

The Galaxy

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Gary Pudles

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Featured Snuggie:

Gary Pudles

It HAS to be fun!

Gary Pudles is a familiar figure at SNUG and throughout the industry. He is always willing to lend a hand, to help someone out, and to give of his time and talents – and those of his employees. Whether he is giving a presentation – complete with dollars and sense —or acting as auctioneer for one worthy cause after another, or sharing information behind the scenes, he is willing to put himself out for the folks in our industry. His unselfishness in these regards has helped most of us in one way or another.

“I want to give back! I have had incredible gifts bestowed on my life,” Gary Pudles exclaimed. “I believe that on my worst day I still have so many more blessings than many people have on their best day!” When you think of the strife, and the life conditions in the world, many of us in the answering service business do indeed have incredible blessings; some of us recognize that more than others and use that knowledge to have fun with their lives. Gary is one of those people.

“I DO have fun,” he acknowledged. “I enjoy every single day! I have a great time with my family, friends, and businesses. I take calculated risks and sometimes I just take great risks, but most of the time things turn out well.” Simply being in this industry involved a series of risks that many people would not have taken, but look where Gary is now.

Most people know that Gary worked for Muzak in Washington for about five and a half years. The company provided services to over 3000 businesses in the DC area installing and maintaining music and sound systems. “It didn’t dawn on my while I was working for Muzak that we were actually a customer of the kind of business I would later own,” he said, “but answering service was a part of my business life even then. I would go into work and review the fax from the night before which showed the service calls that came in. Messages were on the old thermal-fax paper and I would mark it up and give different pieces of it to each department for their follow-up. I was a consumer of answering services and I like to think that gave me some insight as to the service quality I wanted to provide.”

“In 1996 my ex-wife and I packed up our children and moved to Philadelphia as my job

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Gary Pudles, cont...

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changed. I wasn't particularly happy in my new job and I ended up browsing the internet looking for a business to buy. I wanted something with stability, flexibility and recurring income. I found something similar to Muzak and put together an investment plan to purchase that business. At the eleventh hour the plan failed to jell. This was in January, 1998 and I made an agreement with my ex-wife that if I had not found something to buy by August 1 would go back to being an employee somewhere. That was something I really did not want to do, so my search to find a company to purchase became almost all consuming, so much so my friends started calling me "the Lee Iaccoca of nothing".

Gary found several answering services for sale that were within an hour of his home thanks to Steve Michaels and Connections Magazine. He wrote out a business plan and set out to find investors. He saw an article in Connections about Bill Robertshaw and contacted him at his office in Princeton, N.J. "Something 'clicked' for us almost immediately," Gary acknowledged, and a friendship was born. "After our first meeting I went back home to put my plans into effect while trying to convince Bill to invest in my new venture. Ultimately I couldn't tie in all the numbers for this venture and I knew that the bank was not going to lend me the money I needed to make the purchase I wanted. By now I had been out of work for five months and it was time to do something. That August 1 deadline was looming so I



Mel and Gary at Smart CEO

called Mr. Robertshaw and asked if I could come to see him. After some more great conversation, he offered to sell me a service in Allentown PA. He named a price and I said, "I don't have that much money." Ultimately, I wrote Bill a check for just about all the money I had in the world, then I had to ask him not to cash it until Tuesday, because I needed to move the cash into the account. I used my knowledge of the law and business transactions to write a six or seven line agreement and just like that, we were partners! After six plus months of unemployment, I was now the President of AnswerNet, a name that I had secured prior to our negotiations. I had 20 employees and we were billing about \$50,000.00 per month. Incredible!"

"Bill had offered me the use of an empty office in his Princeton building and I thankfully

(Continued on page 3)

Gary Pudles, cont...

(Continued from page 2)

took him up on the offer. It figured it would keep us close while I was learning the business. About a week later, Bill told me about another service for sale out on the west coast." Using the first service as collateral Gary ALMOST had enough for the purchase. "I was about \$100,000.00 short so I asked the banker if he did Home Equity Loans. He did, and within days I had another service!"

"What an exciting time that was," Gary laughed. "It was so much fun and it was so scary, good scary but still scary. By March 1, 2000 we had 30 companies and people in the industry knew who I was. Today AnswerNet is the largest privately held answering service in the world. It boggles the mind. I could never have done it without Bill Robertshaw opening the door. His strength in expense management has taught me so much. I had only basic knowledge of the answering service, and was able to leverage my other business experiences and legal skills with a willingness to work 18 hour days, but Bill provided that little extra that allowed me to be successful in the TAS industry."

Gary's passion for life extends to his family as well. Today Gary is engaged to his "best friend" Melanie (aka Mel) and together they have five children—two from his previous marriage (Jesse, 20 and Jana, 17) and three from hers (Nicole, 20, Elyse, 17, and Ryan, 17). "When we moved in together we had five kids all in high school. We were like the Brady Bunch on crack," Gary jokes. And now, Mel and Gary are less than 18 months from becoming empty nesters.



"We were like the Brady Bunch on crack..."

An appreciation for life and a love of people resonate throughout Gary's stories. "In my lifetime I have had many moments of clarity that have shown me what life is all about, and how to live it well," Gary mused. "I remember when I was in high school and was the only boy on the student council. I was unhappy about something that was happening at my prom. That evening one of the teachers noticed my angry attitude, stopped me near some beautiful flowers and asked, 'What's the matter, Gary? You are about to graduate, you are here on a beautiful night with a beautiful girl, be happy.' He made me see past the minor disappointment and taught me to always smell the flowers."

"It isn't always easy to move past disappointments but I have learned they come with life and we need to handle them with grace. I remember running for the ATSI Board of Directors, and I lost. It wasn't so much that I lost but I had done a lot to help ATSI and I felt disheartened that I lost to someone who had done little for the organization. I was devastated. Eventually my work was acknowledged by the organization and I went on

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Gary Pudles, cont...

(Continued from page 3)

to serve four years on the ATSI Board. I have spent a lot of time on ATSI over the years and I was incredibly proud when my friend Allan Fromm presented me with the ATSI's President's Award."

"One of my best ATSI experiences has been my involvement with the ATSI Owner's Forum program," Gary continued. "Betty Porter had donated money to begin the program, and although we had slightly different views of the way it should be formatted, this program has been very successful for ATSI, and more importantly for the members who have taken part in it. Every single person has benefited from what they learned and have gone on to run a more profitable company. And we had FUN participating in it."

"I have had great fun working with ATSI and CAM-X, being the master of ceremonies and the auctioneer for the fund raisers, for Breast Cancer and for the SNUG Education Foundation has been

"Running a business is FUN; running a multi-site, complex business is insane fun, it makes your head spin. It is all about forward thinking and calculated risk-taking, you just have to be willing to reach out and take that decision and make it yours and make it work."



Walk for the Cure

"It is all about love and fun, and fun and love and fun. I have a lot to be thankful for and lots of people to thank for helping me get to this point in my life."

a blast; I can't imagine anything more satisfying and exhilarating as being involved in those programs. FUN doesn't begin to describe it. And the cherished friendships that we form - they are fun, and so much more." Gary added, "Our industry friends form a network that is also a safety net, we are there for each other. I value and...truly the word cherish is the right word... some of my most cherished friendships are within the SNUG organization. I don't know what I would do without you."

"Running a business is FUN; running a multi-site, complex business is insane fun, it makes your head spin. It is all about forward thinking and calculated risk-taking, you just have to be willing to reach out and take that decision and make it yours and make it work. I have been amazed and grateful for the SmartCEO program, the Inc. 500 programs and the opportunities they have provided for me. To interview John Scully, the former CEO of both Apple and Pepsi, was incredible, what a thrill. None of these amazing things would have happened if I had not signed that check for my life savings and joined this incredible industry."

(Continued on page 5)

Gary Pudles, cont...

(Continued from page 4)

“Everything I do is designed to help companies run better – not my way – but by having a platform that will help people run their business the way they want to. I want to help build business processes and identify priorities. I want to help companies operate better because it is more FUN to have a successful business.” He enthused, “And a successful business isn’t that difficult to attain. In our industry being 20% profitable is enough for a good living. Being 40% profitable is fantastic, it’s more than fantastic it is great fun! And we are so lucky we can DO that!”

FUN... Gary Pudles is all about fun, “I AM about fun, life should be fun, I play fat guys tennis every Saturday and sing and play my drums in my basement when no one’s around...that’s fun too. I travel and that’s more fun. Recently, I’ve been to the International Startup Festival in Montreal, Mel and I went to Italy, and we took our family to Costa Rica and Mexico, and just recently at the SNUG conference in Newport Beach, Mel, Jana, Elyse and I went to jail! It was all great fun.”



Gary interviews John Sculley



“And my family, my wonderful ‘his and hers family is becoming our family”, Gary smiled, “My great kids and Mel’s great kids and how we all get along is fun! It is all about love and fun, and fun and love and fun. I have a lot to be thankful for

and lots of people to thank for helping me get to this point in my life. I wouldn’t trade my life with anyone and I can’t wait to see what tomorrow brings!”

Download the Best of the SNUG Conference

Whether you were able to attend SNUG or were there in sunny California but missed the session, You don't need to miss the information! The presentations are available for you on the SNUG website.

Getting the power points from the Team SNUG site is super easy!

1. Go to TeamSNUG.org -OR- TeamSNUG.com
2. Look for "Conference" in the navigation menu
3. CLICK "Agenda" in the conference category
There you will find a list of all the sessions from this year's conference
4. CLICK any session
Please note, not every session has a power point
5. CLICK the link under the session description in the "Attachments" section.

Here are a few samples of Power Point Presentations from this year's fantastic conference! There are lots more Power Points on the website – visit www.TeamSNUG.com to see for yourself what might make your business better!

Five Things to Consider Before Mining Your Soft Switch

by Victoria Nelles and Patty Ambrose



Scenarios

Scenario + Queue = Split Group

Scenarios are equal to the attribute portion of what was referred to as a split group in the Digital Switch.

Queues handle the assignment of calls to specific groups of Agents, Extensions, or Positions.



Base Scenarios

Base Scenario:

A pre-defined Scenario that other Scenarios can reference like a template. It will normally define most, if not all, of what the Soft Switch needs to do to process a call. What makes it functional as a "base" is that it uses variables and not specific values for things like Call Priority and Call Queue IDs.

StarTel Product Innovation—Next 12-24 Months

By Bill Lane



Unified Communications

- Pieces of UC in Place...
 - Integrated Email, SMS, Secure Messaging, Voice, Paging, Faxing, User Interface, VOIP, Solution built on standard protocols/APIs
- Pieces of UC, StarTel is/will be Working on...
 - "True" Multi-media Queuing
 - Queuing all forms of media for presentation to agent
 - Web Chat → piece of media missing
 - Automatic escalation via most efficient mode of communication with presence
 - Speech-to-Text (STT)
 - Text-to-Speech (TTS)
 - Video capability, i.e. full 3d communication



Unified Communications

- Purpose & Benefits of UC in the Enterprise
 - Seamless Integration of Technology
 - Tying together both real-time and non real-time media
 - Email, IM, SMS, Secure Messaging, Voice, Fax, Paging, etc.
 - Enabling Collaboration between Resources
 - People, places and things
 - Eradicating limitations caused by location, etc.
 - Increasing Efficiency of Operations
 - Intelligent routing to resources with required capabilities
 - Modular Approach to UC
 - Best of Class Apps Fitted Seamlessly
 - Example: Speech-to-Text (STT)

Startel State of the Union

By Bill Lane



Technological Leader

- Why Does it Matter that Startel be the Technological Leader?
 - Customer Investment Protection
 - Modular nature of how we have built our solution
 - Swop out switch, if needed
 - Swop out database (MSFT SQL Server v. Cloud Data Management System (CDMS) like NUODB, if needed
 - Integration and interoperability with 3d party solutions
 - Security – We've got your back!
 - Old systems inherently less secure
 - Features & Functionality Advantages
 - Hardware changes to accommodate S/W changes
 - Push/pull situation – but mostly S/W leads H/W

Go West Young Man—State of the Industry

By Bill Lane



Contact Center: Superset

- Are you a TAS, a Call Center, or a Contact Center?
- Is there a delta between the operations of each anymore?
 - Definition: TAS → You define
 - Definition: Call Center → You define
 - Definition: Contact Center → Definition on next slide
- Why bring it up? Because, Startel is moving toward becoming a **Unified Communication Vendor (UCV) for Contact Centers**. Contact centers are a superset of TAS and Call Center technology infrastructure. Which means by building what is needed for contact centers, we will be building what you need for TAS or Call Centers too.
- Opportunity build your business → Customer care for SMEs, LORGs, etc.



Contact Center Technologies

Contact Center = Customer Touch

- Communicating...However, Whenever, Whomever, Whatever, Wherever...collaboration is needed

Requires...

- Telephony infrastructure
- Multimedia contact routing and prioritization (Virtual routing applications for multisite)
- IVR – voice portals for self service apps – Speech enabled (TTS/STT)
- Presence tools
- Social media
- Outbound dialing – proactive contact
- Integration with CRMs
- Analytics/Reporting
- Web chat
- Video – live and prerecorded (Rachel)
- Self-service knowledgebase
- Workforce optimization
 - E-learning; workforce management, etc.
- Mobile customer service applications



Small v. Large Contact Centers

- Today, small & medium (SME) contact centers can deliver what customers demand just as well as large contact centers
- Software development has changed over last 30 years – open source libraries of code, advanced S/W development tools, i.e. C# & JavaScript, .NET Framework & Java, RAD, etc.)
- SME contact centers working with smaller UCVs can offer as good, or better, solution than the large contact centers
- Complex corporate IT environments out of necessity require customization and integration – SME contact centers hungry for business with reasonable pricing have a chance to succeed
 - Clinical Solutions example
- SME contact centers partnering with UCVs can offer the open source solutions large companies are looking for
- Vendor like Startel – we will help even the ball-field bringing success to both you and Startel



Keyboard v. Mouse v. Touch

- Keyboard v. Mouse v. Touch
- Right now, I assume most in room would agree that keyboard driven software is most efficient.
- But, what if the CRM design was such that touch screen could actually be quicker for your agents?
- Which requires less training – keyboard, or touch/mouse driven apps?
- What if a combination of touch screen, mouse and keyboard would be quickest?
- Why bring this up? Because the world is changing and Startel will provide what you need to change with it

Claim Jumping—Supervising and Mentoring Remote Agents

By Tom Reandeau

Monitoring

- **Watching the Room**
 - Old You could see people getting up to meander
 - New Dashboard shows them getting up
 - Old Quiet times seen in the room
 - New You need to use dashboard and statistical reports

Monitoring Cont...

- **Quality**
 - Old only had to listen to the mechanics of the call
 - New
 - Mechanics
 - Sound Quality
 - Back Ground Noise
 - Need to check several calls for background noise to verify on agents end

Hitting the VoIP Motherlode

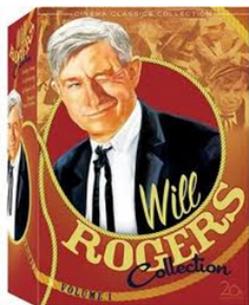
By Steve Newell



Hitting the VoIP Mother Lode

Steve Newell
Sales Manager

Will Rogers
Cowboy



SIP and New Technology

If SIP is an IP Address and These are IP Addresses...

Native SIP Soft Switch PBX (SOFT SWITCH) = 192.154.12.12

Amazon.com = 234.156.33.12

Chat = 196.323.42.12

Video conferencing = 212.344.56.7

Yelp! = 166.233 19.13

Twitter = 204.675.99.12

...Shouldn't they talk to each other?



SIP/VoIP and New Technology

Connect via Multimedia Queuing!

Native SIP Soft Switch = 192.154.12.12 –

Multimedia Queuing

Amazon.com = 234.156.33.12 *Click to Call*

Chat = 196.323.42.12 *Click to Chat*

Video conferencing = 212.344.56.7 *Click to Conference*

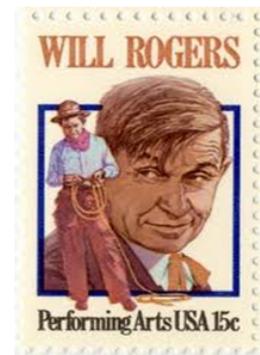
Yelp! = 166.233 19.13 *Respond to Yelp! Post*

Twitter = 204.675.99.12 *Respond to Twitter post*



SIP and Savings

“The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it in your pocket.”



Gold Fever—Positive Attitude Programs

By Donna West and April Kasza



- Burn out – the leading cause of turnover
- Agents primarily hear about mistakes; not triumphs
- \$\$\$ due to agent loss and training costs

Don't you want to go to a workplace where people are happy?



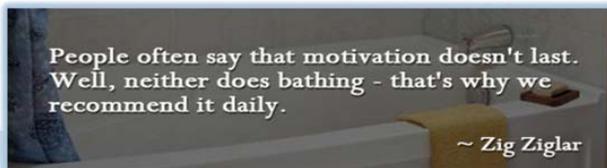
Positive Actions

- Employee Awards
- Mentions on Company Websites or Facebook
- Treasure Hunts
- Appreciation Cards and Personal Notes
- Love Notes in Startel Accounts, Cubbies, Emails
- SMILE – lots of smiles!!!



Positive Communication!

- Give a verbal compliment
- Write an email (include calls if possible)
- Visit with agents – coaching
- Chocolate!
- Pass along articles from The Galaxy, Connections or Constellation
- High Fives!
- Greet colleagues warmly



Paydirt! *Knowing Your Extras and Selling Them Too*

By Tim Jones



Bob (Owner)
Quick n' Easy Plumbing



The Situation:

- Does not have after-hours telephone coverage but he does offer 24/7 emergency service.
- Has numerous coupons and promotions available to new customers.
- Frequently gets complaints that his technicians are not very responsive and sometimes do not even call the customer.
- He has a main on call technician and a backup technician at any given time.

The Solution:

-Secure Messaging

-Web On Call Module

-TAA

-On Hold Music





DON'T BE STRESSED OVER NEW AGENT TRAINING!

SAVE TIME

Get your newly hired agents trained and answering in record time.

SAVE MONEY

Cut your training costs by implementing a proven system. The TeamSNUG W-BIT and HyperTrack system have been designed with maximum efficiency in mind.

FREE TRIAL

Contact Dan L'Heureux today to start your free, two-week trial of the TeamSNUG Web-Based Interactive Training system.

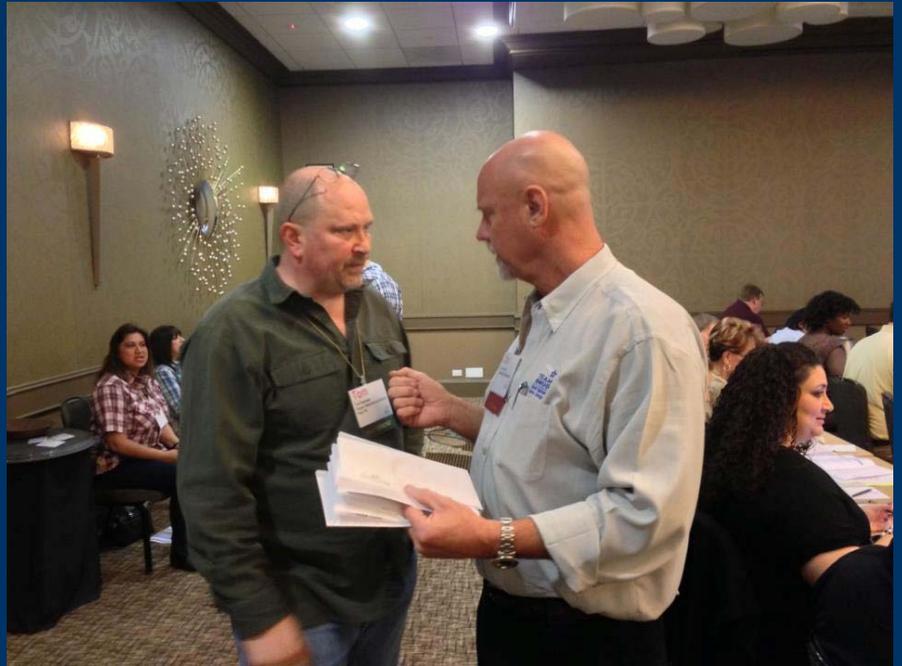
dan@callconsult.net



The SNUG Conference in Photo Review



Victoria "Spur" & Patty "Banjo" with their training day game faces on



Dan L'Heureux and outgoing TeamSNUG President Tom Reandeau going over some last minute details



TeamSNUG Secretary Peter Brousseau is all smiles



Startel CEO Bill Lane kicking off the 26th Annual TeamSNUG Conference.

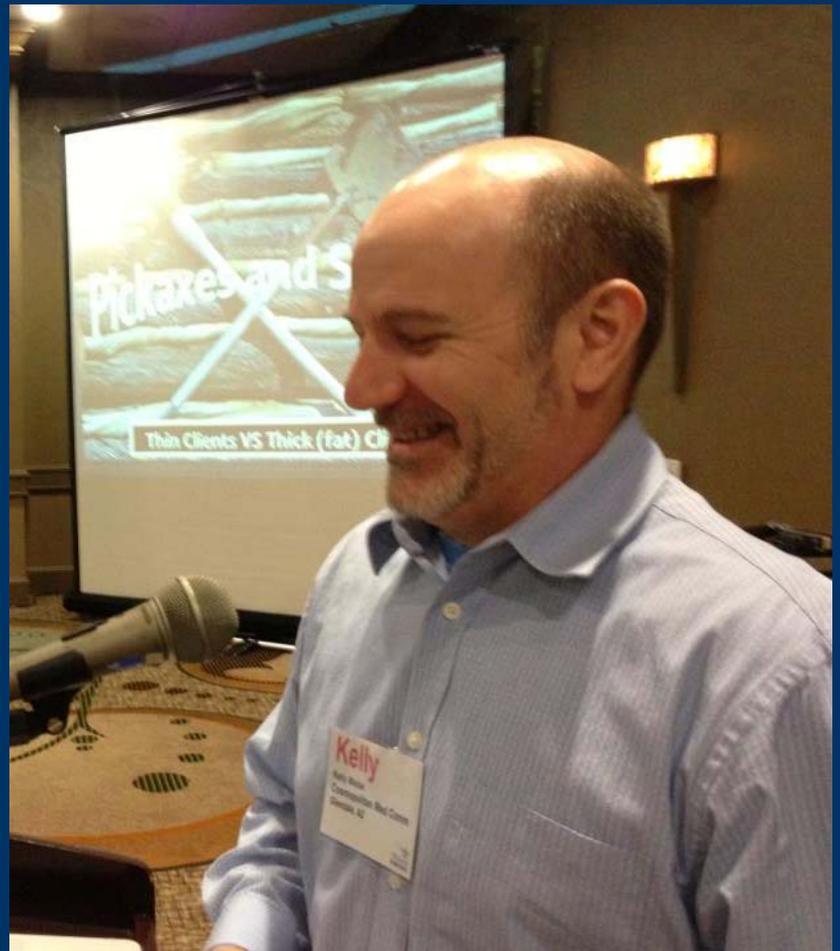
The SNUG Conference in Photo Review, cont...



Dirk Moeller discussing Formatting the CMC OnCall Scheduler during the lunchtime roundtables



Judge Vikki and Sheriff Trish locking up TeamSNUG President Tom Reandeu for his crimes at Startel's Event night



Kelly Weiss explaining the pros and cons of Thin Clients at the 26th Annual TeamSNUG Conference

The SNUG Conference in Photo Review, cont...



Christopher Osburn discussing the tools you need in your IT Toolkit



First Time Attendee Tim Jones discussing how to be a Custom Solutions Provider for your clients

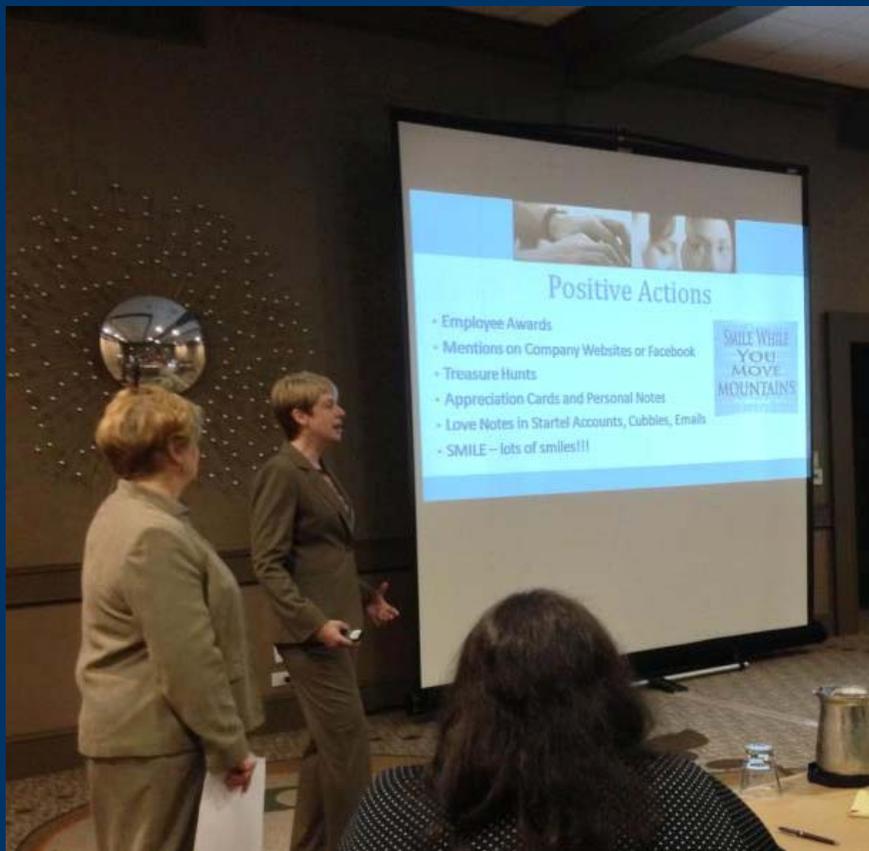


Special Guest, CAM-X Executive Director Linda Osip discussing the AOE program at the lunchtime roundtables

The SNUG Conference in Photo Review, cont...



Everyone lining up for Startel Training Day



April Kasza and Donna West on Positive Attitude Programs



Sherita Sin talking about the Elevator Of Excellence

Donna Berry Award Presentation to...

Peter Brousseau

by Tom Reandeau

"And last but certainly not least, I would like to recognize Peter Brousseau for his service on the Board this past year.

I don't mean to single you out, Peter but I'd like to take an extra minute if you don't mind to just point out how dynamic an individual Peter is. Peter has always been my 'Board Buddy' because he and I were elected to the Board at the same time.

"He works hard and plays hard. He has traveled the world to some of the most exotic locations."



"I'm telling you, you have no idea how hard this guy works, yet he's always available to answer a question or lend a hand."

I have always been secretly jealous of Peter. He works hard and plays hard. He has traveled the world to some of the most exotic locations. When you ask some people where they are going on their next vacation they might reply to the Islands or Disney or some other resort while Peter's response is usually 'I'm Going To Climb Mount Kilimanjaro' or 'I Am Going To Backpack Across Switzerland' or 'I Am Going To Train To Climb To Everest Basecamp'. Me? I'm lucky if I make it to the mall on a Saturday. He runs marathons for fun and is even training now for an Iron Man competition.

Peter also works hard. He started at MedCom as an agent and has worked his way up to be part of the management team. No matter what challenge he is presented with he always approaches it and gives it 100% EVEN when that challenge is being sent to an ATSI conference and questioning, as Chris Bell's proxy, during the business meeting why the Executive Director's job hasn't been bid out. One member of the board told Peter that Chris had 'sent him into the wolves den with a pork chop around his neck'. This earned him the nickname of 'Pork Chop Peter'.

In the world of SNUG, Peter has always been a familiar face. He has served on the Scholarship Committee, the Marketing Committee, the Technical Committee and, much to his disappointment and protest, served as this past year's Board Secretary. I'm telling you, you have no idea how hard this guy works, yet he's always available to answer a question or lend a hand.

If he were here I am sure Chris Bell would acknowledge that MedCom is certainly a better operation because of Peter's efforts. I am here to tell you that the Startel National Users Group, as well as our industry, is DEFINITELY better off because Peter is part of it."

Peter, that is why you have been chosen as the recipient of this year's Donna Berry Award!"

Congratulations to...

Christopher Berry

SNUG president's Scholarship Winner 2013

In a coincidence that rarely happens, Chris Berry of Mid State Communications, in Tennessee, was in the audience at the recent SNUG meeting when his name was announced as the major scholarship winner for 2013.

The very pleased young man came forward to be given his certificate for \$1,250.00. He was joined by Ryan Chinoski, the representative of Rochester Telemessaging, there to receive the certificate for Jesse Puvalowski who received the second place scholarship of \$1,000.00, and Stacy Polinsky of TelUs who received the third place scholarship for her son, Sam, for \$750.00.

The answers to several questions and the short essay that Chris wrote show in part why he was chosen for the honor. In answer to the question, "Why do you feel you should be awarded the TeamSNUG scholarship?" Chris wrote, "In the spirit of fairness, I don't believe that any single person should have more of a right to this than anyone else. It is not in my nature to say that I should get this over anyone else. It seems like a selfish act."

Describe yourself outside of the classroom.

"I am in a completely online course so activities within in the school are hard to complete. I am very involved with my child's activities both in and out of school, which includes Tae Kwon Do activities, and soccer, and I am involved with the local PTO. I work with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which Mid State Communications is a member. I enjoy playing Chess every chance I get and love to teach other people how to play. Being a veteran I also always try to get my children involved in support of Veterans. We have in the past written letters and sent packages to troops over seas in addition to supporting veterans through local events."

Describe any achievements for which you have been recognized.

"Startel Soft Switch Training Certification, assisted company in achieving the Small Business of the Year award from the Manchester Area Chamber of Commerce, Pioneered and Field tested the company's remote agent program."

Essay Question

Aristotle's quote "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit," is a very powerful idea. It is saying that we do not just do one act to show our excellence, but rather we keep performing acts of excellence. We cannot say we are experts in any field if we have only done it once. To truly show others and to have them believe in us, we have to consistently perform above and beyond. This holds true in the customer service world as well as any other.

In order for a customer to say that we are really excellent they have to see examples of it over and over again. If I give an out of this world experience on one contact but then the rest of the calls are mediocre they will not believe in our excellence and will be more likely to let others know that they do not believe in us.

It has been said that it takes 12 good interactions to make up for one bad interaction. After hearing this it is easy to see how making a habit of doing things the wrong way can seriously impact your customer's view of your company. This is why it is so vital that you practice excellence every day and in every customer interaction. Anything less is not truly excellence.



“Direct Quotes” from our Friends at Startel

Georgia Thompson

In her own words...

Everyone at Startel tries to help each other to ensure our customers receive the best service possible. So yes, at times, it can be challenging to work as effectively as we'd like, but I think we do a pretty good job overall!

Our BOMGAR remote access system allows Startel quick, secure and reliable access to a customer's Startel servers over the Internet for troubleshooting or maintenance.

In almost every company there are people working diligently behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly. They rarely have a public face, working as they do with issues that are more support for their teams than for their customers. But these people play an important role in the well-being of their company and in the lives of their co-workers. Such a person is Georgia Thompson, the Controller of Startel Corporation.

Galaxy:

You had some life experiences in your younger years that are truly unique; things that directed the course of your life dramatically. Tell us your adventures after high school.

Georgia:

Young Jewish Adults have the opportunity to live for free on a kibbutz in exchange for work and studying the language and culture of Israel. Kibbutz's are collective communities in Israel. I wanted something different, something exciting and I found it in a kibbutz called Heftziba in Jezrell Valley of Israel. Heftziba at the time I was there was mostly an agricultural community: citrus orchards, dairy, poultry and fish ponds. They also owned the patent and manufactured trickle irrigation systems. The community of Heftziba was a small village of bungalows nestled in the mountains, surrounded by trees and alive with birds. It was very peaceful. Kids live safely and young people from many difference countries were there to make that transition toward growing up. I worked in the manufacturing unit, the kitchen and the orchards mostly picking grapefruit which I grew very fond of. Turns out the grapefruits are very refreshing in very hot temperatures.

The first day I arrived I met an arrogant Brit named Kelvin, who was in charge of the volunteers. Volunteers are people from all over the world who come to the work at the Kibbutz in exchange for room and board. We did not like each other – right from the start! However, we found ourselves in the same classes, and taking part in the same activities. At one point I went on a short trip for about a week, and when I returned it was clear that there was something between us.

Eventually, I decided it was time to move on and I give my notice. I stopped over at Kelvin's bungalow to let him know I would be leaving in a few days, and to get directions from him since he had been there longer than I and knew his way around better. The next day we acknowledged our feelings for one another, but I still had to leave since I had given my notice. I was all packed and ready to go on my final day, when one of his friends rushed up and told me that Kelvin had asked me not to leave until he got there. He was working on the farm but he needed to see me before I left.

It was very romantic. We left together traveled to Egypt and then to England to meet his parents. We were planning to be married in England, but I became homesick and decided to return to the States instead.

Galaxy:

It must have been hard to walk away from a fairy tale. What did you do when you returned home?

(Continued on page 19)



Georgia Thompson, continued...

(Continued from page 18)

Georgia:

Before my trip to Israel, I worked as a waitress in Sonoma County. A Greek friend of mine opened a restaurant and I managed it. Once I got back from England I told my friend I would like to open a restaurant together. Months later we opened an Italian restaurant making fresh pastas and salads. Eventually, I began doing the bookkeeping and discovered I really loved the financial part of the business.

Then the rest of the fairy tale came true. Kelvin came to the United States and we were married in 1983. A new marriage and working about 80 hours a week in a restaurant just won't work, so I sold my share. We moved to Orange County, California. My husband began working at Northrup and I worked part time and returned to school to earn an Associated Arts Degree with a certificate in Bookkeeping in 1993.

After I got my degree I worked for Air California; it was my first real corporate job and I was SO excited, but ultimately I was so disappointed! Not only did they not appreciate their employees, they felt that their employees should be grateful that they were allowed to work there. "Free air fare" A short time later I left there and began working for Taco Bell. It was a smaller company back then with only



Kelvin and Georgia enjoy the great outdoors

2,000 stores. When I left (because they moved the accounting department out of state) in 1994 there were 7,000 stores and they were still growing at a nice rate.

Galaxy:

What was happening in your fairy tale while all this was going on?

(Continued on page 20)

"Then the rest of the fairy tale came true. Kelvin came to the United States and we were married in 1983."

"After I got my degree I worked for Air California; it was my first real corporate job and I was SO excited, but ultimately I was so disappointed! Not only did they not appreciate their employees, they felt that their employees should be grateful that they were allowed to work there."

Georgia Thompson, continued...

(Continued from page 19)

Georgia:

We were busy. I come from a large family so there was always something going on. Our son Isaac was born in 1986, and our daughter Naomi followed in 1988, so all the fun and responsibilities of family life were woven in with my career. Kelvin opened his own company stripping and refinishing furniture and restoring antiques. I continued working most of that time, and it is surprising how much I learned that contributed to where I am today.

My boss, who was the controller at Taco Bell moved to Del Taco and took me along with her. During that time I earned my bachelor's degree. All in all we worked together about 10 years and I learned a lot of the practical side of accounting.

Galaxy:

How did you learn so much about software, and computers and this industry?

Georgia:

I had once interviewed with a controller for a position and about nine months later I got a call from this person who remembered me which led to an good offer for a job with Software Company that was really a merger of several small companies.



Sibling love: Naomi and Isaac

Unbeknownst to me when I accepted the position, they were really setting themselves up to be purchased. When I first realized this I was very upset especially since I left a good job. In fact I remember calling my husband telling him I had made a huge mistake. But it turned out to be the best because some of the people in the small companies left and since I was eager to move up – every time they asked me if I could handle something more, I said “yes” Eventually I took over the accounting department. I did the sales tax, and stock options, and payroll, and SEC Filings, I learned how to do it all! The

controller was a really good mentor and since there were companies from all over the country, I got a very broad, practical, hands-on education.

Then I briefly went to work for a company called Dyntak, and was introduced to the cloud. I went to their sales meeting held in Las Vegas, and what an eye opener! It was my first exposure to the cloud concept and companies like Microsoft, Dell Cisco and Motorola were presenting their products. The company brought on new investors and was able to streamline many of their complicated financing processes and I was laid off.

(Continued on page 21)

Georgia Thompson, continued...

(Continued from page 20)

Soon after I applied for the position at Startel. I met Sheryl and Bev first and then I was interviewed and hired by Bill Lane a couple days later.

Galaxy:

Was it a comfortable transition? Was it all you hoped it would be?

Georgia:

Oh yes! You have no idea! I love it at Startel. I was comfortable here right from the start! I understood Bill's vision and direction for this company. I enjoy being part of a small company. We have a wonderful quality of life here! Bill has a "Let's do it and get it done" attitude and he trusts you. We never want to let him down. We work more, and are more involved, and more creative because of that trust. He is honest and open and compassionate, and he is funny! He has a good sense of humor.

And Sheryl is amazing! I wish there were more Sheryl in the world. Sheryl's management style is very impressive. She never belittles anyone, she encourages but at the same time helps you to think things through. She sets a warm tone for the company, I was hired in September, 2010 as the Accounting Manager but my new title is Controller.



The gorgeously-restored 1938 Olds

Galaxy:

Congratulations! We have come a long way on your road to Startel – what was happening back in the fairy tale while all this was going on?

Georgia:

Our son and daughter were growing up and moving out – but right now they are both back home! Isaac went to college and majored in political science at UC Santa Barbara; he tried a few jobs, but has decided to return to school so that he can teach political science. He wants that satisfaction that learning and teaching bring.

Naomi went to Florida to visit a friend and ended up moving there and going to school at an industrial arts college. She eventually moved to Texas and discovered that she is extremely good at collections – in fact, she was so good at it that she was bringing in more than double what the others were bringing in to the company. She left to go to another company and discovered that the job had been severely misrepresented so she decided the time was right to come home for a while.

Kelvin and I are really looking forward to having all the family together again! It will be crazy, with our

(Continued on page 22)

Georgia Thompson, continued...

(Continued from page 21)

daughter's return, her parrot, and our four dogs. We must really enjoy the ciao's. We have people over at least twice a week for dinner. My husband likes to get his friends together about once a week and they trade off cooking that evening. I keep lots of food and ingredients on hand to encourage creativity! They have the freedom to make whatever comes to mind and we have some of the BEST meals! Friday's are design your own pizza night we have come up with some really great ideas.



One of many in Georgia's clock collection

Galaxy:

Aside from your love of cooking, what else do you like to do away from work?

Georgia:

We have a 1938 Oldsmobile that we restored and it is the pride of our lives. We also have at least a hundred clocks if not more that we mostly inherited from my father. He was a collector of clocks and we are used to having them around us as small pieces of art. We also like to hike together on the weekends. But mostly I have a love walking. I spend most of my lunch time walking and sometimes walking and reading.

Galaxy:

Sounds dangerous! How do you see where you're going?

Georgia:

I don't seem to have any trouble – but I did almost walk into a tree when I was texting. I guess I shouldn't text and walk!

Galaxy:

This is your chance to tell all of SNUGland something you really want them to know. Go.

Georgia:

Working at Startel is very special. The people are just wonderful! Because this is a small company we work just a little harder and wear many hats. We are always here for each other, and we develop a closeness that larger companies just don't have. The quality of life here is just the best.

Galaxy:

This is a refrain that your customers never tire of hearing, and we hear it every time we interview a Startel team member. That camaraderie spills over to your clients, too. We feel like we are a part of your family!

Now, how do you want to say "Goodbye"?

Georgia:

I enjoy being part of the Startel Team. Please contact me if you have any accounting questions. I would love to help.

Georgia
xxxxx

From the Executive Director

Well SNUGGIES,

Another year under our belts; the 26th “Discovering the Gold” annual conference is one for the books (see full report elsewhere in this issue of Galaxy) As usual, it was a time for friends, business associates, peers to gather together to see and hear ‘what is going on’. True we live in a high tech world; only 15 short years ago, many if most, did not have email and if they did, it wasn’t the primary point of contact. The internet was out there but again, people still read newspapers for news rather than going on-line or receiving it on their multi-function phones. (I still do read the newspaper the old fashioned way, but that is a different story)

My point is in this high pitch, fast action and expectation times it is still very important to get together; people-prefer-people. If you missed the meeting, I’m sorry for you and sorry of us. TeamSNUG needs every one of its members because “WE” are YOU.

Mark your calendars now for 2014! We’ll be at the Hotel Sofitel in downtown Philadelphia March 30th to April 2nd. We do have a limited number of rooms for Saturday the 29th so if you are interested in arriving early please call the hotel to make your room reservations. They don’t have a website set up for us yet so in the meantime call – 215-569-8300 asking for the Startel National User Group rate of \$175 King, \$195 Double/Double. We expect there will be training before the conference on Sunday although at press time, those details have not been set.

It is a Beautiful 4-Star Hotel; The Sofitel Philadelphia blends French Elegance with American style providing a refined environment for upscale business and leisure travel in the City Center, just minutes from the airport and historic attractions. This sophisticated hotel near Rittenhouse Square serves as the cornerstone of the new French Quarter and abundant restaurants. Offering the height of contemporary comfort and convenience the hotel provides luxury accommodations, Pennsylvanian charm meets European Chic with breathtaking elements such as a geometric lobby floor design inspired by Shaker Quilts and crafted from several types of stone. Select from 306 elegant rooms on 14 floors all featuring Sofitel’s luxurious feather-top and duvet sleep system – SoBed. And if you happen to be so inclined you might find one or two fellow SNUGGIES at the Liberte Lounge...Check it out at: <http://www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2741-sofitel-philadelphia/index.shtml>



You won’t want to miss the face-to-face connection opportunities with your TeamSNUG friends

Wishing you the best in business,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Dan L'Heureux'.

Dan L’Heureux – Executive Director



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- ⇒ Articles
- ⇒ Letters
- ⇒ News Releases
- ⇒ Comments

To Dan@CallConsult.net

SNUG will update you with the latest information and news in-between issues, so be sure to keep an eye out for messages via the e-mail list serve and fax.

The President's Letter

Dear Snuggies,
IT ALL STARTED WITH A PHONE CALL

Well, *technically* it started as an e-mail but more on that in the next paragraph. First, a little history. While my company has been a SNUG member since 2001, it wasn't until the moment that we cut over to our Startel CMC that I, as an owner, came into my own. And I truly mean 'the moment' for the minute the proverbial switch was flipped, the Startel CMC transformed not only my business but also the way I interacted with my team, my clients and the people & Associations within our wonderful industry.



Now... back to the e-mail I mentioned. Not long ago, I was debating whether to hire a dedicated salesperson to help ease the burden of managing our sales pipeline. So, I did what a lot of us have done in similar situations and took advantage of one of the greatest tools at our membership's disposal: The TeamSNUG listserv. I sent the standard "*How Did You Handle...?*" e-mail and I received several responses all with great ideas. However, it was one e-mail in particular that changed my existence in the SNUG community. "*Call me and I'll be happy to discuss it with you*" was all it said. The e-mail was from the Director of Business Development for Answer 1 Communications and TeamSNUG Past President Terri Paffile.

I called Terri who was gracious enough to spend some time bestowing some of her wisdom and experience. Then some words came out of her mouth I wasn't expecting... "*You Should Run For The SNUG Board*". The first thought that ran through my mind was "*Why?*" as I wasn't sure what I could possibly bring to the table. Shortly after I got off the phone with Terri, April Kasza called and reiterated the fact that I should run. I was touched that two people I hold in high regard thought that I would be able to make a valuable contribution to our Organization (*either that or no one else wanted to run but we'll go with the first for now*). As the story goes, I ran, was elected and have enjoyed every moment of the past few years I have served on the Board. Through my membership in SNUG I have made many friends, solved operational conundrums and propelled my business upward even during a down economy.

The point is this... your membership in the Startel National Users Group brings with it a tremendous amount of value. Yes, we have great products like the SOL and W-BIT (*we really need to get better at naming things*) and great services like the listserv, certification and our annual conference. All of these things are designed to help you get the most out of your business. But the best way [*and some may say 'the only way'*] to get the most out of your TeamSNUG membership is to **GET INVOLVED!**

We are an amazing organization busting at the seams with talented people. My charge to you during my term is to take advantage of everything your membership has to offer and for you and your team to get involved. Participate in positive discussions on the listserv, host a webinar, train your staff with the W-BIT, attend Conference and yes, even make a run for the Board.

I am honored to serve as your TeamSNUG President and am happy to share with you my experiences and ways you can get the most out of your membership. Remember, it all starts with a phone call (*or e-mail*). Hit me up!

Love & Handstands,

Drew Ritter