

## Mean Girls Mean Women?

By Maggie McCoy

Sixteen very kind, civilized and well meaning women gathered on November 12th to discuss this sometimes nasty issue. It was another in the occasional UCWBG "Small Talks" conversation series.

We shared some media articles and commentary, and then launched into our own conversation about the mean girl phenomena. While the terms 'all' and 'every' cannot be applied, many studies indicate girls and boys tend to socialize differently from very early ages. Boys tend to engage in roughhousing yielding clear hierarchies with their friends, girls tend to have

long turn-taking conversations where equality and engaging in confidences is most prized. "Mean" is something we do to other women, we tend to start at early ages and it seems some of us keep at it for a lifetime.

Some mean encounters spurred the recipient on to wonderful accomplishments, others left scars. The memories were still vivid.

We discussed the distinction between mean behavior, aggressive behavior and bullying. We concluded that 'mean' behavior intended to cause hurt feelings or embarrassment. The words

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## Women, Success and Financial Markets

By Susan Gaastra



Thursday, October 15 was a full day for the UCWBG for its Symposium held at the University Club of Chicago. Members and their guests started the day by attending two of the following four seminars:

*Maximizing Your Return on Your Banking Relationship*, by Cheryl Wittert, Senior VP Harris N.A. Cheryl seminar's provided

advice from a banker's perspective on starting a business. One thing you need to consider when starting a business: is now the right time?

have risen 87% compared with general inflation of 18% and wage growth of 20%. The main drivers of the substantial increase in health costs are new treatments, new drugs, increased demand for services, and a general decline in health status—obesity, diabetes and an aging population.

Wellness is the new buzzword and reports show preventable lifestyle related illnesses account for 50-90% of all healthcare costs. Companies are promoting wellness programs by offering annual health and lifestyle assessments, group workshops, and referral of high-risk persons for health care.

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- **Economically**—necessity is the mother of invention. Several companies have started in recession, for example, CNN, Trader Joe's, and Wikipedia Foundation, Inc. Think about the type of business you will open and whether it will perform during and after a recession.
- **Financially**—Banks are under more scrutiny today. Providing a loan to a start-up company is a risky investment compared to a company that's been in business for several years. During an economic recovery, banks like lending to businesses that do not need it. If you have access to equity to invest in the company versus someone who is desperate and needs the money or go bankrupt, you have greater chance of receiving a bank loan as you're perceived as a better risk.
- **Personally**—starting a business is a huge time commitment and you will have less time for family as an entrepreneur/business owner than you did as an employee. Keep your family and friends informed about the progress with your business; they care about the emotional impact on you/ Continue to keep the communication lines open and ask for help when there are problems at the office.

*Harnessing Healthcare Solutions*, by Helen Clary, VP of Employee Benefits at Alper Services LLC. Health care costs from 2000-2008

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## Mean Girls Mean Women? (Continued)

power, insecurity, relationship-oriented and unfair came up as descriptors. Aggressiveness and bullying were more about getting your own way.

As we talked, many shared stories of their own encounters with mean women. Common threads began to appear, and conversation turned to mitigating strategies. If the 'intent' of the mean woman was to inflict pain, (and some of it clearly was intended!) it required the recipient to receive the information in that mode. Emotional responses are a natural consequence to perceived insults. However we did agree that if you could intercept and logically analyze an incoming 'zinger' you could also provide a non-emotional response. You would effectively say to the sender, 'message rejected.'

As we listened to one another, it was also apparent that not every mean encounter was likely to have been intended as mean – occasionally we get very caught up the "it's all about me" mode and receive benign information as mean when that was not intended.

Our concluding thoughts turned to equipping ourselves with the clever rejoinder that would be at hand and encourage logical, not emotional responses. Some favorites were (if you dare) "You want to try that again?" or a simpler cool, quizzical look directed firmly at the offending woman.

We all left the conversation with a richer understanding of the issue, thanks to the experiences of our peers. We also have a few more tools in our kit that may be handy next time we need one.

## Welcome New Members

Grazina(Chris) Keeley

Dina Spentzos

Julie Pully

Suzae Johnson

Ann Chris Ortigara

Loryn Mischke

Rosemaria Martinelli

Jamie Denz

Melissa Reagen

Radost laneva

Jennifer Bhagwanjee

Jackie Raker

Susan Hudson

Eileen Lysaught

Debra Krolick

Beth Inlander

## UCWBG 2010 Board of Directors



From the back row left to right: Jane Ranshaw, Maggie Coleman, Caryl Pedersen, Maggie McCoy, Candice Kline, Elene Cafasso, Rose Martinelli. Front left to right: Connie Dunn, Deborah Pool, Susan Gaastra, Mary T. Go. Not pictured: Irene Márquez



## Presidents Letter

By Jane Ranshaw, '72

What a year!

We gave a new, and renewed, meaning to our mission of "Connecting with leadership and growth." Despite a tumultuous year for the economy at large, we sponsored or co-sponsored more than two dozen events with widely differing appeal to our members.

In the process, we learned a lot. Some members prefer smaller, more focused topics, such as the evening in March when Caryl Pedersen, VP Programs, conducted one of her popular "Accidental Entrepreneur" sessions. In April, several of us spent a few hours learning how improvisation skills help us better understand our relationships with each other (sponsored by former board member, Jennifer Dominiquini).

Later in the year, Maggie McCoy, our immediate past president, hosted a small group discussion on "Mean Girls." We all remember those moments in fourth or seventh grade when we learned others had less exalted views of us than we had. These hurtful moments stay with us for years and can color our relationships for the rest of our lives.

Smaller events are the core of First Fridays, where a half dozen or so members have lunch at the Midway Club. A guest speaker leads a discussion around her particular area of expertise, and we thank Merle Tresser (networking), Helen Clary (health insurance), Elene Cafalso (personal branding), and Kathy Flanagan (how to work with a coach).

Members also continue to be inspired by women who have gone before, and we were delighted to co-sponsor two events with the Chicago Women's Alliance where we heard from Hannah Gray, former president of the U of C, and Evelyn Echols, who, 60-70 years ago, broke into the then-male-dominated world of travel agents by first starting her own agency (and landed Pepsi-Cola as her first big client).

UCWBG members are always interesting in new technologies and how they affect our lives. In July, board member Jane Belcher chaired two excellent meetings on social networking. These meetings were among the most highly-attended events of the year and included many non-members.

Caryl Pedersen, our VP, Programming, was busy as well putting together six programs, including the entrepreneurship event in March. We had a dazzling (meaning "lots and lots of chocolate for dessert") annual meeting at the University Club where, after a great dinner, we had a lovely presentation on Chicago architecture by Lynn Osmond, President of the Chicago Architectural Foundation. Caryl also oversaw the arrangements for our three member receptions (April, September, and December), held at Gleacher for the high-minded purpose of pure networking.

## 2010 Board of Directors

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(If you have an interest in filling this open position, please contact Maggie McCoy)

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Caryl headed "Women, Success and Financial Markets," our Fall Symposium which included four different breakout sessions in the afternoon of October 15, followed by dinner at the University Club. Attendees were joined by Ellen Costello, President and CEO of Harris Financial Corporation, for an intimate evening of dialogue.

UCWBG is more than a collection of events, and other members worked on the behind-the-scenes activities that help us succeed. Sue Gaastra, VP of Marketing and Communications, ensures that our flyers and other marketing collateral have a consistent theme. She helps everyone leading events make them more successful. Sue also produces The Exponent, our one way to make sure we stay in touch will all our members.

Connie Dunn, VP of Finance, has reformatted our financial statements so we can all see the economic impacts of our many, varied activities. We hold our members' funds for the purpose of providing programs that will help them connect and lead. Connie's hard work lets us do a better, more meaningful job.

We own a HUGE thank you to Irene Marquez, VP of Technology, who shepherded our transition to a new website, started up our LinkedIn group, and ensures our technology is firmly planted in the 21st century.

Maggie Coleman, VP of Membership, has streamlined processes for signing up new members and renewing existing ones. She has also guided the creation of our new, comprehensive on-line directory. Be sure to check it out on our website.

With so much going on, we'd be lost without Debby Pool, VP of Administration, who keeps minutes of our meetings and maintains our annual calendar. I can't count the number of times this year that her meticulous note-taking has saved us from hours of wandering discussions on issues decided at a previous meeting.

Mary Tweedie Go, our VP of Strategic Partnerships, has connected UCWBG to the many Booth student groups who represent our future membership. She and other board members have given up many evenings and Saturdays to maintain these valuable relationships.

Now, before we strain our wrists while patting ourselves on the back, the obvious question is: so what? We have more exciting events and other programs (30th anniversary? Meet up groups? Facebook presence? Virtual meetings?) in the works for 2010. To get an exciting preview of what's in store for the next year, join us for our annual meeting at Gleacher on January 27.

Personally, I have had a wonderful year as President—who wouldn't with that kind of talent lineup? I am thrilled to be repeating as your President for 2010!

## Women, Success and Financial Markets (Continued)

Companies are investigating options to drive down health costs and are introducing consumer driven health plans. For example companies are offering a high deductible health plan and personal account in the form of healthcare reimbursement or health savings account.

The consumer-driven health plan benefits both employers and employees. Employer's benefit by reduced premiums, tax advantages, improved morale and empowered employees. Employee's benefit by lowers premiums, flexibility, and tax benefits, potential for reduced out-of-pocket expenses.



*How Booth Can Help Support You Throughout Your Career, by Julie Morton and Jessica Henry.* Two experienced women from Booth's Career Management Services office explained the many services the school continues to offer graduates well beyond graduation.

*The Brand of You, by Elene Cafasso, President and founder of Enerpace, Inc.* In "The Brand of You" seminar, Elene covered the three parts of personal brand using the acronym D.N. A—dependability, novelty and attitude. Your personal brand encompasses your total perceived value, relative to substitutes, as viewed by your key stakeholders.

Participants got the opportunity to define and refine their own brands and then debrief with a partner to gain perspective. Many found their partners were able to discern things they couldn't see themselves! Everyone got into the action with homework to incorporate this new brand into all forms of professional communication—from email signatures to networking introductions. As Tom Peters says, "We all need to be distinct or we'll be extinct." Said another way, ordinary has become a designer disaster!

Following the seminars, members and their guests gathered for a

reception and lavish dinner, topped off by an intimate conversation with Ellen Costello.

*Ellen Costello, President and CEO of Harris Financial Corp, the US banking subsidiary of Toronto-based BMO Financial Group (Bank of Montreal).* Ellen is not one to lecture from a podium and elected for an open, interactive question and answer session moderated by Caryl Pedersen.

Caryl opened the evening by congratulating Ellen on her most recent honor: one of US Banker magazine's 25 Most Powerful Women in Banking.

Caryl promptly asked, "At a time when many other banks have run into serious trouble, what is driving your success?" Ellen replied, "Since we are owned by the Bank of Montreal, in Canada, they play by more conservative regulations than in the US, so they were not involved in the types of activities that caused the financial crisis."

What does it take to make it as a woman in business? Ellen said, unflinchingly, "Work hard." She then added, "don't say 'no' to new opportunities, they can be your best learning experiences."

How do you balance the demands of being a CEO with your personal life? What are the rewards of being a CEO, and what makes it so worthwhile for you? Smiling, Ellen remarked, "well, balance might not be my best suit, because I like working hard and always have...the CEO job is the most interesting one of my career."

Ellen was asked about the old boys network, especially in banking, she replied, "I basically ignore it and just keep focused on my goals."

Ellen was challenged about practices of other banks – e.g. excessive fees; not helping those who've made mistakes, etc—she calmly stated "We should not include Harris with other banks." She couldn't speak to what other banks do and highlighted the areas in which she was proud of her firm.

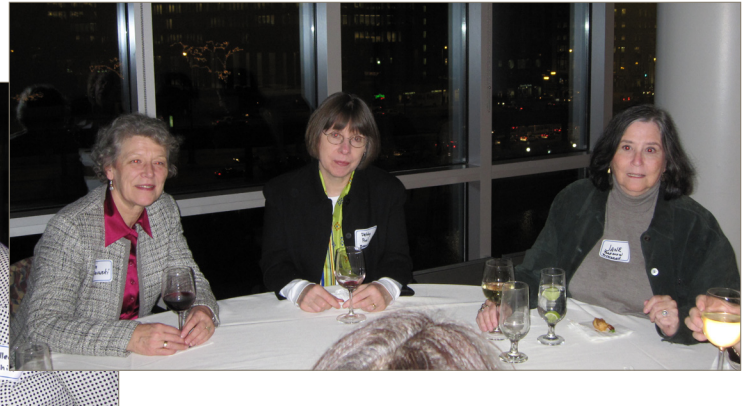
The event was indeed "intimate" and there was ample access to Ellen before and after dinner. I found her to be intelligent, down to earth and confident. It was a nice mix of prepared questions and impromptu thoughts from many in the audience.



# Members Reception



## Members Reception Photos



## **Networking 101: Ask the Questions You're Afraid to Ask Anywhere Else!**

**February 5**

We're trying something different for the February First Friday lunchtime - a webinar covering the basics of networking from soup to nuts. This is the place to bring those nagging questions you've always wanted to ask OR to make sure you're doing it "right". Come prepared with your tips and best practices too! Read more and register.

## **The Accidental Entrepreneur - Part I**

**February 25**

Would you recognize a business opportunity if you saw it? Caryl Pedersen, Professor of Entrepreneurial Finance and UCWBG VP, Programs, is again leading the discussion in her popular Entrepreneur Series. Caryl has bought, nurtured and sold several business in her career. Come hear her insights on finding and recognizing business opportunities. Read more and register.

## **Union League Club Author Luncheons**

UCWBG is partnering with the Union League Club of Chicago to present newly published books that we think will be of interest to our members. The presentations are held at the Union League Club from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at 65 West Jackson in Chicago.

## **Monday, February 8 Amazon Bestseller**

**David M. Walker, Comeback America**

Comeback America shows how we can return to our founding principles of fiscal responsibility and stewardship for future generations. The book includes bold ideas to control spending, save Social Security, dramatically alter Medicare, and simplify the tax code—all taking into account the Obama Administration's current efforts, which receive never-before-published assessments both complimentary and critical. Read more and register.

## **Women of Influence Tour of Graceland Cemetery**

**June 26**

Come join UCWBG for a tour of Graceland Cemetery conducted by the Chicago Architecture Foundation.

During Chicago's explosive growth, women played an enormously influential role in the city's development. However, many have never heard of the women who conducted the Underground Railroad, purchased avant-garde paintings that became the basis of Modern Art, created the juvenile justice system, or broke up a plot to kill President Abraham Lincoln. These are just a few of the stories behind the some of the remarkable women buried at Graceland Cemetery.

## **West Networking Group Announces 2010 Events**

**Saturday, Feb 6, 9:00 am**, Egg Harbor Restaurant, Hinsdale

**Saturday, Apr 10, 11:30 am**, Nordstrom's Cafe in Oak Brook Shopping Center

**Saturday, Jul 17, 9:00 am**, Blueberry Hill Breakfast Cafe

**Saturday, Oct 2, 11:30 am**, The Clubhouse in Oak Brook Shopping Center

**Saturday, Dec 4, 11:00 am**, Seasons Restaurant in Long Grove

## **Networking 201: Strategic Networking - March 5**

We're starting the year with a different format for our First Friday lunches – webinars! To follow up on our February session on Networking basics, in March we're bringing you Networking 201: Strategic Networking. This is the place to bring your questions/concerns AND to find out how to maximize the ROI on your networking time. Be prepared to share YOUR tips and best practices too!

This session builds upon last month's Networking 101 Session, which covered the basics. This month, we raise the bar and look at:

- Strategic networking
- Networking
- Best practices for networking follow-up
- Applications from Marketing Contact Strategy
- Questions, best practices and resources from everyone on the call