

Special Events in 2032

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We'll fly to the moon for a party, planners say. Photo by iStockphoto.com

As *Special Events Magazine* celebrates its 25th year covering special events, we look forward another 25 years to the year 2032.

It was September 1982, and a little publication called *Special Events Magazine* made its debut. We started as a quarterly insert in our sister magazine, *Rental Equipment Register*, which covers the tool and construction rental business.

Fast-forward 25 years to today, when *Special Events* now reaches the event industry worldwide with a print magazine, trade shows, conferences, an e-newsletter and a Web site that generates 150,000 page views a month.

We've enjoyed spending our 25th year in publishing by profiling every month the event industry professionals who have also been in this business for decades. But in this issue, rather than taking a look back, we're taking a look forward. We'll be 50 years old in 2032; what will special events look like then? Fasten your seatbelts ...

In 2032 ...

What will decor look like?

"I don't see much changing, just reinventions of old themes. But this time, even this era—the early 21st century—will be considered old, and theme parties will thrive based on the early 2000s!" *David Merrell, An Original Occasion, Los Angeles*

"Decor will all be based on wireless technologies with an edge that we now term 'green,' but by 2032 will be the standard—hopefully. Low wattage, low power, low emissions, recycled products." *Tom Bercu, Tom Bercu Presents, Los Angeles*

"It will be all about virtual imagery that can change throughout the lifespan of the event. Perhaps as the keynote speaker uses a baseball metaphor, the entire room changes into Dodger Stadium." *Jon Michaels, Extraordinary Events, Sherman Oaks, Calif.*

"We will have more customers who will be able to afford luxury and who have grown up with luxury. Today's 13-year-old who is celebrating a mitzvah in 2007 will be 38 in 2032 and likely will be planning events for their children. They will only have known the luxury that they grew up with." *Daniel Briones, CPCE, Four Seasons Philadelphia*

What will we use for entertainment?

"Consider that the decision-makers of today grew up with early '80s music; that's why you see more Earth, Wind & Fire, Huey Lewis and the News, and Hall and Oates. The decision-makers of tomorrow are listening to today's music, so don't be surprised to see a resurgence of Eminem, 50 Cent and Rihanna for the corporate entertainment of choice in 2032." *David Merrell*

"Luxevents will help clients create live entertainment using the 'AvatarStar' software program—Luxevents patent pending. A client can create an avatar by choosing elements from their favorite entertainers, e.g., Madonna's dance moves, Britney's lips, J.Lo's booty and bust, Mariah's voice. Then the AvatarStar will 'perform' at the event." *Carl George, Luxeevents, Los Angeles*

"Live entertainment will still be key, but virtual entertainment will be a vital part of the industry. Maybe you can't have U2 at your event, but acts will sell virtual versions of themselves that seem like a completely custom show for your event. The holographic band will be enhanced with live dancers and other live elements to give more life." *Jon Michaels*

What will we use for invitations?

"Who has time for those anymore? At the press of a button, or even just thinking a thought, the host's face will appear in front of the invitee via hologram and give a personal invite." *Tom Bercu*

What will event venues look like?

"Many of the ballrooms and event spaces that we enjoy now—and that were designed without the benefit of event producers involved—will become obsolete. Event spaces will allow the proper amenities such as adequate load-in and load-out facilities, adequate hang points in every ceiling, proper wiring throughout for power and satellite lines, etc." *David Merrell*

"VROL—Virtual Reality Optical Lenses—and VRAC—Virtual Reality Audio Clips—a display technology that integrates real and virtual environments will be the industry standard. Event guests will wear beautifully designed glasses or invisible contact lenses and tiny ear clips enabling displayed images and sounds to 'slide' as the head is turned. In this way, virtual people, objects and environments—designed by Luxevents to complement the event theme—appear to be stationary in relation to the real environment, which you can still see." *Carl George*



L.A.'s Dodger Stadium can be anywhere Photo by Lisa Hurley

"'Fly Me to the Moon' will be a standard phrase in airports shuttling guests to all sorts of stars and space stations." *Tom Bercu*

"We feel people will begin to see all places/spaces as a venue. As people try to separate themselves and the uniqueness and creativity of their own events from everyone else's, they will turn towards unusual, less traditional places to use as venues. Why not build a luxurious tree house and party in a canopy somewhere?!"

On a plane, on a glacier—in space?!" *Evan and Jordan Carbotti, Perfect Surroundings, Newport, R.I.*

What will event food be?

"Food will be tiny morsels that are fat- and calorie-free, taste like whatever fattening food you choose, and be good for you all at the same time. There will be different price points for different levels of flavors—we can't let a shrimp bite out at the door at the same price as a pretzel bite. Buffets are nonexistent and everything is served from moving kiosks, where you can make your selection, and it is served up on the spot." *Ruth Moyte, Extraordinary Events*

What will event beverages be?

"All harmful side effects of alcohol will be genetically removed from the base liquid, leaving only the pleasant aftereffects. By far, the most expensive and rare beverage will be fresh spring water." *Carl George*

What technologies will we rely on?

"Virtual environments, with everything programmable from a single memory stick. Our success in the industry will be determined by the difficulty level of the event 'experience' that we provide through technology—for example, a 1,000 DPI event will definitely cost more than a 300 DPI event. Moving environments are more expensive. Special effects like real waiters and serving trays add money." *Ruth Moyte*

What events will we be celebrating?

"Incentive trips on the space shuttle." *Matt Brown, Harith Productions Ltd., Willow Grove, Pa.*

"Almost 70 percent of the weddings in 2032 will be destination-oriented. Global travel has been made easy with the development of America's first dedicated Wedding Travel Airline. WTA will have a banner year in 2032 and has created a potent network of hotel/destination packages that are as economical as staying home, and far more exciting." *Stu Feinstein, LeClique, Jupiter, Fla.*

"I see an increase in global summits with the world coming together peacefully to celebrate mankind and the accomplishments we can face with a united front." *Jon Michaels*

"Due to a generation that has grown up receiving trophies for just participating, we're likely to see more awards-related or recognition events. While remembering the events of 9/11, global warming and the nation's healthcare problems, etc., planners and clients will be more civic-minded. Parties and events will be more prominently attached to a cause. They will want to improve the lives of others." *Greg Jenkins, Bravo Productions, Long Beach, Calif.*

"Celebrations haven't changed since the beginning of time. And even though how they are produced and what they look like will evolve, the reason to celebrate the milestones will remain." *David Merrell*

"We see events moving more towards great causes—towards wellness, health and a greener future. Our generation will hopefully see the value of awareness-through-events and embrace the exciting possibility of events to change our world." *Evan and Jordan Carbotti*



The '80s really is old! Photo by iStockphoto.com

What events will be so over?

"Anything having to do with Maxie Hilton, Paris Hilton's granddaughter."
Carl George

"The 'white' party." *Tom Bercu*

"Lounge parties!" *Jon Michaels*

"I hope the 'super Sweet 16' parties will be done with." *Jen Poyer, Catalina Island Conservancy, Long Beach, Calif.*

"'80s parties. They weren't that good during the '80s." *Matt Brown*

Will there be more or fewer event professionals?

"More people on the planet, more events and more event planners." *Brian Acheson, CSEP, VIP Events, Dallas*

"Fewer. People will have realized they can't make a living and many will have starved to death or else will have gone on to compete on 'The Apprentice.'" *Tom Bercu*

"There will be creative consultants that invent the concepts for events and production companies that actually produce them. The long-term impact of an event will be a lot more important than today since events will be by far the most expensive contact with a consumer." *Matthias Kindler, The Event Co., Munich, Germany*

"Event producers will weave in more partners and sponsors in order to enhance events. The number of event suppliers who 'go national' will increase, allowing event production companies to easily provide a wide range of services in multiple markets." *Tom Burke, AMCI, Marina del Rey, Calif.*

"I think that a direction that we will see more of in the future will be more collective event/partner teams. Sally Webb with Special Event Co. in London and North Carolina has created an event 'collective with Mitchell's Catering, Designs by Sean and Maestro Productions that will work under a collective umbrella of 'Eventology, NC.' This concept creates a one-stop shop for a total meeting and event experience. The four companies will share office space in Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina as well as retain their own corporate brands, singular identities and subsidiary offices. Eventology, NC, companies will continue to work on individual projects as each member has a strong existing client base but will share expertise and utilize individual personality strengths of group members to benefit each other." *David Casteel, Mitchell's Catering, Raleigh, N.C.*

What skills will event professionals need?

"Technically savvy people with incredible personal communication skills will be at an all-time premium. They will need to multitask and balance busy family, social and professional lives—oh, wait, that's what we have now!" *Jon Michaels*

"I hope that a focus on education, ethics and professionalism will be on every planner's tool belt." *Jen Poyer*

"More masters and doctoral-level degreed planners is very likely." *Matt Brown*

"Certification designations in the industry—for example, CMP, CSEP, CPCE—will be more recognized, respected and in some aspects of the industry will most likely be a requirement for employment." *Steve Kemble, Steve Kemble Event Design, Dallas*

"The Internet enables complete novices to source locations, vendors and ideas, so it puts the onus on professional planners to continue to raise their game and focus on the value add of their services. For all the value of information on the Internet; however, one could argue that it has made the process of choosing vendors and locations harder, not easier. Twenty-five years ago if you wanted to host an elegant banquet in New York, for example, your choices were the Plaza, The Pierre, Tavern on the Green, the Waldorf, and the Rainbow Room. You could go and visit them all in one afternoon. Today, you easily have 10 times as many legitimate options, along with another 50 places which on the Internet appear feasible but in reality are too small, too expensive, etc. Are you going to kill 10 days doing site inspections? So in this regard, coming up with venue suggestions does not add nearly as much value to a planner as helping guide them through the plethora of options." *Howard Givner, Paint the Town Red, New York*



Ruth Moyte of Extraordinary Events
matter the time or place." *Ruth Moyte*

"Events will be a lot more like theater pieces or movies than just wine-and-dine with a lot of company logos. Event agencies will hire more people from the TV and theater world since they know how to tell a story. It will be harder to attract people to attend events since they have been disappointed too many times. The long-term impact of an event will be a lot more important than today since events will be by far the most expensive contact with a consumer." *Matthias Kindler*

"Creativity, imagination and the ability to use them in innovative ways truly dictate the course of our visions, no