



Chesapeake Professional Women's Network, Inc.  
Building Relationships. Growing Businesses.

## Newsletter

### WELCOME ..

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### This Month -

### FINANCE

#### CPWN Member News

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FEBRUARY 2009



### Hollis Thomases, President & CEO, Web Ad.vantage, Inc.

Hollis Thomases, a graduate of Cornell University, founded WebAd.vantage.net, a boutique agency providing strategic online marketing and advertising solutions, in 1998 when most businesses were primarily focused on building websites. Realizing that "if we build it, they will come" was not enough, Thomases advocated tactics that generated qualified website traffic and measures that converted those leads into sales. She oversaw the development of processes that enhanced efficiencies and her clients' bottom line. As a result, Thomases has gained a reputation as one of the industry's most pragmatic and insightful online marketing gurus and her agency has cultivated an impressive client roster of both national and regional clients including Nokia USA, Johns Hopkins University, Endo Pharmaceuticals, Nature Made Vitamins, Blair Corporation, Home Instead Senior Care, the Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association, Connections Academy and International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Thomases has received multiple awards and recognition. In 2008, she was named "Enterprising Woman of the Year" in the "more than \$1 million and up to \$5 million" category. In March 2007, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) awarded Thomases "Small Business Person of



### **SPONSOR**

### Ronnie Davis, Longstream Coaching

Ronnie T. Davis is the president and founder of Longstream Coaching and Training LLC. With the desire to help people reach their potential and vision, Ronnie has taken herself from educator to Certified Personal Life Coach, Emotional Intelligence Coach, and Career Coach. Working with high achieving men and women who want to move beyond where they are at the present time, she helps her clients to formulate *their* vision and create goals and actions to achieve them. With 15 years as a trained group facilitator, trainer, mentor and coach, Ronnie works with a variety of assessments and

profiles to create personalized workshops for businesses and groups and individuals. Ronnie holds a B.S. degree in Elementary Education and M.Ed, as well as a Certification in Administration from Towson University. She is a certified Personal Life Coach, Emotional Intelligence Coach and Career Coach, and an authorized DiSC facilitator and distributor.

Ronnie is the president of the Bel Air Chapter of the Professional Referral Exchange and Area Director of the Maryland chapters of the [Professional Referral Exchange](http://www.professionalreferralexchange.com). She is a charter member of the Southern Harford County Rotary and a member of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce. In addition, she is a member of The Chesapeake Professional Women's Network and is a commissioner for the Harford County Commission for Women.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sandy Glock

Melissa Barnickel

Ann Davidson

Hollis, cont'd

the state of Maryland. The annual award recognizes outstanding entrepreneurs for their contribution to the nation's economy and personal achievements. In 2007, Thomases was a finalist for the 2007 Athena Award for women's leadership and WebAdvantage.net was named a "Smart Giant" by the Greater Baltimore Technology Council. In 2008, the Baltimore Business Journal named WebAdvantage.net has a Top 50 Women-Owned Business and in 2006, Smart Woman magazine selected WebAdvantage.net as a "Best Place for Business Women to Work."

Since 2005, Thomases has bi-weekly authored the "Online Media Buying Agency Strategies" column for top Internet marketing resource site, ClickZ (.com), and in 2007 added the role of official online marketing and advertising blogger for citybizlist.com, for which Thomases will be commenting on search engine news, B2B online marketing, industry forecasts, online/video/mobile ad trends and technologies, social media and more.

Since 2005, Thomases has bi-weekly authored the "Online Media Buying Agency Strategies" column for top Internet marketing resource site, ClickZ (.com). Thomases has appeared on television (local ABC, NBC and PBS stations) and on TechTV's "Working the Web" and in such print publications as the BusinessWeek, Advertising Age, Baltimore Sun, DM News, and The Examiner. She frequently speaks at such industry and trade conferences as the American Marketing Association, Search Engine Strategies,

The Newsletter and Electronic Publishers Association, The Kelsey Group, the Laboratory Product Association, The Direct Marketing Association of Washington DC, and the Vocus Worldwide User Forum.

Active in her community and industry, Thomases has participated in several advisory boards: the Governor's Workforce Investment Board Information Technology Industry Initiative Steering Committee; Harford County Economic Development Advisory Board; Harford County's Small Business Development Center Advisory Board; Association for Interactive Marketing's Online Promotions Council; and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education's Teen Web Project. Thomases is a current member of the CEO Club and Vistage. She was also a co-founder of the Digital Bridge Initiative, a philanthropic outreach venture between the Greater Baltimore Technology Council (GBTC), of which she is an active participant and Ambassador, and she has been a member of the giving circle, The B'More Fund.

### EVENT CHECK IN

For record keeping purposes, please remember to check in at all events, even if you have pre-paid.

## Top 10 Oddball Tax Deductions

### Can I deduct?

Admit it. As you've worked on your return, trying to come up with extra deductions to pump up your refund, you've taken a few flights of fancy. "Can I claim a deduction for all those blood donations at the Red Cross?" Nope.

"How about a charitable contribution for all the time I donate to the church?" Nope, again. "The wedding gift for the boss's daughter as an employee business expense?" Come on! On the other hand, over the years your fellow taxpayers have beaten the IRS in court on payments for many crazy things that most of us wouldn't even dream of claiming. We've uncovered what we think are the weirdest deductions allowed, ranging from pet food to free beer.

#### 1. Pet food

A couple who owned a junkyard was allowed to write off the cost of cat food they set out to attract wild cats. The feral felines did more than just eat; they also took care of snakes and rats on the property, making the place safer for customers. When the case reached the Tax Court, IRS lawyers conceded that the cost was deductible.

#### 2. Moving the family pet

If you are changing jobs and meet a couple of tests, you can deduct your moving expenses — including the cost of moving your dog, cat or other pet from your old residence to your new home. Your pet — be it a Pekingese or a python — is treated the same as your other personal effects.

#### 3. A trip to Bermuda

This island is more than just a scenic place to visit: It's a great place to schedule a tax write-off. Business conventions held in Bermuda are deductible without having to show that there was a special reason for the meeting to be held there. That's a sweet perk.

Other countries in the Caribbean region qualify, too, including Barbados, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Meetings held in Canada, Mexico and all U.S. possessions also receive this favorable tax treatment. Attend a convention in Paris, Rome or Beijing, though, and there's no deduction unless you can show it made as much sense to travel abroad as to head to Pittsburgh.

#### 4. Body oil

A pro bodybuilder used body oil to make his muscles glisten in the lights during his competitions. The Tax Court ruled that he could deduct the cost of the oil as a business expense. Lest it be seen as a softie, though, the Court nixed deductions for buffalo meat and special vitamin supplements to enhance strength and muscle development.

#### 5. A private airplane

buffalo meat and special vitamin supplements to enhance strength and muscle development.

#### 5. A private airplane

Rather than drive five to seven hours to check on their rental condo or be tied to the only daily commercial flight available, a couple bought their own plane. The Tax Court allowed them to deduct their condo-related trips on the aircraft, including the cost of fuel and depreciation for the portion of time used for business-related purposes, even though these costs increased their overall rental loss.

#### 6. Babysitting fees

Fees paid to a sitter to enable a mother to get out of the house and do volunteer work for a charity are deductible as charitable contributions, even though the money didn't go directly to the charity, according to the Tax Court. The Court expressly rejected a contrary IRS revenue ruling.

#### 7. Breast augmentation

In an effort to get more tips, a stripper with the stage name "Chesty Love" decided to get breast implants to make her a size 56FF. A female Tax Court judge allowed Chesty to write off the cost of her operation, equating her new assets to a stage prop. Alas, the operation proved to be a problem for Chesty. She later tripped and ruptured one of her implants.

#### 8. Landscaping

Sole proprietors who regularly meet clients in a home office can deduct part of the costs of landscaping the property. The deductible portion is based on the percentage of the home that is used for business, according to the Tax Court. The Court also allowed a deduction for part of the costs of lawn care and driveway repairs.

#### 9. Free beer

In a novel promotion, a gas station owner gave his customers free beer in lieu of trading stamps. Proving that sometimes beer and gasoline do mix, the Tax Court allowed the write-off as a business expense.

#### 10. Swimming pool

A taxpayer with emphysema put in a pool after his doctor told him to develop an exercise regimen. He swam in it twice a day and improved his breathing capacity. Turns out he swam in the pool more than his family did.

The Tax Court allowed him to deduct the cost of the pool (to the extent the cost exceeded its added value to the property) as a medical expense because its primary purpose was for medical care. Also, the cost of heating the pool, pool chemicals and a proportionate part of insuring the pool area were treated as medical expenses.

Source: Turbo Tax

INTEREST

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Ambassador & Membership**

Kim Schmidt  
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Nancy Laudenslager  
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and  
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and  
Diane Dei  
AG Edwards  
[diane.dei@agedwards.com](mailto:diane.dei@agedwards.com)

Membership Dues: \$85  
Meeting Sponsorship: \$100  
plus door prize

[www.cpwnet.org](http://www.cpwnet.org)

**SARC Cell Phone collection**

SARC partners with Shelter Alliance, a Miramar, Florida firm that specializes in the logistics and underwriting of fundraising programs through the collection and responsible recycling of used cell phones.

This partnership is beneficial to SARC, their clients, and our community in many ways.

These collections help provide victim services through fundraising. No matter how old the cell phone, SARC can receive up to \$30.00 per phone. Also, SARC is able to distribute cell phones to their clients. Even old cell phones can be used to dial 911 in case of an emergency. Lastly, donating cell phones to SARC is a great way to help the environment and responsibly dispose of used cell phones. Shelter Alliance engages in zero landfill recycling of the cell phones.

Cell phone collection "drop boxes" are currently established at the following locations: The Harford County Public Library at the Edgewood, Aberdeen, Whiteford and Joppa Branches; the Arena Club; St. Mark's Church; Frito Lay; Harford Mutual; Tabitha's House; Merle Norman Cosmetics; Chesapeake Professional Women's Network; Slavia Federal Savings Bank; and outside the Harford Community College Student Life and Wellness Center.

Additionally, SARC is looking to partner with local businesses to initiate collection campaigns with its employees, customers and vendors. SARC will provide the collection box and will pick up the cell phones. Please contact Stacie Beard, Prevention Specialist at 410-836-8431 for more information.

**CPWN MEMBER BENEFITS**

Monthly meetings to network and promote your service or product.

Advertising in our online membership directory with website and e-mail links.

Varying meeting dates, times, and locations to meet your busy schedule.

Topical speakers on issues pertaining to women and business.

Opportunities for women to support and mentor each other in both business and personal aspects of our lives.

Special events & Meeting Sponsorship

A monthly newsletter with calendar of events, networking tips, member updates, and articles of interest.



Luisa Caizzo-Nutter Accepts CPWN's donation to SARC. From Fashion Show proceeds.

January's Speaker—David Libdan



Celebrate & Recognize Exceptional Role Models Who Inspire Others to Achieve.



## **Women's Leadership Reception & ATHENA Award**

*An Event of SBDC's Women's Business Assistance Program*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING CPWN**

**MEMBERS WHO ARE ATHENA FINALISTS:**

**Valerie Twanmoh, Esq.**

Staff of Sen. Barbara Mikulski

**Patricia Desiderio**

Patty's Gifts and Baskets, LLC

**Content McLaughlin**

Tydings & Rosenberg, LLP

**March 6, 2009 • Richlin Ballroom • 7:30-9:15 AM • Cost:  
\$35**

Visit: [www.harford.edu/Community/athena](http://www.harford.edu/Community/athena)

for registration information.

For more information, email [phogan@harford.edu](mailto:phogan@harford.edu)

or call 443-412-2176.

# 7 TIPS TO NURTURE YOUR NEST EGG

Your health and your relationships are the real keys to enjoying life. But [financial freedom](#)

is critical too. For most people, how late in life they're willing to work is the single biggest planning variable. However, building a suitable nest egg isn't just about working longer. Here are some key considerations adapted from my book, *The Power Years: A User's Guide To The Rest Of Your Life*:

## **Don't Count on Government or Your Employer**

When the first Social Security check was cut to Ida May Fuller in the 1930s, no one knew what a great deal it would turn out to be for her generation. She had paid just \$24.75 in [Social Security taxes](#)

in her working years. She lived to be 100 and collected \$22,889 in lifetime benefits. In her day, there were 42 workers for each beneficiary. The nation could easily afford to pay at such lush levels. There are today just 3.4 workers per beneficiary and by 2050 the worker-to-retiree ratio will be down to 2-to-1.

## **Spend Less**

I harp on this a lot because it's really basic and anyone can do it. You have a great deal of control over your expenses. You can choose to eat out or eat in or set the thermostat at sixty-six or seventy-two

## **Invest in Your Future**

Every pay period, write a check to yourself and put it someplace you won't touch. Just as the amount of junk you save in your attic expands to the size of the attic, your bills expand to consume all of your available income. Pay yourself first, and your spending will adjust. Promise.

## **Pay Off Credit Cards**

Thirty-five years ago, Americans carried an average of three credit cards and owed \$127 million on them. Today, Americans carry an average of four credit cards and owe

\$2 trillion. Some 14% carry more than 10 credit cards, and one in seven has a balance equal to at least half of their available credit, according to a new Experian study. Even if you have a large income, it's easy to let your credit-card debt get the better of you. One or two cards is really all you need. [Consolidate](#) your card debt with a low interest rate and commit 5% of your pre-tax income to paying off the balance.

## **Pay Down Your Mortgage**

Debt isn't always a bad thing. The home mortgage popularized at the turn of the 20th century has done more to foster household wealth than mutual funds, certificates of deposit, interest-bearing checking accounts, IRAs, and 401(k)s combined. But you don't have to carry that debt forever—or even for the full term. With home appreciation almost certain to slow in coming years, it's important to shed your mortgage debt as quickly as is practical. Add two extra mortgage payments each year and you'll retire a 30-year mortgage in 15 years.

## **Be Clear About Your Potential for Inheritance**

Boomers stand to inherit \$25 trillion over the next 20 years, but just 10% of boomers will receive a whopping 90% of that wealth. If your parents have financial troubles or just live a long time, it's likely that you won't receive an inheritance.

## **Invest for Growth**

Stocks are your best bet; on average they return 7% a year after inflation. You should have a mix of large and small companies, some that pay dividends and some that don't, and some international stocks. Exchange Traded Funds can be a good alternative; these are baskets of stocks that are priced continuously and trade on a stock exchange. Regular mutual funds (I lean toward low-cost index funds) are a great option too. Invest through a 401(k) or other tax advantaged account when possible—at least to the limit of any company match. But keep some bonds and cash on hand for stability. They become increasingly important as you get closer to the point at which you'll be taking distributions from your accounts.



Chesapeake Professional Women's Network, Inc.  
Building Relationships. Growing Businesses.

## Welcome New Members!

Stacie Dalcourt  
Color Images Salon and Day Spa  
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[colorimageessalon@gmail.com](mailto:colorimageessalon@gmail.com)

Jennifer Dillon  
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410-420-0077  
[madiimprovements@comcast.net](mailto:madiimprovements@comcast.net)

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Fuller & Associates Insurance  
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410-914-5467  
[Lisa.Fuller@InsureWithFuller.com](mailto:Lisa.Fuller@InsureWithFuller.com)

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Beauty Within Skin Care, LLC  
407 E. Churchville Road, Suite 202  
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410-420-7754  
[mikeymayuchan@comcast.net](mailto:mikeymayuchan@comcast.net)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 10, 2009

**SPEAKER: Hollis Thomases,**  
President & CEO, Web Ad.vantage, Inc.  
11:30 AM — 1:30 PM  
Maryland Golf & Country Club  
Mbrs/Non Mbrs - \$20/\$25

March 10, 2009

11:30 AM — 1:30 PM  
**Speaker: David Craig,** County Executive  
Maryland Golf & Country Club  
Mbrs/Non Mbrs - \$20/\$25

rsvp at [www.cpwnet.org](http://www.cpwnet.org) or 410-297-9722  
Deadline is Friday before the event at Noon.

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For by Medifast



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THE  
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**MEMBER NEWS & ITEMS OF  
INTEREST**

**CPWN MEMBER NAMED PRESIDENT OF GERIATRIC ASSISTANCE  
INFORMATION NETWORK**

Monkton, Md., January 19, 2009 -- CPWN member Melissa Barnickel, CPA, CLTC, principal of the long-term care insurance companies Comprehensive LTC Group and Group LTC Services, has been named president of Geriatric Assistance Information Network. Her one-year term began January 1. Ms. Barnickel was previously secretary of the organization.

In addition, Ms. Barnickel was also named vice president of the newly formed Central Maryland/Baltimore Chapter of Women in Insurance and Financial Services. Her 18-month term began January 1.

**HR Solutions** will be hosting a Business Breakfast on February 19th at the Open Door Café from 8:00—10:00 AM. The topic is

**Having Difficult Employee  
Conversations**

To register, go to [www.hrsolutionsllc.com](http://www.hrsolutionsllc.com).

***Paint & Powder President's Ball***

***An Affair of the Heart***

***Saturday, February 14, 2009***

***7 PM***

***Martin's Valley Mansion***

***594 Cranbrook Road***

***Cockeysville, MD***

***\$ 110.00 per person***

***Contact: Marge Pearce for tickets 410-272-3929***

