

NEWS

# Amanda H. Bill of Exhibit Promotions Plus Wins Newport Beach Sweepstakes

By Todd McElwee

Amanda H. Bill, VP of Business, Development, Exhibit Promotions Plus had forgotten she was part of Visit Newport Beach Live The Dream sweepstakes, but will never forget the contest again. On Jan. 30 Bill was going about her business in her family's Ellicott City, Md office when she was ambushed by Amanda Kliem, National Sales Manager at Visit Newport Beach, Inc. with a dream vacation to the California resort town.

"I am so excited," Bill told *USAE*. "At times I forgot about it. It will come at a perfect time and I know how fortunate I am to win, that's for sure."

During Live The Dream, every meeting planner who submitted a qualified request for proposal received a \$100 Nordstrom gift card. Booked events resulted in the submitter earning an American Express gift card valued at \$250 and entry into the Live The Dream sweepstakes, which will continue throughout this year with a new winner selected in early 2014.

Last year, Bill submitted a request for

proposal for a client, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), to Visit Newport at either DMAI's Destination Showcase or ASAE's Springtime – she couldn't remember which one – at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Later, she booked SSSR the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa, which qualified her for the vacation.

Visit Newport e-mailed Exhibit Promotions Plus to find out when a good time would be to ambush Bill. On Jan. 30 Amanda Kliem struck, employing a method similar to when Ed McMahon would surprise Publisher's Clearing House winners.

Bill won a seven-day, all-expenses paid vacation. Housed in a five-bedroom beachfront home, she will be provided with a luxury SUV, complimentary boat rides, rounds of golf and spa treatments. She and her husband Nicholas are expecting their first child in May. They plan on heading to Newport Beach in October, spending some time together near their anniversary and then inviting some of their West Coast friends to visit.



On Jan. 30, Amanda H. Bill, Vice President of Business Development for Exhibit Promotions Plus (left), was surprised with a dream vacation to Newport Beach, Calif., by Amanda Kliem, National Sales Manager at Visit Newport Beach at Exhibit Promotions Plus' offices in Ellicott City, Md.

"That area is just beautiful, so to be able to win a trip and not go there on business makes a big difference," Bill said. "I go to

all of these nice places on business and just live in the convention hall. This will be wonderful to get to experience the area."

## St. Peters Square

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with a Jesuit who comes from "THE AMERICAS" but of course not an American. Issues like optional celibacy, women priests, artificial birth control and gay marriage are likely not on his "to do list."

However, he is a holy man, a man who lives a vow of poverty and is passionate about the poor and the sick.

His age will do two things: One it will give him time (5-8 years) of health to carry out his job. Two it will open the notion of grooming new Cardinals from which to pick in 6-10 years.

Many think that he will be less of a teacher and more of a doer. I think he will come across more like the name he took, St. Francis. St. Francis was known for being compassionate, obedient, self-less and caring about the poor and living with the poor.

When he was made a Cardinal he told people who wanted to fly to Rome to stay home and give the money to the poor. He rode buses as a Cardinal. The day he was made a Cardinal he went to soup kitchen to serve the poor.

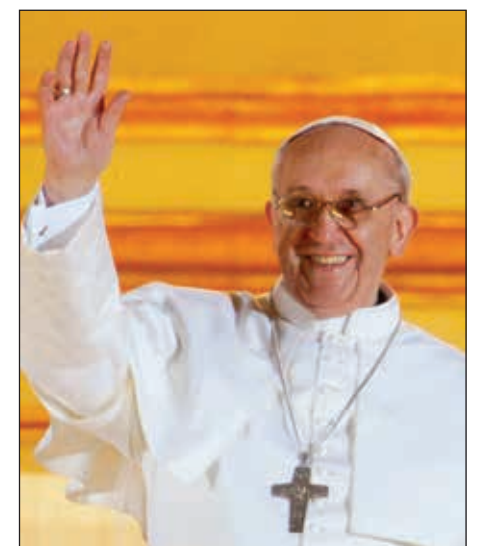
***I think that he will re-energize vocations for religious orders in the church as well be a pastor leader for the secular clergy.***

This Cardinal-elect Pope is going to be on his knees more than most of them.

He is commonly known as a man who will be walking with friends and will stop and ask: "Can we stop and say a prayer?" This is one of the strengths we look for in a spiritual leader. He is also equipped with a deep Ignatius spirituality. I think that he will re-energize vocations for religious orders in the church as well be a pastor leader for the secular clergy.

Unlike the last election of a long-time administrator and teacher at the Vatican, this Pope will be much more among the people and will not be dazzled by money or politics. Since he is the same age as my mother I expect him to be seeing the world from that generation and will need to hire others to keep things modern and relevant to the young people.

Rio has the World Youth Day this year so he will be able to take a short flight from his old home to get there. I expect that will be more exciting for those kids



Pope Francis waves to the crowd in St. Peter's Square from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, on March 13. Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who chose the name of Francis is the 266th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. Credit: Dmitry Lovetsky

than an 85-year-old German Pope.

In sum, the mood on the Plaza outside of St. Peter's was positive. I think we will have a spiritual guru vs. a theological lecture series.

## Savannah Convention Hotel Stays Alive in County Vote

County Commissioners Refuse to Pull Out of Project

By Mike Santa Rita

A controversial idea for a second convention hotel on Hutchinson Island in Savannah, Ga., stayed alive on March 7 as Chatham County commissioners voted to keep the project viable with more research to follow.

Pete Nichols, a Chatham County spokesman, told *USAE* that the most controversial aspect facing the development of the hotel is whether the county should issue \$50 million in taxpayer-backed bonds to help finance the hotel. As a corollary to that, commissioners must also decide what the county's liability would be "should the project go belly up."

In the March 7 vote, county commissioners could have voted to end the project once and for all, Nichols said. Instead, in a 5-3 vote, they voted to maintain the project's viability and move forward with a study of the project. The vote was an important one for the hotel because the county had four new county commissioners who came into office in January and who were considering the project for the first time, Nichols said. The county commissioners will next address the issue on March 22, Nichols added.

The issue of taxpayer bonds has been controversial with Republican commissioners, who claim that the infusion of that much money into the project would be unfair to other hotels in the city that did not get public financing for their hotels. Because of the controversy, commissioners have extended the county's memorandum of understanding with Hutchinson Hotel Holdings, the potential developer three times. The last time they extended the memorandum was in October, buying the county extra time.

As the deal stands, the county and Hutchinson Hotel Holdings are in a tentative agreement to build the 500-room hotel near the publicly owned Savannah International Trade and Convention Center using a combination of private financing and \$50 million in county-backed bonds.

To pay the annual debt service on the public bonds, the county would rely on the hotel's lease payments for the publicly owned improvements. The developer has agreed to maintain a \$3 million line of credit with the county to cover any shortfall in bond payments, according to the *Savannah Morning News*.

A decision for or against is expected this year, now that new county commissioners have taken their seats.



The North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO) recently held its Annual Conference at the Mayflower Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. Shown here from Left to Right: Leslie Wong, Director of Special Projects, Office of the President, American University; Ambassador Capricia Penavic Marshall, U.S. Department of State; and Lisa Arakaki, Co-Director, Special Events, Office of the President, American University.