

# FRONT & CENTER

INFORMATION AND EVENTS FROM THE GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER



## Educating Georgia

Georgia PTA members' yearly gathering at the GICC



## Focus

Introducing the College Park Destination Marketing Organization



## Spectacular and Spotless

Seven years later and still looking like new

## Industry Spotlight

### Q&A with Vinnie Polito: 2011 Chairman, International Association of Expositions and Events

VINNIE POLITO directs his own trade show consultancy and production company, VP International. He has held senior leadership positions in the trade show industry for more than 20 years. He developed COMDEX, among many show brands, and spent most of the past decade with Reed Exhibitions, most recently responsible for the launch of its healthcare and life sciences division. He is the 2011 Chairman of IAEE.

#### F&C. What is the state of the trade show industry?

**Polito.** We are performing well, compared to the overall U.S. economy, growing at a rate of 2.4 percent this year, which is about three times that of the U.S. GDP. Still, the industry is vulnerable. Our outlook is one of restrained optimism until we see consistent and meaningful growth in the global economy.



Vinnie Polito

We need to be more sophisticated and passionate than ever. One example is our marketing. It has to be more precise, more targeted. Our messaging has to be extraordinarily segmented, no generic messages. In terms of our passion, almost all exhibitors say "no" at first, so you have to have the determination and commit the resources to continue to pursue those companies.

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# Antiques Roadshow Travels to the GICC



At ANTIQUES ROADSHOW in Atlanta, this guest (right) is all smiles after learning about a chair he purchased more than 50 years ago. Made mainly of mahogany, it's called a corner chair or "round-about chair" and features cabriole legs and claw and ball feet. Appraiser J. Michael Flanigan (left) valued the circa 1760-1780 piece of furniture between \$250,000 to \$300,000. © 2011 WGBH. Jeff Dunn for WGBH.

A TULSA, OKLAHOMA cane carver was watching a television news report on Mother Teresa in the late 1980s, and wondered if she might get around better with one of his walking sticks. So he set about his craft, and shipped the finished cane to her home base in Calcutta, India. So appreciative was the missionary nun whose works were recognized with a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, that she wrote and mailed the carver a letter including an original prayer and a small drawing showing him resting in the palm of the hand of God. The carver was to see his work one more time, again in television coverage, this time of Sister Teresa's funeral in 1997. The cane was leaning against a wall in a corner just a few feet from the nun's coffin.

"He had tears in his eyes as he was telling me the story, and I had tears in my eyes listening to it," said *Antiques Roadshow* Producer Jill Giles.

Stories like the carver's – and a more recent one of another Tulsa native who showed up with Chinese rhinoceros horn cups that were appraised in the neighborhood of \$1.5 million – are what drive more than 10 million weekly viewers to *Antiques Roadshow*, which has aired continuously since 1979 in the United Kingdom and since 1997 in the United States.

"It's smart reality TV," emphasized Marsha Bemko, the show's executive producer. "Through the stories behind

the items, viewers learn about the history and culture of the United States and places around the world. Viewers learn about antiques and they live vicariously through what people discover hidden in their attics, but the stories are what really drive the show."

(continued on page 2)

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– MARSHA BEMKO, Executive Producer, *Antiques Roadshow*

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US POSTAGE  
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PERMIT 96  
MARIETTA GA

Georgia International Convention Center  
2000 Convention Center Concourse  
College Park, GA 30337



# Antiques Roadshow Travels to the GICC



(continued from page 1)

## FROM ATTICS AND BASEMENTS

The show and its stories were in Atlanta and the GICC for an August 6 taping that hosted 6,000 people carting about 10,000 myriad items: paintings, pottery, porcelain, pop art and assorted potpourri. They flocked to the GICC in hopes that one of the 70 or so appraisers who travel with the show, from category-specific experts from esteemed auction houses like Sotheby's to independent generalists, would discover an unexpected treasure among their once discarded items.

Atlanta was the last of six cities to host the *Roadshow* this summer. Each of the six will yield three shows for airing during the 2012 *Antiques Roadshow* television season, which runs from January through June. In each city, applicants vie for one of 3,000 pairs of tickets, which are awarded by random drawing, and the lucky recipients line up early on a Saturday morning with their items and stories and hopes.



All photos © 2011 WGBH. Jeff Dunn/WGBH

This historical treasure originally belonged to the guest's (right) great-great-great grandfather, and is a cavalry officer's sword—the rarest type of Civil War sword. It has a sand-cast guard, leather handle, with copper wire, and was made in Macon, Ga. Appraiser Rafael Eledge (left) assigned it an impressive insurance value of \$50,000.

Giles noted. About 90 of what came in August 6 were selected for shooting, and about 20 of those will be featured during the three Atlanta-based shows.

## THE "PERFECT" VENUE

"The GICC is logistically perfect," said Giles, who heads up site selection for the travelling show. "It is the most convenient facility we've ever used – and we're talking about more than 100 cites."

She pointed to the generous parking, and the fact that the entire building is on the ground level so no one need slide an Indian prayer rug down the banister of an escalator or cram a chifforobe through an elevator door. The location at the doorstep to the Atlanta airport and the on-site hotels represent significant conveniences to the staff of 125 professionals who accompany the show from its home base at WGBH-TV in Boston.

"And the people are incredibly gracious. They have worked with us in every way possible and made the whole process seamless, simple."

So what was the most astounding item and story that day at the GICC? We're as much in the dark as the show producers were the day before – and will be until we tune into our local PBS station again this year for the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive U.S. season of *Antiques Roadshow*. ■



Appraiser Peter Shemonsky (right) tells this guest (left) about her heirloom 1870 Tiffany necklace. Originally purchased at Tiffany's in New York by the guest's great-grandparents during their honeymoon, the design has a Japanese influence and is probably 18K gold. Shemonsky gave the necklace a sparkling value of \$40,000 to \$50,000.



Susan Olson event coordinator with PTA attendees

# Educating

## Georgia PTA members gather at the GICC

**T**HROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) have played a key role in our nation's schools. In Georgia, the statewide PTA has been at work for more than a century advocating for children and promoting quality education. At its annual meeting at the GICC this summer, the Georgia PTA celebrated 105 years advocating for students by bringing together all concerned parties – teachers, school officials, parents and legislators, everyone who participates in the decisions that impact public education – with the goal and mission of helping students maximize their years in school to become productive adults.

Like most organizations, the difficult economy has forced the Georgia PTA to find ways to make its annual meeting more cost-efficient without sacrificing substance. That has resulted in combining what previously had been two separate meetings, the convention and a leadership training program. According to Sheila Cornelius, immediate past president of the Georgia PTA, that meant a broader, richer program for all to share. This year's event, attended by about 1,400 members, included classes on such subjects as health and wellness and contemporary communications, including social media, as well as a program of speakers and sessions designed to "help us improve our networking skills and do a better job

advocating for students, all with the goal and mission of helping students achieve more and making them better learners."

Attendees learned more about leading-edge programs seeking to "bridge the achievement gap among students across the country." Georgia was an early adopter of Common Core Standards, now implemented in all but two states, a national program that seeks to standardize curriculum across the country to ensure students everywhere are learning equally. Parents also learned how to use the Longitudinal

Data System to track their child's grades, test results and homework assignments online, and to see how they compare with other students around the country.

Those and other improvement initiatives are giving Georgia educators more to boast of these days, including one of the highest percentages of students who take the Scholastic Aptitude Test as their college entrance exam.

Cornelius is also pleased to applaud Georgia PTA Event Coordinator Susan Olson and the GICC for their work to constantly improve their annual meetings.

"It's a real pleasure working with the GICC staff because they listen to our concerns and do whatever they can to address them. We have been meeting here since 2004, and every year the level of professionalism and anticipation of our needs increases. The facility is so convenient to people coming in from around the state, and Susan and the staff work so well together, tweaking the meeting each year to make it that much more comfortable." ■

**"It's a real pleasure working with the GICC staff because they listen to our concerns and do whatever they can to address them."**

— SHEILA CORNELIUS,  
Past president of the  
Georgia PTA



on (1),  
director,



*PTA members  
enjoying the  
Friday night  
banquet*

# g Georgia

GICC for their annual conference and training.



*Georgia PTA Board of  
Directors with Georgia's  
First Lady Sandra Deal  
and State School  
Superintendent John Barge  
with National PTA and  
other Georgia dignitaries*

*Debbie Snyder, PTA  
Office Manager,  
greeting attendees  
at registration*



**All 53 PTA congresses across the U.S. participate in Reflections, a student cultural arts program. Georgia submits winners from four divisions in six categories – dance and choreography, film and video production, literature,**

**music, photography, and visual arts – to the national competition; this year, 11 Georgia students were national PTA winners. The 2011 Georgia PTA meeting showcased the state's winners in the photography and visual arts categories.**



**FOCUS**

by Hugh Austin

## Introducing the College Park Destination Marketing Organization

**W**E HAVE ANOTHER MEANINGFUL commitment by our City of College Park, owner and operator of the GICC, and our local hotel community that will further expand our role and reputation as an international convention destination. Mayor Jack Longino and our city council approved the establishment of the College Park Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) to promote the city, and in particular, the GICC and our local hotel properties. The DMO will be overseen by an 11-member, city-appointed board consisting of hospitality professionals, local residents, a local restaurateur and local hotel general managers. Their goal will be to not only promote but continue to enhance what we offer our visitors.

The mission of the College Park DMO is to generate and stimulate economic development and impact for the City of College Park by marketing facilities of the community as a preferred tourism, convention and business destination, and to promote and enhance the quality of life within the community and drive economic success as a premier destination.

We intend to have the DMO fully operational by January 2012. Our activities will be guided by a set of standards established by the Georgia Convention and Visitors Bureau Destination Marketing Association. We intend to be certified by that organization's accreditation program by 2014.

Beyond nice facilities and the convenience of being connected to an internationally accessible airport, the GICC complex and the surrounding city of College Park offer you, the organizers who bring your events to our facility and our city, an ever-expanding collection of places to go and things to do, the services and amenities so critical to your guests' enjoyment and, in turn, the success of your events. The new College Park DMO will be a convenient and helpful source to you and your guests for hotels, restaurants, shopping and attractions: a single point of reference for the information you need to plan your events and related activities.

Over the past couple of years, the GICC complex has emerged as one of America's most compelling meeting destinations due to our beautiful, contemporary convention center, our new on-site hotels and burgeoning local hotel community, our connectivity to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport via our new guided railway, a host of new College Park restaurants and shopping opportunities. Now, we welcome a new DMO to make all these services and the many more in the planning stages more accessible to you and your guests. ■



# Q&A with Vinnie Polito:

2011 Chairman, International Association of Expositions and Events

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**F&C.** How can an organization like IAEE help its members deal with difficult economic times?

**Polito.** If you are a member of an organization like IAEE, your membership can be most valuable in helping you learn from others' experiences. Find out what is working now, in your own industry, with other shows and events, or something that is transferable from another industry. As part of a group like IAEE, you will find people willing to share their successes and failures, so take advantage of networking and educational opportunities.

**F&C.** As chairman, what were your goals coming into 2011 and what progress have you made?

**Polito.** I have had two major initiatives. One is to upgrade our education across the board, including our Expo! Expo! annual meeting and our professional certification program, and at both local and international levels. We have reviewed, revised and updated our curricula, and tried to ensure that the topics we're covering are important today and will be tomorrow for people who take our classes. We have improved our education and have set mechanisms in place for further improvement.

Second, we have initiated a major public relations effort. When I speak on behalf of IAEE, I often hear that we don't do enough to market ourselves. I consider our PR Task Force Committee our most important committee this year. Members were hand-selected and personally invited to participate based on their ability to make a valuable contribution. We have selected Edelman as our PR agency and begun a three-year campaign to convey the value of face-to-face meetings.

**F&C.** What advice do you have for young people entering the exposition industry?

**Polito.** Be active in your association at both local and national levels. Volunteer to participate on committees. Learn from people who have had success in the business. Don't be afraid to ask questions; question everything. Understand what defines success in this industry, challenge conventional wisdom and don't be afraid to make mistakes. It is great to be both passionate and intelligent, but the truth is that passionate folks fail less often than smart people. ■

## KEY CONTACTS

To book your next meeting or trade show at the GICC, contact the Sales Department:

PHONE: 770.997.3566 EMAIL: dcole@gicc.com

To book hotel reservations directly with the on-site Marriott or SpringHill Suites hotel:

Marriott sales: 404.443.8750

SpringHill Suites sales: 404.461.2125

[www.SpringHillSuitesAtlantaAirportGateway.com](http://www.SpringHillSuitesAtlantaAirportGateway.com)

For leasing information on the Atlanta Gateway Center Office Building, contact:

Lee Evans, III

Colliers Spectrum Cauble, Inc.

PHONE: 404.877.9203

EMAIL: lee.evans@colliers.com



The GICC is still Georgia's newest and one of the nation's most elegant convention centers.

# Spectacular and Spotless

When the new Georgia International Convention Center opened its doors in March 2004, it was hailed as a marvel of architecture and design: a bold exterior of winged and angled shapes of aluminum and glass complemented by a spectacular interior of swirling graphics and circular images. Its rich appointments included elegant fabrics and fine hardwoods; a distinctive, single and non-repeating pattern of woven Axminster carpet throughout 192,000 square feet of hallways, ballroom and meeting rooms; and a gallery of commissioned artwork from artists of international acclaim.

The GICC is still Georgia's newest and one of the nation's most elegant convention centers. From its debut, the plan for operating this most unconventional convention center has included the budget and focused on a commitment to keep the building functioning at its highest levels and looking like new – from the exhibit halls to the kitchen, in the ballroom and prefunction area, from the rest rooms to the meeting rooms. The building has been maintained so spotlessly that, outside of kudos to the GICC staff, observations on its beauty and modernity are still the most frequent comments heard from its visitors and guests.

How can a building with such elegant appointments and such continuous use be kept looking like new?

"Mainly, it's the staff and the pride they take in

**"We clean every area every day [and] every two weeks we do special detail cleaning ... Each month we select an area for complete detailing, like touch-up painting and carpet thread repair."**

– YANOUS BARNER,  
GICC Operations Manager

plan. "We clean every area every day," Barner explained. "Every two weeks we do special detail cleaning, from high dusting to the doorways. Each month we select an area for complete detailing, like touch-up painting and carpet thread repair."

And all cleaning is done consistent with the GICC's commitment to sustainability, Barner stressed. "We use green chemicals on every task for which green chemicals exist." ■

this facility," notes Yanous Barner, GICC Operations Manager.

The janitorial staff, which has been together as a unit for almost as long as the building has been in operation, works by a single, simple principle, Barner points out: "If I walk into your house, how would you want to impress me? A clean, fresh space. Rooms that look clean and smell clean."

Simple as the guiding principle is, it requires execution of a detailed, day-to-day operations