The Past – A Stepping Stone to Future Success

BY DANIELLA BERNETT

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

WTS-GNY’s Annual Meeting and 13th M/W/DBE Expo, which was held on January 22nd at Club 101, was a pleasant way for members to reconnect after the holidays and set the stage for the year ahead. 2010 promises to be truly memorable, for not only is the chapter welcoming the new 2010-2012 board, but it is also launching a year-long celebration of its 30th Anniversary.

The evening began with a changing of the guard as Jenny Kapelyan turned over the reins to new WTS-GNY President Marcia Shapiro, who, in turn, introduced the 2010-2012 board. “It is an honor for all of us to take on the leadership of the Greater New York Chapter as we kick off our 30th Anniversary,” Marcia said. She outlined WTS-GNY’s roster of upcoming programs.

“Our goal, however, is not just to look back, but to continue to evolve as an organization. I hope to broaden our membership by attracting professionals who support transportation through their expertise in finance, energy policy, technology and other specialties.” She noted that the Young Professionals Committee has been a great way to spread the word about the benefits provided by WTS. “I hope to focus our outreach this year on increasing our diversity in ethnicity, race and gender.”

To this end, Marcia called on members and guests, as well as the public agencies and consulting firms that have supported WTS over the years, to join the chapter’s 30th Anniversary Challenge of pledging to support 10 additional members this year. She pointed out that the return on their investment means a great deal and is evidenced in the chapter’s professional development, Mentoring and leadership training program opportunities, which are free to members. Meanwhile, WTS-GNY’s events provide “unparalleled access to industry and government leaders.” In addition, she noted that they will be helping to support scholarships and reduced memberships for young women pursuing degrees in transportation engineering, planning and related fields.

What better way to highlight WTS-GNY’s...
success as an organization than to make the presentations for the 2009 Member of the Year, Rosa M. Parks Diversity Award and Employer of the Year. WTS-GNY this year also introduced a new award for Innovative Transportation Solutions. Amy Kaufman, 2008’s Member of the Year, started off the proceedings by introducing Linda Travis, WTS-GNY Director-At-Large, as the 2009 recipient.

“Linda embodies the can-do spirit of volunteering,” Amy said. “With a career in the transportation industry that spans 21 years – seven with Metro-North Railroad (MNR) and 14 years with MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) – she is [thoroughly committed] to improving public transit in the New York-New Jersey metro area.” Linda was the first woman in MNR’s history to hold the title of general foreman in the Mechanical Dept. Later, she earned a master’s degree in transportation engineering at the City College of New York Graduate Center. She was subsequently hired as a planner in NYCT’s Operations Planning Division. Her climb up the career ladder led Linda to the position of contract administrator in the Material Division and to a role as a customer service coordinator in the Traffic Checking Operations unit, where she remains today.

Linda joined WTS in 1990 and has been selected to chair every committee, except Membership. “With her dedication, determination and flare, Linda became an advocate and then a leader of the Mentoring program, which as she says, ‘touches so many lives.’ She has an unconventional approach, which can open up pathways most other people don’t see.

“I am proud to have worked with Linda on committees and presently on the Greater New York chapter’s board.”

With innate grace and quiet humility, Linda stepped up to accept this well-deserved honor. “How sweet it is to receive this award.

“My work with WTS is among the most personally gratifying things I do with my time. Each experience – good, bad or indifferent – teaches me something I would otherwise not have learned.” She said that meetings, programs and committees all provide opportunities to network; exposure to leaders; and a chance to both learn and teach by example.

“Specifically,” Linda noted, “the WTS-GNY Mentoring program has provided some of the richest rewards imaginable. By working with others, in teams, all sincerely interested in the betterment of others to follow, I have received benefits both unanticipated and immeasurable. The practical value of real work experiences, when applied to one’s job, no matter how great, pales by comparison to the magnitude of the contribution to the Greater Good.”

The Member of the Year Award was followed by a presentation for the Rosa Parks Diversity Award. Felicia Jones, the 2008 recipient, bestowed this year’s award on Maria Garcia, Transportation Analyst for in the Regional Transportation Planning Group at the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC). A transportation professional with 23 years of multimodal experience, she began her career at the NYS Department of Transportation and pursued a bachelor of science in architecture by attending night classes at the New York Institute of Technology. Maria received her degree in 1991.

With infectious enthusiasm, a zest for life and a drive to succeed, Maria has made many contributions to the chapter. Between 2005 and 2010, she served as Treasurer, Job Bank Chair and Director-At-Large, and she was responsible for this year’s W/M/DBE Expo. While serving on the WTS-GNY board, Maria revitalized the Young Professionals Committee. She is an alumna of the 2010 WTS Leadership for the 21st Century: People, Policy & Politics program. In addition, she has been elected to the WTS International Board.

“I want to thank my WTS family for all of the support, the nurturing and the challenges that they have provided...
to me, and for the opportunities to develop and define my career path and professional goals,” Maria said.

“Diversity for me is the celebration of the color of life. Having been nurtured in a multi-racial and bilingual environment and being accepted among different socio-economic groups, I have always been comfortable with people, regardless of whether they were just like me or not.

“It was not until I began my professional career that I understood the existence of subtle, overt and widespread prejudicial treatment based on gender, race or pay-grade. I also learned that being a ‘woman’ can present a disadvantage in a male-dominated field, but being a ‘woman of color’ can be even more complicated.

“My years of work in the public sector have revealed an under-representation of women in [this area of] the transportation industry. I would encourage greater outreach to women to retain those who have chosen to work in the public sector and to reduce the public/private sector disparity. Helping companies and agencies to better understand the definition of a diverse workforce is a career goal that I continue to pursue.”

“I have always advocated,” Maria concluded, “that men should play a role in the advancement of women in this industry.

Therefore, I encourage men to be part of the process. Men and women working together can only promote a better situation.”

NYCDOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan next stepped up to the podium to present the Employer of the Year award to George Pierson, CEO of Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB). The company has a unique relationship with WTS. PB has made a long-standing commitment to support the organization and women in the industry. “It is very gratifying for me,” Pierson remarked, “to be here in PB’s hometown to accept this award.”

The final award was for Innovative Transportation Solutions and was given to the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) for its “Green Light for Midtown,” a pilot program that sought to reduce traffic congestion throughout Midtown Manhattan via targeted improvements on Broadway. The program focused on Times and Herald squares.

“I’m proud and deeply honored to receive this award,” Janette Sadik-Khan said. “It takes a village to make such a project happen and it paid off in ‘green’ dividends. The project tapped into efforts to implement the sustainable policies outlined by Mayor Bloomberg in PlaNYC.”

After riding upon this wave of successes, the evening wended its way to a close with a keynote address by MTA CEO and Chairman Jay Walder, who extolled WTS-GNY’s achievements.

“I have been involved with WTS since the beginning of my career, a few years after the chapter was founded. WTS has always been a voice for women in a male-dominated industry. I’ve seen tremendous change since the chapter was created 30 years ago.

“It’s terrific to see that there are more women in engineering and operations, positions that once were solely [the realm of men].”

He went on to discuss his experiences as the head of London Transport and his current efforts to address the MTA’s dire fiscal problems, as well as his goals for the agency.

On this night filled with honors and insights into the world of transportation over the last 30 years, WTS-GNY also hosted its 13th Annual M/W/DBE EXPO. This year’s EXPO supporters and exhibitors included AI Engineers, Inc.; B. Thayer Associates; Crescent Consulting; Eng-Wong, Taub & Associates; Len Schwendinger Light Projects LTD; NYC Small Business Services; Robinson Aerial Surveys Inc.; and Peter Buckley Group.

**Event volunteers:** Heather Cuffel; Maria Garcia; Jenny Kapelyan; Sara Laughlin; and Elizabeth Marcantonio.

Leni Schwendinger Light Projects LTD and Eng-Wong Taub & Associates were among the EXPO exhibitors. Far right: Maria Garcia, WTS-GNY Volunteer Coordinator and WTS International Board member.

From left: Campbell Rightmyer, Monica Paciorek and Anjuli Upadhyay, all of Hatch Mott MacDonald; WTS-GNY Director-At-Large Beth DeAngelo; and Grace Baird of Parsons Brinckerhoff.
and our goal is to end the year with an additional five. By increasing membership and attracting new corporate partners, we will ensure WTS-GNY’s continued financial stability.

When I began my term as President, a number of members indicated that they had offered to become a volunteer but were never contacted. To remedy this, I asked last year’s Member of the Year, Maria Garcia, to serve as Volunteer Coordinator, a new role in our chapter. Now, both old and new members have a single point of contact to find volunteer opportunities that reflect their interests and availability. Maria’s contact information is on our chapter website and we will soon be posting information on areas most in need of volunteers.

Improving Member Services
Quarterly Programs with well-known speakers discussing important trends, Professional Development activities, the Mentoring Program, Networking Events in these challenging economic times, the benefits of membership are more critical than ever. Our goal is to provide member services that are relevant and affordable. For example, our 5th Annual Diversity and Professional Development Program, held in March at a venue graciously made available by MTA, was open to both members and non-members. Scheduled as a breakfast, the event featured a panel discussing “Surviving in a Tough Economy.” We are planning additional breakfast programs at locations in Westchester County and northern New Jersey to serve members who cannot attend programs in Manhattan or in the evening, as well as free or low-cost social events where members can meet informally.

Whatever you do, don’t miss our BLOWOUT 30th Anniversary Party in June! This event will take place at a location near the High Line, a 1.45-mile New York City park built on a section of the former elevated freight railroad along the lower West Side of Manhattan.

What are you looking for from WTS-GNY? Contact me and let me know!

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

By Julia Kerson

The writer is the WTS-GNY Treasurer and a Transportation Programs Analyst for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ).

With over 70 attendees and a panel of public- and private-sector leaders, outgoing Diversity Committee Chair Cheryl George kicked off the 5th Annual WTS-GNY Diversity and Professional Development Program at MTA headquarters on March 19th. During this milestone event, panelists spoke to the enthusiastic audience about the plethora of workforce development issues facing the transportation industry in this tough economy. They offered both advice and lessons learned.

Moderator Alexandra DePrete Tosi, Principal Associate at Gilbert Tweed Associates, provided an overview of the economic climate and the challenges that come with it. Getting right to the heart of the issue, Alexandra asked panelist Veronique Hakim, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of MTA Capital Construction, how the “do more with less” mantra has impacted the MTA specifically and the industry overall. Emphasizing the role of leadership, Hakim noted that we can no longer throw money at a problem, that it takes “ingenuity, tenacity, and hard work” to get things done in this environment.

The notion of strong leadership quickly emerged as the theme of the day. Wendy W. Wark, Director of Employee Relations and Diversity at Metro-North Railroad (MNR), stressed the need for management’s support in promoting diversity in the workplace. Furthermore, Wark highlighted diversity as a cornerstone of creative problem-solving. To this end, she urged industry leaders to be open to multiple perspectives. Panelist Luis Lugo, Senior Vice President, Operations and Business Development of the PACO Group, expanded upon this idea by pointing out that a diversity of skills is needed in transportation. He underscored the importance of being our own “career managers,” as well as identifying the skills we are interested in and working to develop them.

Cheryl McKissack, President and CEO of McKissack and McKissack, rounded out the panel with a different point of view. She shared the incredibly moving story of how her company has overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges by thinking strategically and making employee morale and work/life balance a priority.

The panelists’ final comments summed up the discussion and left the audience with food for thought.

- Hakim: “Even in troubled times, there are economic opportunities if you market yourself correctly.”
- Wark: “Know your organization’s mission. To be successful, especially in a tough economy, you must demonstrate and market how what you do drives the organization’s mission.”
- Lugo: “Diversity is critically important in an organization and I understand that it is a very sensitive subject. However, I believe that it’s not where you come from that is most important – it’s who you become. You have to be the best at what you do, especially in these times. It’s what you give to an organization that will make you successful. Focus on excellence.”
- McKissack: “The cycle that we’re in right now, the state of the economy, is something that we’ve been through many times before. The bottom line is that we always come out if it.”

In closing, WTS-GNY President Marcia Shapiro recognized the Diversity Committee’s new co-chairs Hollie Wells, a Project Administrator at MTA New York City Transit, and Sharon Barnes, a Computer Training Manager at MTA Bridges & Tunnels. The chapter looks forward to both Hollie’s and Sharon’s visions and commitment to continuing and broadening Diversity Committee initiatives.

For members interested in joining the Diversity Committee, please contact Sharon Barnes at sbarnes@MTABT.org or Hollie Wells at hollie.wells@nyct.com.

Event volunteers: Elizabeth Frederico; Chelsea Gleis; Pippa Brashear; and Allison Davis.
**The Bus Has Left the Stop**

**BY BETH DEANGELO**

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

Attending the “Catching the Next Ride: The Potential for Regional Bus Rapid Transit Systems” presentation at the NYU Wagner Rudin Center, on February 24th, was like being at the curb at just the right time to make the bus. While attendees learned about what has been done with bus rapid transit (BRT) systems in major cities nationwide, more focus was placed on the future of the transit mode and the visions of key transportation leaders. This event, presented in association with the WTS-GNY Chapter, provided an overview of state-of-the-art BRT systems in the Americas.

While the list of presenters would consume this entire page, there were a couple of standout speakers, who also happen to be members and avid WTS supporters. They included Therese McMillan, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and Janette Sadik-Khan, NYCDOT Commissioner. McMillan pointed out that all modes are critical to making our transportation systems function well. With BRT, for example, the service’s success relies heavily on the highway system. In addition, BRTs typically connect users to other transit systems. She credited New York City for its achievements breaking down the walls that often exist between the various transportation agencies with perceived conflicts of interest.

Sadik-Khan shared the City’s success with innovative traffic solutions and its BRT system, branded as SBS—Select Bus Service. SBS is a joint initiative of NYCDOT and MTA New York City Transit. What’s next for SBS? The First Avenue/Second Avenue corridor. This new BRT expansion will become operational in October 2010. The current bus service in this corridor, the M15, has the highest ridership of any of the MTA’s bus routes. As part of a citywide effort to improve service along major bus corridors, the system will use low-floor, three-door buses and off-board fare collection for quicker loading and better ease of use; dedicated bus lanes to reduce travel times and increase reliability; and provide improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. This BRT project is being implemented in two phases. Additional information about the SBS program is available at [www.nyc.gov/html/brt/html/home/home.htm](http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/html/home/home.htm).

So the secret is out about BRT. The systems are in demand, having been recognized as a cost-effective means of providing high quality regional transportation, offering alternatives to transportation agencies that are more affordable than the expensive investments needed for fixed-guideway systems. BRT projects now comprise a significant portion of the FTA’s Small Starts program funding.

WTS-GNY would like to thank the Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management at New York University for leading this program. It was a rousing topic, as evidenced by the large gathering and the stature of the industry leaders in attendance.

**Event volunteers:** Beth DeAngelo and Amy Kaufman.
Bridging the Gap

BY KASHFIA BILLAH

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

The WTS-GNY NJ Program Committee organized an exciting panel discussion on “State of the Art in Bridges” in Hamilton, NJ, on March 3rd. More than 70 professionals from various public agencies and private companies attended. The dinner program included informative presentations from New Jersey bridge professionals and representatives from various organizations on such topics as accelerated bridge construction; inspection technology; what’s on the horizon for bridges; and the results of an international scan on bridge safety and serviceability. The featured panelists included Helene Roberts, FHWA NJ Division Infrastructure Team Leader; Jean Laird, New Jersey Turnpike Authority, Senior Project Engineer; Harry Capers, Arora & Associates Vice President and Corporate Bridge Engineer; and Richard Dunne, NJDOT Executive Manager, Structural Engineering, who also served as moderator. The program ended with a question-and-answer session.

Event volunteers: Helene Roberts, Beth DeAngelo, Jean Laird, Nevin Garbaglu, Kaelyn Sutter, Nancy Santoro and Kashfia Billah.

WTS members and non-members learned about various aspects of bridge construction, inspection, safety and serviceability.

1+1 Membership Event!

Thursday, May 27, 2010 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Bring your associates who would be interested in enjoying the benefits of WTS membership to this networking event!
Traffic Bar & Lounge
986 Second Ave. (between 52nd & 53rd Streets)
New York, NY 10022
Tel: 212 813-1595

This event is free and open to all! (cash bar)

Members: If your guest joins the WTS GNY chapter, you will be eligible to win a trip to the 2011 International Conference in San Francisco.

Advanced registration required.
Please RSVP by May 17, 2010.

For current news, information and programs, or to join WTS, please visit our website: www.wtsinternational.org/greater_ny
Making Sustainability a Reality

BY DANIELLA BERNETT

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

As a tribute to Earth Day, WTS-GNY holds its annual panel discussion on sustainability in April. This year’s event, which was conducted on April 21st at Club 101, was more special than in the past. The chapter chose to recognize its 1991-2009 Employer of the Year Award winners as part of its year-long 30th Anniversary celebrations.

WTS-GNY President Marcia Shapiro noted that these previous winners, like the chapter’s corporate partners, have demonstrated an unstinting commitment to helping women succeed in the transportation industry. These employers included Stone & Webster; URS; Parsons Brinckerhoff; LK Comstock; Jacobs (Sverdrup); Urbahn Architects (formerly Urbahn Associates); NJ Transit; Ammann-Whitney; MTA Bridges & Tunnels; NJ Dept. of Transportation; Howard Stein-Hudson; Port Authority of New York & New Jersey; New York City Transit; Sam Schwartz, LLC; Lower Manhattan Development Corp.; Michael Baker Corp.; New Jersey Turnpike Authority; AECOM; and NYC Dept. of Transportation (NYCDOT).

Marcia presented a special certificate to the 10 firms represented at the meeting.

She then turned over the podium to Mary Ameen, Director of External Affairs for the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), who served as the moderator for an insightful discussion on “Sustainable Urban Development: Innovations in the New York Metro Area and Beyond.”

The panel featured Lou Calgano, NYCDOT Assistant Deputy Commissioner; Jeffrey Perlman, NJTPA Principal Planner, Regional Planning; and Marcia Bystryn, Executive Director at the New York League of Conservation Voters.

“This notion of sustainability is something that is getting a lot of attention now, but it is not a new concept,” Ameen pointed out in her introduction. “Transportation is a huge part of sustainability. One-third of the impacts on climate change come from transportation.”

The panelists, in turn, strove to highlight how New York City’s and New Jersey’s 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 costs and promoting smart growth.

Jeffrey Perlman, who manages NJTPA’s climate change research activities, said that North Jersey and New Jersey as a whole have a lot of infrastructure that was built a long time ago. “Unfortunately, the state’s transportation investments in the past contributed to sprawl. Transportation now [accounts for] one-third of
all greenhouse gases emissions in New Jersey. It falls to NJTPA to change the way investments are made.”

To this end, Perlman explained that the agency has formed a climate change working group to conduct a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory. NJTPA’s goals are to do a better job of integrating transportation into the community and in land-use planning; mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; advancing and adapting strategies to address climate change; and incorporating sustainability into the next generation of transportation projects. He said that it is important to get counties and municipalities involved in every level of this process.

From New Jersey’s efforts, the discussion moved on to what NYCDOT is doing to make New York greener. Lou Calgano gave an overview of the City’s Alternative Fuel Program and Emission reduction strategies. Initially, the program has been expanded to privately owned fleets. These include taxis and delivery trucks. A public-private partnership approach has been implemented using economic incentives to convert vehicles to alternative fuels or to install emission reduction technology. As examples, he talked about hybrid-electric and battery-electric cars, as well as a new program to address emissions from ferry service in New York Harbor.

Marcia Bystryn rounded out the evening by examining the politics of sustainability. Her organization endeavors to elect strong environmental candidates to office and holds them accountable. “The League sets an agenda for elected officials at every level of government. This year [its efforts center on] clean and renewable energies, smart growth, brownfields and mass transit, which are all designed to advance the economic agenda of the state.”

The League works closely with the transportation community, both with agencies and advocacy groups, because it “believes that mass transit is vital to the sustainability of the region’s environment and economy.”

However, she acknowledged that the environmental community is very heterogeneous. “The problem is that infrastructure projects are not a major part of their efforts because, in theory, they impinge on other values, such as open space.” But Bystryn said that her goal was to build the biggest possible political action committee to stress the importance of protecting the environment, while simultaneously addressing economic realities.

**Event volunteers:** Allison Davis, Chelsea Gleiss, Stephanie Camay and Elizabeth Marcantonio, Elizabeth Federico, Jignasa Ray, Kimberly Wagner Patterson, Pippa Brashear.
A Salute to WTS-GNY’s Employers of the Year

In honor of WTS-GNY’s 30th Anniversary, the April 21st Quarterly Program on Sustainable Transport included a recognition of previous winners of the Employer of the Year award. We would like to thank these employers for their contributions to the advancement of women in transportation.

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<td>2010</td>
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PHOTOS
1: Richard Aquino (URS)
2: Thomas Prendergast (NYCT)
3: Bernie McNeilly (Parsons Brinckerhoff)
4: Janet Campbell (Sam Schwartz, LLC)
5: Natale Barranco (Urbahn Architects)
6: Laura Toole (Michael Baker Corp.)
7: Marianne Stock (NJ Transit)
8: Joe Pulicare (AECOM)
9: Chelsea Gleis (Howard Stein-Hudson)
10: Lori Ardito (NYCDOT)
A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

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

Kirit Desai
Kirit Desai PE PC

Anjuli Upadhyay
Hatch Mott MacDonald

Crisnna Lado
Port Authority of NY & NJ

Trent Lethco
Arup

Sonia Axter
ULLICO Investment Advisors

Roxana Choe
Landman Corsi Ballaine & Ford

Kin-Fung Lam
MTA Capital Construction

Elisabeth Wooton
New York University-Wagner

Stephanie Camay
URS

Grace Baird
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Lori Schwarz
Zetlin & DeChiara LLP

Nancy Zou
Melissa McInerney

Allison de Cerreno
Port Authority of NY & NJ

Kenneth Bobetsky
David Evans and Associates Inc.

Penny Eickemeyer
University Transportation Research Center

Janice Wells
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA

Karen Slout
URS

Sue Wells
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Giselle Fernandez
MTA Metro-North Railroad

Caroline Drucker
AECOM

Ellie Bereznitsky
ELLANA Inc.

Georgina Mendoza
ELLANA Inc.

Giselle Fernandez
MTA Metro-North Railroad

Sue Kestner
David Evans and Associates Inc.

David Evans and Associates Inc.

Georgina Mendoza
ELLANA Inc.

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