



# MAXIMUM FLOAT

Michigan Capital Area Chapter Newsletter

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www.pmi.org/chap/mcapmi

**PMI  
Michigan Capital Area  
Chapter Officers**

**President**

Amy Piper, PMP  
Electronic Data Systems  
Phone: 517/885-3281  
amy.piper@eds.com

**Immediate Past President**

Maureen Myers, PMP  
MI Dept of Mgmt & Budget  
Phone: 517/373-1448  
myersm@state.mi.us

**VP Membership**

Richard Cummings  
Jackson Natl Life Insurance  
Phone: 517/367-4301  
rick.cummings@jnli.com

**VP Finance**

Alan Casey, PMP  
Maximus, Inc.  
Phone: 517/881-6378  
alancasey@scg-inc.com

**VP Communications**

Kristen Mullaney, PMP  
MI Dept of Mgmt & Budget  
Phone: 517/241-4582  
mullaneyk@state.mi.us

**VP Publicity**

Dan Buonodono, PMP  
MI Dept of Mgmt & Budget  
Phone: 517/335-5099  
buonodond@state.mi.us

**VP Professional Development**

Viji Jayaraman, PMP  
e-Michigan office, State of MI  
(517)241-5792  
jayaramanv@state.mi.us

**VP Programs**

Gwenn Carr  
Integrated Strategies, Inc.  
Phone: 517/381-4800  
gcarr@sourcing.com

**VP Logistics**

Mark Lawrence, PMP  
MI Dept of Mgmt & Budget  
Phone: 517/241-1640  
lawrenceml@state.mi.us

**VP Special Projects**

Penny Dewey  
MI Dept of Mgmt & Budget  
Phone: 517/241-2926  
deweyp1@state.mi.us

## Message from the President

By Amy J. Piper, Ph.D., PMP

Spring is a time of new beginnings! As I began thinking about writing this month's column, (the most difficult thing I have to do as Chapter President) I reflected back to the spring of 1999, when the Michigan Capital Area Chapter of PMI was a new beginning. At that time our big concerns were finding 25 members, enough prospective Board of Directors to fill a slate, and a convenient, reasonable place to hold our meetings. There was so much to do; the Chapter was "Forming".

After our elections in 1999, the Board of Directors "officially" came together as a team. Through "Norming" we had a successful first year under Maureen Myers' leadership.

This year I would say was our "Storming" year. We had a new Board of Directors that needed to learn to work together. We've started to be concerned with issues such as member retention. (In our first year, only one individual didn't renew their Chapter Membership, and that was because they moved out of state.) We had to turn people away from the dinner portion of our meeting once because we didn't have enough space.

Now, two years later, we will be electing our third Board of Directors! I expect this next year to be a year of high "Performing". Since we received our charter in October of 1999, we are still considered a Novice Chapter (less than three years old). Seasoned chapters are those more than three years old. Since the President's position has a one-year term, this month I am supposed to write an advertisement that will convince someone else to run for President. At this writing, I do plan to run for President again. There is still so much to do!

*Continued, see "President" on page 2*

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## ***PM Eye on Vonnie Konzman!***

Vonnies is the project management subject matter expert and the Performance and Productivity Improvement Leader for Electronic Data Systems in the Lansing Solution Centre. Vonnies primary line of business is software development.

Vonnies responsibilities include meeting with the Project Managers to review project status and incorporate process improvement activities. Vonnies uses metrics to measure the project performance. She is heavily involved in developing and deploying our organizational processes using the Software Engineering Institute's Capability Maturity Model Level 2 and Level 3 key practices as a guide. The Lansing Solution Centre is currently assessed at Level 3.

Vonnies has been a member of our PMI chapter 2 years.

Vonnies is interested in networking and learning more about Project Management. The speakers and Bonus programs have been very interesting and beneficial in my current role.

Please introduce yourself to Vonnies at a future dinner meeting, as she was the latest winner in the "free dinner" drawing!

### **President**, continued from page 1

I would like to assist with the following **new** activities in the coming year as President:

- Establish a Chapter Mentoring Program,
- Promote Student Involvement through Local Colleges and Universities, and
- Establish a Yearly Community Project Management Volunteer Activity.

I encourage you, the reader, to run for a Board of Director position, too! There is so much to be gained from working toward a common goal with people that you usually don't have an opportunity to work with. We all come from our own corporate cultures and approach projects differently. This can be a great learning experience to take back to your other projects. Someone mentioned to me that they didn't have their PMP yet as a reason for not running for a Board Position. You do NOT need your PMP to run for a position on the Board of Directors. PMPs are encouraged to run simply because it provides them with Professional Development Units (PDUs) toward the renewal of their PMP. Any PMI Michigan Capital Area Chapter member is encouraged to run.

### **On Another Note**

At the September 2000 Leadership meeting in Houston, Texas, I attended several sessions on ethics; so, it wasn't a surprise to hear that beginning in 2002, the PMP exam will cover a new area referred to a "Professional Responsibility." Questions will be taken from the PMI Code of Ethics, which you sign when you become a PMI member, and other sources. One speaker referred to business ethics as keeping promises and commitments. They had a two-question test for ethical behavior that I thought was pretty simple and straightforward:

1. Would I be willing to justify what I did to Mom and Dad?  
and
2. How would I feel if I picked up the New York Times and read what I had done?

To read more on the topic, see a Complete Guide to Ethics Management: A Toolkit for Managers by Carter McNamara. It can be found at the following website:

<http://www.mapnp.org/library/ethics/ethxgde.htm>



## *Grey Matters*

### **Random Thoughts on Project Management**

by Daniel Belcher

#### **Technology and Human Interaction**

E-mails and phone calls seem to out number the more personal hand written notes and face to face conversations. I can think of many other examples of where technology has caused reductions in human interaction. One that comes to mind is maple syrup.

My kids are the fifth generation of Belchers to make maple syrup. It started before I was born with my great grandfather on the banks of the Muskegon River. He used an iron cauldron that was placed over a camp fire to boil down the 45 gallons of tree sap to make 1 gallon of syrup. Since then, you might say our family has had syrup in our veins.

In the 1960's my grandfather bought an 80 acre farm with 40 acres of sugar bush (maple forest) near Cadillac, MI. Soon after, he started using an evaporator (channeled pans with wood stove underneath) to produce an average of 250 gallons of syrup a year. I started to pitch in several years later once I had learned to walk. My grandfather has since passed away and my Uncle has taken over. I have always looked forward to sap season. Changes in technology however have reduced the human interaction and taken the romance out of making maple syrup.

Years ago family, friends, dog and barn cats would gather in the sap house to watch and smell the amber sap boil from the wood fired heat. My grandfather would tell endless stories as the steam condensed and dripped off the building's interior. As I got older, I would save my best jokes for the sap house just to see my grandfather's mischievous grin. It was a great time to be a Belcher.

Today, a hood covers the evaporator shielding any view of the boiling liquid and trapping the sweet steam. The hood holds in heat making the fire more efficient and is a requirement of the US Dept of Agriculture to keep the condensation drips, cat and dog hair out of the syrup (it may also help the taste). As a result the gatherings in the sap house are not as frequent.

When I was a kid, pails were hung on the trees to collect the sap. Family pitched in to empty each pail into a bucket, which was then carried through knee-deep snow to a tank that was pulled by the 1952 Ford tractor. Neighbors and friends were always willing to help out. Snowball fights were guaranteed. When the sap was really running, it was an all day job for a five or six person crew (plus kids) to collect it. The reward was a delicious meal cooked up by my Grandmother with 99% of the ingredients coming from the farm.

Desert was always mouth watering homemade lard crust pies. There would be more than a dozen people at the dinner table. Often my brother, cousins and I were exiled to the old card table set up in the other room. Interesting conversations always broke out that almost always included words that made grandmother gasp and grandfather grin from ear to ear at her response.

Today, tubes connect each tree and the sap flows downhill to a collection tank. The suction from the downhill flow pulls more sap from the trees than the traditional tap and pail. Sap collection is now a one person operation so that friends and family are no longer required. My grandmother now spends winters in Florida and Texas. She makes it a point to return after sap season (mouth watering pies are scarce). I think that she also misses the old days.

I often wonder what technology has in store for my children. They will never experience some of life's simple pleasures of human interaction. I myself have missed many that my parents and grandparents enjoyed, but they never had 500 channels on the television, computers and video games. Perhaps it is no coincidence that futuristic fiction depicts computers and robots with human characteristics because it is human interaction that we will crave in the future.

**Message from VP Membership, Rick Cummings**

The bonus program at our March meeting provided a number of great ideas to improve the membership growth and retention. In addition to a number of suggested ideas for improvements, the attendees also wanted to see some statistics on membership demographics (companies, industries, locations, etc.) I have included some of those statistics here in the newsletter. Additional Statistics will follow.

Below is a summary of the ideas presented. I will be issuing a further detailed paper through the List-Serv.

**Recruitment**

Bring a Buddy to Dinner Meeting Free, Board Member Follow up with walk ins, Formal Presentations, and Corporate Membership (group Rate).

**Other Venues to Promote Chapter Growth:**

Chamber of Commerce, Job Fairs, Tech Connect, Word of Mouth, Schools, Local Trade magazines (Media), Consulting Companies, Brochures, and Professional Organizations.

**Retention**

Chapter make the first contact on upcoming renewals  
 Call Non Renewals with follow up questions on why they did not renew.

**Statistics**

Chapter Statistics for year 2000						Chapter Statistics for year 2001					
Attrition (least amount of membership loss)						Attrition					
Regional Rank		PMI Rank		%	PMI Avg.	Regional Rank		PMI Rank		%	PMI Avg.
1 <sup>st</sup>	22 Chpts	7 <sup>th</sup>	115 Chpts	17.8%	31.21%	6 <sup>th</sup>	22 Chpts	36 <sup>th</sup>	116 Chpts	3.23%	4.59%
Growth (Most amount of membership gain)						Growth					
Regional Ranking		PMI Ranking		%	PMI Avg.	Regional Rank		PMI Rank		%	PMI Avg.
1 <sup>st</sup>	22 Chpts	2 <sup>nd</sup>	115 Chpts	103.3%	26.53%	7 <sup>th</sup>	22 Chpts	37 <sup>th</sup>	116 Chpts	5.91%	5.23%

**Top Companies Represented**

1. State of Michigan – 67
2. EDS – 37
3. Dow Chemical – 10
4. Spectrum-Maximus – 7
5. Unaffiliated (no company representation/self employed) - 6
6. IBM and Robbins Gioia – 4
7. Integrated Strategies; Citizens Insurance; Jackson National; Unisys – 3
8. Accident Fund; Allmerica Financial; City of Lansing; Integration Projects Inc.; - 2
9. Advisa; Dow/Anderson Alliance; Anacom; Analytical Systems Inc.; Andersen Consulting; Anderson Development Co.; Andrews Hooper & Pavlik P.L.C.; Application Interfacing Corp.; Automation Resource Corp.; Bell Atlantic; Bethke & Assoc.; Bio Port; Compaq; Complete Business Solutions; Compuware; Consumers Energy; Delta Dental; ePresence; Etkin Skanksa; GTE North; Indian Rock Consultants; Information Systems Technology; Key Consulting; LCC; Lansing Craft Center; LCO Inc.; Libbey-Owens-Ford Co.; Motorola; NSK Corp; O Boticario; Phillips Display Components; Plante & Moran LLP; PMSI – Project mentors; Professional Tech Development; Public Sector Consultants; Rysberg Holdings; Sequoia NET.com; St. Johns Health Systems; Tower Automotive; TRW; United Parcel Service; Western Michigan University – 1

**Top Agencies Represented by Michigan Government**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Michigan DMB - 22                         | 6. Michigan State Police - 6         |
| 2. Michigan FIA - 9                          | 7. Department of Corrections - 3     |
| 3. State of Michigan/Department of State - 8 | 8. Department of Treasury - 3        |
| 4. Department of Transportation - 7          | 9. Michigan Gaming Control Board – 1 |
| 5. Defense Logistics Information Service - 7 | 10. Unemployment Agency - 1          |

## April's Featured Speaker

Speaker: Mr. Tim Pearl, CEO of Agate Software

Topic: "Ensuring Customer Satisfaction on Web Projects while Adhering to Schedule and Budget"

Learn what not to do-Based on a State of Michigan Project

A graduate of Michigan Tech, Tim started Agate Software in 1991 as a developer of custom database applications. As the Internet became more popular, Tim directed Agate Software's resources towards building database applications for the Internet. The company's first Internet database application was completed in 1997. That was followed by other applications, including a grant management application for the State of Michigan that was the State's first contract for an Internet application using Microsoft's Active Server Page technologies. Agate Software now derives 90% of its revenues from the development of Internet applications, servicing industry segments that include State Government, the automotive industry, education, and the furniture industry. Most recently, Tim's company has been awarded the contract to build the online application process for the Michigan Department of Education's one billion dollars in grant programs.

## April Bonus Program

The goal of the April Bonus program is to solicit volunteers for work on planning and conducting the Professional Development day. The agenda is as follows:

1. Present objectives for the Professional Development day.
2. Present volunteer needs and approximate time commitment.
3. Solicit volunteers by obtaining names and email addresses.



## Dear Maxine,

There are many definitions used in Project Management that I don't understand. I've been a Project Manager for a while now, but many of these terms just don't come up that often. Could you give me your opinions on the items below.

Listless in Dewitt

Dear Listless,

You and many others have asked me for definitions of terms that have been heard concerning Project Management. To answer you and others, this is the second installment of a three part series of definitions. Part Two – Tracking, Schedule and Control definitions.

**Milestone** – A milestone is an activity with zero duration, usually marking the end of an activity group or period. It generally serves as an achievement point throughout the project.

**Late Start Date** – The latest dates by which an activity can start to avoid causing delays in the project.

**Float** – The amount of time that an activity can slop past it's planned duration without delaying the rest of the project. Usually the float is calculated as the difference between an activities path and the project's critical path. If an activity is on the critical path, it has no float.

**Fast Tracking** – Compressing the project schedule by overlapping activities that would normally be completed sequentially.

**Slack** – The amount of flexibility the project has in the activity start date without impacting the project completion date.

**Change Control Process** – The process of closely managing change and insisting that any amendments are carefully defined and documented. These changes need to be reflected in the project plan which should include a sign off process where stakeholders and other critical team members are communicated each of the changes in the project.

**Change Control Document** – Serves as a form to formally document any changes that are requested or made4 to the initial project scope document. Changes can be in requirements, resources, schedule, or quality.



**PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRODUCTIVITY CHECKLIST**

**Book review by Penny K. Dewey**

As part of a course that I attended recently I had the pleasure of reading "Getting a Project Done on Time" by Paul B. Williams.

This book is clear, concise, and very easy to apply to daily work. It helps you by giving a defined process and also addresses the "what ifs" associated with many aspects of managing a project. I found the book easy to read and hard to put down. I found myself say, "so that's why I have a hard time of accomplishing a certain phase of the project". Almost all of my questions were addressed...and answered in this book. It's a definite "must read" for new project managers. Here are a few tips from the book:

**Initial Project Fact Finding**

1. Write a list of people who will have information you'll need and the types of information they're likely to possess.
2. Build rapport with them by reflecting their preferred communication style.
3. Prepare at least one open and one closed probe for every topic you plan to address.
4. Gather information until you're sure about the project's a) Purpose, b) Outcome, c) Value, d) Potential problems, e) Your responsibility and authority, f) The budget and g) The deadline.

**Getting Enthusiastic Help from Participants**

1. Start building your overall influence foundation by sincerely and proactively developing a supportive network.
2. Mini-Max participant outcomes you'd prefer and you'd need then Mini-Max a range of commitment you'll request.
3. Use priority and ability probe information to determine whether a potential participant needs telling, selling, a delegated task or coaching/training to succeed.

**Planning the Project**

1. Get people involved in the early planning stages of your projects.
2. Explore creative solutions when risk is low and upside potential exists.
3. Develop draft goal and milestone sequences as early as possible to focus project team input.
4. Prepare project charts that reveal enough detail so you can effectively spot potential trouble and proactively manage key dependencies.

**Prime Mover Review Meetings**

1. Keep your project prime mover up to speed on results and plan variances.
2. Prepare an agenda and objective(s) for every project review meeting (initial, periodic and emergency).
3. Avoid meetings when another method will yield the same or a better result.
4. Make time to prepare for and follow through on all project meetings.
5. Have the tact and courage to exhort, present, control, and summarize and to ask for specific action/resource commitments.

**Time Management for the Project Manager**

1. Load your planner with all key activities and outcome dates. Refer to it before saying "Yes" To anyone.
2. Prioritize planned activities and, when asked for help, clarify, calibrate, compare and either challenge or cooperate to protect your plan.
3. Use milestones to reduce procrastination; hand off results when they're "Business Ready" to control perfectionism; use the next response rule to improve listening.

**Influencing Participants and Prime Movers**

1. Anticipate project changes and influence people to keep your project on Line.
2. Learn enough about team members to identify their wants/needs and to work participant benefits into your projects.
3. When influencing, ask more questions/probes than usual. Best case - talk 30% and listen 70%.
4. Welcome resistance and discuss/problem solve objections in a way that builds partnering relationships.  
Ask for resources, support and commitments from project prime movers and milestone/time commitments from project players.

**Presenting Project Results**

1. Find out about your audience's expectations, interests, and familiarity with the project and their opinions of the project before preparing.
2. Prepare a presentation goal first, then write enabling points that support the goal.
3. Select facts, evidence and/or expert opinion that support each enabling point.
4. Be sure to use the presentation for interaction - not core dumping.

**Teamwork From Project Teams**

1. Identify your participant's team maturity level - Do they Identify with the project and each other?, Are they motivated to learn And achieve?, Do they trust each other and you?, Do they communicate about the project frequently, meaningfully and/or productively?
2. Find things that you, as leader, can start and stop that will help your team mature from dependence through Independence to interdependence.
3. Emphasize listening, trust building, empowerment and balance as team priorities.



**PMI Executive Board Members 2001-2002**



**No Chads, Lots of Opportunities**

Maureen Myers, Immediate Past President

*The Chapter is currently soliciting nominations for Executive Board Members for 2001 - 2002. Serving on the Board provides the opportunity to work with experienced Project Managers from a variety of disciplines. As a young Chapter, we can set the direction for program and professional development for the area. The positions opening up include:*

- *President (12 month term)*
- *VP – Finance (24 month term)*
- *VP – Membership (24 month term)*
- *VP – Publicity (24 month term)*
- *VP – Special Projects (24 month term)*

*\*We are also soliciting volunteers to complete the last 12 months of the VP – Programs term.*

*The time commitment for these positions is approximately 5 to 10 hours a month.*

Why volunteer for the PMI Michigan Capital Area Chapter Board?

- Advance your career
- Meet Project Management practitioners from multiple companies
- Gain a greater understanding of PMI
- Opportunity to influence the direction of the chapter, and
- Gain Professional Development points towards maintaining PMP certification

A call for nominations will be sent out in the next week with nominations due by April 27. Ballots will be distributed and voting conducted at the Chapter business meeting on May 15. Members will also have the opportunity to vote on the proposed revised Chapter bylaws, which will be distributed in mid-April.

Please consider serving on the Board and/or encourage Project Managers that you know to run!

## Program Events Schedule

The Chapter Dinner Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, September through May, excluding December. The Dinner Meetings are held at the Lansing Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center. Bonus Programs are held prior to dinner meetings from 5:15 to 6:00.

**Costs:** Dinner costs are \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members. Anyone who does not pay in advance will be charged an additional \$5 at the door. If you are not pre-registered, we may be unable to accommodate you due to restaurant limitations.

**April 17, 2001** -- Mr. Tim Pearl, CEO of Agate Software, "Ensuring Customer Satisfaction on Web Projects while Adhering to Schedule and Budget"

Bonus Program: "Professional Development Day Planning"

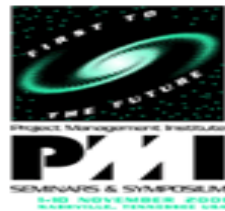
**May 15, 2001** -- Award Program/Elections

Bonus Program: "The Closeout Process" -- Case Study

**September 18, 2001** -- Mr. John Tuman, CEO of Management Technologies Incorporated, "The Past, Present and Future of Project Management"

Answers to Next Month's Crossword Puzzle

1. IV&V, Independent Verification and Validation
2. RBS, Resource Breakdown Structure
3. EVA, Economic Value Added
4. CPI, Cost Performance Index
5. CASE, Computer-Aided Software Engineering
6. RFQ, Request For Quotation
7. RDU, Remaining Duration
8. QAR, Quality Assurance Representative



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Also available for viewing  
is the Monday Morning  
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2000

Michigan Capital Area Chapter  
Project Management Institute  
P.O. Box 19075  
Lansing, MI 48901-9075

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Dan Buonodono Managing Editor  
Dan Belcher Contributing Editor  
Larry Selvage Contributing Editor  
Jerry King Contributing Editor  
Liz Chaney Contributing Editor  
Judy Walsh Contributing Editor

**Please send comments,  
suggestions and articles to  
buonodonod@state.mi.us**