

Rental Rag May 1998 Issue

A CALL TO ARMS

What is it that makes up an Association? It's not entirely the dues that the people in the Association pay (although \$ certainly help to achieve goals). It's the people in the Association themselves who contribute ideas, time, knowledge and most important and effort to accomplish some of the goals that have been established by the steering committees of the Association.

While our steering committee chairperson may have a clear goal(s) in mind, without the "HELP" of other individuals on the committee to obtain those goals, the \$ earmarked for that particular goal may fall short of the intended target. Just as the golfer has a mindset to reach the green with a 3-wood, he or she may fall short of the flag because they did not account for the wind factor. A point which the golfer's caddy has brought to the golfer's mind prior to the shot.

What does this have to do with the Association? We all could use a caddy sometimes in our business to help us with questions like, "How much inventory to buy this month?" --- - "Where should I shop for the best prices?" ---- "What is the best way to advertise our products?" ---- "How can I obtain and keep good quality employees?" ---- "How can I get the government working for me, instead of against me?"

It is time we all start looking at the "Association" as our caddy for answers to all our business questions. The ARA of NJ is planning to become a more viable business caddy for answers to all our business questions. The ARA of NJ is planning to become a more viable business caddy by bringing together both store owners and vendors into an arena of planned business goals designed to benefit us collectively.

One of those planned goals in the establishment of the ARA- NJ website committed by Joseph Mihalko and Steve Kohn.

Another goal is to solidify the nearly nonexistant conversion law that in its current form is a detriment to every rental store operating in the state of N.J. - committed by Joseph Mihalko.

A membership booklet detailing the by-laws of the Association, its general goals, the current board members, and the memberships' names, addresses, phone nos., fax nos., E-mail, web sites, etc. committed by Kalki Joisher.

A safety program (which in itself should entice a good deal of manufacturer's reps and vendor participation_ - committed by Dave Hinck,

An Educational training program to afford our employees training on the equipment we rent, safety considerations, maintenance procedures, over the counter proper customer services, etc (with certification after completion of course work) - not committed.

The various committees need support of other members of the Association to make our goals become more easily attained. Some may have wondered why this month's president's report is titled, "A CALL TO ARMS." Well we are asking a few good men and women to help us be the caddies and join our committee chairpeople to achieve their collective goals.

If you as an owner do not have the time, maybe you have a key person or a manager who can become involved. Feel free to contact any of our committee chairpeople at the numbers listed in the Rental Rag.

Tony Perrotta, President

YOUR ARA-NJ CALENDAR

May 20th - Adam's Rental, Trenton, New Jersey Legislative Night.

At this meeting the focus will be on legislation needed to aid the rental industry in the state of New Jersey. As we go to press political nabobs are being lined up to address our meeting. Come prepared with questions and to demand answers.

August 2nd -Modern Equipment Rentals, Hightstown, Equipment Demo Day.

September 16th - Location to be determined - Safety Night

November 18th - All Star Rental, East Brunswick, Associate's Table Top Show.

THE MAY MEETING

The Place: Adam's Equipment Rental - 501 Spruce Street - Trenton, N.J.

Your Host: Dave Vandenburg

The Time: 7 - 7:30 PM

Phone: 609-695-9200

Program: Legislative night

DIRECTIONS TO MAY MEETING:

New Jersey Turnpike to Exit 7A - to Route 195W - to Route 129N - to Route 1 N - to Olden Avenue exit.

Turn left at light onto Olden Ave., make 1st right onto Pennsylvania Ave., go less than 1 block then turn right into Adam's' parking lot.

If traveling Route 1 south: take Olden Avenue exit, turn left onto New York Ave., Make first right onto Olden Avenue then first right onto Pennsylvania Ave. Go less than 1 block and turn right into Adam's' parking lot.

Note: Though the address for Adam's Rental is 501 Spruce Street, it is accessed from Pennsylvania Avenue

LOOKING FORWARD TO EQUIPMENT DEMO DAY!

An exciting Equipment demo day is planned this year. It's to be held on Sunday, August 2nd, at Modern Equipment Rentals in Hightstown, NJ. Hightstown is convenient to everywhere.

The Sunday date will allow you to bring family and/or employees for a day of education, fun and games. Free balloons, tote bags and food are just a few of the enticements offered by vendor sponsors (hey, vendors, we can use a couple more sponsors!).

Hands-on exhibits will also be presented by vendors. Want to see how equipment works? Does it do the job? Like to try it yourself? Equipment Demo Day is the place to be. To name a few of the great vendors who will be on hand to dazzle you - you'll see: Viking, Wacker, Edco, Cardinal Sales, M & R Sales, Titan, Harrison Products, Garden State Bobcat, Pace Marketing and likely there will be more before everything is finalized.

Don't forget, too, National Insurance Specialists, ARDI, and Inter/National Insurance will be holding safety seminars. If you have a klutz in your shop - this is the place to send him.

A registration form will be forthcoming with all the details. Until then, be sure to reserve August 2nd for a very productive day for you, your employees and your family (if you don't have employees, or even a family - you can likely find an ARA-New Jersey member who will rent you either. ARA-NJ members have proven they can handle anything!). Find info on the internet at NJARA.org.

WEB SITE CREATION 101

In the last issue we covered "**Defining your objectives.**" In this issue, I will discuss "**Research and Site Preparation.**" I hope all of you have been doing your homework and putting this knowledge to work.

Joe Mihalko Jr. and I attended a seminar last week on how to make an effective web site. We learned many new ideas and reinforced much of what we already knew. One point that was stressed at this seminar, which I would like to share with all of you, is to remember what your web site really is. Try to think of your site as your own "**Broadcasting Station.**" You will be using this station not only to send important messages to your customers, but also to your employees, competitors, financial backers, potential investors and the general public. For this reason alone, you should take the time and energy to make sure your site broadcasts the most effective message possible.

By now you should all have an objective and a target audience in mind. Now it's time to research other Web sites providing the same or similar services as your business on the **WWW**.

For just a moment take yourself away from what you do. If you plan to sell something on the web, forget that you have ever heard of your product. If you plan to provide a service, such as renting, forget that you know anything about that service.

This can be difficult, but it is necessary. Now write down five "keywords" that you would type into a Search Engine (For those of you who are not yet computer savvy, this is a complex form of an Internet yellow page.), if you wanted to look for your particular product or service. Think of a search engine as a giant spider spreading its web to search for information. These keywords should embody the essence of your product or service. They should also be the most common terms that would be used.

Don't be too sophisticated or too complex with these selections. If you rent **homeowner equipment**, some keywords could include: Tool renting, Chain saws, trenchers, back hoes, sanders or tile cutters. If you rent **Party equipment**, key words can be tents, chairs, tables, picnics, linen. Be careful with words like china, this could bring up everything about a country or dishes!

It also helps to use specifics, such as "tool renting NJ. This will cut down on a lot of research. For party rentals try "tables renting NJ." You can use the name of your business as a keyword also, but unless the customer knows your name, this word is useless.

By using popular search engines such as *www.yahoo.com* or *www.excite.com*, you may or may not come up with web sites that fit your criteria based on your keywords.

In my business I used specific keywords on major products that I specialize in such as "Skytrackers" or "Aerial Lighting" and "Corporate Events NJ." I have been able to develop large market shares in these areas by using the information gathered from research to better target my web adverting and general marketing efforts. You will be surprised if you think you are the only one who does something. Very rarely will you come across a market segment where you have a monopoly.

Now, once you have gathered information on other web sites, sit down with a pad and pen. Make two columns. One labeled "Don't Like" the other labeled "I really Like." Go through each site and categorize each part of that particular web site. Place ideas in their appropriate column. When you're all done, you should have a pretty good idea of what a good web site should or should not have. Then by adding in your own unique ideas, your site should truly be an effective "broadcasting station."

In the next issue, I will discuss ways to prepare your web site for maximum exposure. Plan on learning what HTML is, and how to use it to your advantage.

On another note, if you haven't sent in your check to become part of the ARA of NJ's Web Site project , please do so now. Don't miss out on being a pioneer on [HTTP://NJARA.ORG](http://NJARA.ORG). Keep that e-mail coming!

Steve Kohn [TENT MAN@MSN.COM](mailto:TENT_MAN@MSN.COM)

YOUR ARA-NJ OFFICERS

President - Tony Perotta (TP Rental) Phone: 212-713-1999 Fax: 212-713-1752

Vice President - Brian Higgins (Riedman Insurance) Phone: 973-835-8439 Fax: 973-835-7312

Treasurer - Tom Lade (All County Rentals) Phone: 973-267-1255 Fax: 973-267-4327

Secretary - Megan Jones (Celebration Party) Phone: 908-735-7368 Fax: 908-806-0029

Commentary **RENT-A-STATE**

I thought I was politically savvy but now, I'm not so sure. I don't remember being taught in high school civics class that it was illegal to have sex in the White House.

Obviously congress knew and it's just as obvious they shared information with Ken Starr who, like congress, appears to be very upset that sex rules have been broken. If these rules had been made public I might not have been so surprised by the reaction to the president's sexual appetite.

Those who support Mr. Starr, say it's not about sex - it's about honesty. If the president had extramarital sex, they believe he should admit it and the fact that he doesn't makes him unfit for our highest public office. I hold to the opposite view: if he admits it, *then* he's not fit for public office. Only a fool would admit to something that he doesn't want his wife to know about. The last thing we need is a fool for a president.

NSWH (No Sex in the White House,) however, is a reasonable rule. It serves to protect our national treasures. As old as it is, the Lincoln bed cannot support an awful lot of activity. I would hate to see it reduced to a pile of splinters and feathers. How would White House tour guides explain its sad condition? The truth might embarrass visitors.

If sex were permitted in the White House, citizens could assume, then, that sex is sanctioned by the government. It might even become (God forbid) a national pastime and, as such, be practiced as a constitutional privilege anywhere by anyone. Even by those who aren't citizens - illegal aliens, for instance, or, Heaven forbid, Virgin Islanders and Puerto Ricans!

Please don't misunderstand those last references, sex in the White House is not all that has left me feeling politically out of it. A bill passed in congress recently allows residents of Puerto Rico to decide whether or not they want Puerto Rico to become a state of our union. I must have been absent that day, too - the day statehood was discussed in Political Science 101. I just assumed it would be up to U.S. citizens to decide if they do or don't want to add a new state to join the union. I should have known better, after all, didn't Alaska and Hawaii get in without my vote? Anyway, while this is under consideration I don't think Puerto Rico should become overpopulated.

If truth be known, the flag I fly on holidays has only 48 stars. It may not be legal but I have never officially recognized Alaska or Hawaii. I never voted to admit them into the union. They voted themselves in.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, all the Italian Americans in this country (U.S. citizens, of course) voted to make these United States a province of Italy? I'll bet even congress would be upset even though they're willing to allow just about anyone who wants to, vote themselves into our union. One thing for sure, Jesse Helms wouldn't last two days in Sicily. He'd find a horse's head in his bed and it's a good bet, if he doesn't already qualify, he'd find the other end there too.

We might ask England to join us as a state; at least they speak our language - well, some of them do. But that would send us back to square one. We'd probably fight the revolution all over again because their royal family has more sex scandals than our first family.

No matter, either way, as an American citizen I want a say in who gets invited to join these United States of America. And while we're at it, since this is about what I want, if congress decides to extend an apology to the descendents of slaves imported to the original thirteen colonies (an action they are considering,) I insist they leave my name off that proclamation. In fact, under the president's signature I will demand they note that, "American Citizen, Carl Sparacio, will not apologize for something he did not have a hand in. Furthermore, he accepts no responsibility for Alaska, Hawaii and, if it should come to pass, Puerto Rico either."

Carl sparacio

SAFETY: Personal Protective Equipment

How many times have you tried to perform a task, personally, or through an employee at your rental store and thought, "This should not be done without wearing eye or ear protection or a face mask or gloves"? If you are like me, probably quite a few times.

Your employees and your customers are not much different, I would guess. Take all of those times that tasks are completed without benefit of these safety aids and you start to see why accidents are as common as they are. You might even wonder, instead, why they are not more prevalent. Several things can reduce the incident of this unsafe work

practice: Knowledge, encouraged use, and regular availability of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Given the element of human nature the easiest action to take is to ensure the availability of personal protective equipment at your store.

PPE, as they are referred to collectively by OSHA and other safety specialists, are those safety aids which safeguard people from common dangers that occur when operating equipment, painting, cleaning, or performing other tasks. PPE for construction are divided into the following subgroups:

1. Eye and Face
2. Head
3. Foot
4. Fall Prevention
5. Ear
6. Respiratory

Government standards for PPE were officially established in 1994 whereby employers were required to supply employees with not only PPE but training for their proper use.. How you respond to the governmental mandate will largely determine how effective this safety initiative will be.

Start with a review of your operation vis a vis the previously listed subgroups. Determine PPE that you need, or might need (better safe than sorry,) to keep your people safe. then maintain a stock that ensures you don't ever need to operate without them in normal daily operations. Consider turning this obligation into an opportunity by providing PPE to your customers. This value-added-service approach of stocking PPE for resale at your store can help avoid liabilities and keep a valued asset safe: your customer. It can provide a source of income while building customer satisfaction from the thoughtful convenience this service supplies, Some PPE to consider would include:

- * Safety glasses, goggles and face shields
- * Hard hats of various types
- *Waist belts with hooks for fall protection
- *Gloves of various types
- *Air Filtration Masks
- *Noise protective gear

Beyond PPE, be sure your employees and customers are aware of appropriate dress while performing certain tasks with tools and equipment. Works boots, which you probably will not provided, may be important for safety. Dress codes for appearance may not address the significance of the need for strict rules for the avoidance of wearing loose clothing and long hair while operating certain machines. These non-PPE circumstances

There are many local and national PPE suppliers. Call them to help determine the most important items you should stock for your employee's use and retail sales.

Dave Hinck,

Safety Chairman

Have I got a story ...

Did you hear ...

"Weather" or not you were there, the Nite at the Races was a great success, even though it was a mud bath due to the incredible downpour!

Of course that didn't stop the horses or the high rollers! Our fearless leader, The Prez, brought along a guest who placed a whopping two dollar bet and walked away with twelve hundred! Not bad for a night's worth of work.

Brian Higgins, our VP from Reidman, Megan Jones, secretary and Matt Holt of Celebration Party Rentals were given the dubious honor of presenting the award to the winning horse in the 8th race. Personally I think it was a test to see how low I could sink into the mud with my heels on.

And for those of you who didn't attend because this year's event was held at Pegasus and not Track Side, too bad because the food was to die for!

Miller's had a tent installation in New York City - of course Steve sent someone else. Guess he didn't want to get wet. Sorry Daminon, that's what happens when you're family.

Also that night, Chris and Val of Party Corner flew in from Switzerland. At least we think they made it. Haven't heard much yodeling from down south.

So much for April showers!

The March meeting was well attended, Thank you Ken of Maywood Furniture for doing such a great job. I heard he had an incredible cake.

Send me gossip, I'm all ears! 908-806-0029

Megan, the gossip Guru

FROM THE "VEEP"

During the day to day operation of your business, there might be a tendency to take things for granted. You don't consciously do this, it just happens. I've compiled a few clichés that apply to the rental industry. The definition of a cliché is: commonplace, a stereotype, triviality, staleness. A well run rental business is anything but commonplace and certainly doesn't treat important matters trivially.

"Better Safe Than Sorry" - Take it easy, steer clear of obvious risks. In other words, make sure your equipment is in excellent working order before renting it. Train your customers to use the equipment properly and provide written instructions whenever possible. Have your customers **SHOW YOU** they can use the equipment safely. Use common sense and be safe or you'll be sorry (or worse, you'll receive suit papers in the mail).

"Jury Rigged" - A temporary or makeshift repair. This is a rental industry No-No!! You're better off taking an item out of service than to rent out faulty equipment. You say you never do that? That's what the rental store owner thought when they rented a floor polisher that the customer broke, repaired on their own, and didn't tell the store management about it (they obviously didn't pay for damage waiver). The repair went unseen because it was under the handle grip. To make matters worse, they used epoxy instead of welding the break. The next person to rent the machine was injured when the repair failed.. This is a classic example of "Jury Rigging." In this case, it couldn't be prevented but, are there mechanics out there making these types of repairs without your knowledge? Hopefully not, but I'm sure it's happening in varying degrees around the industry.

"A Stitch In Time Saves Nine" - Preventative action is wise, Don't take shortcuts. Prevent problems before they occur because, if you don't prevent them, they will occur. Especially in this business. Brian Higgins

Vice President ARA-NJ - Brian Higgins [E:MAIL BRI1122@aol.com](mailto:BRI1122@aol.com)



ARA of NJ
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