

the  
**PROUTY  
PROJECT**

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**"C" NOTE QUOTE:**

"I don't want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well."

● **If you know who said this quote**, please send an e-mail to [kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com](mailto:kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com) or call 952.942.2922 by **Friday, October 29** – one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

**And last issue's winner is... Peter Lafferty, M.S., La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA.**

**Pete knew that Dr. Mehmet Oz, The Dr. Oz Show, said the following:** "We don't gauge our happiness by their grades, but by the effort they make. I'd rather they get A's and D's than C's and B's; I want them taking chances."

**Congratulations Pete!** Pete is planning to use the prize for a night out with his wife, Holly!

## The Prouty Project on YouTube

We hope you thoroughly enjoy our first foray into the world of YouTube. Please go to our YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/proutyproject](http://www.youtube.com/proutyproject), to watch a short video about our STRETCH 2010 experience in the Amazon. Enjoy.

Also, please save the dates, June 24 – 29 for STRETCH 2011. Our 14th annual STRETCH Expedition will take us into the mountains of Colorado for a spectacular and life-changing adventure race.

Hosted by Erik Weihenmayer (the only blind man to summit Mt. Everest), World Team Sports, and No Barriers USA, the race teams up three able-bodied with two disabled teammates. If you're intrigued, please join us at our informational kick-off meeting on **Thursday, January 27, 2011, 6 – 8 pm**, and RSVP to [melissa.gennert@proutyproject.com](mailto:melissa.gennert@proutyproject.com).

As you turn the corner on Q4 2010, we hope you continue to put the s-t-r-e-t-c-h in strategy every day. Have another fantastic quarter!

[jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com](mailto:jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com)



## ● BOARD DEVELOPMENT

# Board Governance: A Revolution? (Intro to a Four Part Series)



Article by  
Mike Felmler

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I attended a board development session with one of our clients and had the opportunity to hear Susan Boren, Managing Partner of Spencer Stuart's Minneapolis office, speak. She offered the following definition of a board of directors:

***“A group of individuals who don't know each other well who come together periodically to make big decisions about an organization they know very little about.”***

As you can imagine, the room went silent. I heard one nervous laugh before we all joined in knowing full well she was spot on with her “Dilbert-ish” reflection.

Last month we completed work with our 94<sup>th</sup> board of directors at the Prouty Project. We affirm Susan's perspective and know that the economic turmoil associated with the recent recession has exacerbated this situation.

Today, we live in an environment where stockholders are wary, employees are more nervous than ever before, and trust among all stakeholders is at an all time low. And board members, whether they represent public, private, or nonprofit entities are all wondering how they can help govern the organizations they serve more effectively.

Are we in the midst of a board governance revolution? We think so. The magnitude and scope of corporate failures underscore the seriousness of this problem.

Is it to the scale of Victor Hugo's fictional account of the French Revolution in *Les Misérables*? We believe so. The impact of this breach in trust is devastating to both U.S. and global markets.

In any case, we all have a part to play.

***To begin, we believe each new or existing board member needs to answer three fundamental questions:***

- 1) Are we spending our precious board time on the right things?
- 2) Are we performing these things well?
- 3) Are we meeting the needs of the organization and performing up to the best of our abilities?

Over the next four quarterly newsletters, we will share with you how the Prouty Project helps board members answer a resounding “yes” to these questions.

- In **January**, we will highlight a board engagement tool we like to use from David Nadler's book entitled, *Building Better Boards*.
- In **April**, we will share a process for developing a robust board assessment tool.
- In **July**, we will provide examples of how individual board member assessment tools should be used to develop high-performing board members.
- And, in **September**, we will share a case study of how we've helped one of our client's board achieve high-performance.

***In the interim, see if you know the answers to the following ten questions we believe every board member should know:***

- 1) What is the organization's mission?
- 2) What are our plans to advance it?
- 3) How are we doing financially and are we living within our means?
- 4) How are we doing relative to similar organizations?
- 5) What could really hurt, or destroy our organization in the next few years?
- 6) If the CEO were hit by a bus tomorrow, who would run the organization?
- 7) What are the “qualitative” and “quantitative” measurements to evaluate the CEO's performance?
- 8) How does bad news get to the CEO and to the board?
- 9) How does the board, CEO, and staff interact?
- 10) Do we really have the right people on the board “bus?”

So, how did you do? If not very well, then it's up to you to find the answers. At your next board meeting challenge your colleagues to do the same.

Don't be afraid to start a revolution on the boards you serve towards high-performance.

Do we really have a choice?



## ● ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

# Spontaneous Dancing at Work in the Amazon



[peter.bailey@proutyproject.com](mailto:peter.bailey@proutyproject.com)

Article by  
Peter Bailey

This year our annual STRETCH Expedition took us to the village of Esperanza in the Peruvian Amazon where we worked to expand a rustic medical clinic which administers treatment to 8,000 people a year. In addition to the hard work, high heat, and equatorial jungle humidity, the STRETCHERS got a first-hand experience of unusual ways to approach and celebrate work.

According to a **first-time STRETCHER, Dr. Dan Margo**, “We had a great time, made great friends, and laughed over silly things. It reminded us not to forget how to “whistle while we work.”

One element which became immediately clear was the need to relax one’s pre-conceived notions about process, progress, short-term results, and outcomes. Instead of working with power tools, we built the building from the ground up with only hammers, nails, a short-bladed saw, and machetes. We all got a crash-course in learning to be more spontaneous, to go with the flow, and to begin to measure our success not in terms of how much work we had accomplished, but by how many friends we had made, how many Spanish words and phrases we had practiced, and how often we had danced in a day. This new way of thinking also taught us something we seemed to have forgotten in our work culture...celebrating accomplishments.

**John Evenstad, a second-time STRETCHER**, commented on his surprise at the spontaneity and eagerness of the villagers to celebrate success each day by dancing. “I don’t think I have ever seen in all my 21 years of working, people who felt so good about what they had done at the end of each day that they

broke into spontaneous dance!” However, we found much to our surprise, that despite heat and humidity, in the Peruvian Amazon, spontaneous dancing is a frequent occurrence.

**Abby Margo, a 16-year old first-time STRETCHER** and daughter of Dr. Dan Margo, says, “It was so great, people would start ‘smoothing’ to the music, and then more of us would pick up the rhythm and then everybody would be dancing!”

Jodi Nelson, video producer and Play it Forward Founder, ([www.pifadventures.com](http://www.pifadventures.com)) coordinated the trip to the Peruvian Amazon and captured some of the dancers at the end of each day with her camera man, Jim Ankeny. She said, “When you do an adventure similar to what we have done in Peru this week, so many valuable metaphors can be brought into your day-to-day life and also into the way you do business back home.”

Jeff Prouty started the STRETCH Expeditions back in 1999 with the ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Since then, each year the focus is either on a physical challenge or a service-based experience in a compelling region of the world. Each STRETCH Expedition has its particular merits and the metaphors abound for life, work, and one’s contribution to small communities and the global community at large.

By working with Dolly Beaver, “Angels of the Amazon,” ([perujungle@hotmail.com](mailto:perujungle@hotmail.com)) and entering the lives of the villagers of Esperanza on the Tahuayo River (a major tributary to the Amazon), we were able to construct a badly-needed addition to an existing medical clinic. While we thought we were there to give service and to bring help to the villagers of Esperanza (which means “hope” in Spanish), upon reflection, perhaps the service was given in reverse. In this case, the villagers of “Hope,” in the heart of the Amazon, gave nine weary Americans, a taste of life they had long forgotten: the importance of shared food in community, the humor of cross-cultural communication, and the joy of expressing oneself spontaneously through dance.

**So, my wish for each of you: May you find a reason today, and yes, where ever you are, to dance a little in celebration.**



Jeff Prouty, Founder and Chairman of the Prouty Project and “Head STRETCHER” says: *“The STRETCH Expedition is intended to stretch people mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally... and you end up in environments where people have to adapt... to think in new ways. You are exposed to people, places, and things that you wouldn’t see day in and day out and I think it causes you to think in new ways.”*

## ● CEO PROFILE

# Lisa Washington, Design Build Institute of America (DBIA)



[jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com](mailto:jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com)

Interview by  
Jeff Prouty

We've had the pleasure of working with Lisa, her management team, and her board in an exciting strategic planning process. A special thanks to DBIA's Board Treasurer (Bob Nartonis, Mortenson Construction) for introducing us to the DBIA leaders.

Enjoy the excerpts from a **truly inspirational** 13-question discussion.

- 1 What do you love about being a CEO?** Leading transformation. Thinking about what high performance means, and then helping our team and board become high performers.
- 2 What's frustrating about being a CEO?** When I became the CEO, I felt we had an unclear vision and too many competing priorities to truly be successful. There are still occasions when I believe leadership has very divergent views which make choosing the right, or most appropriate direction for the organization challenging.
- 3 What advice would you offer to other CEOs in their first 10 days on the job?** Know the army you are fighting with. Learn their strengths and weaknesses quickly.
- 4 Advice for the first 10 months on the job?** Accept that you received the promotion to CEO for a reason. Be prepared to take calculated risks, and be confident in doing so. It took me about six months, and then I felt I had done enough talking, research, and due diligence to present my bold ideas to the board in a confident way.
- 5 Advice for the first 10 years on the job?** Have a plan – a strategic, clear plan, with clear goals, and be ready to adapt and adjust your plan as the environment around you changes. Pay careful attention to history and trend data. Looking back will help you move forward.
- 6 What advice would you offer board members around the world?** The CEO's behavior and how he/she is perceived can make or break the organization. Engage in open, honest communication day-in-day-out with the CEO.
- 7 What rhythms and rituals keep the communication with your board effective?** There are no surprises. The executive committee meets with me monthly, in a one-hour conference call. They are also clear that I have only one boss, the Chair of the Board who does a good job of getting feedback from other board members.

- 8 Any advice for aspiring board members?** Understand how the role differs from the role of being a CEO. Develop a clear understanding and respect for board responsibilities versus CEO responsibilities.
- 9 Any advice for aspiring CEOs?** I requested a contract. 70% of association CEOs have contracts, 30% do not. Remember that your performance has to be based on something. I took the initiative to play a role in creating the plan on which I am to be measured. Also, take the time to get to know the folks who will clearly be leaders and/or board members down the road. Pay attention to all of your relationships in advance.
- 10 What did you learn from your mom and dad about leadership?** Leadership and success isn't about ego or self-gratification. It's about bringing out the best in other people. I'm the youngest of ten children, my mom had a 7th grade education, my dad had an 8th grade education. They always taught us, "Whatever you're hired to do, do the best you can at that job."
- 11 Any other words of wisdom, words of humor?** I love quotes. My favorite quote: "Progress always takes risk. You can't steal second base, and keep your foot on first."
- 12 What's the big stretch for you and DBIA this year?** Instead of shying away from potential controversy, we are going to stand for something and stay true to our direction. When you stand for something, and you clearly tell people what you stand for, it always sparks dialogue and interest.
- 13 What does your mom think about your CEO success?** My mom is incredibly giddy, incredibly proud.

*Thanks, Lisa, for taking the time to share your thoughts. It's been a joy working with you, and I'm sure our readers will appreciate this dose of inspiration.*



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Call 952.942.2922 or email [stretch@proutyproject.com](mailto:stretch@proutyproject.com)

**THANKS!**

Bigger Goals ● Bolder Strategies ● Better Collaboration

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