

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



February is here and I have always seen it to be a month of transition. For me it is the transition from winter to spring and a time to focus on the renewal ahead. It is a great time to re-energize.

Do you have a goal for your business this year that you want to re-energize? One goal I will focus on is taking "follow-up with clients" to the next level?

You know that your business thrives on making contacts and getting new business.

- What happens after you have made the sale and they are now a client?
- How often should you be in touch with that person?
- What are some rules of thumb for keeping in touch and nurturing your relationship?

In an article I co-author with Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., *Staying in Touch With Your Clients*, we talk about this important part of the networking process. Here are several tips for keeping in touch and strengthening your business relationships:

1. Spread out your contacts. Regardless of the level of your relationship with your clients, regular contact is generally good. Two short meetings or phone calls are more beneficial than one long session. Each meeting becomes an opportunity to strengthen the relationship and to enhance your visibility and recognition.
2. Schedule predictably. Stay in touch with your clients regularly and consistently. Train them to expect to hear from you at certain times. For example, if you usually contact certain customers during the first week of every quarter, they will come to expect it and will budget time for you. If they don't hear from you, they may actually call to see how you are doing on their own.
3. Make each contact lead to the next. Before concluding a meeting or telephone conversation, schedule the date of your next contact.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## BALANCING *Your* BUSINESS FINANCES

Thursday, February 21, 2008  
7:45 a.m. • Holiday Inn at Ingleside,  
I-91 Exit 15 Holyoke, MA  
([hiholyoke.com](http://hiholyoke.com))

If there's one thing that will make or break your company, especially when it's small, it's cash flow. Love 'em or hate 'em... knowing your finances and business cash flow situation is the bottom line for any business large or small! Join us Thursday, February 21, to learn from Lyne J. Kendall, Financial Analyst/Senior Business Advisor at the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Lyne possesses expertise in finance, marketing and management and has over 15 years experience in business and assisting companies with their operations worldwide! She assists companies in all sectors of business from manufacturing to retail and service, providing financial, marketing and technical assistance...and she can help your company, too!

- Planning ahead will help you see problems coming so you can effectively deal with them early on.
- Simply put, think about the balance in your checking account. Will that balance be enough to pay your bills when they come due?
- Figure out where your money is going so you can avoid a cash crunch – and business failure.

Ms. Kendall is part of the adjunct faculties at the University of Massachusetts, Western New England College and Holyoke



LYNE J. KENDALL

Community College, teaching courses in small business finance, marketing, management and how to start your own business. In addition, Ms. Kendall co-teaches an undergraduate marketing course at the University of Massachusetts and is Lead Trainer/Instructor for the NxLevel National Training Program for Entrepreneurs. Also, Ms. Kendall conducts seminars throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She was Director of the Small Business Institute Program at WNEC and is on numerous committees for local Chambers of Commerce and women's organizations.

Come join us for our February WBOA meeting and learn to develop the tools and discipline to handle your business finances.

**\$15<sup>00</sup> WITH RESERVATIONS  
AND \$18<sup>00</sup> WITHOUT.**

*Important: Please call voicemail at*  
**(413) 827-4182**

RESERVATIONS BY :  
**Monday, February 18th**  
*No show reservations will be billed*

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In written correspondence, close by stating the date your customer should expect to hear from you again: "I'll send you a note or email by the end of the quarter." Having made the commitment, you're more likely to follow through. This practice establishes a chain of contacts, with each meeting leading to the next.

4. Assume responsibility for making contact. You can't control whether clients will contact you, but you can control when you contact them. Take the initiative; stay in touch with your customers. This is especially important for your most important clients. When clients or customers do not feel cared for – they are more likely to try someone else. By staying in touch with them, you are much more likely to head off potential problems down the road.

5. Invite them to networking events. One way of making sure to stay in contact with your customers is to invite select ones to some of the networking events that you go to. This is a great way to meet with them periodically while getting you out of your cave to network and to meet other people.

6. Stick to your plan. As you achieve success in establishing routines with your sources, some of them may begin taking initiative with contact. Don't let this interfere with your contact schedule — that is, don't count it when they initiate the call as one of the contacts you've scheduled.

Embrace the possibilities and move forward. Transitions can be fun, exciting and fuel for the future. Make all your transitions powerful and meaningful.

WARMLY,

*Linda*

Linda McDonald, President

---

---

*Mark* YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

(THE THIRD THURSDAY OF

SEPTEMBER-MAY, 7:45-9:30 A.M.)

**2/21, 3/20, 4/17, 5/15**

WOMAN OF THE YEAR EVENING EVENT

JUNE 19, 2008

---

---

## NEW MEMBERS AND MEMBER NEWS

### TARA "JACKSON" TETREAULT

• GRAND OPENING MARCH 1, 2008

Jackson & Connor  
150 Main Street  
2nd Floor  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(917) 648-8911

### JOANNE ATTARDI, FOUNDER/CEO

#### NUTS 4 NUTS

In the Fall issue of Specialty Food Magazine, an article listed the top ten product claims of 213 new nut products. Kosher, premium, no cholesterol, no additives or preservatives, low or reduced carbs and seasonal were all listed. Kosher is the most prominent positioning claim.

Nuts 4 Nuts products are kosher, premium, have no cholesterol [nuts have none and actually help lower cholesterol!], No additives or preservatives, low or reduced carbs...everything but "seasonal"... Nuts 4 Nuts are a delicious "year-round" snack or gift!

Good News! Nuts 4 Nuts can now be purchased at the following retail locations:

- Abundant Wellness Center - Chicopee
- Atkins Market - Amherst
- Beyond Housewares - Feeding Hills
- Big Y World Class Markets - MA + CT
- Come for Coffee and...-Wallingford, CT
- Cool Beans - Madison, CT
- Curtis Country Store - Charlemont
- Fresh Acres Market - Springfield
- Hickory Dell Farm Gift Shop - Northampton
- Highland Park Markets - CT
- Richardson's Candy Kitchen - Deerfield
- Table & Vine - West Springfield
- Tropik Sun - Enfield Mall

- Whole Foods Market - W. Hartford, CT
- Wild Oats Market - W. Hartford, CT
- The list of locations continues to grow...

Check the Nuts 4 Nuts website often for monthly specials and a current show listing. Volume discounts/wholesale available upon request. [www.Nuts4Nuts.biz](http://www.Nuts4Nuts.biz) or [Joanne@Nuts4Nuts.biz](mailto:Joanne@Nuts4Nuts.biz).

### SUZANNE LAROCQUE

#### SLEAQUE IMAGES

Suzanne Larocque of Sleaque Images is proud to take part in the WGBY Art Auction. Larocque's donated image, titled Lakeside Solace, was created while on holiday in Lake Placid, NY. The 14" x 9.5" black and white art piece is printed on rag paper using archival inks.

The online auction is open through February 24. The final party featuring the live and silent auctions will be held at the Northampton Center for the Arts, 17 New South Street, Northampton on the 24th.

For more information, please contact Suzanne at (413) 525-9089 or [suzanne@sleaqueimages.com](mailto:suzanne@sleaqueimages.com).

### LINDA McDONALD

#### REACH RESOURCES

[www.REACHresources.net](http://www.REACHresources.net)  
(413) 527-2178

On February 5, 2008, Linda L. McDonald of REACH Resources presented to a community audience of more than 200 supporters of the Spirit in Action Rethink Project fund raiser to benefit schools, students and teachers rebuilding schools in New Orleans post Hurricane Katrina. The event took place at the Courtyard Marriott



*Sheryl Blais and Karen Cardoza welcome a visitor. -PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE LAROCQUE*



on Rt. 9 in Hadley and was sponsored by BeFit Health and Wellness of Hadley.

Linda's presentation, *Habits are Hard to Break...*, helped the audience to understand how and why we form habits; what happens when we try to change too quickly or too much and gave eight steps to forming healthy and effective new habits to support individuals in achieving the results desired. Linda is a business and life coach, organizational consultant and trainer.

Linda has also been accepted to participate in the Authors Mentor Program by acclaimed author of best selling business development books and articles, Ivan J. Misner, Ph.D. of BNI and Referral Institute. Among Dr. Misner's books is *Truth or Delusion* and *Masters of Sales*. This is a one year program in which participants learn key skills for writing effective articles for publication that support business development and book development. "The program began in January and I have already co-authored one article submitted to the WBOA newsletter February edition. I am very excited to begin bringing this new skill to my business."

Linda announces the opening of her new blog, REACH For It!. "I want to use this blog as an opportunity to share wisdom and insights with others interested in personal self-discovery. Please join the discussion. Bring your own reflections and learnings and enjoy what others have to share." Visit the REACH For It! Blog at [www.reachlifecoach.blogspot.com](http://www.reachlifecoach.blogspot.com).

### NEW MEMBERS

- Laurie Pare, Director  
NEBA Business Consulting Center  
One Federal Street, Bldg. 101  
Springfield, MA 01105  
(413) 328-0932  
Fax: (413) 755-6101  
[www.nebaworks.com](http://www.nebaworks.com)
- Business consulting for disabled individuals launching their own businesses.



A visitor enjoys the meeting with Victoria Ahrens Dorf and Tara Tetreault - PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE LAROCQUE

## HOW DO YOU GIVE A TALK PEOPLE TALK ABOUT?

How do you give a talk people talk about? In the continuing series, *Sasha ZeBryk* of *SashaSpeaks Seminars* offers tips to polish and pump up any speaking opportunity, so that people will remember you. Sasha is the author *93 Ways to Hook 'em, Book 'em & Keep 'em, Introduce Yourself in Technicolor* and *NetWork the Room like a PRO!*

**1. Break your talk into three simple, logical parts: beginning, middle and end.** Sketch it out starting with the end. If you know where your talk is headed (perhaps a specific "call to action"), it is easier to write the ending first and the rest later. Second best place to start is with your middle content. Write down bullet points; then 2 or 3 ideas under each point. Work on the beginning last. It will be easier to come up with an opening once you've figured out your middle points and your ending.

**2. Hook your audience in the first 30 seconds.** Show them in your first four sentences that you're interesting and original. Your hook is any opening statement that grabs the audience's attention immediately. Don't waste the precious power of the first im-

pression saying unimportant things like, "I'm really happy to be here." or "Isn't this weather just awful?" Never tell them the obvious, the trite or the boring.

**HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE  
IN THE FIRST 30 SECONDS.  
SHOW THEM THAT  
YOU'RE INTERESTING  
AND ORIGINAL.**

**3. Match your opening to your purpose.** Use your first 30 seconds skillfully because audiences make up their minds immediately if you're interesting or "same old, same old." Open with a personal story or anecdote, a question, startling comment, unusual quote or statistic, or a funny experience. Grabbing your audience immediately establishes your confidence and reduces tension in them. Memorize your opening and like it. Know it so well that nothing will break your concentration or confidence.

*Tell a Personal Story or Anecdote related to your objective*

"Last October, while stuck in an elevator for 13 hours, an idea struck me that changed my life forever."

*Use an Unusual Statistic*

"A new study reveals that 57% of people have walked out of a business without buying anything because they were treated rudely."

**sashaSpeaks  
Seminars**

**Boost Speaking  
&  
Networking Skills**

210 Beekman Drive • Agawam, MA 01001  
(413) 821-0086 • [Sasha@SashaSpeaks.com](mailto:Sasha@SashaSpeaks.com)  
Vero Beach, FL Office



**Sasha ZeBryk**  
speaker, author  
executive speech coach  
[www.SashaSpeaks.com](http://www.SashaSpeaks.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2008

6:45 p.m.

#### *Abundant Solutions Group Coaching Program*

Life Does Not HAVE to be hard. Discover what is most important to YOU and learn to fully express your magnificence; tap into your inner wisdom and knowing; discover what it is you are here to do; learn how to claim your purpose everyday and begin to create the life you want.

Coach Linda McDonald creates a safe and sacred learning environment in which you will directly and, through the experiences of others, learn, discover and grow in ways that invite long-lasting impact personally, professionally and spiritually.

Enroll monthly (4 90-minute sessions and more) and save!

**Location:** Abundant Wellness Center, 94 Chicopee St (Rt. 116), Chicopee, MA

**Registration:** 413-592-2828

**Questions:** Linda at 413-527-2178

Online info: [CLICK HERE](#)

### TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2008

9:00 a.m.

#### Web Seminar • Amy Grabowski

The first Tuesday of each month a 9 a.m. there is a web seminar on "What QuickBooks can do for you." Visit [www.fiscaltraining.com](http://www.fiscaltraining.com) to register.

## Your AD HERE!

Looking for a great place to advertise your business that will reach local business women and the community? Have you noticed the advertising in this newsletter, and wondered how that can be you? Contact Allison Biggs by phone at (413) 222-6441 or by email at [allison@am-designworks.com](mailto:allison@am-designworks.com), to learn about the advertising options that are available to you!

Now that our newsletter is in digital form and we have made the transition to full color ads, take advantage of this opportunity to get your business noticed. Consider WBOA newsletter advertising as an important part of this year's marketing plan!

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### INGE HENDERSON

#### *Advertising Products Corporation*

Inge Henderson has been in business with Advertising Products Corporation for thirty-four years and has been a member of WBOA for the last three years.

She was introduced to WBOA through Nancy O'Hare, a vital and fun person, and former client, who has gone on to other paths in her life. Also by Amy Grabowski, whom she was privileged to meet at a new members meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. She also first met Nina Berman at that meeting, who was also a new member of the Chamber. Inge says, "Thank you, ladies, as I have enjoyed my association with WBOA very much over the years."

She also notes, "It is said that most people change jobs or careers every 5 years or so, so I wonder how it is that I have been doing this so long. The answer is that I love helping my clients market their businesses by choosing the right imprinted promotional items to give out at trade shows, or leave behind after they have met with their clients, which will keep their names in frequent view during the day for quick reference. This is so important to your success!"

"The challenges are usually meeting the in-hands date for those who want their products 'yesterday,' and trouble-shooting errors at the factory (they all make them) so that things go smoothly. This is my 'value added' contribution so that my clients can go on with their business and leave the details to me."

In the year ahead she wishes to grow my business more with the wonderful established list of clients that she already has, and to find more cli-

ents by scouring newspaper ads, business magazines, etc., as well as making notes to herself regarding prospective clients when she is on the road between appointments.

The women of WBOA are always a pleasure to meet and talk to at monthly meetings, and she is so impressed with the caliber of speakers that Karen and Joanne have recruited to be guests at these meetings. Inge is looking forward to a great 2008, and may we all share success and happiness in this new year!

### BONNIE NORKIN

#### *Bonnie's Knifty Knitting*

Bonnie has been selling her knit items since 1971, and in the last twelve years has begun actively pursuing her business through craft show venues. Bonnie has been a member of the WBOA for one year.

In the year ahead Bonnie hopes to accumulate more inventory and develop new items to sell. Bonnie appreciates the women of the WBOA as they provide support to her when she needs it. She enjoys the meetings as a chance to make friends who might help her with business pursuits.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

### KATHI L. DONAHUE

VICE PRESIDENT  
COMMERCIAL LENDING  
[kdonahue@chicopeesavings.com](mailto:kdonahue@chicopeesavings.com)



### CHICOPEE SAVINGS

P.O. BOX 300, CHICOPEE, MASS 01014-0300  
229 Exchange Street • TEL 413 594-6692 • FAX 413 594-8894  
1-800-662-0974 • [www.chicopeesavings.com](http://www.chicopeesavings.com)

## Got Goji?

Now, get **gochi™** for better sleep, increased mental acuity and physical energy AND feel more calm.

Experience THE number ONE  
Health Product world wide for yourself.

Call Victoria at 413-268-3220  
[www.goberry.freelife.com](http://www.goberry.freelife.com)





**SHERYL BLAIS**  
*Sheryl Blais Studios*

Sheryl Blais has been creating one of a kind wire crochet and silver jewelry as Sheryl Blais Studios for eight years. She has been a member of the WBOA for one year.

In the year ahead Sheryl plans on expanding her store locations and transitioning from her heavy show schedule.

In the year to come, the WBOA can support Sheryl by doing what they've always done, holding meetings to help women network with other people in business.

**DEBORAH REIDY**  
*Reidy Associates*  
[www.reidyassociates.org](http://www.reidyassociates.org)

Deborah Reidy of Reidy Associates has been in business for eleven years, and has been a member of WBOA for less than a year.

Reidy Associates is a coaching and consulting service which specializes in developing outstanding leaders, helping to plan and implement desired futures, and building high performing teams. Clients work in health care, government, non-governmental organizations, and industry. Results include greater clarity of purpose, better alignment between values and actions, better collaboration, and resolution of longstanding "logjams."

Deborah loves her work and almost all aspects of it. The biggest challenge she has is being away from home so much. "I have clients all over New England as well as in other parts of the country and I can be away on a weekly basis during busy periods. I've always fantasized about being able to teleport myself over the phone lines; as technology becomes more and more sophisticated, that is actu-

ally a reality, with virtual meetings becoming increasingly common. I look forward to taking advantage of this more."

2007 was a fantastic year in terms of personal and professional growth and achievement. For 2008, Deborah aspires to continue the trend. Two specific accomplishments will be:

- to expand her coaching practice, particularly organizational leaders and young women;
- to publish and sell the book on leadership that she's been writing for too many years.

"I would love to offer a leadership development program that I've designed especially for women called "In Your Power: Core Capabilities for Women Leaders." Also, I am very interested in developing a coaching specialization for young women. I strongly believe that young women would benefit from coaching at that critical point in their lives and I feel I have a calling to do this work but I am not sure how to get it going. I'd also like to find ways to use my skills to contribute to WBOA. And they can become clients and buy my book!"

**SANDY CASSANELLI**  
*Greenough Packaging & Maintenance Supplies*  
[www.greenoughpaper.com](http://www.greenoughpaper.com)

Sandy Cassanelli is Vice President of Greenough Packaging & Maintenance Supplies, a company that has been in existence for one hundred and twenty two years and specializes in packaging materials, towels and tissue, and maintenance and cleaning supplies. Sandy has been a member of the WBOA for one year.

Sandy's biggest challenge in business is getting staff to work together and realize their importance to the business.

Sandy's clients benefit from her company's excellent customer service; they

are always willing to go the extra mile for their customers.

In the year ahead, Sandy would like to increase the company's sales, increase green product initiatives, and make more people aware that Greenough is a woman-owned business. By helping Greenough increase its awareness in the business community, WBOA can help support Sandy in these goals.

---

---

## WBOA WOULD LIKE TO

**SPOTLIGHT YOU** as a member, but first we need you to answer a few questions!

If you would like to have your business spotlighted in the WBOA newsletter, please contact the newsletter chair, Freda Brown by email at [FREKEV@aol.com](mailto:FREKEV@aol.com) to complete a brief questionnaire.

---

---

## ARCH PROGRAM DONATIONS.....

The WBOA is continuing its drive to collect travel sized, unused toiletry products, new women's undergarments and sleepwear, along with functional cell phones with their chargers to be donated to the YWCA of Springfield's ARCH program. The ARCH program (Abuse and Rape Crisis Hotline), provides these items for use at local domestic violence shelters. A tote will be located in the back of the room for you to drop off your items. Donations can also be given directly to Allison Biggs, who can be reached at either (413) 222-6441 or at: [allison@amdesignworks.com](mailto:allison@amdesignworks.com).

## Your Legal Ally

**Gina M. Barry**

Estate Planning, Elder Law, Real Estate



Big enough to offer specialists -  
small enough for personal attention.

*Your Personal Legal Specialists.*

Springfield ~ Northampton ~ Westfield ~ Amherst  
413-781-0560 [baconwilson.com](http://baconwilson.com)

## BUILD YOUR BUSINESS FROM THE INSIDE OUT



What are you doing that sabotages the success you want in your business?

What if you could succeed with 'ease'?  
Would you want that?

Ask Linda, the Inside Out Coach how you can go from struggle to ease.

choose success  
[www.TheInsideOutCoach.com](http://www.TheInsideOutCoach.com)

 Linda McDonald  
527-2178

# FROM To-Do TO DONE: 10 TIPS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

By Ann Latham

There are only 24 hours in the day for all of us. Those who use them wisely, get where they want to go. Those who don't, are left to dream. If you carve out enough time for the right things and then focus on getting them done, you too can achieve your goals. Follow these ten steps to significant results:

## 1. Know what is important

Decide what is truly important to you, whether personal or business. What must you do to create value for which customers are willing to pay? What will make you or your company more able to create that value? What will make you a stronger, more capable person? What will keep your life balanced, healthy and sane? Devoting time to these goals will help you get to where you want to go. Devoting time to everything else – the urgent but unimportant, the myriad little tasks piled up at your desk – will only suck up your seriously limited hours. Know what is important and keep it in mind always.

## 2. Know what is most important

You can't do everything. You can't improve everything. You must choose. Decide what is most important and focus on the top few. You will accomplish more if you tackle less. Get it done and then move on.

## 3. Clear the unimportant off your plate

Delegate, outsource, find a more efficient method, and simply stop doing things that aren't necessary. Examine your activities. Which ones support your most important goals? Minimize or eliminate the rest.

## 4. Be specific about next steps

Be clear about the specific, con-

crete steps needed to make progress toward your goals. What exactly will constitute success at each step? Vague tasks suck up time. You don't have to have a completely detailed plan reaching far into the future but you better know exactly where B is before trying to get there from A. Otherwise how will you know you have arrived?

## 5. Assess prerequisites

In order to complete your next task, do you have the knowledge, skill, process and resources required? If not, get them. Otherwise, you are just kidding yourself and the task will remain on your to-do list far too long.

## 6. Schedule time for the important

If a task is important, schedule a reasonable block of time for it just as you would for a meeting with an important customer.

## 7. Remove distractions

Silence the phone, shut the door, turn off the email alert, hang a sign. These precautions should eliminate most external distractions. The self-imposed distractions are tougher. Put everything away except the project at hand. Close unnecessary computer applications. Move to a work surface out of reach of your computer and other common distractions. Keep a small pad handy to jot down distracting thoughts.

## 8. Be intentional

Just as you would start a meeting on time with a predefined agenda, start your task on time with a predefined outcome. Note the clock and the reserved block of time. Tell yourself that you need to accomplish X by the scheduled end time. You may wish to set a timer at the halfway point to ensure progress.

## 9. Check your progress

If you are not making progress as expected, what step did you skip? Are you clear about the specific outcome? Do you have the knowledge, skill, method and resources necessary to complete the task? Did you set aside a block of time and eliminate distractions? Did you review the agenda mentally and commit to finishing the task in a specific time period?

## 10. Avoid perfectionism

Keep the purpose in mind and when you achieve it, quit. The last 20% may satisfy your pride but is probably not even noticeable to anyone else. If the last 20% of every task is excessive and unnecessary, you could be wasting the equivalent of one whole work day every week.

*Ann Latham is President of Uncommon Clarity, Inc., a firm that helps executives and business owners improve the strategies and systems that provide a winning focus, productive people, reliable processes, and happy customers. For more information or to sign up for Ann's free newsletter, please visit [www.uncommonclarity.com](http://www.uncommonclarity.com) or call 413-527-3737.*

---

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have an article that you would like to be included in the next WBOA newsletter, please email it to Freda Brown, Newsletter Chairperson at [FREKEV@aol.com](mailto:FREKEV@aol.com).

The insertion deadline for the March newsletter is February 28.

---

**advertising  
products** corporation

INGE H. HENDERSON  
PRESIDENT  
MA (413) 786-6364  
TOLL FREE (877) 786-6364  
FAX (413) 786-6812  
email: [info@ad-products.com](mailto:info@ad-products.com)

P.O. Box 526  
Agawam, MA 01001  
[www.ad-products.com](http://www.ad-products.com)

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS  
TRADE SHOW EXHIBITS  
SIGNS & SIGN RENTAL  
MOVING MESSAGE SIGNS  
BANNERS — CUSTOM & STOCK  
STORE FIXTURES



**create your change**

...from the inside out

Kat Lovell • Certified Hypnotherapist

413-585-1581 • 800-594-7217  
[www.createyourchange.com](http://www.createyourchange.com) • [kat@createyourchange.com](mailto:kat@createyourchange.com)  
16 Center Street, Suite 311 • Northampton, MA 01060





*The breathtaking view from the balcony at Cozumel by the Sea.*

## A VACATION IN *Paradise* COURTESY OF A WBOA RAFFLE

By Nina Berman

I have won a few raffles in my lifetime, but never one like the week at Shirley Simolari's Cozumel by the Sea penthouse in Cozumel, Mexico!

When Shirley offered to raffle a one-week stay in her penthouse as part of WBOA's 25th anniversary celebration, I never dreamed it would be as beautiful as it is. As my daughters, Stephanie and Michelle, so accurately said, pictures do not do it justice. You have to see it in person.

Her condo is part of Residencias Reef, an exclusive beachfront residential community about five miles from the town of San Miguel, which is the only town on the island of Cozumel. We drove to the compound in our rented white Jeep Wrangler (a.k.a. Mexican Hummer). It seemed the appropriate vehicle for a vacation on an island off the Yucatan Peninsula. Although we eagerly took in all the sights and sounds on our trip from the airport, our main goal for the day was to rush to the condo, shed our winter clothes, and run to the beach. That is, until we saw Shirley's place!

We slowed our pace considerably as we gazed at the pristine white buildings with thatched roofs set against the alluringly blue Caribbean Sea. We climbed the stone steps and opened the mahogany doors to Shirley's Palati Mou (Greek for My Palace). Not sure which direction to

explore first, we peeked into the living room and came to a dead stop. The walls on two sides of this expansive room were all glass. They were at least 10 feet high with sliding doors that extended the room out on to the balcony and into the gorgeous vista of the crystal blue Caribbean Sea. The view was breathtaking.

I cannot tell you how long we remained there drinking in the skyline from all possible vantage points: We stood in the living room, sat at the granite peninsula in the adjoining kitchen, stood by the mahogany railings in the balcony, relaxed in the hammocks, and gathered around the "patio" table. Finally, Stephanie and Michelle beckoned us to "check out these bedrooms." There were four of them, each with its own large bathroom. The two master bedrooms had king-size beds and balconies overlooking the same magnificent view that had captivated us in the living room. On the walls in the foyer leading to the rooms there were two colorful murals painted by a local artist.

Thinking it could not get any better than this, we went to the rooftop solarium and discovered our paradise. With nothing above us but sky, the panoramic view from our rooftop perch took on a completely different level of beauty. Whether we were soaking up the sun, cooling off in the lap pool, or identifying

constellations in the starlit night sky, this is where we spent most of our time when we stayed "at home."

For those of you who would love another chance to stay in Cozumel by the Sea, keep your eyes and ears open. My understanding is that Shirley has donated one-week stays to two local non-profits for their 2008 fundraising events.

---



---

## THANK YOU *Thank You*

At each meeting, members donate items for a raffle. This raffle generates money for the Cheryl Reed Loan Fund. We would like to thank the members who donated an item for the January raffle. If you would like to donate an item for the next meeting, just bring it with you to the meeting.

**Suzanne Larocque-** *Sleaque Images*

**Kat Lovell-** *Create Your Change Hypnotherapy*

**Suzanne Boniface-** *SMBPR*

**Joanne Attardi-** *Nuts 4 Nuts, LLC*

---



---

## WE HAVE A NEW LOOK!

The WBOA has just updated the look of its logo. Keep your eyes open to see this new logo making an appearance over the upcoming months!



**P.O. Box 958**

**WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA 01090**

**413-827-4182 • WWW.WBOA.ORG**