

Houston EViConnect

March 2023



From Our President

Spring is finally here! After some of the coldest weather we've had in years, as well as lots of rain, I know that each of you are more than ready to enjoy our beautiful spring weather. It is always refreshing to witness all the trees and plants as they begin to blossom. This is also the time for us to reflect and remember how special our membership is in the Houston Chapter of EWI as we focus on Connections, Careers, and

Community.

Executive Appreciation Night is next month on April 13, 2023, at the beautiful The Ballroom at Bayou Place. Our Fundraising and Program Committees have been hard at work to plan a very special evening for our executives, representatives, and guests. I look forward to celebrating and recognizing our executives.

This is also the night that we come together to raise funds to support our local students who are going to college for the first time or back to college to finish up their degree. With a successful fundraiser, we are able to support our EWISP and ASIST scholarship programs, literacy initiatives, and other philanthropic events. Through the help of each and everyone's contributions, we can continue to enhance the lives of so many young people as well as adults.

The Houston Chapter held their first March to Membership reception on March 23 at the Hyatt Regency Downtown. Thanks to the hard work of Cindy Baker, representing Black Haw Group; LaTonya Perez, representing The Rose; the generosity of the Hyatt Regency, and many others that made this such a successful membership drive. Looking forward to welcoming several new firms/representatives.

This is your friendly reminder to complete and return your Interest Survey by April 28. Your input is extremely important. It assists the Nominating Committee with recommendations for the Leadership Team, the incoming President to select committee chairs, and the representatives be assigned to committees they are most interested in. **It would be wonderful if EVERYONE returned their survey. I know you can do it!**

I read the following on Facebook. I found it to be very inspirational - hope you do also!

**For every sunset, there is a sunrise;
For every dream that ends, one is born;
For every door that closes, another one opens;
For every love that ends, another begins;
For every end, this is a new beginning;
For each departure, there is an arrival;
For every defeat, there is victory
Nothing is ever finished, as long as there is life**

Author: Paulo Coelho

If you want to go fast, go alone, and if you want to go far, go together - GO T-E-A-M

Wishing everyone a Happy Easter!

Kay



2022-2023 Officers & Directors

President

Kay Bart
Skerl & Associates

President Elect

LaTonya Perez
The Rose

Secretary and Director-at-Large B/C/DP

Linda Petticrew
Shell Energy
Resources Company

Treasurer and Membership Director

Cindy Baker
Black Haw Group

Sergeant-at-Arms

Carole Pitts
John Daugherty, Realtors

Communications Director

Sanela Hasagic
Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam,
Inc.

Fundraising Director

Rebekah Wesley
Jackson & Company

Program Director

Debra Crabtree
Westpark Communications

Save the Date!

Thursday, April 13th

Executive Appreciation Night - The Ballroom at Bayou Place

Thursday, May 11th

Firm Night - TBD

Thursday, June 8th

Business Meeting and Past Presidents' Night - TBD

Friday and Saturday, June 23rd & 24th

TEXOMA Board Forum - Oklahoma City, OK

Thursday, July 13th

Firm Night - TBD

Thursday, August 10th

Annual Scholarship Celebration Night - Amegy Bank

Thursday, September 7th

Annual Business Meeting - TBD

Thursday, September 13th - 16th

Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting (LCAM) - Chattanooga, TN

Representative Birthdays

Shannon McNair

April 14

Martha Ceballos

April 18

Ellen Ramsey

April 21

Marilyn DeSimone

April 23

Sanela Hasagic

April 25



Company Anniversaries

The Ballroom at Bayou Place

April - 5 years

EWI of Houston Mission Statement

EWI of Houston aspires to be the premier business organization of choice for member firms and their key individuals. Recognized by the Houston community as an avenue to achieve personal and professional excellence, every activity of the Houston Chapter will fulfill at least one of the objectives of the EWI Mission Statement.

Our Strategic Goals

- To strengthen, expand, and broaden membership.
- To provide member firms with meaningful benefits.
- To actively promote education for all representatives.
- To achieve a high level of community visibility through service.

Our Mission

EWI brings together key individuals from diverse businesses for the purpose of promoting member firms, enhancing personal and professional development, and encouraging community involvement.

Our Vision

To enhance professional growth and development within a diverse group of women while empowering them to make a difference as they inspire others.

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EWI of Houston Chapter March Meeting Recap

Submitted by Shari Schiffman, representing Douglas Elliman Real Estate



What a beautiful day to host our March Meeting at Ouisie's. Each year we host a luncheon meeting to honor our Sustaining Members, our wonderful Women of Wisdom. These ladies were members of our chapter for many years and even though they've retired, they still wanted to be a part of EWI of Houston.

What better way than to become a Sustaining Member. Several of these ladies are still active on various committees. Their knowledge of EWI is an asset to our organization. We were happy to have 10 of these ladies at our luncheon.

President Kay Bart, representing Skerl & Associates, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She then called upon each Sustaining Member and encouraged each one to introduce themselves and give a brief recap of their service - when they joined, what firm(s) they worked/retired from. It was so good to hear from them and all of their fond memories of EWI.

Membership Director Cindy Baker, representing Black Haw Group, then came forward to introduce our newest member, Juliana Wathen, representing Cosmo Cool. Welcome Juliana.





Cindy then gave a brief recap of the upcoming March to Membership Mixer on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at Hyatt Regency Shula's Steak House. Each member is invited to come and is also encouraged to bring a potential new member.

SAA Carole Pitts, representing John Daugherty, Realtors, gave a heartwarming invocation. Lunch was then served consisting of a choice of Ouisie's Meatloaf, Salmon or Chicken. After lunch, we enjoyed a fabulous dessert choice of Lemon Ice Box Cake or Tres Leches.

President Elect LaTonya Perez, representing The Rose, then came up for our Door Prize Drawing. President Kay Bart thanked everyone again for coming and wished us Safe Travels.



EWI of Houston March 2023 Meeting



*Carolyn Toriggino, Sustaining Member
Cindy Joutraw, CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
Priscilla Massey, Sustaining Member*



*Kay Bart, Skerl & Associates
Shiara Cook, Guest*



*Rebekah Wesley, Jackson & Company
Jessica Witek, Velas Resorts*



*Mary Margaret Carroll, MMCarroll & Associates
Cheri Ferguson, Sustaining Member*



*Sara Waguespack, Sustaining Member
Shari Schiffman, Douglas Elliman Real Estate*



*Mary Speltz, Sustaining Member
Mary Sue Patronella, Sustaining Member*

EWI of Houston March 2023 Meeting



*Rebekah Wesley, Jackson & Company
Sara Waguespack, Sustaining Member*



*Cheri Ferguson, Sustaining Member
Debra Crabtree, Westpark Communications*



Betty Stolarski, Sustaining Member



Pat Thomas, Sustaining Member



Rene Azinger, Sustaining Member



Mary Sue Patronella, Sustaining Member

New Member Update

Submitted by *Cindy Baker*, representing *Black Haw Group*



Juliana Wathen – President and sole owner of Cosmo Cool Concepts, Inc., a destination management company located in Spring, Texas that provides transportation, team building, tours, special events, staffing, and brand ambassadors to the Greater Houston Special Events Industry. Juliana joined Cool Concepts in 2008 and purchased the company in 2021.

When asked why she wanted to join EWI Houston, Juliana stated “EWI of Houston has always been on my radar and now that I am the owner of Cosmo Cool Concepts, I want to position myself to learn from the best businesswomen Houston has to offer so that I can grow this company and serve our community.”





EWI of Houston Membership Update

As of March 21, 2023

33 Member Firms
36 Representatives

12 Sustaining Members
3 Honorary Members



Did You Know?

EWI Corporate (<https://ewiconnect.com/>) has a member only portion of the website. Here you will find a resource library, logos, documents, and lots of useful information. Please email Vicki Chapman, Director of Member Experience, (vchapman@swbc.com) for login information.

Member Mixer Recap

Submitted by Shannon McNair, The Rose

SHULAS

STEAK HOUSE

EWI of Houston's first March to Membership event was a great success. The mixer gave potential new members the opportunity to meet with existing members and board members. Potential members learned more about the members, the member firms, and the many philanthropic initiatives and professional development aspects of EWI of Houston.

The newly renovated Hyatt Regency Houston donated the food and drinks while serving as the backdrop for the mixer. Not only did they serve as an amazing host, the Hyatt Regency decided to join EWI of Houston. Cindy Baker, representing Black Haw Group and Membership Director, did a great job planning and executing such a successful March to Membership. LaTonya Perez, representing The Rose, gave a very informative and inspirational introduction to EWI.

We want to thank the potential members for attending: Diane Bart (Holthouse Interest), Rusti Banagas (Holthouse Interest), Marci Davis (Climax Portable), Catherine Erekson (Axiom Space), Jayson Garcia (Hyatt Regency Houston), Demi Welling (Senterra LLC), and all of the board and representatives who made the time to attend to share their "why" EWI.

The meeting ended with several attendees deciding to join EWI and eight door prize drawings for gorgeous Easter and Spring themed serving pieces and various gift cards generously donated by Rosanna and Myron Blalock, executive Black Haw Group.



EWI of Houston Membership Recruitment Reception



*Diane Bart, Guest
John Schafer, General Manager, Hyatt Regency
Kay Bart, Skerl & Associates*



*Holly Borham, Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty
Barbara Stokes, Amegy Bank*



*Rusti Banagas, Guest
Jan Bonugli, The Palm Restaurant
Marci Davis, Guest*



*Catherince Erekson, Guest
Kay Bart, Skerl & Associates*



Jayson Garcia, Hyatt Regency Houston



*Lana O'Neil, Guest
LaTonya Perez, The Rose
Cindy Baker, Black Haw Group*

Professional Development

Submitted by Courtney Castellanos, representing Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc.

What Inspires You #GOFORIT

What inspires you to be more than you ever thought possible?

What helps you get up every morning and go through the motions of life, even when you don't feel like it?

What enables you to recharge your batteries when you have all but burned out?

We've all been there ... *there* being any of the above scenarios. We find ourselves at a place where we need a little push to get the momentum headed in the right direction once again. We need inspiration. Let's look at different things that can offer inspiration ... hopefully giving you the tools you need to live your life to the absolute max. #GOFORIT

Friends and Family – Friends and family have the ability to inspire you to be the best you can be. Friends are often able to step into the void when a supportive family doesn't exist. You can count on friends and family to be there through good times and bad. They are there to pick you up when you fall, and ready to pat you on the back when you deserve it. Family accepts you for who you are while at the same time encouraging you to become all that you can be. #GOFORIT

Love – Love is an amazing thing! There is very little that will ignite a passion more than love. Love truly is a force to be reckoned with. Love never fails to motivate and inspire. #GOFORIT

Nature – The peace and inspiration found by spending time with nature is like none other. The simplicity and beauty experienced as one communes with nature can be refreshing, invigorating and inspiring! Nature can be experienced almost anywhere and can easily be incorporated into your everyday life. Nature can be as small as a potted plant on your desk or as large as the Amazon rain forest, and anything in between. #GOFORIT

The Arts – Music, great writing, art and even acting all have the ability to touch the soul in a very unique and individual way. Art, in its many forms, moves and inspires you. The arts provide a means for you to escape to exotic, supernatural and exciting places, discovering new worlds and new things about yourself. The arts can challenge you to think and feel differently creating an environment where inspiration meets reality, often setting the stage for change. #GOFORIT

Dreams – The dreams you have ... the ones where you strive to create a better life for yourself and those around you frequently inspire you to reach beyond yourself. Your dreams motivate you to think differently in order change the status quo. We all have dreams ... dreams to travel, to change lives, to build and create things. These dreams inspire us to grow in order to realize their fulfillment. #GOFORIT

Forgiveness – Forgiveness is a gift ... one you give to yourself even more than you give to the person who needs to be forgiven. Forgiveness releases you to move on with your life, not allowing the actions of another to hold you back. Lack of forgiveness can be a very destructive force. A true act of forgiveness inspires all who witness it and has the potential to transform the lives of all involved. #GOFORIT

Inspiration can be found in all of these things and so many more. Each of us is entirely different. The things that will inspire each of us will be individual as well. Inspiration can be found almost anywhere. There is no right or wrong. If it inspires you to be a better person, to be all that you can be ... it is a very good thing. #GO FOR IT!

PLEASE SUPPORT

EWI OF HOUSTON



RaiseRight™

Formerly ShopWithScrip

<https://www.raiseright.com>

ENROLLMENT CODE: UX7RB2FICCU8

Simply use gift cards on everyday purchases to raise funds for EWI of Houston!

Select from 750+ popular brands of gift cards and EWI of Houston receives up to 20% of your purchase at no additional charge to you!

Please contact Rebekah Wesley for further assistance.
Rebekah@jacksonandcompany.com





Notes from the Board of Directors

I. Fundraising Report – Rebekah Wesley, Jackson & Company

March Door Prizes:

- *Stone Cross* - Donated by **Michele Votano**, representing Atlantic Relation Systems. Winner: Renee Azinger
- *Four Replica LV Zipper Pouches with a Bracelet and Earrings* - Donated by **Barbara Stokes**, representing Amegy Bank. Winner: Linda Petticrew
- *VISA Gift Card* - Donated by **Cindy Joutraw**, representing CenterPoint Energy. Winner: Sara Waguespack
- *Cash Prize* – Donated by **Carolyn Noack**, Past President & WOW Member. Winner: Debra Crabtree
- *Two Beaded Necklaces & Longhorn Purse Hanger* – Donated by **Shannon McNair**, representing The Rose. Winner: Lisa Noack

Funds:

- February Door Prizes - \$435
- \$195 Cash
- \$70 Clover
- \$170 Authorize.net

II. BCDP Report

Important 2023 Dates:

Tuesday, January 3	Scholarship Application Websites Open
Friday, March 3	Chapter judge names and e-mail addresses due to Corporate Scholarship Committee
Friday, March 24	Application Submission Deadline
Wed., April 12	Chapter Judging begins
Sunday, May 7	Chapter Judging closes
Friday, May 26	Chapters Notify EWI Corporate Office of their Chapter ASIST & EWISP scholarship nominee for corporate consideration
Friday, June 23	EWI Corporate Judging Evaluation closes
Friday, July 5	EWI Corporate Office Notifies Chapter of Award Winners
Friday, August 4	For Corporate Winners, student verification of enrollment forms (VOE) must be submitted to the EWI Corporate Office for prompt payment of funds to schools prior to school starting.

III. Conventions Report

Texoma Board Forum will be held in Oklahoma City, June 23-24, 2023.

LCAM 2023 will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, from September 13- 16, 2023.

IV. Nominating Committee Report

The 2023-2024 EWI of Houston Interest Survey and Emerging Leaders Packet has been emailed out a 2nd time to all current representatives and sustaining members. The due date to return the interest survey is April 28, 2023.

Member Spotlight



The Plaza Group (TPG) is a multi-million dollar minority-owned international chemical marketing firm based in Houston, Texas. Started in 1994, we initially marketed only those chemical products produced at Texaco Refining and Marketing refineries located in El Dorado, Kansas, Delaware City, Delaware and Anacortes, Washington (Puget Sound) on an agency basis.

At The Plaza Group, our customers' problems, challenges, and needs become our own. And we are fiercely dedicated to helping our customers perform at peak condition. That's why our team of marketing and products specialists continuously monitor industry specific events, as well as other news from around the world which can impact the market.

This proactive, solution-oriented approach enables The Plaza Group to help customers prepare for product shortages, price fluctuations, or interruptions in distribution channels.

Strong financial performance in the commodity chemical industry requires solid business relationships and low cost or otherwise "special niche" operations. Our partnerships marry our supplier's strategic positions in these products with TPG's business relationships.

As we look forward, TPG will increase sales by continuing to obtain marketing rights from targeted producers in order to improve our product offerings to our current customer base. We will build on strong customer relations and only represent low-cost producers or producers who otherwise have niche positions that can supply the highest product quality required by the marketplace. We will continue to focus on the customer, providing the highest level of customer service. We will provide regular market reviews and maintain constant communication about these markets with our stakeholders.

Our goal is to become a globally recognized leader providing marketing and related services to customer and suppliers in the petrochemical and other identified industries.

The Plaza Group is a highly-motivated, sustainable team that is viewed by customers and suppliers as a vital extension to their organization's efforts to meet their own goals, providing innovative solutions. Based on this approach, our team has been awarded "Outstanding Supplier" by Huntsman Corporation. The Plaza Group was selected from over 1500 suppliers of products and services to Huntsman. In addition, we were awarded the first full "Partner" award ever given by Owens Corning (OC) as part of their "Supplier Partnership Process". This award was the result of a two-year process of working together to enable OC to respond quickly to the needs of the marketplace, with quality products that meet their customers' fitness for use criteria.

Since 2008, we have been awarded BNSF Rail Company highest honor for Product Stewardship for our efforts in protecting employees, the environment, and the public with zero tank car non-accident releases. In 2010 we were awarded a Certificate of Excellence by our customer, Vi-Jon. In 2013 we received the Eastman Supplier Excellence Award. And in 2016 we were honored to receive 3M Supplier of the Year Award and BP HCC HBE Elite Supplier Award.

2022 – 2023 Board of Directors



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Please contact Sanela Hasagic at shasagic@lan-inc.com for corrections, edits, and feedback about the newsletter. Thank you,