



2010 Meetings

Houston Chapter

Wed, June 2, 11 AM-1 PM
Seating is limited; RSVP by
Fri, May 28, to Janet Dodd:
janet.dodd@kbr.com

2010 General Meetings

First Wednesdays, 11 AM-1 PM
June 2, August 4,
October 6, and December 1
Location:
Brown & Gay Engineers, Inc.
Lubbock Conference Room,
10777 Westheimer Rd
3rd Floor, Houston, Texas

2010 Board Meetings

First Wednesdays, 11 AM-1 PM
July 7, September 1,
November 3
Location:
AECOM, 5757 Woodway #101

Lone Star Chapter

2010 General Meetings, 6 PM
June 16, August 11,
October 13, December 15
CHIC from Barcelona Restaurant, 11909 Preston Road,
#1426
Preston Forest Square, Dallas

Central Texas Chapter

2010 General Meetings, 6 PM
August 5, November 4
Contact chapter officer(s) for
time and location; RSVP to
apmpcentraltexas.com

Greater Midwest Chapter

2010 General Meetings,
3rd Wed, 12-1 PM
Contact chapter officer(s) for
meeting time and location

21st Annual APMP International Conference and Exhibits

Orlando, Florida
June 1-4, 2010

Mindmapping as a tool for proposal and project managers

Discover the magic behind mindmapping – learn how this non-linear, graphical method of capturing information can help you handle the complexities of managing proposals and other projects, as well as serve as a memory aid. Mindmapping is a valuable implement for your toolbox whether you are preparing a speech, creating a proposal schedule, interviewing a subject-matter expert, outlining a section, planning the graphics, or preparing for orals. Gary Garner and Barbara Bowden Garner will



Gary Garner

demonstrate how to use the mindmapping process to promote and organize creative ideas and other information.

June speakers Gary Garner and Barbara Bowden Garner are Certified Project Managers (PMP) and facilitators with more than 60 years' combined experience in administering public sector programs, developing policy and

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Graphics cost a lot of time and money and drive me crazy. Are they worth it?

By Mike Parkinson, The Graphics Guru

Reprinted with permission from 24-Hour Company and APMP National Capital Area Chapter

Yes, and I'll tell you why, but first a little background. While researching my book my goal, believe it or not, was to prove that graphics didn't matter. (The book needed to be honest, backed by empirical evidence, and tell it like it is-not how I wished it to be.) I know from experience that buying decisions are made without the support of graphics, so I suspected these decisions are based on relationships and insight of the potential client. So, I needed to find the truth. I interviewed evaluators, buyers, and experienced pro-

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From the Prez: Spring is here

Summer has arrived and proposals are popping all over the place. Every proposal professional I know seems to be slammed. I know in Houston some companies have laid off proposal staff. APMP is a great resource to find jobs. Check out the APMP job board at www.apmp.org. Also, the Greater Houston Chapter will provide free listings for members who are looking for proposal positions. If interested in posting a short “Proposal Talent Available” biography and contact information, please contact any board member. Also, come to a meeting and bring copies of your resume with you. We always ask for a show of hands of companies hiring. Unfortunately, not too many firms are



hiring in Houston. If your firm is looking for talent, the Greater Houston Chapter of APMP is a great source for finding the right person for your team. The Greater Houston Chapter posts job positions for free. For those of you who will be attending the 21st Annual APMP® International Conference, I look forward to seeing you at lunch on Thursday. We will have three “Texas All-Stars” tables. Look for the tent cards. With six tracks of presentations and workshops, an extensive exhibit hall and a proposal-oriented bookstore, the conference is going to be a true green-belt of information. If you are still trying to decide whether to attend, consider

this—it is the best return on investment I have ever made for my company and my career.

For those attending our June General Meeting, I know you will enjoy the presentation. Our speakers for the June General Meeting come to us with great reviews from the Central Texas Chapter. This will also be our last meeting at the facilities that Brown and Gay have so generously donated to us. I look forward to seeing you in August at our new home, The HESS Club. Look for more information on our new venue in the next edition of the newsletter.

On to the next proposal!

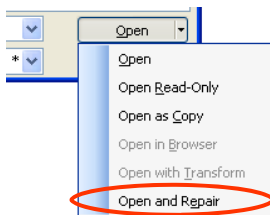
Jeannette Waldie, APM APMP
President, Greater Houston APMP Chapter

Repairing corrupt files

By David Wallis

Occasionally Microsoft® Word files become corrupt and won't open normally. Here are a couple of things to try.

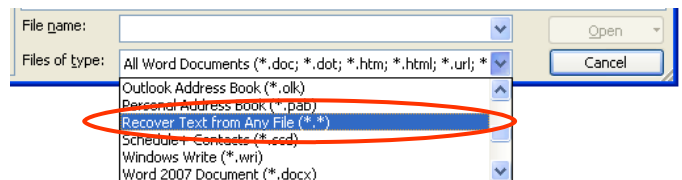
First, notice the drop-down arrow on the file *Open* button. One of the options is *Open and Repair* which can be a lifesaver.



If that doesn't work, it still may be possible to recover text (without graphics and formatting). Go to *Tools*, click *Options*,

and then click the *General* tab. Make sure the Confirm conversion at Open check box is selected, and then click *OK*.

Now when you go to *File–Open*, look in the file type box at the bottom and choose *Recover Text from Any File*.



About David Wallis

David Wallis is a senior proposal manager for [Halliburton](http://Halliburton.com)'s Global Business and Technical Solutions team. He has created and regularly delivers proposal training throughout Halliburton.

He has more than 10 years of experience with large oilfield services tenders and is a member of APMP's Houston Chapter.

Are graphics really worth it?

(Continued from page 1)

posal professionals. I asked tough questions to prove that graphics did not matter. Surprisingly, again and again, I was told that they do matter. I heard real-world stories that proved graphics directly impact wins. For example, the contracting officer for a ballistics bid told the winning company that its proposal cover was the reason they won. The cover showed the bullet the client needed in a live ammunition test. The cover graphic proved the bullet was ready-to-go, and this proof won the proposal.)The contracting officer also said the proposal itself was written so poorly that it almost cost the company the win.) After several years of research, I heard many similar stories confirming that graphics affected the final outcome. Then I wanted to understand why.

So why do graphics matter? Because we are not robots. Buyers, evaluators, you, me, and everyone else cannot consciously calculate every variable and determine the optimal solution to every decision. We simply do not have the time. However,

human beings have developed an amazing way to subconsciously make the best decisions—heuristic thinking. Essentially, we pick up data consciously and subconsciously. Our brains then weigh the gathered information and give us a “gut reaction.” Studies show that this gut reaction is often correct.

Let’s say you work for a service-based company. You are in charge of a new task to turn the proprietary software your company developed into revenue-generating assets. Your company will pay \$2M to the company that can do this without compromising the integrity of your core, service-based business. You hear about two companies that can do it—Company A and Company B. Both companies have experience and claim to be industry leaders. Each company visits and presents its proposal. Below is a sample slide from each company (see **Figure 1**).

Our brain subconsciously helps us make our decision. It looks for incongruent information. Which company looks like the industry leader? Our brain makes intuitive

judgments based on our experience. Which company has better resources? Which company is more experienced? In other words, which company is better?

Here is why the graphics in this scenario are critical. Company A’s graphic is easier to understand and much more memorable. It is aesthetically appealing and, therefore, more likely to be studied and reviewed longer. Additionally, the graphics in the two proposal provide clues that give you insights into Company A and Company B:

- Company A has more resources to help your company. (They had the resources to make a superior proposal.)
- Company A is more invested in working with you. (They spent the money and time to make visuals that speak to your unique challenges.)
- Company A cares more. (They focused on your unique challenges to develop graphics that resonate with

(Continued on page 7)



Figure 1: Who has the better solution, Company A or Company B?

Why good proposals lose

By Dr. Tom Sant

Reprinted with permission from *The Sant Corporation, Messages That Matter Blog* at <http://messagesthatmatter.blogspot.com/>

Sometimes you do everything right but it all comes out wrong. You write a fabulous proposal and you still lose.

Shouldn't quality be rewarded? Shouldn't an outstanding effort be crowned with success?

Well, maybe in Hollywood, where happy endings are required, but in real life it doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes you produce a great proposal and it still loses. It's beautifully written. It has terrific graphics. The win theme is creative and strong. And what happens? Nothing. It doesn't even get down-selected to the final two or three. What's up with that?

What's up is that your seemingly great proposal might be doomed by a fatal flaw. And just as is true of those Shakespearean heroes and their fatal flaws, the consequences for your proposal are tragic. Here are some of the most common flaws that can doom your magnificent effort:

- Weak qualification of the opportunity. The proposal was well written, true, but there was never a deal there in the first place.



Dr. Tom Sant

One of my clients in London received an RFP from a global technology firm. Overjoyed by the size and scope of the opportunity, my client assembled a top team who worked for six weeks to respond to the complex and difficult bid document. They even spent £100,000 with an outside graphics firm to create fantastic illustrations and slides. But when they arrived at the prospect's headquarters to present their proposal, they were told, "We're so delighted you chose to

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How to prepare for plan B

By Richard Ogle, PhD

[University of Houston–Downtown](#)

This article follows up Dr. Ogle's April presentation to APMP-Greater Houston Chapter meeting about getting the best from your proposal team.

At the April meeting of the Houston Chapter of APMP I covered some of the career paths of the graduates of the University of Houston–Downtown's Professional Writing program. The objective was to bring to APMP members awareness of some of the options available if a job change is desired or, if not desired, necessary.

If things are not working out at your present job there are numerous proposal preparation jobs at the Texas Medical Center, school districts, city and local government offices, as well as the larger non-profit organizations in the Houston area.

I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on preparing for a job change. In other words, how do you prepare in case Plan B is necessary but you don't feel you have the up-to-date skills needed to compete in the present job market? At the University of Houston–Downtown (UHD) there are a couple of ways you can make yourself more marketable.



Richard Ogle, PhD

One of the most obvious ways of improving your chances in the job market is to earn a Master's degree. UHD offers an M.S. degree in Professional Writing and Technical

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SPAC 2010: Proposal jukebox: Don't just spin it... rock it !!!



If you are old enough to remember going up to a jukebox to insert your dime and choosing a 45 rpm record to play with your dinner, or young enough to enjoy today's CD and MP3 versions, you know the fun of looking through the jukebox selection. You might find your favorite song or maybe an oldie that you hadn't heard in years. The best jukeboxes not only reflected the general theme of the establishment in which they sat, but they also offered an eclectic and ecumenical selection that appealed to a broad array of musical tastes.

Like the DJ that chooses the tunes for the jukebox, the proposal manager has to make sure that the content and

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A strong proposal, like a good jukebox, will catch the attention of the reviewers and before they know it, have them tapping their feet and nodding their heads in time with the “music” of your proposal.

”

style of the proposal have broad appeal and address the needs of the key customer audiences. Even in the most constrained proposals, you have opportunities to be creative and incorporate proposal elements and content that strike the right chords with critical decision-makers and



Read the exploits of the Proposal Panda during his (her?) March trip to Houston for the First Annual APMP Texas All-Star Symposium and excursion to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo
<http://www.theproposalguys.com/category/panda/>

influencers. A strong proposal, like a good jukebox, will catch the attention of the reviewers and, before they know it, have them tapping their feet and nodding their heads in time with the “music” of your proposal. A strong proposal manager helps the team think about the customer audiences and how to blend the core messages into a harmonious, compelling composition.

The theme for the 14th Annual Southern Proposal Accents Conference (SPAC) is “Proposal Jukebox: Don’t Just Spin It . . . Rock It !!!” The [Georgia Chattahoochee, Carolina](#), and [Florida Sunshine](#) APMP chapters will co-host the 14th SPAC at the Cobb Galleria Centre in northwest Atlanta Friday, October 29, 2010.

The 2010 SPAC will be a full-day event featuring presentations by proposal and business development professionals. The SPAC planning committee is working on plans for this year's conference, including pre-conference workshops, such as the APMP certification and proposal graphics sessions that were held last year.

The SPAC draws from the entire eastern U.S., with almost half of attendees traveling from beyond the Atlanta metro area in recent years. Check the SPAC website often for news, links for registration, hotel discount information, and more: <http://www.apmp-spac.com/>

Plan B

(Continued from page 4)

Communication. In addition to being able to select from a variety of course offerings, you will complete either a thesis or a capstone project. Most of the people enrolled in the graduate program also work full time. To accommodate students' working schedules, nearly all graduate courses are taught in the evenings.

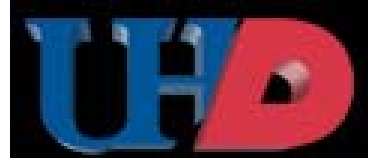
If you don't feel you are up to the long-term commitment of a graduate program but still want to improve your skills in specific areas, there is always the option of enrolling as a post-baccalaureate student. If you have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited university, you can apply for admission as a post-baccalaureate student. As such, you will have all the privileges of a student but you are not enrolled in any degree program. You are able to enroll in either graduate or undergraduate classes for which you have the prerequisites. With this flexibility, you can take specific

courses where you can acquire skills in areas you may consider yourself lacking.

For example, a web design or desktop publishing course might be used to brush up skills in these areas. If you are already have experience in writing for the web you might want to your take on a graduate course in Hypermedia Theory and Design. Other graduate courses that could broaden your knowledge into new areas include Public Relations and Media to prepare you to move into your company's public relations office. You might also consider an Intercultural and World Communications class to better prepare you to work on international projects.

In total, UHD offers 35 undergraduate and 24 graduate level courses in the Professional Writing program.

Another advantage of enrolling as a post-baccalaureate student is that it is a means



of getting your feet wet in the graduate program before you make the full commitment. If you are accepted into the graduate

program you can transfer a maximum of two courses you have taken as a post-baccalaureate student toward your M.S. degree as long as you earned a grade of "B" or better in the courses.

The University of Houston-Downtown is not the only university in Houston that can offer ways to improve your skills to make you more marketable in the job search. It is, however, the only complete professional writing program at both the undergraduate and graduate level in the Houston area that concentrates on technical writing. If you feel a need for improving your professional skills, the University of Houston-Downtown probably can meet your schedule.

About Richard Ogle

Richard Ogle, PhD, is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Professional Writing Program at the [University of Houston-Downtown](http://www.uhd.edu).



Dr. Ogle addressing attendees at the April 2010 general meeting of APMP Greater Houston Chapter

Are graphics really worth it?

(Continued from page 3)

you and your company. Company B simply placed canned clip art into their proposal.)

Our brains do an excellent job subconsciously analyzing thousands of bits of information and choosing the best possible solution (see **Figure 2**). Humans are hardwired to be influenced by what we see. What we see plays a major role in our decision. Thanks to life experience, we are wise enough to know we need more than just facts and

figures to make the best decision. Have you ever had a bad feeling about someone for no obvious reason? That’s often heuristic thinking at work. Our brain picks up subtle cues that say, “WARNING!” The same is true for proposals. Even if your company has a good

relationship with your potential client, you want to ensure everything you put in front of them is synonymous with the perception that your company is better than any other. If you ignore this, you may lose the proposal.

Potential clients, evaluators, and decision makers are influenced by what they see. Herbert A. Simon, Nobel Prize-winning scholar at the Carnegie Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh, studied corporate decision-making and found that people often ignored formal decision-making models because of time constraints, incomplete information, and inability to calculate consequences, and other variables. Intuitive judgment

was the process for many decisions. You want to positively affect your audience’s “intuition.” If you say your company and solution are the best, then your proposals need to support that assertion in every way possible. Graphics communicate volumes

“ Use a few simple rules to help keep your graphics looking professional—stay consistent, keep it clean and simple, do your homework, label elements, and use a “smart” color palette. ”



Mike Parkinson

about you, your company, and your product or service in seconds.

In today’s fast-paced world, the speed and efficiency with which you communicate is an important factor in gaining positive favor. Visuals communicate 60,000 times faster than text because text is digested linearly, whereas graphics are absorbed all at once and instantly stored in long-term memory—never to be forgotten. Graphics make it easier for your audience to understand and remember your features, benefits, and discriminators that may otherwise get lost in a sea of words.

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Figure 2: Features, benefits and discriminators

Graphics...

(Continued from page 7)

Your audience will appreciate your graphics because, like you, they are distracted by 20 other things and would prefer to be home relaxing, not dealing with your proposal. Graphics make it easier for potential clients, evaluators, and decision makers to find what they need to quickly make a decision.

After all, a happy audience makes more favorable decisions. So, are graphics really worth it? Yes! As long as the net value of your win exceeds the cost, using graphics is well worth it because they impact the final decision to such a

degree that not using them gives your competition an advantage. You expend a lot of effort and time to write and assemble your proposals. You aren't working that hard to lose. You want to win, and you want every advantage to guarantee that win. According to a 3M-sponsored study at the University of Minnesota School of Management, presenters who use visual aids are 43% more effective in persuading audience members to take a desired course of action than presenters who don't use visuals. Good graphics give you and your company a powerful advantage. So use visuals if you want to increase the likelihood that you will succeed. It's definitely worth it.

About Mike Parkinson

Mike Parkinson is an internationally recognized visual communications expert and APMP Fellow. He is a partner at 24 Hour Company (www.24hrco.com) specializing in bid-winning proposal graphics. His Billion Dollar Graphics website (www.BillionDollarGraphics.com) and *Billion Dollar Business Graphics* book share best practices and helpful tools with proposal professionals. Contact Mike at mike@24hrco.com or call 703.533.7209.

“
Before developing
and presenting
specialty graphic
types, icons, symbols,
or imagery, be sure
your audience
understands what it is
you are
communicating.
”

Helpful Web Pages

<http://www.apmp.org/siteSpecific/job/jobBank.aspx>

<http://www.apmphouston.org/employment.html>

<http://proposalcafe.com>

<http://www.acquisition.gov/>

New Meeting Location!

Watch for the next issue of *Final Draft* and for announcements of a new meeting location for APMP Greater Houston Chapter. Beginning in August, we will meet at the [Houston Engineering and Scientific Society \(Hess\) Club](#), 5430 Westheimer Road at Yorktown Street, just west of the Galleria.

Welcome New Members

The Greater Houston Chapter welcomes the following new member.

- **Marcianne Glennon – Microsoft**

APMP Accreditation Coaching Workshop

June 1, Shipley Associates, an ATO of APMP, will facilitate an APMP Accreditation Coaching Workshop preceding the 21st Annual APMP International Conference and Exhibits at the Walt Disney Dolphin Resort in Orlando. The coaching will last from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The Foundation Level Exam will be administered from 2:00 to 3:00 PM and participants will receive results immediately after the exam.

For more details and registration information, contact Debbie Wright at 801.807.0161 or dwright@shipleywins.com.

Register now for the 21st Annual APMP® International Conference & Exhibits scheduled for June 1-4, 2010, at Walt Disney World Dolphin in Orlando, Florida.



[CLICK HERE](#) for More Conference Information

Why good proposals lose

(Continued from page 4)

respond, considering that we don't actually intend to change our supplier this time around."

Ask yourself three questions: Is the client serious? Can we be competitive? Can we win? If you can't answer these questions honestly, throw up a big yellow flag. Otherwise, you may be in for a case of proposal heartbreak.

- Not understanding the business drivers. You can be 100% compliant to the RFP and 100% a loser if you don't understand the client's real needs. The RFP almost never discusses the business problems that lie behind an opportunity. So your proposal, which does a great job of responding to the technical requirements, may be missing the point completely.

Suppose a bank discovers they have a serious problem with the security of their accounts, particularly in regard to on-line banking functions. They issue an RFP, seeking help. Do you think they will indicate exactly what the problem is, how serious it is, how many customers are at risk? No, no, and no. RFPs can quickly become public documents, so any revelations about leaky security could damage the bank's reputation, create panic among customers, and possibly send the share price plummeting.

- Failing to leverage lessons learned. Have you had previous engagements with a client? Have you received a debriefing after submitting a previous proposal? If so, you may have valuable insights that will enable you to personalize the message. Unfortunately, the so-called lessons learned often go into long-term storage and are never looked at again. It's surprising how many companies invest millions of dollars in CRM systems, but don't use them to store information or insights into decision makers,

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Is the client
serious?
Can we be
competitive?
Can we win?
”

corporate culture, or other factors that could strengthen the next proposal effort.

- Pitching to people who aren't there anymore. If we have a long-standing relationship with a client or a government agency, we might find ourselves unconsciously slipping into a traditional pattern. We know what they want. We know how they like us to organize our bid. We share experiences and assumptions, so we don't bother to spell that stuff out. "They know that," we say. "We don't need to mention it." What we may fail to notice is that those people have moved on. Some of them retired. Some were replaced. Maybe a few of them transferred to new positions. And as a result our usual way of proposing may not work anymore. I recently worked on a huge proposal to a government agency, one that was deemed a "must win", and kept getting "advice" from the old timers about the way that agency liked things done. What they weren't acknowledging was that six months earlier the entire command structure in that agency had been replaced and the culture was totally different. Happily, we ended up pitching to the people who were there, and I got word a couple of weeks ago that the proposal won.

There are probably a few other reasons why otherwise great proposals lose. But I suppose you could argue that if a proposal was hampered by one of the fatal flaws I've listed above, it probably wasn't all that great in the first place.

If you're looking to eliminate hidden fatal flaws and produce truly great proposals, give us a call. We have the software, the training and the processes to help increase your win rate. And how great would that be?

“
...companies
invest millions of
dollars in CRM
systems, but don't
use them to store
information or
”

About The Sant Corporation

The Sant Corporation enables sales professionals to deliver high quality content throughout the entire sales cycle. Our sales enablement solutions reduce the time it takes to locate the best sales materials and expertise within the organization. Our proposal automation solutions improve win rates by accelerating the production of persuasive proposals, RFP responses, presentations, and related documents. Businesses choose Sant to improve sales productivity and win rates, increase marketing effectiveness, and deliver accurate, personalized documents to their customers.



2009 Board of Directors

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Mindmapping

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procedures, analyzing business requirements, training, writing proposals and managing statewide projects. As Garner Consulting, they provide business management consultation and subject-matter expertise to private sector companies and state and federal government agencies. Their years of experience are primarily in the child support and human services arenas with a focus on business process improvement, change management and customer service. Expertise includes program and project management; participation in developing solutions and writing proposals in response to various

The mission of the Association for Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) is to advance the arts, sciences and technology of new business acquisition and to promote the professionalism of those engaged in those pursuits.

We are extremely proud that we have grown into an internationally recognized association with membership and corporate sponsors from a diverse range of disciplines and industries who are committed to the pursuit of proposal excellence. Our journey has been one of promoting the professionalism of our members and shaping the future of the proposal profession throughout the world.

APMP is a learning environment for both novice and seasoned proposal professionals. We offer professional symposia, conferences, and publications - the **Perspective** and the **Journal of the Association of Proposal Management Professionals**.

Join our organization online at https://www.apmp.org/siteSpecific/customer/register_accountData.aspx. You can pay with a credit card or check (follow the online instructions). For a chapter affiliation, simply select the Greater Houston Chapter from the corresponding drop-down list.

Join us and discover how we can help you pursue new horizons in proposal excellence.



Barbara Bowden Garner

government agencies' requests for proposals; providing business analysis and documentation of requirements for developing requirements traceability matrices; and developing test scenarios for new systems. In addition, Gary is a mediator, and a published author and speaker on topics including leadership and creativity.

The June 2, 2010, meeting of the Greater Houston Chapter of the Association for Proposal Management Professionals (APMP) will be at Brown & Gay

Engineers, Inc., Lubbock Conference Room, 10777 Westheimer Rd., 3rd Floor, Houston, Texas.

Seating is limited; RSVP by 10:00 AM Friday, May 28, to Janet Dodd: janet.dodd@kbr.com providing your name, company name, and membership status (APMP member, non-member). Or call Janet at call 713-753-2261

Admission includes lunch and is \$20 for members, \$25 for nonmembers, and \$15 for students (student ID required).

Email Meeting Announcements

To receive email announcements of each APMP Greater Houston Chapter's upcoming meeting, send an email request to:

janet.dodd@kbr.com

Please provide your name and email address.