A New Year, New Challenges

BY DANIELLA BERNETT

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

On the same day President Obama took office, WTS-GNY held its Annual Meeting and M/W/DBE EXPO. This event always sets the stage for the year ahead. However, this is especially true for 2009 because members are eagerly anticipating great things for the nation and the transportation industry with the change of administration in Washington.

The evening began with the presentations for 2008 Member of the Year, Rosa M. Parks Diversity Leadership Award and the Employer of the Year. Stacey Hodge, 2007’s Member of the Year, introduced Amy Kaufman, WTS-GNY Secretary, as the 2008 recipient.

Amy has been a member of WTS since 1997. In 2004, she was an apprentice in the Mentoring Program. She moved on to serve as Co-Chair and then Chair of the Corporate Relations Committee from 2006-2007. During her tenure on the committee, she helped to increase corporate partnership contributions and oversaw two successful Annual Dinners. Elected to the WTS-GNY Board as a Director-at-Large for the 2008-2010 term, she subsequently accepted the vacated post of Secretary.

Amy was selected to the WTS International Leadership Program in 2008 and attended as one of two WTS-GNY chapter representatives. Currently, she is a Manager of Capital Programs at the MTA. Amy has been a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) for eight years.

“We are at the beginning of a new era and WTS is at the forefront,” Amy said. “I want to...continued on page 2
thank Felice [Farber, WTS-GNY Immediate Past President], Sue Lebouvie and Gail [Spears, former WTS-GNY Vice President] because mentoring is so important to this organization.”

The Member of the Year Award was followed by a presentation for the Rosa M. Parks Diversity Leadership Award. Cheryl George, the 2007 recipient, bestowed this year’s award on Felicia Jones, Safety and Training Manager at MTA/NYC Transit, Dept. of Buses. Felicia joined WTS in 2003 and served on the Membership and Diversity committees. As a Diversity Committee member, she has worked as program coordinator and contributed as a presenter for several Diversity and WTS National conferences. Serving as a WTS-GNY Board member from 2005 to 2007, Felicia was actively involved in implementing new policies and procedures aimed at strengthening the chapter.

Felicia thanked WTS members for honoring her with the award. “I hope action and change apply to me, as well as to our new president. I took action and encouraged other women of color.

“Women piercing the glass ceiling is very dear to my heart. Women view things differently from men and therefore must be involved in rebuilding infrastructure and continued on page 3
greening America.”

The final award presentation was for Employer of the Year. Ira Levy, President of DMJM Harris (AECOM) which was the 2007 winner, was on hand to give this year’s award to the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT). Lori Ardito, the First Deputy Commissioner, accepted the award on behalf of NYCDOT.

The evening also featured keynote speaker Christopher Ward, Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANY&NJ). He gave an overview of PANY&NJ’s history and all the ambitious projects that the agency has undertaken over the last 30 years to make New York “the urban machine that drives job creation and wealth in the region today.”

Ward went on to discuss PANY&NJ’s current capital program, including such projects as the $8.7 billion Access to the Region’s Core (ARC) tunnel, the $3.2 billion World Trade PATH hub and expanding rail access to the region’s ports to keep them competitive. Also, he noted that the agency’s No.1 planning challenge is to shift to a more sustainable business model, so that it is able to move a greater volume of people and cargo at its bridges, airports and ports.

“Even in these difficult financial times, we can build wonderful infrastructure,” he concluded. His presentation was followed by a short question-and-answer session.

On this evening filled with honors and insights into infrastructure planning and renewal, WTS-GnY also hosted its 12th Annual M/W/DBE EXPO. This year’s exhibitors were Ellana, Inc., IH Engineers, P.C., Medina Consultants, Promatech, Inc. and SI Engineering, P.C. The EXPO allows firms to showcase their services.

Event volunteers: Heather Cuffel, Marie DeLucia, Sara Laughlin, Catherine Matera, and Christie Marcella.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK
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On October 15th, we will be honoring our Woman of the Year, Susan Bass Levin, Deputy Executive Director of PANY&NJ, at WTS-GnY’s Annual Dinner at Bridgewaters in the South Street Seaport.

The year to come is full of promise, and our success continues to depend on the work of our volunteers. Even if you have only an hour a week or an hour a month, we welcome – and need – your participation. The benefits of joining a WTS-GnY committee are enormous: you will find opportunities to network, learn new skills and make lasting friendships.

Thank you for your participation in WTS-GnY. Strengthening this important organization can only occur through the hard work of our dedicated members.

Jenny Kapelyan
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SAVE THE DATES

Sixth Annual Golf Outing
Friday, June 12, 2009
Split Rock Golf Course
Pelham, NY

Annual Awards Dinner
Thursday, October 15, 2009
at Bridgewaters
South Street Seaport

Susan Bass Levin
PANY&NJ Deputy Executive Director
Woman of the Year
Embracing Diversity

BY FELICIA JONES

This year WTS-GNY celebrated its 4th Annual Diversity Professional Development Conference on March 20th at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA) headquarters at 2 Broadway. The conference’s theme was “A Strategic Look at the Future.” The conference consisted of three interesting workshops, ranging from Creating Opportunities in these Challenging Times, Workforce Development Trends and Looking at Globalization as the New Diversity. All the speakers represented diverse backgrounds and provided a wealth of knowledge to our members, who were eager to listen to the experiences, lessons and insights learned along the way in their careers.

The featured speakers included Joan Dupont, P.E., NYSDOT Regional Director; Linda Kleinbaum, MTA Deputy Executive Director of Administration; Michael Garner, MTA Chief Diversity Officer; Felice Farber, Manager, General Contractors Association and WTS-GNY Immediate Past President; Lorrinda Gray Davis, Perini Construction; Leonardo Vasquez, Program Director and Professor and Executive Education Director, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University; Sasha Durcan, Phoenix Constructors, JV, Manager of Sustainability for the WTC Transportation Hub Project; Sherry Harrington, MTA Metro-North Railroad (MNR) Assistant Vice President, Operation Services; Stacey Hodge, NYCDOT Director of the Office of Freight Mobility; Deborah Wathen-Finn, WTS International and WTS-GNY Advisory Board Member; Susan Hayes, Cauldwell Wingate President and CEO; Patricia Lancaster, President of Lancaster Group; and keynote speaker Jane Chmielinski, AECOM Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Officer. WTS-GNY Diversity Co-Chairs Cheryl George and Felicia Jones moderated the first and second workshops, respectively.

The first workshop kicked off with speaker Felice Farber, who discussed the opportunities and chal-...
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lenges raised by the federal stimulus package and how this funding will affect the construction workforce, small businesses and M/W/DBEs in an economic downturn. Joan Dupont expanded on the U.S. economy and the fiscal crisis that New York State is facing in developing new revenue streams, maintaining current transportation services and funding for future capital projects. Linda Kleinbaum furthered this discussion through explanations of MTA’s opportunities at this time.

Workshop II provided a unique perspective on the changes and trends in the workforce. It identified growth sectors such as green jobs and women in nontraditional jobs in the railroad industry. Sherry Harrington spoke about her career and experiences at MNR. She encouraged WTS members to think about pursuing a nontraditional career at MNR and said that the opportunities for women in the railroad industry are limitless.

The theme of the third workshop was “A Global Perspective: Witnessing the Impact Change.” Stacey Hodge gave a presentation about China’s accelerated growth in the transportation industry. While visiting China, Stacey witnessed significant economic and social changes among the Chinese people.

The second half of this workshop featured four exceptional panelists, who are leaders in their industry. Their topic was “Globalization as the New Diversity.” The speakers discussed their trip to Israel through the Project Interchange program. During the trip, the group evaluated different ideas and practices that the workforce used in integrating diversity concepts. In Israel, women fill a substantial number of leadership roles, as opposed to the United States. The majority of the audience was intrigued and surprised by the panelists’ findings. The panelists concluded that some of the practices pertaining to diversity could be applied in the United States. WTS members were very satisfied with the program and would like the chapter to provide more events such as this one. Some members voiced the opinion that “these conferences provide valuable information and serve as a resource in assisting and in preparing [us] for today and tomorrow.”

*Event volunteers:* Sharon Barnes, Iris Berman, Marie DeLucia, Cheryl George, Alicia Hamilton-Young, Felicia Jones, and Hollie Wells.
New Jersey and the Stimulus Act

BY JEAN LAIRD

The writer is the WTS-GNY Programs Chair (NJ) and Senior Project Engineer, Structures Design for the New Jersey Turnpike Authority.

Following WTS-GNY’s mission, to keep members abreast of legislation and trends that will have an impact on the transportation industry, the NJ Programs Committee organized the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – Stimulating NJ’s Economy” in Hamilton, NJ, on March 24th. American Society of Highway Engineers (ASHE) Southern NJ Chapter joined WTS-GNY in hosting the event. The dinner program included an informative presentation and thought-provoking panel discussion with representatives from New Jersey transportation agencies on how the ARRA will help the state’s economy. The panel featured Dennis Merida, FHWA’s NJ Division Administrator; David Kuhn, NJDOT’s Executive Director of Capital Investment Strategy; Peter Garino, NJ Transit’s Chief of Capital Programming and Administration, and Mary K. Murphy, NJTPA’s Executive Director, who also acted as moderator. The panel addressed an audience of more than 70 professionals, including members of both organizations, about the challenges and opportunities in administering the stimulus act. The evening ended with a question-and-answer session.

Event volunteers: Kashfia Billah, Liza Betz, Susan Boone, Helene Bowman, Beth DeAngelo, Jenny Kapelyan, Polina Knaster, Jean Laird, Danielle Pinkus, Susan Richardson.

Bus Rapid Transit: Helping To Move NJ

BY KASHFIA BILLAH

The writer is WTS-GNY Vice President (NJ) and a Project Manager for Michael Baker Corporation.

With Princeton University’s Prospect House garden as a beautiful backdrop, WTS-GNY’s NJ Programs Committee joined the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) on April 22nd to host “Transit Signal Priority for Express Bus and Bus Rapid Transit in New Jersey.” The event was comprised of an afternoon technical session at McCormick Hall followed by dinner and a presentation at the Prospect House. After the hour-long technical presentation, attendees spent some time networking before the dinner. The program opened up with introductory remarks from Kashfia Billah, WTS-GNY Vice President (NJ), followed by Gordon Meth, President, ITE-MET Section. The evening’s featured speaker, NJDOT Commissioner Steve Dils, spoke about the state’s transportation initiatives in light of the current economic situation. Chris Hayden, Principal of Cambridge Systematics, discussed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Systems. About 120 professionals and members of both organizations attended the event. Beth DeAngelo, WTS-GNY NJ Programs Co-Chair, coordinated program arrangements with ITE.

Event volunteers: Beth DeAngelo, Kashfia Billah and Danielle Pinkus.

WTS-GNY members learned about NJDOT’s initiatives in these tough economic times and bus rapid transit (BRT) systems.
A Green New York, A Sustainable Goal

BY DANIELLA BERNETT

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

As a tribute to Earth Day, WTS-GNY hosted a timely panel discussion on sustainability at Club 101 on April 29th. Sasha Durcan, Sustainability Manager for Phoenix Constructors, JV, served as the moderator.

The esteemed panel featured Audrey Heffernan, Chief of Environmental and Sustainability Services at MTA Capital Construction; Ryan Russo, NYCDOT Assistant Commissioner of Traffic Management; Paul Krekeler, GreenLITES Program Manager for NYSDOT; and Julie Stein Kaplan, Director of Office of Stormwater Management Planning, NYCDEP’s Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis.

The panelists strove to highlight how state and New York City green initiatives are seeking to improve quality of life and reduce our carbon footprint to benefit the environment, while in the long term saving on energy and construction costs.

Paul Krekeler gave an overview of NYSDOT’s GreenLites program, which is modeled on the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED certification system and the University of Washington’s Greenroads initiative.

“GreenLites is intended to change the culture of NYSDOT to make designers consider sustainable items to improve our transportation infrastructure. It is a self-certification program.

“GreenLites is used to measure environmental sustainability and performance; recognize and promote environmental sustainability best practices; and identify areas where we need to improve our environmental sustainability practices.”

He said that project designs are evaluated for over 150 possible sustainable practices in five categories: sustainable sites; water quality; materials and resources; energy and atmosphere; and innovation/unlisted. The program has four certification levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Evergreen. The program assigns points, based on the number of sustainable elements incorporated into a project’s design. Projects are awarded according to the points accumulated.

“NYSDOT has done a little over 100 projects under the GreenLites program, especially since the stimulus package was passed.” Krekeler went on to give some project examples, including the Belgium Bridge replacement and reuse. The department saved the old structure by taking it offsite to refurbish and then putting it on a county highway. Another project was the Bronx River Greenway, which created a pedestrian and bike pathway where once urban blight and unsafe environmental conditions ruled.

From the state’s efforts, the discussion moved on to what NYCDOT is doing to make the city greener. Paul Russo focused on the department’s Street Design Implementation and Innovation program; pedestrian safety programs and projects; bicycle programs; and traffic planning. He stressed that at NYCDOT safety is of paramount importance.

“Sustainable design and construction has a lot of crossover benefits,” Russo pointed out. He sought to illustrate his ideas further by citing such projects as Madison Square, Broadway Boulevard, Pearl Street Plaza in DUMBO, Brooklyn, and Grand Street in Manhattan. All the projects were aimed at creating pedestrian- and bike-friendly spaces citywide, as well as to calm traffic.

Julie Stein Kaplan provided insight into the NYCDEP’s Office of Stormwater Management. Lots and site development; drainage and public and private sewers; and treatment of stormwater runoff are areas that fall under the office’s purview. Kaplan discussed the Staten Island Bluebelt Program, which decentralizes approaches to stormwater. The program takes stormwater from lots and sidewalks to detention basins. “It’s been a great success. We saved millions in stormwater infrastructure. Now, [NYCDEP] is working with the departments of Design and Construction and Parks to bring Bluebelt to Queens.” Springfield Gardens in Queens is a proposed Bluebelt site at Springfield Lake.

Kaplan also noted that NYCDEP has a tax rebate program for green roof projects at city schools. She said that the School Construction Authority is a leader in stormwater best management practices (BMP). Another initiative is blue roofs, which slowly release water from rooftops to reduce peak surges and save on energy costs.

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Audrey Heffernan rounded out the evening by presenting the transit aspect, which is essential in any debate on sustainability and green design. She serves as MTA Capital Construction’s representative on the agency’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability. The commission has made a series of recommendations. However, the agency does not qualify for any energy stimulus aid because it would require a state match. However, with a new administration in Washington, she said that “we have an opportunity to propel a new green economy.”

Event volunteers: Sara Laughlin, Heather Cuffel, Marie DeLucia, Catherine Matera, Elizabeth Marcantonio, Christie Marcella, and Kimberly Wagner.

How To Get LinkedIn To WTS
BY SARAH KAUFMAN

The writer is the WTS-GNY Young Professionals Committee Co-Chair and a Project Coordinator, Emerging and Intelligent Transportation Systems, at MTA New York City Transit.

WTS-GNY has developed a LinkedIn group for chapter members to network, communicate and learn from like-minded transportation professionals in the Greater New York City region. With more than 36 million members worldwide, this professional site will assist WTS professionals in job searches, collaboration, and expanding trusted networks through career listings, discussion boards, and peer introductions.

A LinkedIn account is required to participate. The site is free to use. The group may be accessed by visiting www.linkedin.com and searching for WTS in the Groups section, or by visiting http://www.linkedin.com/e/vgh/1828322/. No member will be automatically added to the Group. You must request to join from the Group’s site.

The Young Professionals Start Things Off Right!
BY JULIA KERSON

The writer is a Leadership Fellow in the Deputy Executive Director’s Office at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The WTS-GNY Young Professionals Committee invited young professionals from across the region to come and say hello at its kick-off Happy Hour at Social on 8th Avenue in Manhattan on April 16th. The event drew graduate students and professionals from Parsons Brinkerhoff, Eng-Wong Taub, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ), as well as many others. With over 30 members and non-members in attendance, the event can only be described as a success. Men and women studying and working in the transportation field met to have a few cocktails and talk to people with similar interests. “There were dozens of women (and men) in their twenties and thirties representing various New York-area organizations and transit career paths. It’s nice to know that transportation is inviting fresh thinking and that these new thinkers are swapping ideas,” said Kelly Ann West of PANYNJ.

The Young Professionals Committee is a new addition to WTS-GNY. Led by Sarah Kaufman of New York City Transit (NYCT) and Julia Kerson of PANYNJ, it has already added a number of events to the chapter’s calendar. Beth Gordon, the committee’s secretary and New Jersey Chair, works tirelessly to ensure that young professionals from New Jersey have the opportunity to participate. Keep an eye out for Beth’s Mario Kart tournament to be held in Hoboken this fall! New York Chair Gretchen Minneman, also of PANYNJ, has striven to reach out to undergraduates and graduates in transportation-related industries region-wide. Leah Flax, a recent and welcome addition to the committee, has encouraged professionals to attend the upcoming Speed Networking event. Under the guidance of Maria Garcia, WTS-GNY Director-at-Large, the Young Professionals Committee has been able to quickly integrate itself into the WTS family. The chapter looks forward to seeing more from the committee in the near future.

Learn more about the Young Professionals Committee on the chapter’s website.

From left: Julia Kerson, Gretchen Minneman, Leah Flax, Sarah Kaufman and Beth Gordon.
### Program Note

WTS-GNY joined ASHE Southern New Jersey and Construction Industry Advancement Program of NJ on February 26th to host a dinner meeting and presentation in East Windsor, NJ, on "Route 52 Causeway Replacement Contract B." The project is comprised of a two-mile connection between Somers Point and Ocean City, NJ. It is one of the largest transporation projects undertaken by the NJ Department of Transportation.
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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Port Authority of NY & NJ

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