

[Odnets] Day 1 -- OD Network 2011 Conference in Baltimore

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Hello, Baltimore, we're baaack!

We've come home again to one of the cities where we've had some of our best times. Charm City, the Inner Harbor, the best Little Italy this side of the Atlantic, and the home of the Chesapeake Bay crab.

The locals pronounce it "Ballmer." The bumper stickers say Be More in B'more. And you know you're talking to a true local when she calls, you, "Hon!"

Our home this year is the Baltimore Hilton. It's a new hotel, standing new and 20 stories tall. Across the street to the south is one of the best baseball stadiums in the world, Camden Yards, where the dreadful Baltimore Orioles play. Across the street to the north is the original Marriott Hotel in Baltimore, where we met when we here in 96 or so. One block west of the new Convention Center, and half a mile from M&T Bank Stadium, where the Baltimore Ravens play the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday.

Two pre-conference sessions on Friday were a gradual beginning for the conference, with about 50 people attending sessions today. Marilyn Laiken led a 2 day workshop on OD and Change Essentials for New and Developing OD Professionals starting this morning; I ran into several participants in the hall way who were all quite abuzz about the day. And the second two day workshop was Lisa Zweber-Smith and Terry Smith lead Sustaining Change—Building Capacity by Creating a Network of Change Agents.

Most of the conference staff arrived last night and today.

And your OD Network board began its two day meeting today as well. The current members of the board include Darya Funches (board chair), Mike Horne (board secretary), Lisa Kimball (conference planning), Matt Minahan (education and professional development), Ava Schnidman (corporate relationships), and Brian Wilson (treasurer.) We were thrilled to welcome the four new board members whose terms begin in January but who joined us for the two day meeting: Mee-Yan Cheung Judge, Carol Parker Walsh, Melisa Sanchez, and Charles Shaw. We thanked Lisa Kimball who is completing her full six year term this December, and Ava Schnidman, who is finishing her one year term this December as well. And, we got a lot of good work done as well.

Most of us went to the Diamond Tavern (a play on the baseball image, and the quality image), looking right across the street at Campden Yards.

It looks like they're calling for snow tomorrow, but either way, it will be a full and rich day here at the OD Network Conference in Baltimore.

If you're in the area, there's still time to register and come by for a day.

If you're on the list and coming or here, please say "hey" as we pass in the halls!

More tomorrow. Matt

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[Odnets] Day 2 -- OD Network Conference 2011 in Baltimore

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The tempo is starting to pick up here today, Saturday, October 29th. We woke to rain and wind, but no sign of snow; it is due here this afternoon . . . but it looks like New York and New England are going to get it bad today. It's like the third grade here, with all of these adults standing up with our noses against the glass, wondering if we're going to get a snow day!

In addition to the two that launched yesterday, another pre conference workshop kicked off this morning. Kim Barnes (who I first met in the Bay Area in the early 90s) and Bev Scott (who is a member of our ODNet list, former chair of the OD Network board, good friend and author) led a session called Achieving Success as an Internal Consultant, based on their book called "Consulting on the Inside," which has just been re-released.

Your OD Network board met all day today, approving the budget for 2012 two months before the beginning of the new financial year, which we take as huge success. We are thrilled with the support and guidance that we are getting from our management company, SmithBucklin. They shared with us several best practices around meeting patterns, board roles, and committee structures drawn from the 100+ organizations to which they consult, and they'll be introducing a new monthly publication for OD Network members that aggregates content about organizations, management, strategy, and OD and sends around abstracts to key articles with links to view them. This is one wicked service and we're very excited about it. They also have overhauled our website - go out to www.odnetwork.org to see our new, snazzy logo and the streamlined and simplified web page. They've shifted our

missed in almost 30 years, I think.

Also this morning, Kendra Coleman and Steve Bridge, both e.g. Sheppard Moscow designed and facilitated the opening Networking with Intent session, helping participants jump start their conference experience by meeting and engaging colleagues, old and new.

The conference officially kicked off this afternoon, when Tom Nicholson, the Executive Director of the Network welcomed all, thanked the conference planning team, and introduced the members of the Network Board of Trustees. Mike Horne, one of my colleagues on the Board of Trustees, introduced Dr. Darya Funches, Board Chair. Darya acknowledged and thanked Peter Norlin, the OD Network's Executive Director for most of the past 5 years, and when Peter stood up, the room burst out into applause and warm appreciation for him and his service to the Network (for which he will be honored on Tuesday morning.)

Darya's keynote was titled "Emerging Faces of Corporations and New Shapes of OD." She began with a First Peoples' chant, to honor and acknowledge the people and traditions of those who occupied the space and these lands before us. She mentioned four negative faces of the organization: the faces of degeneration, separation, exploitation, and the beast, and asked us in pairs to come up with archetypes or ideologies and philosophies for these four faces of the organization.

She said that when we are working with the face of separation, we are acting as if we're not all related or connected to each other and the earth. She reminded us that organizations were initially set up to be "of service, for the public good." When we think about change, we should be thinking about long term sustainability, and that we should be thinking as the native traditions do, with 7 generations in mind, not the next quarter of the current financial year. Darya said that it is not just about honoring the agreements we make, it is also about making honorable agreements to begin with.

She said when we work in integrity, we are able to consider the aesthetics of things, and we work as if beauty matters. She cited the Navajo prayer, "I walk with beauty in front of me, I walk with beauty in back of me, I walk with beauty beside me, I walk with beauty inside of me."

As for 21st century OD, Darya challenged us to look at our organizations anthropologically, with indigenous OD, bringing art, and music, and poetry in organizations, to bring forth the creativity and integrity of leaders. Using nature to bring forth shifts. Quantum OD which bring forth the intricacies of systems. And finally, she challenged us to experiment with being crazy, outside of the box. Give yourself permission to do that, in order to see the truth and speak the truth. Use your art. Use your heart, and get the most out of being at the conference.

And then the conference was off to the races! Concurrent sessions Effective OD/HR Relationships with Barbara Bunker, Dick Axelrod, and Chris Trout who is VP of HR for Disney; Uncertainty and Change in Complex Systems with Lisa Kimball, Tom Mandel, and Denise Easton; Mindset and Narrative in Leadership Development with my fellow GWU alum Michele Gundlach; Leadership Development in Global Organizations with Johnny Kelleher and Lucy Hatchell, both with e. g. Sheppard Moscow and Eva Mendel who is a client of their at

