



Join VSAE on Friday, **February 1, 2019** at the **Hilton Richmond Downtown** for “**Courage & Conflict—Critical Conversations!**” presented by Tom and Melissa Laughon. Constructive conflict is essential to building relationships, high-performing teams, and strategies for success. In this interactive session, explore strategies to foster improved interpersonal relationships, idea generation, and increased productivity. Become a catalyst for courageous communication with your staff, board, legislators, and other stakeholders and encourage others to follow your lead.

The Governor has been invited to speak during the luncheon. If he is not available, another high ranking state official will present in his place.

Tom and Melissa Laughon are owners of Catch Your Limit, a leadership development firm in Richmond, and VSAE’s partners in designing and facilitating the Association Leadership Virginia (ALV) program.

Please make a note to wear red to the meeting as our charity of the month will be the American Heart Association. The donation will be given in honor of Danny Mitchell.

Building Your Association’s Political Capital: Best Practices for the “Off-Season”

Associations exist to influence public policy in ways that benefit their members. To influence public policy, associations spend political capital, especially when the General Assembly is in town. During the legislative session, association executives and lobbyists walk the halls of the legislative buildings urging lawmakers to support, oppose, or modify dozens or even hundreds of bills each session – request after request, day after day, week after week, and month after month.

And when the General Assembly finally adjourns for the year, effective associations switch gears from spending political capital to building up reserves for the next round of spending.

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NEXT EVENT

SEMINAR SERIES WITH LUNCH

Friday, February 1
Hilton Richmond Downtown
Speakers:
Melissa & Tom Laughon
Catch Your Limit

SCHEDULE

Registration..... 8:00 a.m.
Seminar..... 8:30–11:00 a.m.

COURAGE & CONFLICT— CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS!

Reception..... 11:00–11:45 a.m.
Luncheon..... 11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

LUNCH PRESENTATION TBD

Register at
vsae.org/seminar-series

UPCOMING EVENTS

SIG: MEETING PLANNER
February 7
Medical Society of Virginia

SIG: COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING
February 12
Independent Insurance Agents of Virginia

SEMINAR SERIES WITH LUNCH
March 1
Greater Richmond Convention Center

See all events at
vsae.org

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- The Tides Inn

**MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT**

Rebecca M. Woodring, CAE

Chapter Executive Director
Community Associations Institute—Southeastern Virginia Chapter



What do you like most about your job?

I love meeting so many amazing volunteers doing incredible things in their communities, helping people connect professionally to serve our community association industry, and putting on events that bring real value to our attendees.

What is your greatest challenge at work?

Budget – what else? We all want more in the budget to do bigger and better things for our associations.

How do you recharge?

Meditation, music, walking on the beach and on the labyrinth at the A.R.E. Headquarters in Virginia Beach.

What's on your music playlist?

Music is a link to the secret space of my soul and it must be fed with everything possible.

What advice would you give your younger self?

You are always enough. You are strong. You are God's perfect creation exactly as you are. Shine!

What's a favorite family memory that has stuck with you into your adult life? Why?

Simon Says in the backyard with my mom and us four kids making her laugh so hard she fell on the ground and we all piled on her with love and hugs and kisses. Sweet summer fun and true love.

What are three things you want to do before you die?

Create a list of the things I've loved for my children (and hopefully grandchildren one day); write one story; and visit Yellowstone.

What piece of advice would you give someone new to the association world?

Be a professional listener. Make it your mission to truly hear *and* understand what others are saying. Only then take action.

What drew you to the association industry?

It was an accident really. I happen to be qualified, unknowingly, and grew to love it. It is never boring. There's always something interesting happening. It's a platform for dreaming and realizing most of those dreams. Had I known that earlier in life, I may have made it into the industry sooner.

What are you most proud of?

My children, every minute of every day in every way with the good, the bad, and the ugly—cherishing this beautiful life we share together.

What sports/teams do you root for?

I love sports of all kinds, especially football, so naturally I root for the Pittsburgh Steelers. #HereWeGo



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How effective is your association at building up political capital – often called “goodwill” – during the “off-season”? Do you have a plan in place? Are you using every tool at your disposal? As you contemplate these questions, consider some best practices employed by effective associations:

1 Connect association members with lawmakers. While we would all like our members – not our lobbyists – to serve as the face of our respective associations, that is a difficult goal to achieve during session. Lawmakers and lobbyists see each other day in and day out at the General Assembly. Opportunities for association members to interact with lawmakers are limited by the press of other business. But this is not the case between sessions, when senators and representatives are back home in their districts – often in a better mood, with more time on their hands, and delighted to meet a local business owner for coffee or a factory tour. Our job as association executives is to make sure these meetings take place so lawmakers think of our members the next time the association has a request to make or a bill to support.

2 Keep it general, personal, and positive. During session lawmakers face a never-ending barrage of requests and demands: vote for this bill, derail that bill, fund this program, cut that tax, and so forth. The off-season is not a time to pile on more demands. Instead, it is a time to thank senators and representatives for their hard work on behalf of the industry or profession you represent. It is also a time to paint the big picture—reminding lawmakers of all the contributions your industry or profession makes—creating jobs and opportunities, generating tax revenues, and promoting the well-being of the state and its citizens.

3 Raise and spend PAC money. It’s no secret that candidates for office must raise ever larger sums to wage effective campaigns, and that Political Action Committees (PACs) are a key source of such campaign funds. Raising and spending PAC money raises the profile and increases the influence of associations and the industries and professions they represent. And the off-season is a critical time to raise and spend



PAC money, not only because lawmakers cannot accept PAC contributions while the General Assembly is in session, but also because association executives, staff, and lobbyists are more likely to have the time and energy to do so.

4 Have association members attend candidate events and hand-deliver PAC checks. It’s not enough for your CEO and lobbyist to attend candidate events. No matter how many emails and phone calls it takes, you need to get your members to these events as well. And having your members hand-deliver PAC checks may seem like a trivial detail, but it is not. Entirely aside from the fact that lobbyists may not legally handle or deliver PAC checks, having a member deliver the check is yet another way to strengthen the personal bond between association members and lawmakers. Even when this is not a realistic option, you can always have a member call his or her senator or representative, thank them for their hard work on behalf of your industry or profession, and let them know the PAC check is in the mail.

5 Consider establishing a 527 Organization or Super PAC. Although a traditional PAC cannot accept corporate contributions under North Carolina law,* a series of court decisions and legal changes over the past decade have made it lawful to use corporate money for issue advocacy (typically through a so-called 527 Organization) or express advocacy (typically through an Independent Expenditure PAC,

often called a Super PAC). While the pros and cons—and the legalities—of establishing a 527 Organization or Super PAC or similar vehicle to use corporate money for political advocacy are beyond the scope of this article, the bottom line is that every association should understand the options and make a thoughtful decision on whether and how to proceed down this road.

*Check with your legal counsel, as Virginia law may be different.

6 Plan your work and work your plan. Chances are that your association already employs some or all of these practices—and others not listed above—to build political capital. The most important take away here is not that you need to change everything you are already doing, but that we can all improve our effectiveness as associations—and better serve our members—if we recognize the critical importance of building political capital, put a plan in place to achieve this goal, and execute that plan. Associations need to devote the time, energy, and opportunity to do so—and an excellent opportunity is during the off-season between legislative sessions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lynn D. Minges is President & Chief Executive Officer for the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association. She can be reached at lminges@ncrla.org or (919) 844-3007.



Rick Eisenman
Executive Director

Moving Forward

As we look back at 2018, VSAE has a lot to be proud of. Last year we increased member engagement, launched the Association Leadership Virginia (ALV) program, exceeded budget for membership, and some of our signature events had record attendance and member ratings. There was one negative that happened in 2018, and that was the loss of one of our Directors, our dear friend and colleague, Danny Mitchell. That will be a huge hole to fill on the Board as well as at all of our events.

Moving forward, in 2019 we plan to build on our successes and continue to make VSAE THE place for association professionals in Virginia. We will continue to expand our SIG offerings so more members can interact with each other in a more focused, intimate setting. Year two of ALV will launch at this year's Annual Conference in May, with registration and sponsorships being accepted now through March 1. VSAE's mobile app, *Engagefully*, will now be available for use all year and at each of our events, not just at our Annual and Fall conferences. (See more details to the right.)

One thing that will not change is VSAE's commitment to you, the members, and living out the mission of creating a network for association professionals: connecting, learning, and leading.

We will continue to provide pertinent educational offerings, ample professional networking opportunities, and first-class customer service—as well as all the other services that make us one of the top SAEs in the nation.

Member feedback is critical to any organization's success. Therefore, whether you have accolades or concerns, we look forward to hearing from you.

Here's to a great 2019 and to making VSAE the best it can be!

In Memoriam

Ashton D. "Danny" Mitchell, III, AAI, AAI-M

March 21, 1953 – December 25, 2018



Danny Mitchell, Vice President of Business Development for the Independent Insurance Agents of Virginia, was an active member of VSAE for over 20 years. He served on many committees, task forces, and, most recently, as a member of the Board of Directors.

While Danny volunteered in many official capacities, he is probably best known as the unofficial "Ambassador" of VSAE. Always the first to welcome new members and greet current ones, he was quick with a smile and an encouraging word. He had the uncanny ability to make those around him feel welcomed.

Danny and his magnetic personality will be sorely missed.



ENHANCE YOUR EVENT EXPERIENCE WITH VSAE'S MOBILE APP

VSAE invites you to experience our events in a whole new way. **Engagefully** by **Results Direct** is the official mobile app for all VSAE events. It allows our members to know on the go! Previously, the VSAE app was used for the Annual and Fall Conferences, but starting this year all VSAE events will be available. Whether mobile technology is your thing, or you only use your smartphone for telephone calls, you'll find the app easy to use—before, during, and after events.

Prior to each event, as well as all year long, members can view event details, review the schedule, search sessions, read about content leaders, create an itinerary, and view registrants.

During the event members may receive event alerts and up-to-the-minute information, which is helpful if there are any changes to the schedule or room locations. A popular feature is the ability to interact with friends, colleagues, and other attendees on the **Social Wall** or privately in **Conversations**, similar to text messaging.

Members can also interact with our content leaders before, during, and after the event. You can ask questions before the event and clarify presented ideas and principles post-event. If handouts or other resources were provided during the session, they will be on the app. Need to remember a concept presented at the last meeting? Open the app and it will be waiting for you in the **Resources** section.

You can download the app for free from both the App Store and Google Play to any of your mobile devices and sync your event information and itineraries across devices. **Pamela Flynn**, VSAE's Meetings Manager, would love to show you how the app can "engage-you-fully" in VSAE events! Make sure to ask for a demonstration the next time you see her.



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Join ASAE in Washington, D.C. to Share



In January we will have more change in Congress than we have seen in many years. As such, there is a critical need for the voices of association leaders in Washington. As Vice President of Public Policy at the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), each year I see the profound impact that association professionals have simply by coming to Washington and sharing with their representatives the important ways their organizations are contributing at home and how policy issues critically impact them. **This is why I am inviting you to join VSAE and ASAE in Washington, D.C. on March 28-29 for American Associations Day, the only legislative fly-in for association professionals.**

We need your help to share with Congress how associations create positive change in America and the world. We call this The Power of A. Attend American Associations Day to help share your story with key decision makers on the Hill.

You don't need to be active in government relations or advocacy to join us. American Associations Day is about gaining knowledge and understanding about what impacts the business of associations and our members. It's also about connecting with other association professionals across the country to improve the work that we do. One such opportunity is the American Associations Day Reception on Thursday evening, March 28, which offers unparalleled networking with the ASAE Board of Directors, D.C. area association CEOs, and VIPs of the association community, as you overlook the U.S. Capitol.

Join us at American Associations Day to ensure that members of Congress

American Associations Day March 28-29, 2019

The event is open to any association executive, staff member, or leadership volunteer that is passionate about association issues and wants to make a difference, as well as meet and network with fellow advocates from across the country. Registration is free, and out-of-town attendees are eligible to receive a scholarship of up to \$300 to reimburse travel costs if they visit their members of Congress. The education session on Thursday, March 28 is worth 3.5 CAE credit hours. Please note that this year the Hill visits will take place on Friday, March 29. Congress will not be in session, but this will allow Congressional staff to focus on our meetings and our message.

know how our associations are improving Virginia's districts and communities. Too often associations are viewed as just another "special interest" by lawmakers, and this is wrong. Tell your representatives how your association is driving the economy and improving society in Virginia. Because if they have no idea, then how will they stand up for us?

ASAE makes it easy: they will provide training in the most effective way to share our message and provide you with resources for visiting your Congressional offices. Registration is free and

ASAE even provides a scholarship of up to \$300 to attend.

For more information, contact Nathan Fisher at (202) 626-2719 or nfisher@asaecenter.org, or visit thepowerofa.org/hillvisit/.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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CAREER DEVELOPMENT for Government Relations Professionals

Moving up in the association lobbying world takes more than a solid grasp of your industry's issues. Whether you need to hone your skills of persuasion or better master the art of risk mitigation, these tips will help you position yourself for your next big move.

The world of association government affairs and advocacy is evolving. With more government and stakeholder scrutiny of associations and their advocacy work, the scope and skills of government relations professionals must evolve to meet the complex demands of this critical function. For those looking to advance their GR careers, this means developing many of the core leadership competencies that will catch the eye of future employers and executive recruiters.

Here are six tips for those looking to move up in the association lobbying world—and maybe even into the CEO's office one day.

1 Create clarity around your values and goals. Roy Disney once said, "It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." By understanding your professional values—the beliefs, standards, and ideas that are important to you at work—you can better articulate how your leadership in a government affairs and advocacy role can help your association succeed. An ability to explain what you want to accomplish from a policy and advocacy perspective, and how you will do it, can set you apart.

2 Assess your strengths and weaknesses—and address the gaps. Once you have identified your values and goals, collect information about your strengths and the skills you'd like to improve. Some

"One of the most important things [to do] in your career is to invest in yourself."

associations do this through 360-degree feedback surveys. You can also seek out open and critical feedback from your peers and other stakeholders.

Other assessment tools you can leverage are Emotional Intelligence 2.0 by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves and StrengthsFinder 2.0 by Tom Rath. These can help you identify areas for improvements, such as your persuasiveness or issue expertise. You can then incorporate this information into a personal strategic plan that aligns your development goals and objectives with your career plan and trajectory.

3 Understand your association inside and out. To have the biggest impact, your development goals should be aligned with your association's goals and business objectives. But what if you don't know what those are?

"Start with the flow of money," says John Sigmon, founder and chief executive officer of Sigmon Leadership Solutions. "If you understand how your association makes and spends money, you will know the answers to two critical questions: Who are the key stakeholders and what are the top priorities?"

From there, consider how your work and development goals contribute to those areas. If you cannot make the connection, you may need to better ground your activities and plans for "sharpening the saw" in your association's business needs.

4 Embrace the new paradigm of government affairs and advocacy. With more government activity and more external scrutiny today, the environment is changing. This increases the complexity and risks for associations and their members. "As a result, the game is raised," notes T.R. Straub, a consultant in the corporate affairs officers practice at Russell Reynolds Associates.

"Government affairs leaders are now essential business partners who must identify opportunities in government and regulatory initiatives, see around corners to help mitigate risks, and connect legislative and regulatory activities to key business issues for the organization and its members," says Straub.

To succeed in this new world, make sure your core government affairs and advocacy skills are augmented with the business, campaign, and communications proficiencies that associations need today and in the future.

5 Go beyond your professional skills and competencies. While most people focus on honing their job-specific professional skills and competencies, it is often personal leadership qualities (such as emotional intelligence and executive presence) and organizational leadership competencies (including strategic thinking and collaboration) that set successful government affairs leaders apart. Put another way, your professional

leadership competencies may help you get that top job, but those personal and organizational competencies will help you succeed in it. Focus there.

6 Don't be afraid to think big. As you consider how professional and leadership development will help you as an association GR professional, let go of self-imposed limitations and expand your thinking. "Learning to think big helps you move from being closed-minded to being curious and expansive," according to Bob Rosen and Emma Kate Swan of Healthy Companies, a leadership development firm. "Organizations today need people to learn faster, rise above the din, and see the larger picture."

Whether you're reframing policy challenges or finding new ways to engage your member advocates, taking these steps will help you develop critical skills that associations need to succeed in today's challenging external environment, while opening you up to a world of career possibilities.

"One of the most important things [to do] in your career is to invest in yourself," says Anne DeSeta DarConte, senior director at HillStaffer. "By investing in your future, you will get a tremendous return on your investment and set yourself up for future success."

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Learn more at
capitolknowledge.net.

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE JOIN THE CAE STUDY GROUP

"I believe that a true professional always seeks out opportunities to grow, not only to learn new ways to do XYZ, but to gain a broader knowledge and perspective that would be useful now or in the future. The CAE helped me do just that and beyond."

DeeJay Garringo, CAE, Associate Director
STAT Association Management, Inc.

The VSAE CAE Study Group is now forming for members interested in studying for the certified association executive (CAE) exam in May.

The study group begins the middle of February and runs for 10 weeks, ending in time for the exam on May 3. This is a group facilitated by current CAEs. Candidates who fully participated in a VSAE Study Group have had excellent pass rates. The study group is free for VSAE members.

If you are interested in participating or if you have any questions, please write VSAE at info@vsae.org or call **(804) 747-4971**.



FREE PASS SIMPLIFIED

As a VSAE benefit, members receive one Free Pass each calendar year to apply to late cancellation/ no show fees. New this year, the Free Pass is not included with this newsletter. Instead, VSAE will keep track of them and let you know when your pass has been used. After it is used, you will automatically be invoiced \$14 for any late cancellations or for not attending a luncheon/ breakfast for which you have registered.

HEALTH CARE CORNER



The IRS recently announced the 2019 contribution limits for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). Employers can establish lower FSA contribution limits for their employees, but cannot exceed the IRS limitations. The table below summarizes the differences between the 2018 and 2019 FSA contribution limits.

Benefit	2018	2019
Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)	\$2,650	\$2,700
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NEW IRS STANDARD MILEAGE RATE

Beginning on January 1, 2019, the standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile will be **58 cents per mile** for business miles driven, up from 54.5 cents for 2018.

TIME TO RENEW!

Your VSAE 2019 Membership Renewal is Available Online.

PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY JANUARY 31 TO REMAIN ACTIVE.

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2. Click "Member Center" on the menu bar.
3. Click "Your Organization" under "My Profile."
4. Click "Invoices."
5. Pay online via credit card or print and mail with a check.

QUESTIONS?

Write Tami at tami@vsae.org.

SEE WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING ABOUT

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP VIRGINIA

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP VIRGINIA is a leadership journey. During the year-long cohort-style program, participants will learn about their communication styles and how they affect their own personal leadership. They will map out a plan to achieve their goals regardless of career stage. Participants will then apply these leadership lessons as they learn about all the important aspects of running a membership association here in Virginia. See what some of this year's participants have to say about ALV:

"ALV is giving me better confidence to lead my team."

"It is a great way to focus on my own development as a leader."

"I am grateful for the dedicated time to reflect on and develop my own leadership abilities and how I can better serve my organization and its members."

"The educational programming has been phenomenal and has opened my eyes to what's possible at my association."

"Tom and Melissa are excellent in gently pushing us to challenge ourselves in our leadership journey and showing us how to apply that at work and in our personal lives."

"This program is giving me concrete tools to help me grow and my organization excel."

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

CULTIVATING WORTHY EXPERIENCES AT HOTEL MADISON

The buzz of energy that surrounds a conference that is both innovative and collaborative is contagious. Everything seems to sync, the pieces come together, and ideas grow legs to run into the future with momentum. But the work that goes into creating this environment isn't easy and success does not come by chance. It must be intentional, proactive and detailed. Selecting a site that will partner with you and assist in bringing your event to life is key. The event teams at **Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center** understand the challenges and critical elements that make a conference, meeting, or fundraiser successful. Knowing your goals and catering our solutions to meet those goals is our specialty. We provide more than just four walls, tables, chairs, and high-tech audio-visual equipment. We deliver expert resources to ensure that you have the tools and support to take your conference to the next level. From room block management and space detailing, to off-site itinerary building, Hotel Madison offers a unique package experience for meeting planners and association executives.

A SPECIALTY DESTINATION IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

Nestled among the Blue Ridge mountains, Hotel Madison bridges the culture and diversity of downtown Harrisonburg and academia and engagement of James Madison University. Located two hours southwest of Washington D.C. and two hours west of Richmond, this site is a perfect meeting place for associations and conferences with attendees coming from across the state. Harrisonburg boasts many historic landmarks, Virginia's First Culinary District, and the moniker of The Friendly City. Hotel Madison will build custom itineraries for your event to enhance the attendee experience. Incentive

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suites, and one Presidential Suite. West-facing rooms on the upper floors offer panoramic sunset views over the city skyline and the mountains beyond. Montpelier Restaurant and Bar, the hotel's signature restaurant, offers an upscale bar and dining experience, with a private dining room available for small groups. Montpelier's menu offers elevated regionally-inspired cuisine, featuring the fresh flavors of the Shenandoah Valley.

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AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



Eisenman & Associates, Inc. announces two promotions. **Tom Spong** is now President. He was formerly President of the Consulting Division. **Pam Kirby** is now Office Manager. She was formerly Administrative Assistant.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort has announced that it has broken ground on a series of major projects to further enhance the property. A partial list includes a new 150-room luxury beachfront hotel with dining, spa, retail, and ballroom; a new conference center; and 11 breakout rooms. Learn more at kiawahresort.com.

Congratulations to Meredith and **Todd Mawyer**, who welcomed Molly Loving Mawyer into the

world on November 15 at 8:45 p.m. Molly weighed 7 lbs. and measured 20.5 inches.

The Virginia Petroleum, Convenience & Grocery Association has re-branded. The new name is the **Virginia Petroleum and Convenience Marketers Association**. Learn more at vpcma.com.

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Polly Bradsher is now Sales Manager at **Holiday Inn Newport News at City Center**.

Kurt Krause is now the President/CEO with **VisitNorfolk**.

Scott Morgan is now Director of Sales at **Omni Charlottesville Hotel**.



2018-2019 OFFICERS

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ASSOCIATES

Brad Garrett
Kingsmill Resort
Williamsburg

Karen Garrett
Kingsmill Resort
Williamsburg

Seanan Keleher
Sanctuary at
Kiawah
Kiawah Island, SC

Lynn Winston
Airlie
Warrenton

SURVEY PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to **Amy Sales**, Associate Director of **Easter Associates, Inc.**, who was the Holiday Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction evaluation prize winner. Amy received a \$50 gift certificate to the spa at **Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump**.

Be sure to send us your feedback of our events by completing the evaluation surveys that come to your email. Your feedback is important to us for planning future successful events.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOARDROOM.

The beautifully restored Cavalier Hotel offers the perfect escape for business ... and pleasure. From world-class dining and meeting spaces to your own private beach club, all just a few footprints from the beach.



CONTACT MARY KELLY TO BOOK
YOUR MEETING TODAY.



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