



The Fine Print

The Newsletter of the Maryland Public Purchasing Association, Inc.

May / June 2004

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George F. Dietsch, CPPO

As I hunt and peck on my computer during this monsoon spell that has hovered over the free state, I just know that spring has arrived. How do I know you ask; I know because Purchasing Month has come and passed. March madness has ended with the University of Connecticut taking it all and sending the Dukies back to Durham blue all over in the aftermath of the semi-final. I know that opening day has come and passed with an Oriole win over the Red Sox's Dennis Martinez. With baseball being synonymous with spring, the season is officially upon us. Another condition of spring is Golf's Master Championship at Augusta, Georgia. What a beautiful sight to see all the blooming vegetation especially while being under the spell of a continual downpour. Phil Mickelson's exciting birdie putt on the 18th hole produced a triumphant victory and to witness him putting on the customary, traditional, green jacket; you just had to know it was springtime. I could go on but I think you get the jest of springing forward of which we also lost an hour somewhere.

MPPA is also moving into spring. On an educational basis, we had a very exceptional turnout at the March general membership meeting. Approximately seventy plus members were present to network and listen attentively to our program speaker, Ms. Margy LaFond from the State of Maryland, Office of Minority Affairs. The topic was Governor Ehrlich and Lt. Governor Steele's new, minority legislative initiative. The presentation was informative and attracted an immense amount of feedback during the Q & A. The membership was so in tuned to the presentation that the time slot was not long enough to accommodate all of the input. So we did the right thing and invited Ms. Lafond to attend our November meeting. She graciously accepted the invitation and will do a return engagement to bring the membership up to date regarding the new legislation.

The May 13th General Membership meeting is also our Staff Appreciation Day. I would like to see all of our managers step up and bring your support staff to this annual event. It is our time to give thanks to those who do so much but receive very little recognition for the work that they perform.

Again, we are on the move with our meeting place, the location is Bowman's Restaurant in Carney. Check the MPPA web site for directions. In the meantime, I am going to clean up my golf clubs. I just know it's springtime.

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Eleanor Roosevelt

Baltimore County Government Buyers are Using Procurement Cards (P-Cards)

By Darla H. Herbold, CPPO, Chief Procurement Officer

Buyers using p-cards is not unique to Baltimore County, Maryland. Plenty of other purchasing departments are ahead of me on this one (Howard County for example). However, I thought an article such as this would encourage other purchasing departments to consider moving in this direction when they hear about the success of our program.

On July 9, 2003, we expanded our procurement card program to include the 10 buyers in the Purchasing Department. The one difference in the cards that were issued to the buyers is that their per transaction limit was increased to \$5,000, in contrast to the \$1,000 limit for countywide cardholders.

Buyers continue to obtain competitive bids informally on procurements up to \$5,000. The bid documentation is maintained with the purchase requisitions and the purchasing system is updated and the using agencies notified via email so that the system and the agencies know the requisitions were procured and paid using the buyer's p-cards.

Between July 2003 and February 2004 the buyers conducted 359 procurement card transactions valued at \$490,554. If you consider that in the past those 359 transactions would have been issued via a purchase order and the average cost to issue a purchase order is \$125, then we avoided \$44,875 in purchase order processing. That's a significant saving. Plus we added to the volume of p-card transactions, which increases the rebate.

I recently conducted NIGP's Public Agency Satisfaction Survey. One of the questions for participants of the survey was "What was the best piece of new information you learned about Purchasing this past year?" A number of the answers sounded like this:

- "Purchasing using p-cards for purchases up to \$5,000"
- "The new credit cards for purchasing and using them over \$1,000"
- "When they decided to allow the buyers to use credit cards for some purchases for agencies"
- "The ability for the Purchasing Bureau to be able to pay for services/commodities via procurement card between \$1,000 and \$5,000 rather than cutting a purchase order"

The buyers' procurement cards are set up with a balance sheet account for the purpose of having a charge code for the initial payment transaction. After a buyer makes a purchase using the p-card, which is authorized from a purchase requisition containing the agency's budget code, the County's procurement card administrator, through the bank's web based system, reallocates the charge to the proper budget code based on the purchase requisition. So the charge to the balance sheet account is cleared out prior to the closing date of the p-card billing cycle.

The use of p-cards was especially useful following Tropical Storm Isabel on September 18, 2003. Many emergency purchases were paid using the buyers' p-cards in the week following

the storm. In a normal month the average monthly payment for the buyers' p-cards is \$51,000 covering 33 transactions; the October statement for buyers totaled \$145,246 covering 140 transactions as a result of the tropical storm.

P-cards are a great way to improve your service delivery. If anyone is interested in initiating this program in their agency, we would be glad to share our documented procedures.

MARCH - FOOD DRIVE

George F. Dietsch, CPPO

The total food donation at the March general membership meeting was 93 pounds. The next collection is scheduled for November, just prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. The next food drive will be a coordinated effort at each jurisdiction's level. A volunteer from each jurisdiction will be requested to collect the donations from their individual office and then contact their local Community Action Group affiliated with the Maryland Food Bank for instructions on turning the donations over to each local food bank. This would increase our donations and eliminate members bringing or forgetting to bring donations to the meeting. It would also keep the donations local to each jurisdiction.

MAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND

SUPPORT STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Come one ... come all !!! Facilities Chairman, Deborah Meehan, has reserved a room that will hold a large crowd, so show your staff how much you appreciate all that they do (and they do!).

WHEN: **Thursday, May 13th, 2004**
 11:30 Networking
 12:00 Lunch

WHERE: **The Bowman Restaurant**
 9306 Harford Road
 Baltimore, MD 21234
 Telephone: (410) 665-8600

COST: \$20.00 – With Advance Reservation
 \$23.00 – Without Reservation

Workshop/Presentation

PERCEPTIONS: Do you ever wonder what aspects of your job are known to you, expected by others? What or who is your product? Who is your customer and what are their needs? What you can control? Who do you need? Then wonder no more! Ms. Marlys Norby, CPCM will be presenting "Risk Assessment - Finding the Best Contract Product". She will provide solutions and suggestions to assist you with addressing the sales challenge, how to identify skills needed to achieve goals and how to develop a positive mind set for negotiation. Ms. Norby has over 20 years experience in both acquisition and contracting roles. She is presently an independent Sole

Proprietor working as a consultant in acquisition management services and contracts management. She is an active member of NCMA, Tyson's Corner Chapter. Ms. Norby serves on the Contracts Management Certification and Accreditation Board as the Chair for Commercial Certification.

RESERVATIONS ARE NECESSARY TO INSURE APPROPRIATE SEATING AND FOOD ALLOWANCES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Due to MPPA's increasing costs, meals must be paid for at the time of reservation or at the door on the meeting day. The number of attendee's must be submitted prior to the meeting. Please **notify Deborah Meehan** by telephone, fax, or e-mail if you plan to attend. Special diets can be accommodated upon request.

Luncheon Buffet Menu will consist of these items ...

Baked Lasagna
Baked Chicken
Sliced Baked Ham (cold)
Hot Vegetable Du Jour
Garden Salad
Lettuce & Tomato Platter

Sliced Cheese Tray

Rolls & Butter
Dessert / Coffee, Hot Tea, Iced Tea & Sodas

Directions:

*Baltimore Beltway 695 to exit 31B (Carney). Less than ¼ mile on the Left is “**The Bowman Restaurant**” (there's also a sign for Tracey's Comedy Club). Parking is available on both sides of the restaurant. Use the 2nd (middle) entry door from either direction to immediately find steps going downstairs.*

MEMBERSHIP

Darla H. Herbold, CPPPO

The following professional purchasing practitioners were accepted into membership at the MPPA Executive Board Meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2004:

Alexander T. Sivels, Supply Officer
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Clifton T. Perkins Hospital

Marlene E. Mueller, Inventory Technician
Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Georgina V. Usher, Procurement Specialist
Maryland Aviation Administration

Lisa A. Estes, Purchasing Agent
Charles County Sheriff's Office

Retirement

Ruth Shegogue, Buyer III, has retired from Anne Arundel County Purchasing effective April 30, after 22 years of public purchasing. Best wishes, Ruth, for a relaxing and enjoyable life after purchasing!

MEMO TO: Fellow MPPA, Inc. Members

FROM: George F. Dietsch, CPPO – President
Maryland Public Purchasing Association, Inc.

DATE: April 15, 2004

SUBJECT: Selection of Volunteer Member to Attend the
Forum in Biloxi, MS. August 7 – 11, 2004

VOLUNTEER: Again this year, the MPPA Executive Board is happy to be able to offer assistance of up to \$1,500 to the volunteer member selected by drawing to attend the Forum in Biloxi, Mississippi. Anyone who volunteered their services to MPPA in 2003, and meets the following criteria has an opportunity to win a paid trip to the NIGP Forum in Biloxi this year:

Participation Criteria:

- Must be a member in good standing
- Any Member whose agency does not pay for their attendance at the Forum. Excluded are the President of MPPA and Retirees (NIGP Forum is “no charge for retirees”) and the previous calendar year’s winner of the Volunteer Member Appreciation.
- Must have performed Volunteer service during the 2003 calendar year.
- The selected winner must submit a letter from their Agency Supervisor to the MPPA Board verifying that the Agency did not budget funds for the person’s attendance at the Forum.

How To Apply:

- Send a letter or e-mail marked Confidential to my attention outlining the service you performed for MPPA during 2003. For my address, see www.mppainc.org and click on Membership (George F. Dietsch).
- E-mail or letter must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., June 1, 2004
- Submittals will be presented to the Executive Board members on June 8, 2004. All eligible candidates’ names will be entered and a name will be drawn in the presence of witnesses (Howard County Purchasing Department Staff for expediting reasons). Runner-up and second runner-up eligible candidates names will also be drawn.

- Should the Winner not be able to attend the Forum, the runner-up and second runner-up will be notified in selection order.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASSOCIATION'S CHARTER

MPPA, Inc. will celebrate 25th anniversary in 2005 of the Association's Charter. If any member has any memorabilia such as stories, pictures, programs, etc. that they would like to contribute to the celebration event, please contact the event's organizer, Cindy Sennett (MPPA Director), so that the Association can begin compiling a list of items and ideas for the 2005 celebration event.

RECOGNITION REPORT

Pam Jones, CPPB, MBA

Announcements

Please remember, if you'd like to forward information to be published (e.g., recent certification, promotion, etc.), please contact me at pam.jones@montgomerycountymd.gov or Tom at thomas.savoie@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Awards

As of March, I did not receive any nominations for the Buyer or Manager of the Year Awards. However, I know there are many deserving members out there. Therefore, I have recently called upon a few of you to consider this great designation. I hope to have a nomination for each award forwarded for Board consideration before the end of April.

New Certification

In our March General Public Purchasing meeting, there were many members recognized for certification achievement. Now, added to those who've reached such prestigious designation, please welcome:

Carol Stock, CPPB, Chief, Construction & Maintenance Section, Division of Procurement, Maryland Aviation Administration.

Congratulations!

Mark your calendar:

The 2004 Best Practices Award is still available. Let your agencies know the value of our profession.

NIGP is considering entries for the 2004 Best Practices Award. Entries must be on behalf of a government agency and not by an individual; multiple entries are allowed. If your agency is interested, please visit NIGP's website at <https://www.nigp.org/common/restrict/bestpractice/submit.asp>. Please note that you will be required to login, as this site is restricted to members only. Submission should be made directly to NIGP, as instructed.

With Deepest Sympathy:

MPPA extends its deepest sympathy to long-time member, Harrison Showell, CPPO, Chief of Purchasing for Howard County Government, and his family upon the passing of his brother, Milton Showell, on Tuesday, April 6.

Retirement Planning Through the Eyes of a Purchasing Agent:

With the average cost for a Nursing Home per day reaching \$188.00, there is a better way when we get old and feeble. I have already checked on reservations at the Holiday Inn for a combined long-term stay discount and senior discount of \$49.23 per night. That leaves \$138.77 a day for: Breakfast, lunch and dinner in any restaurant I want, or room service, laundry, gratuities and special TV movies. Plus, they provide a swimming pool, workout room, a lounge, washer, dryer, etc. Most have free toothpaste and razors, and all have free shampoo and soap.

They treat you like a customer, not a patient. \$5 worth of tips a day will have the entire staff scrambling to help you. There is a city bus stop out front, and seniors ride free. The handicap bus will also pick you up (if you fake a decent limp). To meet other nice people, call a church bus on Sundays.

For a change of scenery, take the airport shuttle bus and eat at one of the nice restaurants there. While you're at the airport, fly somewhere. Otherwise the cash keeps building up. It takes months to get into decent nursing homes. Holiday Inn will take your reservation today.

And – you are not stuck in one place forever, you can move from Inn to Inn, or even from city to city. Want to see Hawaii? They have a Holiday Inn there too. TV broken? Light bulbs need changing? Need a mattress replaced? No problem. They fix everything, and apologize for the inconvenience.

The Inn has a night security person and daily room service. The maid checks to see if you are ok. If not, they will call the undertaker or an ambulance. If you fall and break a hip, Medicare will pay for the hip and Holiday Inn will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

And don't worry about your family members not visiting. They will always be glad to find you, and probably check in for a few days' mini-vacation. The grandkids can use the pool. For what more can you ask?

So: When I reach the Golden age I'll face it with a grin. Just forward all my email to: me@Holiday Inn!

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Karen R. Luther, CPPO

Purchasing Month Celebration

In celebration of March being Purchasing Month, the Second Annual Purchasing Month Contest was held by the Washington County Purchasing Department. The contest form contained ten

(10) items consisting of multiple choice questions, scrambled word terms, definition questions, etc. The questionnaire was e-mailed to all employees and also contained a brief introduction regarding the public purchasing profession. The contest winner would be the entrant with the most correct answers and would receive a local Mall \$50 gift certificate donated by the purchasing agent. Numerous entries were received, with three employees submitting all correct answers.

The County Administrator requested that the winner be presented the award at the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. The three finalists were recognized at the Board's meeting, but only two were in attendance because of the snow that we received that morning. The name of the winner was drawn by one of the Commissioners and it was the employee who couldn't be in attendance, County Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Jack Reynard. Instead of accepting the gift certificate, Mr. Reynard requested that a \$50 donation be given to the Batten Disease Support & Research Association. The young son of our County Attorney's secretary had recently passed away from this disease.

Needless to say, it was a great "Purchasing Month"!

Reunions

As chairman of the committee for my 15-year high school class reunion this year---O.K. so it's 30-year---I found the following article that I recently read rather amusing and something to which some of you may relate.

Have you been guilty of looking at others your own age thinking—surely I cannot look that old? You may enjoy this short story which could be true.

While waiting for my first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist, I noticed his certificate, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been in my high school class some 30 years ago. Upon seeing him, However, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate.

After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the local high school.

"Yes," he replied.

"When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "in 1974. Why?"

"You were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked closely at me and then asked, "What did you teach?"