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Photo of the Month



Steve Eschbach and Dawit Woldemariam at our January program.

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From the President



As the calendar turns, apparently the weather does not. This year, March came in like a lion, and we can only hope it goes out like a lamb as we are all due for spring fever. I turn to my monthly NIRI-Chicago letter having just put down the pencil on Anixter's 2014 annual report and shareholders' letter. This is one aspect of my job that allows for reflection and tying together all of the pieces

for a broader audience, including new investors and prospective employees. I think we can all learn lessons from the best in class, so I am including a link to Warren Buffet's [letter](#) -- it's always worth a read.

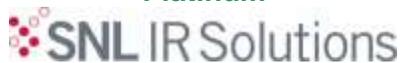
Last week, Bill Chapman and his W.W. Grainger colleagues Laura Brown, Casey Darby and Michael Ferreter hosted a NIRI in Your Neighborhood informal breakfast gathering. This format is a perennial favorite among NIRI-Chicago members to discuss top-of-mind IR matters, given the non-threatening and collaborative setting. As always, we had an engaging discussion. We thank Bill and the team at Grainger for graciously hosting the breakfast.

Successful investor relations officers must know about strategy, finance, communications, marketing and compliance -- but superb technical knowledge and skills will not necessarily land you a promotion or a better job in another field. Be sure to join us Friday morning, March 20 at the Metropolitan Club for [Leadership Skills: the Critical Piece of the Puzzle](#). Our mini-workshop will help you identify the most important leadership skills for the next step in your career, discuss how to develop and demonstrate those skills to build influence within your organization, and offer real-world advice from experts and senior practitioners. Our speaker is Julia Sweeney of Korn Ferry and our panelists are Beth Coronelli of Apollo Education, Aaron Hoffman of ITW and Chris Hodges, founder of Alpha IR -- with Stephanie Buckles, also with Korn Ferry, moderating the discussion. [Register now](#) for this highly valuable career development event.

We are pleased to host new NIRI president Jim Cudahy at our April 14 program. Please join us that evening at the Standard Club as we seek [Insights from the Buy-Side to Win the Competition for Capital](#). We look forward to meeting Jim and introducing him to our membership that evening. It should be a special evening, as we will be among the first chapters Jim

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visits on his NIRI "listening tour." This is a great opportunity to better understand NIRI's current goals and how we can support its mission -- and to share with Jim our ideas on how NIRI can support our chapter and Chicago-area members. [Register](#).

In closing, as we move toward the end of our program year, your board is beginning to think about our chapter's 2015-2016 programs. We are always looking to broaden participation, and welcome your involvement if you'd like to help with any of our events, from our flagship fall IR Workshop to our golf outing. As in any organization, people make the difference. NIRI-Chicago is fortunate to be endowed with dedicated, smart, successful and engaged members. I encourage you to contact me if you have an interest in becoming more involved.

In the meantime, think spring.

Regards,

[Lisa Micou Meers](#), CFA
NIRI-Chicago President

NIRI Annual Conference

We *know* that you know that the NIRI Annual Conference is coming to Chicago on June 14-17. But we haven't given you the top five reasons to avoid this year's conference like the plague.

5. We don't like food and fun. You'll save lots of calories by avoiding NIRI and chapter networking receptions, dining with out-of-town IROs at fantastic downtown Chicago restaurants, and NIRI-Chicago's pre-conference annual meeting (details to come).

4. We just love waiting in long security lines. That's right, you won't have to brave O'Hare or Midway airports to network with more than 1,000 IROs from around the world.

3. We would miss work and family too much. These few short days will be chockful of information and networking opportunities. Seriously, check your emails after regular business hours and make the kids walk the dog that week.

2. Too many choices. The conference offers dozens of interactive and informative sessions covering the nuances of IR strategy, implementation, marketing, outreach, regulations, governance, markets and more. There's no such thing as a wrong choice -- and no one will complain if you "butterfly" between sessions.

1. You'll regret it if you don't attend. The NIRI Annual Conference is an outstanding venue at which to learn, make new professional contacts and network with colleagues from all over the world -- and it's conveniently here in Chicago.

In the News

- Shareholder activism [pays off](#)...for some, and is [changing](#) American capitalism.
- Amid increasing [investor concerns](#) about lack of integrity in financial reporting, [how to tell](#) if a CEO is lying.
- [Study](#): Difficult-to-read news releases can [mislead investors](#) about poor results.
- [Study](#): Let's hear it for the 25-page proxy statement and clearer compensation disclosures.
- Are [virtual annual meetings](#) coming back into fashion?
- SEC [challenges](#) companies to do better on cybersecurity, financial reporting and disclosure.
- How to practice corporate [social responsibility](#) while maintaining shareholder value and analytical rigor.

NIRI-Chicago Member News

Welcome to NIRI-Chicago's newest members: **Jennifer Hiser**, director, investor relations, McDonald's Corporation; **Ryan Glenn**, manager of FP&A, Paylocity; and **Gerald Gradwell**, senior vice president, investor relations & special projects, Walgreens Boots Alliance.

A new *Deloitte Insights* article, [Effective IR: Lessons from the Trenches](#), quotes NIRI-Chicago member **Chris Jakubik** of Kraft Foods.

[Share](#) your news (job changes, awards, interesting articles) -- and thanks for reading the MEMBER CONNECTION.

*Maryellen Thielen
Vice President, Communications
NIRI-Chicago*