

## Mark Your Calendars!

June 2, 2000  
**Summer Golf Tournament (Presidio Golf Course) & General Membership Meeting**  
San Francisco Marriott Fisherman's Wharf  
1250 Columbus Ave.  
San Francisco, CA  
Room Rates: \$169  
single/double occ.  
(415) 775-7555

October 12-14, 2000  
**51<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention**  
Hyatt Grand Champions Resort  
44-600 Indian Wells Lane  
Indian Wells, CA  
Room Rates: \$185  
single/double occ.  
(760) 341-1000

## Staff Perspective

1999 has come and gone. The Y2K issue wasn't nearly as dramatic as it was cracked up to be unless of course you are trying to return the generators, excess kerosene, gas masks, freeze dried food, ammo and the rest of the goodies you bought to insure that you would survive in style when everything fell apart. (P.S. most of my stuff is still on the boat and ready to go!) But seriously, the legacy of the past year, consolidations and mergers, the revolutionary pace of change in technology, both hardware and software, the potential impact of e-Commerce on our industry, etc., are still around and are alive and kicking. Add to these national issues, California specific issues such as the enforcement of rules regulating ammonia, AB 60, which is the new overtime law, etc., the year 2000 is going to be an exciting one.

But as the new millennium begins, the success for any company whether in our industry or not, will be determined by its ability to relate and meet the expectations of its customers. This really isn't a novel idea for most firms, however, there has developed a fundamental change in the **"business as usual" relationship even for those firms that are considered industry leaders.** This not so subtle difference, going into the new century is that we are no longer in the driver's seat, driving this relationship, but instead our customers are. Your customers are the driving force behind the purchase of new technology, they are the ones demanding that we become more efficient and competitive, and they are the shakers and movers behind the e-Commerce movement. Their entire focus is in reducing their cost of doing business. They have recognized that like any other firm in a competitive industry, profits come from reducing and controlling the cost of doing business. e-Commerce for larger firms will have a significant impact because it can help reduce the cost of "purchasing". The good old days of "Cost of Living" price increases are long gone, unless

of course inflation makes a strong come-back... however, don't count on it.

Where does that leave us? I believe that this situation presents us with a tremendous opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to become an integral part of our customers operation by becoming a resource that helps to reduce their cost of operation. How can this be accomplished? How can I set myself apart from the competition? How do I become this resource? How...by inviting your customers to become part of your "management" team. Yes... that's right, invite key customers to become part of your Board of Directors, invite them to become part of your planning and strategy meetings, make it a corporate policy that top management meet quarterly with key accounts to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship, and finally, participate in your customer's industry programs, i.e., become members of their association, participate in their meetings, attend their conventions, learn as much as possible about what is important to them. Become an asset, become the expert who really knows and understands what their industry needs and the direction that it is taking in the marketplace. By getting your customers involved in your business strategies, you will understand what they need, you will understand what technology is needed to meet those needs and you will establish a working relationship built on mutual benefit rather than on just price. Guaranteed that if done professionally, this will set you apart from your competition. It has been proven time and time again, the cost of keeping existing customers is significantly less than acquiring new ones. The cost of getting your customers involved is even less expensive. You have a core of business that generates the majority of your sales and profits. Insure that you keep those sales and profits by becoming more involved with your customers operations and by driving your organization toward meeting your customers needs and expectations.

## **WRA1999 – 2000 Board Members**

**Spring 2000**

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### **President**

**Mr. Dave Blaylock, Sr.**  
Rocky Mountain Blueprint  
2460 30th Street  
Boulder, CO 80301  
Phone: (303) 440-0502  
Fax: (303) 440-0974

### **Treasurer**

**Mr. Dave Dignam**  
San Jose Blue  
835 W. Julian Street  
San Jose, CA 95126  
Phone: (408) 295-5770  
Fax: (408) 971-3299

### **Director (Southern California)**

**Mr. Odie Duggan**  
OCB Reprographics, Inc.  
17721 Mitchell North  
Irvine, CA 92614  
Phone: (949) 660-1150  
Fax: (949) 975-1482

### **Supplier Director**

**Mr. Jayson Jones**  
PageMasters, Inc.  
1850 N. Central Ave., Ste. 1500  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
Phone: (800) 782-0753  
Fax: (602) 744-1330  
Email: jaysonj@apprentice.com

### **Past President**

**Mr. Paul Holt**  
Classic Reprographics  
1965 5th St.  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Phone: (619) 234-4488  
Fax: (619) 234-8925

### **Vice-President**

**Mr. Paul McKee**  
Scott Blueprint  
133 W. 1st Avenue  
Mesa, AZ 85210  
Phone: (888) 833-3912  
Fax: (480) 834-0825  
Email: paulm@scottblue.com

### **Director (Southern California)**

**Mr. Ross Banks**  
ARC/Ford Graphics  
934 Venice Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90015  
Phone: (213) 745-3145  
Fax: (213) 745-3159  
Email: rbanks@fordgraphics.com

### **Director (Northern California)**

**Mr. Greg Betty**  
Studio Blue Reprographics, Inc.  
7132 A Johnson Dr.  
Pleasanton, CA 94588  
Phone: (925) 463-9660  
Fax: (925) 463-0327  
Email: gbetty@sbgraphics.com

### **Supplier Director**

**Mr. Tom Elliott**  
Oce' Imaging Supplies  
1674 Heritage Circle  
Anaheim, CA 92804  
Phone: (714) 778-1670  
Fax: (714) 778-1681  
Email: elliottt@oceusa.com