Celebrating in “High” Style
BY DANIELLA BERNETT

The writer is the WTS-GNY Newsletter Subcommittee Chair and Research Manager for STV Incorporated.

Despite the heat and humidity on the sultry evening of June 24th, WTS-GNY members and non-members gathered at The Park restaurant overlooking the High Line to celebrate the chapter’s 30th Anniversary. What better site to underscore various transportation modes and the creative planning initiatives that have helped the industry and the City to evolve over the last 30 years.

The High Line’s long history stretches back to 1847, when it existed in the form of street-level railroad tracks built down Manhattan’s West Side. In the 1930s, as part of the ambitious West Side Improvement project, the High Line became an elevated freight rail line, which ran from 34th Street to Spring Street. At the time, this area of Manhattan was an industrial district and the home to many factories and warehouses. The High Line was designed to run through the center of blocks, rather than over 10th Avenue, thus facilitating the loading and unloading of cargo without posing a danger to city streets and pedestrians.

In the 1950s, the growth of interstate trucking led to a drop in freight rail traffic. By the mid-1980s, a group of property owners lobbied for the demolition of the entire High Line. Despite the development of the High Line and planned without success to visit it since its opening a year ago. Thanks to our Special Events Committee and the fabulous volunteer tour guides it recruited, our members were given an experience that contributed to their professional development and their appreciation of the hidden treasures of our urban environment.

Second, we gathered in a sophisticated but relaxed setting with attendees ranging from senior executives to young professionals. By providing a chance to meet new...
CELEBRATING IN “HIGH” STYLE
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However, Peter Obletz, a Chelsea resident, activist and railroad enthusiast, filed a court challenge and tried to restore rail service on the line. The Friends of the High Line, a non-profit conservancy group, was formed in 1999 to advocate for the High Line’s preservation. In 2002, the group garnered the City’s support to preserve the line as an elevated public park. The High Line south of 30th Street was donated to the City by CSX in 2005. A year later, the groundbreaking took place on the first section of the park, from Gansevoort Street to 20th Street, which opened in June 2009. Construction on the next segment, from 20th Street to 34th Street, is underway. It is slated to open in 2011.

Thanks to Friends of the High Line today City residents and tourists alike can come enjoy this unique haven above 10th Ave. And so it was on that June evening, WTS members were given a glimpse of this world as they took a brief walking tour along the winding pathways that feature 210 species of self-seeding perennial grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees that are able to withstand the strong winds coming off the Hudson River. The tour guides hailed from Amtrak, Philip Habib and Associates, and Lee + Associates Architects. Anthony Conner, a retired history teacher, also served as a guide. The pathways were designed in such a way that there are plenty of points along the route where visitors can sit down, lounge and sunbathe as they while away a day, an afternoon or evening caressed by the breeze and mesmerized by the silvery-white embers of sunlight dancing upon the water in bustling New York City.

It was hard for members to tear themselves away from the High Line, but they did so to join the festivities across the street at The Park restaurant, where cocktails and hors d’oeuvres were served in a special room rented only for WTS-GNY. People spilled out onto a terrace, where they had an opportunity to network. They also seized the chance to catch up with old friends and, perhaps, make new ones.

In addition, a raffle was held to benefit the Scholarship Fund, which gives a helping hand to the next generation of women seeking to enter the fascinating field of transportation. The raffle raised $600 for the Scholarship fund. But before the evening came to a close, a huge cake was brought out and everyone took a moment to bask in the glow of WTS-GNY’s accomplishments over the last 30 years. Happy Anniversary! May the next 30 be just as successful.

From left: Thomas McLaughlin, Noemi Santiago and James Brown, all of HDR.

From left: Christopher Lamm of Cambridge Systematics; WTS-GNY Young Professionals Committee Chair Beth Zall; and Nicole Bucich of Systra.

From left: Jessica Cumberland, Stefanie Beemer and Crystale Wozniak, all of Parsons Brinckerhoff.

From left: WTS-GNY Special Events Committee member Camille Gordon-Taylor and WTS-GNY Corporate Relations Co-Chair Kimberly Wagner Patterson.

From left: WTS-GNY Special Events Committee Co-Chair Lisa Marie Pompei, and Danielle Morgan and Stephanie Brooke of Michael Baker Corporation.

CELEBRATING IN “HIGH” STYLE
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Enjoy a game of pool or ping pong while sipping on cocktails at Slate; a trendy restaurant and lounge located in the Flatiron district.

FREE TO MEMBERS!!

Location:
Slate at 54 West 21st Street

SAVE THE DATE

August 26, 2010
Arup is an international multidisciplinary engineering, design and planning firm with nearly 10,000 staff working in more than 92 offices in 37 countries. The firm’s principal fields of activity are transportation planning and policy, site development, civil engineering, infrastructure and buildings. Arup is a global leader in multimodal transport planning, policy, design, and systems analysis and is known for developing high quality, sustainable solutions to address transportation infrastructure and service challenges in complex urban environments.

Transportation shapes the development of our communities and is a major determining factor in the quality of the local environment. A hallmark of Arup’s transportation planning work is putting people first and developing a system where pedestrian movement is prioritized and supported by networks for cycling and transit. With a history of devising innovative strategies to connect land use and transportation, Arup has assisted in creating downtowns, town centers, and station areas that are sensitive to their natural context, sustainable, and attractive to a variety of businesses and individuals. Communities that are, in a word, livable.

Within the New York region, the firm’s nearly 400 professionals are working on projects such as the Lower Manhattan Street Management; Access to the Region’s Core; Second Avenue Subway; Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review; East River Waterfront; Newark’s Master Plan Revision; Newark’s Broad Street Station District TOD Plan; and Princeton University Arts and Transit Neighborhood, to name a few. Arup is proud to be an integral part of shaping the region to ensure that New York will continue to be a global leader in sustainable urban living.

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SAVE THE DATE

September 16, 2010
If you are interested in the future of high-speed rail in the Northeast, don’t miss our September 16th Quarterly Program, featuring Joseph Boardman, President and CEO of Amtrak and Karen Rae, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration USDOT.

Location:
Club 101 at 40th and Park Ave.
Pippa Woods has over 29 years of experience in the transportation industry in Canada and the United States in strategic and business planning, and innovative program development at the state and federal levels. Currently, she serves as Policy Advisor for Transportation in the Office of the Governor of New Jersey, Governor Chris Christie. Prior to this appointment, Pippa served in NJ Transit’s Capital Planning Department, focusing on Intermodal and Interagency coordination. In this post, she represented the Executive Director on the three Metropolitan Planning Organizations in New Jersey, as well as coordinating transit interests within New Jersey state government. Pippa also served as the Business and Project Development Director for the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers. There she managed a wide range of research projects on all transportation modes, including a policy and planning advisory role to the NJ Turnpike Office of Transportation Policy and Planning: State ferry policy and federally funded ferry emission reduction projects; facilitating and implementing special public policy series on aging and mobility issues.

Pippa joined WTS in the 1990s. In 1996, she assisted the Program Committee to prepare for the Annual Conference in New York. In 2001, Dedi Gonga, who was the WTS-GNY President at the time, asked Pippa if she would be interested in serving on the Board, which she did. It was under Dedi’s leadership that the chapter held its first Gala, as it was called back then, at Bridgewaters in South Street Seaport. Pippa co-chaired the committee, which underwent an intense year working with the WTS-GNY Advisory Board. The chapter achieved some notable firsts with that Gala and it coincided with its 20th Anniversary.

Pippa was on the WTS-GNY Board from 2002 to 2005, serving as President in 2004 and 2005. She was also asked by Mary Jane O’Meara to be a Committee Chair during O’Meara’s National Presidency. Pippa served as Co-Chair on the Chapter Development Committee, which at that time was charged with helping new chapters take the necessary steps to become a full fledged chapter. WTS welcomed its first International chapter at that time, the Strait of Georgia Chapter in Vancouver, Canada. That Committee worked with over a dozen locations interested in becoming chapters.

After completing her presidency of WTS-GNY, Pippa was asked to join the WTS Scholarship Board. During her time on the board, the chapter launched the WTS Foundation, as a successor to the WTS Scholarship, with an expanded mission to enhance the scholarship offerings to include high school and professional development, and to undertake research to establish a baseline understanding of the policies and programs in transportation industry, all sectors that help to advance women in transportation.

Currently, Pippa is President of the WTS Foundation.
Atlantic Avenue Tunnel Tour

BY ERICA ALARIO

The writer is a Planner with the NYC Department of Planning.

The WTS-GNY’s Young Professionals Committee, joined by students from New York University and Polytechnic University, embarked on a tour of the world’s oldest subway tunnel on May 22nd. The Atlantic Avenue Tunnel Tour group met at Trader Joe’s on Court Street in Brooklyn. The tour commenced as participants climbed into the Tunnel through a manhole at the busy intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Court Street.

Upon entering the half-mile long Tunnel, the group was greeted by tour guide Bob Diamond, who rediscovered it in 1981. “As a younger and thinner man, I crawled into the Tunnel with a flashlight, gas mask, air tank, crowbar, and chain ladder,” he said. The chain ladder still remains inside the Tunnel.

As the group walked the length of the Tunnel (from Court Street to Hicks Street), Bob shared its rich history, which is filled with urban legends of pirates, street gangs, ghosts, German spies and five-foot rats. Most notably, he explained that “the Tunnel was a victim of its own success.”

The Atlantic Avenue Tunnel remains an archeological site, standing 17 feet high and 22 feet wide. It was built in 1844 by William Beard, using the cut-and-cover method. Cut-and-cover, abandoned after the 1890s, consisted of digging a ditch with picks and shovels and then covering it. Bob pointed out that this method was needed because of the natural geology of the area, which lacked bedrock to tunnel through. The Tunnel’s stone walls came from Manhattan bedrock from another of Beard’s projects at the time. The ditch was covered over and arched with brick. The brick ceiling is covered in soot from the steam engines that ran through it in the 1800s.

“The Tunnel remains a monument to 19th-century political corruption,” Bob said. It served as an integral part of the Northeast transportation system prior to its extinction in 1861. Constructed by the Long Island Rail Road for $66,000, riders from the South Amboy ferry used the subway as means of transport to the end of Long Island. Upon transferring to another ferry in Connecticut, travelers would continue making connections to get to Boston and Providence. During the Civil War, the Tunnel was closed after the Lynchfield Brothers bribed Tammany Hall politicians. The Lynchfield Brothers significantly profited from the closure of the Tunnel. They even stole the tracks and brought them to Minnesota for their new projects. Since the Lynchfield Brothers never filled in the Tunnel completely, it was discovered again.

Bob told the group that his fascination with legends of the Tunnel’s existence began in the early 1980s when he was a Pratt student. Despite warnings from various city officials not to search for the Tunnel because gas pipes located underground might explode and five-foot rats lived in the Tunnel would eat him, Bob remained determined to search for it. As a precautionary measure, he packed a gas mask, air tank, and crowbar (to fight off the oversized rats). With assistance from the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, the manhole on Atlantic Avenue and Court Street was opened. With only enough room to crawl, Bob dug through dirt until he found a patched up wall of brick and cobblestone. Then, he climbed down 15 feet into the concealed Tunnel with his chain ladder. The following year, the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association was formed to preserve the Tunnel and has since been providing tours to the public.

For members who were unable to attend the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel Tour on May 22nd and are interested in a tour, visit the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association http://brooklynrail.net/bhra_events.html or call (718) 941-3160.

Event volunteers: Beth Zall, Leah Flax and Stephanie Camay.
A Speedy Way to Improve Your Communication Skills

BY ALICIA LICATA

The writer is Vice President, Long Island Student Section Liaison of the Society Of Women Engineers NY Section. She is also a participant in this year’s Mentoring Program.

Members gathered at Galway Hooker Pub on June 9th for an evening of “Speed Networking to Build Your Brand.” The seminar was the first event sponsored by the 2010 WTS-GNY Professional Development Committee, and was presented by Hilary Pearl of Pearl Associates and Laura Daley of Insight Learning Partners. The objectives of the evening included how to create a powerful and positive first impression; how to define and communicate your “personal brand;” the impact of how others perceive you; how to support your executive presence physically; and practicing your speed networking message.

Pearl stressed that “now more than ever,” global communications are playing a prominent role in our daily work environment. In addition, people tend to have a shorter attention span simply because today there is such an influx of communication. Finally, as a result of the current economic climate, we as professionals are in a highly competitive era, in which it really boils down to the survival of the fittest.

During the presentation a list of 36 “first impression adjectives” was displayed. Members of the audience were asked to select four impression adjectives by which they wanted others to recognize them. Next, par-

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Participants were paired with a partner and were given 90 seconds to make a pitch. At the end of each segment they were asked to record two first impression adjectives. This exercise was repeated with three additional people, leaving someone with a total of four independent critiques of your 90-second presentation.

After a discussion of the aforementioned exercise, Daley went on to present common examples of "mixed messages." In other words, although you believe that the message you are trying to verbally impart is communicated in a clear and concise manner, in actuality it is not only the words that you are presenting. Only seven percent of the message is expressed by the "words," while 38 percent is conveyed in the tone and the remaining 55 percent is through one's physical appearance. To further this point, Daley showed a video clip of a speaker who verbally articulated his enthusiasm. However, based on the fact that his hands were crossed in front of his chest and he spoke in a monotone voice, it became clear to the observer that he was very tense and uncomfortable. Consequently, in communicating your "physical brand," it is important to consider eye contact, facial expressions (don’t forget to smile), posture, dress, hand gestures, tone, volume and handshake.

With these newly acquired communication skills in mind, participants were given another opportunity to perfect their one-minute message when asked "Tell me about yourself!" They were again broken into pairs and allowed to repeat the exercise for a final time. This time, though, the key elements of the exercise included answering the following statements:

- A headline statement – I am a...
- Which means...
- For example (story)
- Followed by, "Tell me about you."

Daley suggested the questions to ask, such as:
- What are you working on now?
- What are your aspirations in this company?
- How are things going in your department?
- How’s your job?

Overall, it was quite an informative evening. At the end, Daley urged everyone in the audience to leverage the network connections that they had made. However, as with anything in life, practice makes perfect!

Having been fortunate to attend a seminar by Pearl and Daley in the past, I was not surprised by the superb quality of the information shared in their presentation. On behalf of the Professional Development Committee, I would like to thank all of the attendees and presenters for making it out to the event despite the terrible weather that evening. The Committee is incredibly excited about the coming year, and hopes to see you at one of its future events. To view our calendar of events please go to the WTS-GNY website.

Event volunteers: Jignasa Ray, Yevgeniya Shpigel, Kellyann West, Jennifer Terry, Alicia Licata.
Port Authority Reduces Crashes with its Traffic Safety Program

BY BETH DEANGELO

The writer is a WTS-GNY Director-at-Large and Area Manager-North Jersey for Parsons Brinckerhoff.

What would be more appropriate than for the WTS-GNY chapter, which spans New York and New Jersey, to join the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Metropolitan Section of New York & New Jersey in hosting the “The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey’s Traffic Safety Improvement Program” at the June 16th lunch meeting?

Imagine a group of traffic engineers and transportation planners huddling together at the Newark Club to hear speaker Michael Diculescu, P.E., Principal Engineer for the Traffic Safety Group at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY&NJ), opine about how the agency evaluates crash statistics, estimates associated costs and identifies priority crash locations, then goes about establishing appropriate safety measures to implement throughout its bridges, tunnels, airports, roadways and port facilities. The process is not complete, however, until PANY&NJ reviews the safety and operation of the facilities for a suitable period after countermeasures are constructed to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements.

PANY&NJ has targeted a range of measures to put into practice a comprehensive Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP). Three main components focus on: improving crash data collection for consistency and comprehension; prioritizing critical locations and types of conditions to physically improve geometry and traffic devices to minimize crashes; and modifying driver behavior.

The TSIP has identified conditions that result in a large number of collisions or high impact crashes. These include facilities with frequent lane departures; pavement surfaces that would benefit from improved skid resistance; and heavy merge maneuvers. On the Lincoln Tunnel Helix Outbound, for example, TSIP safety improvements to address lane departures and improve skid resistance have resulted in a 31 percent overall decline in crashes and a 50 percent reduction in single-vehicle collisions from the preceding two-year period. TSIP safety improvements at the George Washington Bridge toll departures, targeting improved merge maneuvering, have also led to an over 25 percent reduction in crashes since 2007.

PANY&NJ recognizes that its effort to improve safety is not solely a function of its facilities. It is also significantly influenced by driving characteristics, which is outside the agency’s control. Or is it outside its control? PANY&NJ is proactively undertaking public safety campaigns, such as the poster below. The education campaign to modify driver behavior is multipronged. The agency is bolstering enforcement of traffic regulations; performing outreach to truck fleets; and using VMS, highway advisory radio, E-ZPass statements and toll plaza posters to get its safety messages out to the public.

The agency’s TSIP continues to meet its goal of providing a safe and efficient roadway network by minimizing the frequency, severity and risk of motor vehicle crashes at all facilities. Between 2000 and 2009, the total number of traffic crashes on roadways at PANY&NJ facilities declined by 38 percent. In addition, the overall crash rate fell by an average of 43 percent.

From the perspective of a closet traffic geek, this was an absorbing topic, and a great way to earn 1.0 PDH (NY State Continuing Education Hours). WTS would like to thank ITE for taking the lead on arranging this meeting and we look forward to collaborating again soon.

Event volunteers: Kashfia Billah, Beth DeAngelo.
My First Time: 2010 International Conference

BY JULIA KERSON

The writer is the WTS-GNY Treasurer and a Senior Policy Analyst for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY&NJ).

As I munched on my AECOM cookie and listened to Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) talk about how far women have come over the years, I thought back to the first time I heard about WTS. An aunt working in Colorado raved about all of the friends she had made, about everything she had learned, and how supportive this group of women had been. Not surprisingly, I had high expectations and these women met them. My first WTS conference left me with much of the same feeling. I expected to meet women from all over the country who excelled in their fields—and I did. I expected to learn about innovative policies and programs—and I did. I didn’t expect all the giveaways, but we’ll call that an added bonus.

The venue was elegant and Washington, DC was beautiful but it was the content that impressed me. The panels were relevant and the speakers engaging. I learned about the enforcement challenges inherent in any value-pricing system, a challenge the New York region will surely face as it seeks innovative ways to combat congestion. I listened intently as a representative from the Port of Baltimore talked about how it was preparing to accommodate the next generation of cargo ships. I learned about the technology that will help this country move towards safer highway infrastructure. To think, all this time I thought those sensors were invented to help me parallel park.

It would be disingenuous to write about my experience at this conference without mentioning the networking. The WTS mission is to “advance women in transportation” and a big part of that is providing opportunities to make connections. Opportunities to learn from the women who have come before us. Opportunities to let a potential employer know what you’re about. That was all there too.

After two days with some of the most interesting women I have ever met, I was left with five words…next year in San Francisco!

WTS-GNY Membership Drive

BY YELENA SHAYER

The writer is a Transportation Project Engineer at AECOM.

On the eve of Memorial Day weekend, WTS-GNY members and prospective members met at the Traffic Bar and Lounge on Manhattan’s East Side for an evening of networking and socializing. By speaking with longtime members, those interested in joining the chapter learned about the organization and how it could enhance their careers. They were introduced to WTS’ purposes and goals, programs and professional development activities. Hopefully this information and encouragement was just the incentive needed to prompt them to take the next step and become WTS members.

Any member who brought someone to the event, who in turn joined, is eligible to win a free trip to next year’s national conference. It’s not too late to try to win your free trip: this membership drive lasts throughout the summer!

Event volunteers: Yelena Shayer, Marie DeLucia, Nicola Belzer.
Improving Member Services

I am happy to report that our membership has increased by 13, raising our total to 326. Our goal for 2010 is to grow to 330 members, so we are well on our way. As for Corporate Partners, we started the year with 13 and our target was to attract an additional five partners. We have already attracted five new partners to date and I am especially pleased that three of them are M/W/DBE firms. With regard to strengthening our chapter, we are identifying areas where additional volunteers are needed and working to match volunteers with those committees. Please contact Maria Garcia, our Volunteer Coordinator, if you would like to help! Also, the Board held a workshop with chapter Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs on August 2nd to continue our efforts to develop a strong and cohesive leadership team. Finally, we are seeking input on how we can improve member services. As an example, the Professional Development Committee will be conducting a member survey in the fall. As always, please feel free to e-mail me at marcia.s.shapiro@gmail.com or call me at (646) 460-4947 to share your thoughts. Hope to see you on August 26th at our Annual Members Event at Slate!

Marcia Shapiro, President GNY Chapter
(646) 460-4947
Marcia.s.shapiro@gmail.com

WTS at the New Jersey TransAction 2010 Conference

BY LIZA BETZ, AICP, PP

The writer is a WTS-GNY NJ Programs Committee member and Special Assistant to the Director of Parks & Community Renewal in Union County, NJ.

If you dream of hanging up your own shingle, of setting up your own business how would you define success in the venture?

This tantalizing question and others were explored at the session, “Starting and Maintaining a DBE Consulting Business: Defining Success as a Woman-Owned Business,” on April 28th at the annual three-day New Jersey TransAction Conference, in Atlantic City.

Organized through the WTS-GNY New Jersey Programs Committee, three talented business women participated in a panel discussion on what propelled them to create their own firms and the challenges they had successfully overcome along the way.

The session featured Amy S. Greene, President, Environmental Consultants, Inc., Victoria G. Malaszecki, President, Envision Consultants, Inc., and Susan Boone, President, Legerity Consultants.

The organizer of the panel was Pippa Woods, WTS Foundation President, who also conceived the brochure distributed to the audience, which contained biographies of the participants and some frequently asked questions about starting a Women Business Enterprise.

The layout and design of the publication was undertaken by the firm headed by Joanne M. Stokes, President, Stokes Advertising. Pippa had been scheduled to serve as moderator but at the last minute she was unable to do so because of a conflict. Moderating was undertaken by Liza Betz, Transportation Planner, Union County.

After giving a brief overview of their startup experiences and business products, the panelists answered questions from the audience. Over the course of an hour, these talented business women discussed their financial decisions, employer retention strategies, and the timely delivery of quality products. Before its conclusion, the conversation shifted to the question of passing the business onto future management.

Certification Maintenance credits for the session topic was approved by the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Event volunteers: Liza Betz, Beth DeAngelo, Pippa Woods and Joanne Stokes.

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK continued from page 6

- Improving Member Services
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A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

The list reflects the new members who joined the chapter up until press time.

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CDM

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