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The magazine of the Pan American
International Movers Association

Winter 2012





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The magazine of the Pan American International Movers Association.

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FRONT COVER:

If you're in the international moving business, you need to understand the importance of cultural differences.

Dean Foster of Dean Foster

Associates in the USA, gave a superb presentation on just this subject at this year's PAIMA conference in Denver.

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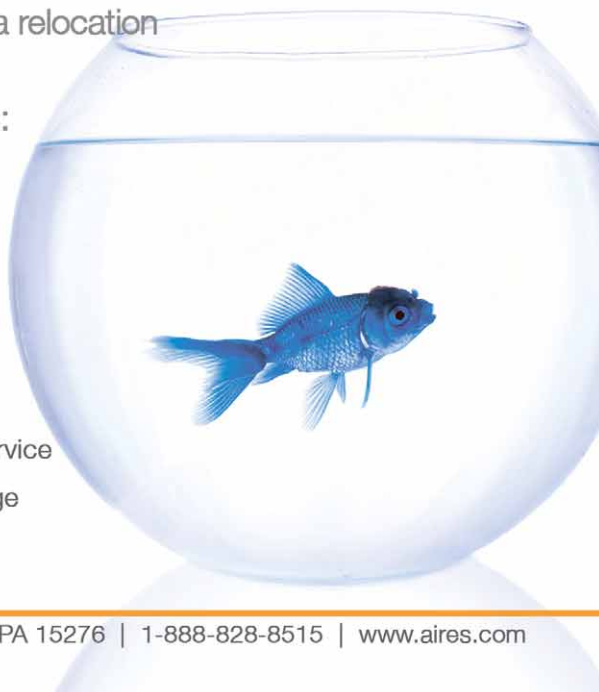


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Amazing days in Denver

GOD BLESS DENVER!

Didn't the city give us an awesome conference? Just a wonderful place to be – fabulous weather, charming people and of course having one of the best conferences ever, helped a lot!

Big thanks to the inimitable Terry Head, President of the IAM, for a terrific presentation when he got out his crystal ball to see what's ahead of us all.

And when there is so much Doom n'Gloom about, it's good to hear someone refusing to give in to negativity and showing us how this industry of ours will continue to be an essential service as the economy picks up.

And you had to laugh. Dean Foster, with that wicked gleam in his eye, made us perform all sorts of behavioural tricks to demonstrate the mess we can get into if we ignore cultural differences.

It took him less than an hour to show how transferees get themselves in bad situations unless they are properly briefed – he commented that when a Japanese says 'Yes' it doesn't mean he/she necessarily understands or agrees with you. They are simply acknowledging your presence. How easy would it be to fall into that trap?

And then there were the social events – I know there are supposed to be plenty of cowboys in our business, but members couldn't wait to dress up as cowboys or cowgirls to have their pictures taken at our closing party night!

And I'm never going to forget the sight of Laura May Carmack (our PAIMA Secretary) in full cowgirl costume! Truly awesome!!

From your President



Then there was the visit to the brewery – and I never knew that we had so many talented billiards players. Clearly, our roots go quite deep into the bar room culture of the Wild West!

So if you weren't there you just have no idea what you missed. I really felt proud and honoured to attend such a fabulous conference as PAIMA's President – it was just so good to meet everyone and to see how the programme not only educated us but entertained us too.

Truly, we are a family – and I am so happy to be a part of it.

Christina Wickman-Kozloski.
PAIMA President



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TRAFIMAR WINS THE TOP TONNAGE AWARD!



Once again, PAIMA presented awards to those companies that supported its tonnage system so enthusiastically.

Although the number of companies reporting tonnage is growing, it's still not really enough!!! PAIMA has made the reporting process easier than ever but more members need to use it to make it still more meaningful.

Tonnage means money – it raises your profile and encourages other companies to ship to you. Yes, it may be discouraging at first when you feel you're not shipping enough, but like anything else, it does build up. You just need to get started – reporting tonnage means more business! And we could all do with a bit more of that, couldn't we?

So this year's results:
Overall tonnage:
Trafimar Relocations Services.

South American Region:
G-International Transportes.

American Region:
AIREs.

Oceania Region:
Australian Van Lines.

European Region:
Carl Hartmann.

Mexican & Canadian Region:
Multi Transportes Mex.

Central American & Caribbean Region:
Swiss Global Movers.

Asian Region:
P.M. Relocations.

African Region:
Magna Thomson

New Member Category:
A. Cross Corporation.

Above: Gary Burke (Burke Bros., UK) presents Francis Toedtli of Trafimar with PAIMA's top tonnage award.

MORE COMPANIES SIGN UP TO PAIMA

Recent new members welcomed into PAIMA include:

Biard International – France,

Cross Corporation – Japan,

Transquavis Especiais Ltda – Brazil,

Orient Express Relocations – Nepal,

Felix Relocations – Malaysia,

Felix Relocations – Singapore,

Prudential Real Estate & Relocation Service – USA,

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CHESS MELBOURNE - PROUD OF ITS LONG HISTORY.

Chess J Wilson Removals in Melbourne, Australia, can actually trace its roots back to 1887!

True, it was in different ownership then but even so, the company is proud of its long history.

Today, it offers a full door to door service on both import and export consignments whilst handling either air or sea freight shipments.

The company is affiliated to FIDI and therefore holds

FAIM certification which is increasingly recognised by the corporate market. In addition, it holds ISO – 9001:2000 quality accreditation and AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational, Health and Safety Management System.

Chess Moving Melbourne operates out of a purpose built warehouse, 6 km from Melbourne's international airport and 20km from Melbourne's CBD.

The warehouse holds a Class 1.3,

Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service (AQIS) licence and a 77G Australian Customs accreditation.

The premises include 5,000 sq ft of storage space; it is an AQIS approved steam cleaning facility and is able to fumigate consignments on site.

Earlier this year the company was awarded the Australian Furniture Removers Association's Safety Management Award 2011.



Rita Hernandez who has been Managing Director of LARM for the past eight years is moving on to pastures new.

LARM has made a glowing tribute to all her work in establishing the organisation and then raising its effectiveness to considerable heights since it was launched from modest beginnings.

She is now training her successor, Diana Duran who has over 10 years' experience representing various Fortune 500 companies.

She has experience in working with a large global mobility relocation company, and a corporate housing provider.

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RECOGNITION FOR MICHAEL GERSON OF LONDON



Michael Gerson made a special contribution to the international moving industry.

His London-based company was a pioneer when it came to quality moving and set standards that the rest of the industry learned to emulate. The company's clients included the rich and famous such as the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the US Ambassador Walter Annenberg.

Michael was a President of FIDI and was also very influential in the work of the BAR Overseas Group. It recently held a lunch for him at the Institute of Directors when industry colleagues came to pay tribute to his work.

It's a very different industry today, but older members of the business will remember the significant contribution Michael made to

the development of the international moving industry as a professional entity in its own right.

EuRA WELCOMES MORE PAIMA MEMBERS TO ITS DSP RANKS



The European Relocation Association (EuRA) held a reception for Members and guests during the recent Worldwide ERC meeting in Denver.

This too was an event that attracted some PAIMA members who have been examining EuRA's quality certification programme. Here the EuRA President Åse Löfgren Gunsten, the CEO of Nordic Relocation Group welcomes guests to her party.



And now we have a member in Egypt!

Another welcome new member to PAIMA is SBS (Sea Bird Services) in Egypt which was established in 1979.

It is now a major freight forwarder in the country offering shipping, receiving cargo, Customs services for general cargo and HHG at all ports in the country.

Sea Bird is a member of International Air Transportation Association (IATA), International Federation of Freight

Forwarders Association (FIATA), International Association of Movers (IAM), Egyptian International Freight Forwarders Association (EIFFA) and the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA).

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Covering bat stew, sponsoring a villa that charges by the hour (and more!), it's a wonderful companion.



WORLDWIDE ERC ATTRACTS THE BIG CORPORATE NAMES TO ITS SUMMIT MEETING

Corporate accounts turned out in force to support the Worldwide ERC summit in Denver.

CEO Peggy Smith (above) gave delegates a run-through of the many changes that had been made to the organisation in the last 12 months.

One of the big focuses of the organisation is to develop research-on-demand for its members as well as to widen training to make it more accessible.

It plans three major international events next year which PAIMA members may be interested in – London in February, Shanghai in March and Washington DC in October.



STAND BY FOR THE IAM'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Stand by for a major conference event in 2012!

The IAM celebrates its 50th anniversary with an event that will be one huge celebration – notes the dates now: October 10-13, 2012. It will be held at the new Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, just minutes outside of Washington, DC.

It has the lot – excellent restaurants, shopping malls, an indoor pool and a 20,000-sq. ft. spa and fitness centre.

And when you want that late night drink, an express elevator speeds you to the two-storey rooftop Pose Ultra Lounge.

And, of course, we'll be there too!

HALL OF HONOR AWARD FOR GEORGE PASHA



George W. Pasha, III was inducted into the IAM Hall of Honor at its meeting in Denver. This prestigious award recognises his remarkable career in the shipping industry.

He has more than 50 years of experience in the field of transportation services, and is Chairman of The Pasha Group.

Mr. Pasha also chairs the Advisory Board of Pasha Hawaii.

CELEBRATING GOOD OL' DAYS IN MOVING

Adding to the fun of conference events in Denver were these two elderly moving trucks from Johnson International.



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CLOSING SHOTS



Bit of wishful thinking here as Melanie Burke pulls a gun on husband Gary of Burke Bros in the UK (and PAIMA board member)!



The Pasha Group was a very deserving winner of the PAIMA ecology award. There's so much to tell that we're devoting a detailed article to it in the next issue of PAIMA Report. Meanwhile (from left) here are Mary Aten, Katie Williams and Mary Arrand from Pasha with the award.



Gotcha! Lars Lemche (Teamwork, Brazil) gets his girl in the form of a startled Laura May Carmack of AIREs.....

PAIMA's Executive Director reports on the latest activities.

SHERRY'S PAGE



SO IT'S OFFICIAL.

Trade associations like PAIMA will continue to perform a vital role in business. There have been several articles on the subject in the business press and none other than Terry Head, President of the IAM, confirms it.

As you can read elsewhere, Terry gave a great presentation to our conference in Denver. Somehow, he managed to take us into the future of the industry and rather than scare the pants off us, it was all very positive.

Yes, this industry has a great future because all the time the economy continues to be global, so people need to move – and that means us.

And the view is that the industry needs the support of associations like ours to provide essential services.

Companies can't do everything themselves, at least not unless they are a major international corporate.

Small to medium sized companies like the ones that make up the bulk of PAIMA need to rely on their association to smooth their paths towards doing good business.

Right now, PAIMA has focussed on providing services that members have specifically asked for. That means a tonnage list, training, financial services and a good conference once a year.

On top of that we have added this magazine, a membership book and a raised profile for you all.

Of course, there's a lot more we can – and will – do. But first we need to build on what we have.

That means greater use of the new, easy-to-use tonnage list, support for the new and remarkable e-learning programme, participation in the magazine and most important of all, still greater support for the conference.

I don't know about you (but then, I'm biased anyway) but I thought there was a real buzz at our conference. Everyone was very kind and supportive and I really began to feel that PAIMA had 'arrived.'

There's still a long way to go but we have the right board in place to devise strategy and we have a growing membership which will help us achieve our aims.

So, I hope you enjoyed the conference; if you weren't there you missed something. Next year of course, we'll be at an amazing new resort overlooking the Potomac, on the edge of Washington DC.

That's quite a way ahead but I hope by the time we get there we'll have expanded our membership still further and that our e-learning programme has really taken a grip.

Finding and keeping good staff is the challenge of the future. Training is essential because not only does the benefit go straight to your bottom line but it makes your people feel valued – and as we all know, that's important to all of us.

Still lots to do!

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DENVER.

PAIMA comes of age with a great event.

PAIMA President Christy Kozloski-Wickman welcomes delegates to the 27th convention.



CONFERENCE



IT WAS A SHOW STOPPER!

PAIMA's 27th annual convention in Denver had it all – great location, beautiful weather, superb business sessions and an excellent social programme.

Was this one of the best conferences ever? Certainly! Can we repeat it – certainly!

PAIMA President Christy Kozloski-Wickman welcomed a big turnout for this conference which saw lots of new members mixing with the long established ones, new board members elected and a new vibrancy in the

Association not seen for a little while.

"I think there is a new confidence about PAIMA which is making its mark," says its Executive Director Sherry Williams.

"Maybe for the last few years we have been slightly on the back foot but the Board has done a lot of clearing out, created a new strategy and set an agenda for achieving it.

It's a remarkable transformation - PAIMA membership is growing, its finances are in good shape – not great but so much better than they were! – and I think our profile is growing.



It seems more and more people want to identify with us and I really believe we will continue to see growth."

The guest speaker was the IAM President Terry Head who gave a fascinating account of how the industry will shape up in the next decade.

Whilst he warned that obstacles in the international transportation industry still remain, the overall picture was not as gloomy as some people would like to paint it.

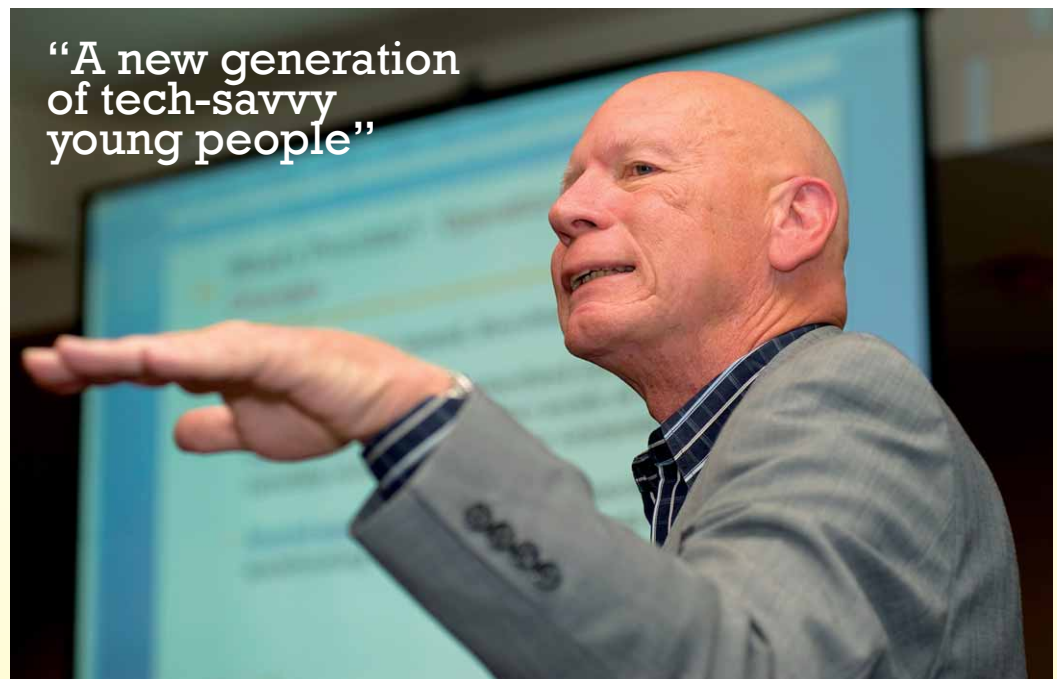


The PAIMA Board as you've not seen them before! From left: Pat Toscano, Gary Burke, Rafael Moreno, Christy Kozloski-Wickman, George Naumann, Laura May Carmack, Jose Marrero.

AS HE SAID,
one of the greatest challenges is consumer protection. It is very easy now to have your reputation canned by dissatisfied customers using one of the social networks and of course, every professional mover is at the mercy of the scammers.

However hard you work, you can't do anything about scam companies that will find a soft spot in the customer's defences and rip it open.

There used to be a concerned government that provided some defence but over the last quarter century, everyone is hell bent on de-regulation and now it's a free for all, whether you're a lawyer, an airline or a mover.



Terry Head of the IAM has always been something of a visionary and at the PAIMA meeting he held everyone's attention with a perceptive look at the future of the industry.

The encouraging sign he sees is the quality of people in the business.

"We all got here by accident," he told PAIMA members. "But now we are seeing

young, articulate, well educated people who are also tech-savvy.

"We also have an older work force which has a lot of experience and knowledge and somehow we have

to manage all this. Increasingly we are having young people working with much older people and this in itself can cause problems."



The girl behind it all - Sherry Williams organised PAIMA's 27th annual convention in Denver.

But it is a fact that there is a new breed of people entering the industry now. Certainly, multilingualism is a given and more and more hold professional business degrees.

These are seriously savvy people – smart, educated, confident and ambitious. The trouble is, the idea of staying with one company for more than a few years does not appeal.

Fine if you are a member of the family that owns the company but otherwise the career path is very short and people will simply look around for the best deals – and a lot of them will start their own businesses.

Relocation of course, has opened up the opportunities for



A steady hand and a steady eye from George O'Masta of Balboa International, Panama.

young people. You don't have to just be a mover – you can become a global mobility specialist. This opens up doors in so many areas, from law to education.

Speaking of which, it was Dean Foster who gave a sparkling



Dean Foster blended wit and wisdom to great effect.

presentation on cross-cultural competencies. It was fascinating to hear how easy it is to get yourself into real difficulties even when you have the best of intentions.

What we might regard as being polite (looking into someone's eye) would be thought terribly

rude in another culture (Malaysia)

Dean has a very jolly way with him and he made his audience participate in the presentation, just to drive home the point that how we see things is not always how someone else sees them.



Phaedra Widney of TG International Insurance (right) shows off baby pictures to Angelina Abraham of La Rosa Del Monte, CA.



Cedric Zibi of NEER Service in France shows off his skills....watched by Steven Raj of Felix Relocations in Singapore.

A VERY ENGAGING

speaker, he amused everyone at the end of his presentation with some examples of how translations can create all sorts of interesting situations – for instance, the notice in the Japanese hotel bedroom which read: “Please take advantage of the hotel chambermaid.....”

After a long day of business, everyone had the opportunity to unwind at the Wynkoop Brewery.

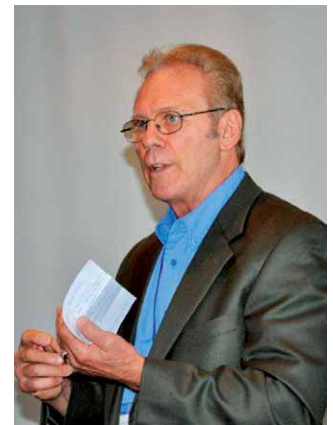
This was an old style Denver bar built on the old brewery – plenty of food and drink was served and everyone made a dash for the billiard tables. It was amazing to see how many excellent players there are in PAIMA!

Back to business the next morning when all the presentations were made to new members, tonnage list supporters and of course, the ecology award.



Cowgirl Laura May Carmack of AIReS is in high spirits!

BILL HAS REMOTE TRAINING SORTED FOR YOU!



The new e-learning programme was then launched by Bill Carlson Sr (above) of Movingedu.com. PAIMA has high hopes for this – training is one of the cornerstones of a good association.

But when you cover an area as big as the one PAIMA does, residential seminars are not a practical proposition.

But somehow, youngsters need to be educated in an industry that is becoming more and more demanding.

As Terry Head said, young people don't come into the industry by accident these days – they are well educated, technically savvy and very ambitious. If a company does not support the career of an employee these days, that person is going to be off.....



From left: Christy Kozloski-Wickman (Wickman Worldwide Services), Daniel Renaud (Mexpack International) and Zenaida Romero of Mudanzas Internacionales Global.



People tend to be in a job for an average of about three and a half years so if you want to keep them – train them!

And PAIMA's new e-learning tool means that students can work at their own pace, not take time away from the office and get a really good knowledge of the industry. And it's amazingly affordable too.

The closing party had a Wild West theme – and you've never seen so many cowboys and cowgirls – and didn't everyone look great?!

Nowhere would you find more glamorous people as they strutted their stuff in an amazing collection of cowboy gear.

They could all borrow props to have their pictures taken which in itself caused a lot of hilarity – and what with plenty of food and drink, the Wild West theme was the best possible way to end a hugely successful conference organised by PAIMA's own Sherry Williams and her team.



From Prudential, Melba La Turner eyes up her next move.

Relaxing with a beer is Helene Faucqueur of Demenagements Garde-Meubles Bailly in France.



Long way from home (left to right) Graham Spence-Ross (Magna Thomson, South Africa), David Conroy of Conroy Removals in New Zealand and David Dawson of Chess JWilson Removals in Australia.





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Leading the way at the PAIMA Western party - Sherry Williams (PAIMA) and Terry Head (IAM).



Above: Sharing names - Zenaida Romero of Mudanzas Internacionales Global in Venezuela and Juan Romero of Mudisa in El Salvador.



Right: Melanie Burke from Burke Bros Moving Group in the UK.



From left: Luis Vanequez (Garcia Trucking Services, Puerto Rico), Juana Cueva and Lourdes Ayala of Express Transports, Peru, Macarene Scalla (Coco's International, USA) and Tito Garcia (Garcia Trucking Services).



Valeria Altamirano of Mudanzas Mundiales in Costa Rica and Jean-Philippe Biard of Biard International in France.



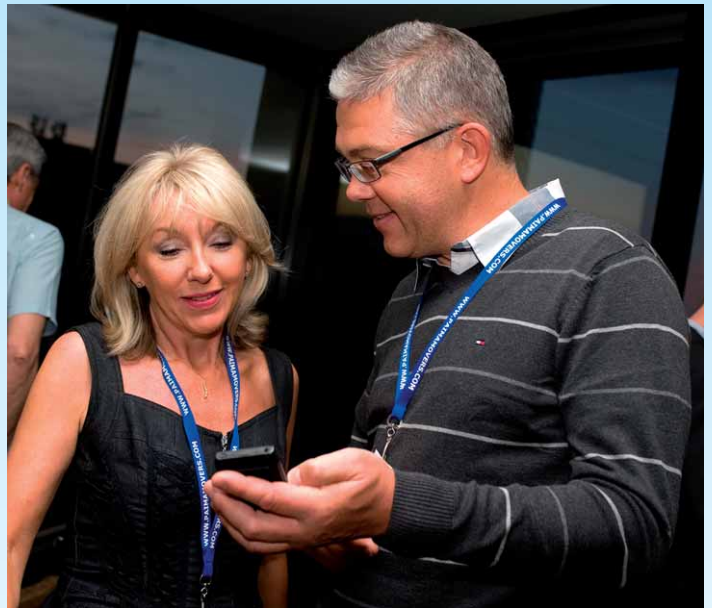
Big smiles from Sid and Vino Vallaydam (Australian Vanlines) and Rajeev Bhargava of P M Relocations, India.



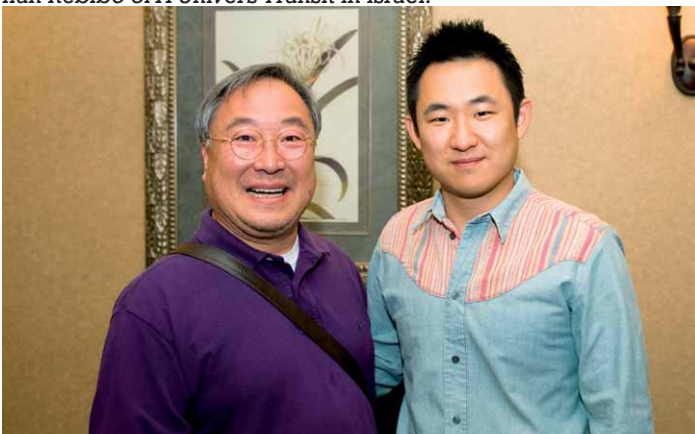
Laura Grana and (left) Fernando Saavedra of Inbolpack in Bolivia with Juan Bernal of Panama Intermoving Relocations in Panama.



Matthias Tischer of Carl Hartmann in Germany chats to (right) Ilan Rebibo of A Unvers Transit in Israel.



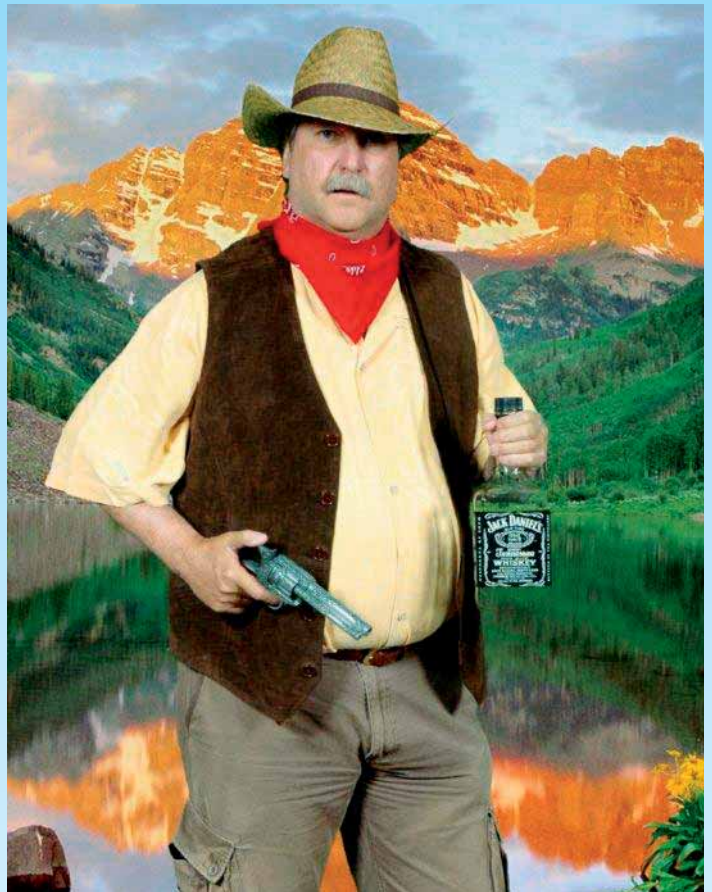
What can George Naumann of Swiss Moving Service be showing Melanie Burke of Burke Bros on his 'phone?



*Cheers! - from the Mexican cowboy Thomas Schmidt of Mexpack International Removals in Mexico.
Left: Wankyu Kim and Ji-Hun Kim from Tong-In in Korea.*



Left to right: Juan Espinoza of Multi Transportes Mex, Mexico, Liliana Salguero of Swiss Global movers, Guatemala, Carmen Cautter of Moving Systems, Peru and Juan Carlos Romero of MUDISA, El Salvador.



From Teamwork in Brazil, Lars Lemche lives the part!



Sandeep Sharma (left) of IBIX Relocations in Doha and Juan Bernal of Panama Intermoving and Relocation.



Juana Cueva of Express Transports, Peru with Jose Marrero of Sentry International, USA.



Lucky Pat Toscano of Reliable in New York enjoys the company of Rocio Munoz of Moreno International, Mexico.



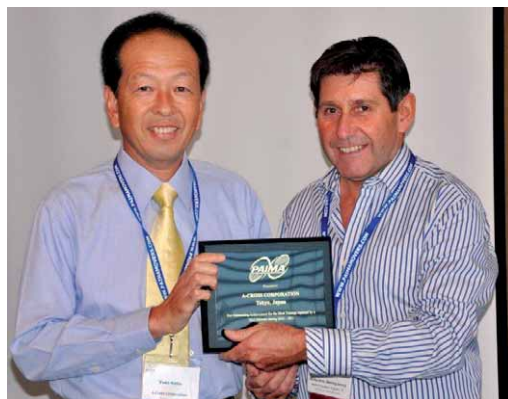
Nori Delgado of TG Insurance in California (left) enjoys a joke with Lauren Granan of Inbolpack in Bolivia.



Rafael and Leticia Moreno from Moreno International, Mexico.

Once again,
PAIMA was
happy to
honour the
stars of the
tonnage
programme
- board
member
Gary Burke
made ALL
the awards!

TONNAGE



Yukinobu Saito of A-Cross Corporation in Japan - new member category.



Laura May Carmack of AIReS - American Region.



Sid Vallaydam of Australian Van Lines - Oceania Region.



Liliana Salguero of Swiss Global - Central American & Caribbean Region Movers -



Harm Meierdirks of Carl Hartmann - European Region.



Aakanksha Bhargava of P M Relocations - Asian Region.



Graham Spence-Ross of Magna-Thomson International - African Region.



Patrick Ohara of G Inter - Transportes Internacionais - South American Region.

Plenty of
new faces at
the PAIMA
meeting in
Denver -
welcome to
these new
members!

MEMBERS



Andreia Ferreira of Tansquavis Transportes Especiais Ltda of Brazil



Albert Perianayagam - Felix Relocations in Malaysia.



Sudeep Shah of Orient International Relocations in Nepal.



Ramiro Quiros of Monarch Moving Systems in Canada.



Yukinobu Saito from A-Cross Corporation in Japan.



Melba La Turner of Prudential in Fort Wayne.



From Paris, Jean-Philippe Biard of Biard International.



Roberto Martinez from SSH Movers in Puerto Rico.



David Dawson of Chess J Wilson Removals in Melbourne.

With a record number of new members to welcome, PAIMA President Christy Wickman-Kozloski was kept very busy handing over certificates at their first conference. It's great to have this rush of interest in PAIMA from all over the world!

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During the industry meetings in Denver, Pasha Group hosted a cocktail party where many familiar faces were seen.

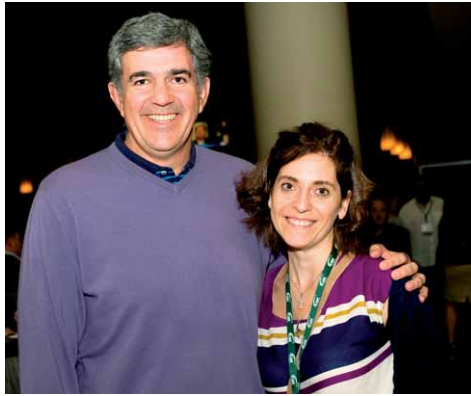
PASHA PARTY



George Pasha IV enjoys the company of Katty Redig of the Gosselin Group in Belgium.



Enjoying a joke - Fran Vollero of Pasha Group.



Belen Lopez Alonso of Gil Stauffer, Spain and Facundo Urtubey from Lift-Van International in Argentina.



Katie Williams of Pasha Group with Sean.



Left to right: Manuel Rojas of Move Management International, Rick Darmanin of Capitol Transportation, Puerto Rico and Andreas Lindinger of ALS Movers in Chile.



Markus Zogimeier of Schenker Deutschland and Sophie Lucas Sassatelli of AGS Paris.



From left: Cedric Zibi of NEER Service France, Sherry Williams (PAIMA), Robin Celino and Lee Brewin of BTR International in the UK.



Peter Schaeffers who represents the Asian Tigers Group in the USA.

Adopting
'green'
policies
is not just
good for the
environment
but also for
your bottom
line.

BUSINESS

One of the most overlooked aspects of "Going Green" is just how much money a company can actually save.

In tough times when clients are trying to reduce margins, any cost saving is very welcome – and often the most obvious place to look is: **waste**. Look in any office and you find waste everywhere – in the use of stationery, fleet management, mains power and so on.

At AIREs in the USA, a commitment to green policies has resulted in serious savings. Last year, for instance, the company saved \$51 per employee – or a total of more than \$13,000 per year.

This number is up from slightly over \$8,000 in total savings for 2009, and AIREs expects it to rise again in 2011 thanks to conservation metrics it has in place that are reviewed annually by its management team.

"Through innovations like DocMan, our electronic document administration program, and new initiatives such as moving our bulky, binder-based relocation planners to electronic jump drives, we reduced paper usage in our company by 824,000 sheets last year. That's 1648 reams of paper!" says Laura May Carmack of AIREs (and the PAIMA Secretary).

The company's overall cost savings breakdown includes:

Paper cost savings

= \$6,600

File Folder cost savings

= \$3,100

Toner cost savings

= \$510

Paperclip savings

= \$50

Staple savings

= \$50

Warehouse Ops file storage

= \$1,640/year

Secure File Disposal after 7 years

= \$1,650/year

Total Annual savings of \$13,600 per year!

"This not only benefits AIREs and our employees, but our clients and transferees as well," she adds. "As a result of our proprietary database systems, designed here at AIREs for ours and our clients' specific needs, we have better coverage, communication, and access to information keeping us in the best possible position to support their relocation program."

But the company's efforts do not stop there! It continues to find ways to reduce

paper consumption and to find other ways of improving efficiencies.

Ever since its ISO 14001 initiatives in 2007, AIREs committed to a goal of reducing paper and resource usage by an additional 5% over each prior year.

In fact, it has actually achieved a reduction of over 15% each year and is still looking for ways to improve this.

So the message is clear – cost savings begin at home. Everyone can reduce costs without reducing efficiency.

It's not even just a matter of being green – it's just good business practice to keep a firm handle on costs.

One thing is for certain – energy costs are not coming to come down, so always check your premises to make sure that mains power is not being used unnecessarily!

Technology certainly helps, as AIREs has shown, but so does common sense.



Laura May Carmack - "Green policies save you money."

**Terry
Head of
the IAM
looks
to the
future.**

LOOKING AHEAD



OK – so business has been tough these past two years, but future prospects still look good – and we need to prepare for them!

That was the robust message of hope that came from Terry Head, the President of the IAM (International Association of Movers) when he gave the keynote speech to the 27th annual PAIMA convention.

Yes, air freight has dipped marginally but it seems that the Middle East and Latin America are immune to cargo slumps.

Transpacific carriers are seeing bookings looking healthier and international container traffic surged 18.5% this

year, while even US railroad commercial movements rose nearly 4%.

On top of that surface trade between Canada/ USA/Mexico jumped nearly 25% last year. So, as Terry says, where the trade goes, so does the moving business.

He made a very brave and skilful attempt at looking into the crystal ball to see where the industry might be heading in the next ten years –

not easy, especially given the current economic climate.

There is certainly a trend towards STA (Short Term Assignments) with corporates preferring to send younger people on overseas postings, especially in emerging markets, and preferably without any family commitments.

Where the trade goes, so does the moving business.

IT'S NOTICEABLE

how over the past few years there has been a growing reluctance of married family executives to move overseas, not just for security concerns but because the partner doesn't want her own career interrupted.

Also, for many people, the supposed 'glamour' of an overseas posting is a bit tarnished these days, that in itself evidenced by the number of failed assignments (and all their associated costs).

"So with the trend being towards shorter postings and more assignments to emerging markets, what will we see?" asked Terry.

"Well, probably extended hotel stays and temporary housing, further growth in the serviced furnished apartments business and probably more rotation in and out of corporate housing.

On top of that, there is definitely a move towards packaged home furnishing."

So what does this mean? In one sentence: A trend towards living in smaller quarters and shipping only personal effects.

Marketing is another issue: Terry suspects that more formal arrangements will exist between independents while, of course, the big groups will just exchange more and more traffic between themselves – so a good chunk of business will be coming out of the agent-to-agent industry.



Stefan Chorus of Streff in Luxembourg pioneers re-usable packing cartons.

Digital and social networking media management will become more important and a new industry will burgeon – data mining and the selling of leads.

There are already specialists who drill down into Facebook or Linked-in networks to extract highly targetable information about individuals. This part of it is quite scary as people put more and more personal information out into the stratosphere.

On this theme one of the biggest impacts will be the way that consumers will rate a company's performance, just as they do already on sites like e-Bay or Amazon.

Given the highly volatile nature of some customers this could be a worrying trend, apart from the fact that it's no secret how many phony reviews are posted to promote/criticise books, hotels or other services operating in a competitive market.

Reputations are easily lost with a customer who has failed to blackmail a supplier into granting a major discount on the final invoice.

On the other hand, professional certifications and training will carry a lot more weight, said Terry. Not only will consumers be looking for ways of identifying a quality vendor but accounts will definitely seek signs of superior management, including a commitment to eco-friendly practices.

And of course, it is in all these areas that trade associations such as PAIMA can help. The more services that come on stream, the more advantage members can take.

When you can demonstrate that your company is a respected member of a trade association that has a proven record, it displays a level of commitment to good business practice which accounts want.

It does, of course, hinge on the trade association operating as a unified force, gathering more and more members who actually participate.

With technology aiding transparency so easily, corporates are going to be able to track the way companies operate within their trade associations (supporting training, conferences and so on).

It really is extraordinary how a profile of your company can be built up so easily.

As if life wasn't tough enough, the industry is caught up in the talent war – put simply it's going to get harder to recruit and keep staff.

There's a new generation of talented, well educated people who recognise their worth and also understand the need for a fair work/life balance.

They will also switch jobs far more frequently than an earlier generation – probably as often as three to three and a half years.

They will also demand flexibility as to the workplace – something like 10% of all workers in the US now work remotely. The smart copywriter or programmer who wants to work in his cabin in the Rockies is going to do just that – and with video conferencing and the speed and affordability of computers it seems to be working just fine.

So a younger, technically savvy workforce that tends to be transient, and, of course, an older, experienced and more permanent generation fast approaching retirement. Quite a challenge for the industry!

And from an operational point of view, vehicles will inevitably get smaller and greener. And whether, with the rapid growth of self-store, companies will feel inclined to invest in warehouses where the rates are probably getting lower in direct proportion to ground charges, it's quite likely that warehouse specialists will act as the hub for movers.

It won't end there either: environmental concerns, some misguided, others not, will still have consumers try to shy away from the use of one-off cardboard cartons.

So what's the alternative (given that customers will not,

however, accept used cartons for their own move?!) It may just be that the developing of exchangeable/reusable packing materials will finally take off.

There are manufacturers who produce excellent high quality plastic containers that can be used for packing glass, crockery and so on.

These eliminate the need for white paper or even bubble wrap but there is a problem

The digital age is already upon us and electronic packing lists, quotations, manifests and so on are the norm. This will continue at a cracking pace and the industry will move to a single set of electronic codes (as already required by the World Customs Organisation). Shipment *information* will all be screened upfront and the shipment itself will be scanned or physically examined.

their move with instant updates or feeds from sources such as Twitter or Facebook.

We also have to accept that insurance coverage and bonds will be harder to obtain and more expensive; we are already seeing that insurance companies will look at certifications and will dictate that clients must adhere to "best practices".

Claims will continue to be outsourced to specialist adjusters and very likely we'll see a move towards one Central Claims Database in a bid to reduce fraudulent claims.

And the next ten years are going to throw up (often in sharp relief) issues such as one recognised international tariff, standardised pricing models and standardised invoicing.

Individual company ratings are also a standard feature these days but could yet be monitored and set by Associations such as PAIMA or IAM.

"So to summarise, what we're looking at is a more modern and centralised industry, a greater focus on technology and sustainability and the one obvious factor which cannot be ignored: that well trained, experienced staff will be your greatest asset," concluded Terry.



which currently acts as a deterrent. These cartons are expensive and companies are not going to ship them to another mover unless they can be certain of getting them back.

Wooden lift vans? Forget them. Over the next ten years they will be taxed out of existence, so portable packing boxes/containers in a pool used by moving groups will almost certainly be the answer.

As is already occurring, there will be greater use of video supervision inside trucks, warehouses and maybe even homes. And then there is a trend towards 'shape recognition' packing, using vacuum packed technology as well as embedded Radio Frequency Identification (RFID).

"And almost certainly, customers will have a single point of contact during the course of

Your greatest asset - experienced staff

It's quite a step from being a doctor to a mover – but Enrique Cuéllar has pulled it off!

Except that he regards himself as being in the fast growing international relocation business. Enrique studied medicine in Mexico City and qualified as a general practitioner but decided he wanted an international career. This led him to join Schenkers in 1984 where he worked in the moving department. Having got to know the business, five years later he then applied for a transfer and ended up at Schenker in Cologne, Germany where he spent a very happy time.

But finally, the lure of his home city pulled him back to Mexico City where he joined a small moving company for a year before spending five good years with Trafimar. It proved to be a good move for his career as he not only added to his experience but began travelling to conferences, his first being the old HHGFAA in Nashville.

Enrique's next move was to Mexpack in 1998 where he worked in sales.

But by 2002 he knew he wanted to run his own business.

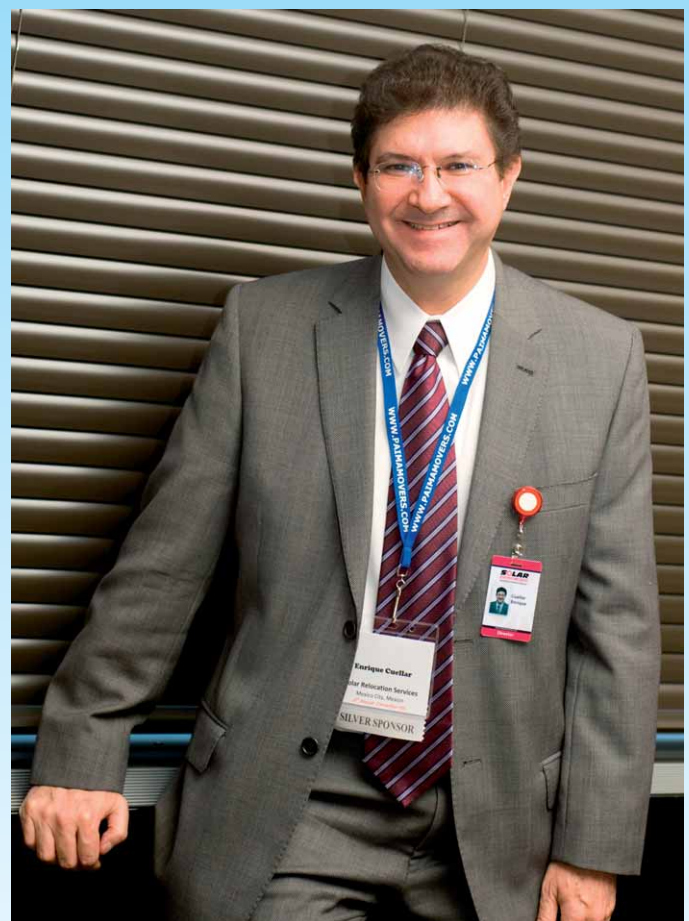
Like so many before him, finding a suitable name kept him pretty occupied – eventually he settled on Solar Relocation Services:

“I wanted something that would mean the same thing in any language – on top of that Solar suggests an empathy with all people round the world, plus, of course, the sun provides life. It took a while to get the name right and then the logo, but it was worth it,” he says.

The new company started off in a shared office but after a year, business was coming in strongly enough for three people to be hired and a year later this had risen to four.

“To begin with, I had to outsource all the packing to an excellent crew which always gave me priority but now we have a 1,000 sq.m warehouse and our own staff inside and outside the office,” says Enrique.

Business comes from many sources including a lot of diplomatic work, international organisations such as the United Nations and a growing number of corporate accounts. Demonstrating how times are changing, there is an increasing flow of internet-driven traffic. Some 90% of the business is international and the



rest covers the whole of Mexico. In the office German and Swedish are spoken and the office manager is French!

There are now 13 inside the office and 12 outside – “It's the size I am comfortable with. I don't want or need to be the biggest, but I am concerned about keeping a grip on service and quality levels – that's why we have built up the business quite slowly.”

“Putting together teams of workers that are really committed to customer service always takes time and showing them how to meet customer

expectation always takes a while when you're starting from scratch as we were.”

Now it's time to take the company up to the next stage – Enrique is undertaking a certain amount of restructuring to move the company to what he sees as a middle size operation. He's not in a hurry – he remembers how the years 2009 and 2010 were such bad ones for the industry around the world, and although this year has proved much better, he doesn't want to grow faster than the company can support – for Enrique, it's all about keeping control of quality.

“I don't want to grow faster than the company can support!” says Enrique.

Do we pay enough attention to the cultural gap? Dean Foster talks us through it.

THE GAP

"Cherish the differences"

DID YOU KNOW

that 60% of all cross-border ventures do not work out as planned?

... and that 30% of all expats return home from an assignment prematurely?

.... Or that 48% of all repatriates leave their company within two years of returning home?

Sobering figures and the consequence of people not being able to settle into their new lives overseas.

The trouble is that the investment made into these international transfers is huge and when it doesn't work out, that money is lost for ever.

Even worse, all this investment in training and development

stays with the transferee who often takes it to the competition.

"It's not easy for some. When they return from an assignment, the partner has to find a job again, the company doesn't give the transferee the job he thinks he deserves and of course, all their friends have moved on," said Dean Foster when he talked to the conference in Denver.

It all comes down to handling the cultural differences that exist around the world and which far too many people tend to take for granted.

In fact, Dean gave a hilarious demonstration of how two people can create huge waves of

differences between each of them simply because of the clash in their respective cultures.

You think you're talking the same language, but you're often poles apart.

For instance, in Malaysia, maintaining eye contact with the person you're speaking to shows a lack of respect, where as in the West, we see it as a sign of sincerity.

Hence Dean's dictum (taken from Anais Nin): "We don't see things as they are; we see things as we are."

"It's not the similarities that cause the problems," he pointed out. "It's the differences."



Take, for instance, the way that Brazilians see Americans (according to a survey):

- always in a hurry.
- serious, reserved.
- cautious.
- restrained.
- composed.
- methodical.

Now, ask a Japanese the same question and they will tell you that Americans are:

- relaxed.
- friendly, spontaneous.
- reckless.
- uninhibited.
- emotional.
- impulsive.

And yes, we're talking about the same race seen from two different cultural perspectives!

As we all know, we're very ready to say that if someone is being difficult it's because of personality, but in fact this is rarely the case. The problems are usually based on a misunderstanding of culture.

Cultural differences are a bit like an iceberg – the things you can actually see account for about 10% of a person's explicit culture. Their traditional, values, norms and so on are all below the surface.

In fact, explicit work behaviours are extremely different from country to country.



Cultural differences are gifts to be treasured, to be unwrapped and cherished.

And sadly, not enough employers recognise this sufficiently well.

"You'll always find some people want to do business first and then develop a relationship; others will want to do it the other way about – remember that cultures can be objectivist (where you obey the rules) or situationist (work through the rules)," said Dean.

This can extend to something as basic as time:

"People who work in a monochronic way, follow time, they work progressively and do one thing at a time.

The polychronic does things according to the situation and not according to the clock."

"The former gets things done at the appropriate stages whereas the latter gets it all done but not in any particular sequence."

You can take these differences further

– in many cultures, companies may request a lot more information from you before they make a decision, because they are very risk-averse.

But in other cultures, they will want everything nailed down first. In Europe, for example, many people want to achieve the result they were first looking for and then figure out how to get there.

Dean's recommendations for engaging in business discussions with someone from another culture are fairly straightforward. They include:

1. Slow down! Give time to the conversation – there's nothing wrong with silence.
2. Simplify your words – speak in phrases.
3. Avoid slang, sports terms and acronyms.
4. Avoid double negatives and any direct questions that require a Yes or a No.
5. Remain formal until you are cued otherwise.
6. Never, ever shout. If anything keep your voice down.
7. Try to learn a dozen phrases relative to your host country.

As Dean says: "Cultural differences are gifts to be treasured, to be unwrapped and relished."

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