Off to the Races!

2018 Region 5 Spring Forum

Chapter 25 Kentucky hosted an unforgettable Region 5 Spring Forum.

BY WAYNE H. KIMBEL

Fancy hats, fancier outfits, jockey silks and silkier bourbon. Combine this with quality meetings and you get an unforgettable 2018 Region 5 Spring Forum. Chapter 25 Kentucky, the host of this Forum, wanted the event to be memorable, fun, unique and contain plenty of time to address critical business. This Region Forum certainly met all of those goals.

Opportune Timing

Held on April 27th to April 28th, the Region Forum overlapped with the opening day of Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby. The Downs kicked off its spring racing meet with a Downs After Dark event on April 28th and what could be better timing for a Region 5 Forum? Chapter 25 reserved a special room in the Jockey Club area of the Downs, which provided a comfortable setting with strategic access to the betting window and the mezzanine viewing area near the finish line. The venue was located directly above a gala fundraising event held for a local arts organization spearheaded by Louisville native, Jennifer Lawrence. The movers and shakers were certainly there that night.

There were 90 registrants for this event, which was the highest attendance ever witnessed by a Chapter 25 sponsored Forum. Members and guests came from many miles away to experience the event (and perhaps some to escape the cold). We were very pleased to welcome some of Headquarters staff, specifically IRWA's CEO, Mark Rieck and Manager of Field Operations, Tim Drennan. We also welcomed Jeff Jones, SR/WA, IRWA's

IRWA's CEO Mark Rieck, President-Elect Jeff Jones, SR/WA, and Manager of Field Operations Tim Drennan.

These ladies embraced the "Southern Belle" tradition of Kentucky Derby hats.

Greg Mathias, SR/WA, Karen Alexander, John Alexander, SR/WA, Becky Merkley, SR/WA, and Bill Merkley.

Region 5's Forty for Forty Scholarship Recipients.

President-Elect and Pat Petitto, SR/WA, past International President. They not only provided their valuable input on business topics, but also joined in the fun and fellowship. We thank them for their presence and leadership at the Region Forum.

At Friday evening's hospitality and free bowling event, attendees got to loosen up and share a relaxing time with fellow professionals. Old friends and associates reunited, while new friendships launched as well. We were impressed with the skills and savvy of many members, especially Jeff Jones and Pat Petitto.

A Grand Memorial

James Donald Brent, SR/WA, a beloved member of IRWA, passed away in late 2017 to the dismay of many that had associated with him, especially members of Chapter 25. His warmth and generosity always gave good feelings to all.

In honor of Don and his 50+ years of involvement with IRWA, Chapter 25 sponsored the last race of that night's card and named it the James Donald Brent Memorial. The race ended in a dead heat, which was just the way Don would have liked it. We were happy that Mark Rieck and Jeff Jones could join others in the Winner's Circle after the race, as Don would certainly have liked that too.

A Group Effort

As all volunteers for Chapter events know, hosting a Region Forum doesn't just happen by hoping for the best. A core committee of dedicated folks generously gave their time and talent to ensure that all the details were secure and that the needs and interests of attendees were given proper attention. A big thank you to everyone involved, as well as the significant others that supported them in the process.

For me, this Forum brought together all the elements for a successful event. Fellowship, learning, service and enjoyment were all part of the Forum. As a Louisville local, it was great to see members enjoying the weekend. I hope that everyone in attendance felt that their time was well-spent and left with fond memories of their visit. ✪

Wayne is the International Director for IRWA's Chapter 25. He has worked with the Louisville Water Company for 19 years as a Property Specialist, handling all real property dispositions including easement and fee simple acquisitions, as well as planning assistance for projects.