

PCNY Luncheon
Planes, Trains and Automobiles:
Working with the Travel Media in Challenging Times

Nancy Friedman – Moderator:

I want to thank Peter Himler and Lisa Kovitz from Burson-Marsteller for asking me to moderate today. And I also want to thank our distinguished panel and we recognize how precious your time is, so thank you all. Just the crowd in the room today is a testament to how magnetic your presence is here today.

Since travel has moved from softer to harder news in recent years, and everyone is watching travel patterns as a barometer of economic recovery, trends, as well as safety issues, practitioners of travel PR are very eager to learn about the perspectives from our prestigious panel and we look forward to your enlightening us and informing us about what you do and how we can work better together. Each panelist will have 3-5 minutes to address the group, I've given them a couple of suggestions, and then we'll follow that with questions and answers. Some of the suggestions I gave include: letting the audience know approximately how many releases, kits, emails and calls they receive every day; letting us know the most effective way to reach them; their dislikes and peeves (but keep that part short, please!); the direction that your section, publication or stories are likely to be going in the coming months, so we can plan better; and the philosophy or mission of your paper or how you do your reporting. What I'm going to do is tell you a little bit about each panelist and then we'll go ahead and let them talk.

We'll start with my immediate right, which is Val D'Elia. Many of you know Val. I'll tell you a little bit more about her, she's been packing her bags and jumping on airplanes, ships and trains for as long as she can remember. She comes from a family of travel agents who predate the flight of the Wright Brothers by a year. 2002 is the centennial of D'Elia Travel, Bridgeport, CT, started by her great-grandfather who booked his relatives from Italy to Ellis Island on transatlantic voyages in steerage class. Today Valarie continues the D'Elia Travel tradition for a 4th generation in her career as a broadcast travel commentator appearing on national and local media outlets. Her top travel tips from how to find the best online airfares, lodging, car rentals and packages to hot family destinations to learning vacations to how to pack a bag in a snap without wrinkling the wardrobe are heard by millions of travelers each year. Every weekend Valarie is heard fielding listeners' questions as the host of The Travel Show on the WOR Radio Network. On television she is seen as the travel correspondent for New York 1 News with her featured segments Travel with Val. She also appears monthly on CNBC's Squawk Box highlighting her signature "D'Elia's Deals", CBS's Early Show and NBC's Later Today have showcased her travel expertise as well. D'Elia spent five years covering the globe for The Travel Channel as a producer-reporter developing and presenting news and feature reports on hundreds of domestic and international destinations. She also was the host-producer of TWA's monthly in-flight video "Ambassador Theater". As the director of production for HBO's Visitor Information Network, D'Elia was responsible for a hotel TV channel providing tourist information for guests in ten major US cities. Other TV credits include The Outdoor Life Network, CNN's Travel Guide and CNN's Airport

Network. Her best travel tips and destinations also have been published in major national publications such as Redbook and Family PC and she was recently named one of the nation's Top 40 Travel Writers for Destinations by Readers Digest's New Choices magazine. D'Elia began her broadcast career as a radio news anchor in Miami while a junior at University of Miami. She went on to anchor report for several radio stations in New York metropolitan area before earning her master's degree from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. She's a member of SATW and a consumer advisor for Orbitz.com. Join me in welcoming Val D'Elia.