

December 1999 Rental Rag

THE NEW ARA-NJ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 1, 2000 will signal the end of the 1900's. Let's take a quick look back at the last hundred years.

The U.S. fought two world wars (I& II), the Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. Henry Ford invented the assembly line for automobiles and the Wright brothers flew for the first time in Kitty Hawk, NC. Man walked on the moon in 1969 and Neil Armstrong declared, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." the Mets won the series that year, too.

The stock market crashed in October 1929 causing the Great Depression in the 30's. the U.S. fought WWII in the 40's and brought us out of the depression and spawned the "Baby Boomer" generation, a sparkling period of growth in this country that may never be equaled. Today we have a global economy. Russia collapsed, the Berlin Wall came down, and China is on the verge of becoming the next world super power.

How about computers? Just 16 years ago Apple Computer introduced the first home Computer. Soon they were in competition with Microsoft, a company formed by two college drop-outs, that is so large today that the U/S. government thinks they are a monopoly and should be broken up.

I missed more events than I covered but look at how much has changed in the last 100 years. The rental industry is changing too. Just look at all the consolidation that has occurred recently. United Rentals and Nations Rent have gone from start up companies to become two of the industry giants. Things change so quickly today you need a scorecard to keep up. In 1996, ARA-NJ had a meeting about the effect of Home Depot entering the rental market and it was one of our most well attended meetings ever. They have recently opened at least two locations in New Jersey that rent equipment. That's close to home. If you think they will stop there, you're kidding yourself.

ARA-NJ is your State Association. Our objective is to keep you informed of changes in the rental industry and provide information to help you run your business better. It's hard for us to measure our success unless you tell or show us how we're doing. One way is to attend a meeting. The next one is March 15th at Tylor Rental in Berkely Heights. For those who came make it there will be a Customer Service Seminar in the afternoon (the cost is \$5.00 per person). This will be followed by the evening regular meeting where the topic will continue. I've just given you lots of advance notice so mark the date on your calendar so you don't forget. You owe it to yourself to keep up with all the changes going on around you so you can stay competitive.

That's about it for now. Thanks for this opportunity to be President of your association. If there is anything you think would be of interest to the membership, please let us know and we'll put it in The Rental Rag, post it on our web site, www.NJARA.org or address it at a meeting.

Wishing you and your family a Healthy, Happy Holiday Season and a successful New Year.

Best regardsBrian Higgins

P.S. - Make sure you come to Casino Night - January 23, 2000. It's going to be lots of fun!

JERSEY TALK

Condolences to Don Zaleski and family following the death of Don's Father. We wish them the best in a difficult time.

Tidbits of Note:

Dave Hinck, *A Party Center*, says that all is under control after much of his roof blew off in an attack by strong winds. It was not easy, but the worst is behind him.

Anybody want to be on film? Check out the new video at *Pioneer Rentals*: What a good old flood can do! Jeff and Vern want to thank all who helped during that difficult time after the flood.

John Reagan and J R Kunz, of *G & H Service*, pointed out that the "Alliance for Action" meeting offered a positive outlook for Residential, Road, and Bridge Building in N.J. for 2000 & 2001.

Ron Galen, *Access Rentals*, allowed it to slip: He is engaged to Tracy Nigro and they are planning a May wedding. Anyone interested in doing the tents? Congratulations, Ron.

Vinnie Ryan of *North Jersey Bobcat* says "Watch for the new Bobcat Track Loader."

Viking Representatives' Ted Vitrini noted that Mi-T-M is offering a turnkey wastewater system to prevent pollution from runoff - to meet EPA local ordinances.

Home Depot, Edison, is now in the rental business.

Villagers Hardware is now open in Garwood.

..... Howard Heller

For contributions to Jersey Talk, call or FAX Howard Heller. Phone/Fax: (908)508-0658

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The meeting held November 17th at All County Rental was called to order at 7:30 PM by president, Tony Perrotta.

After making welcoming remarks, Tony advised those in attendance that former Associate Member, Terry Boland had suffered a heart attack. Associate members were then invited to speak on updates to their product lines and special offers. Ted Vittrini announced the formation of a new company, Viking Specialties, which will supply waste water maintenance systems.

Tony thanked Tom Lade of All County Rentals for hosting the meeting and invited him to say a few words about All County Rentals.

The reading of the minutes of the September meeting were dispensed with because they are posted on the ARA-NJ website. Treasurer, Tom Lade, gave his treasurers report. Committee reports, however, were skipped because of the anticipated length of the Round Table program.

In the absence of Social Chairman, John Futcher, Jr., a report was given on final details of Casino Night to be held on January 23rd, by Vice President Brian Higgins.

With no further old business the meeting proceeded to the election of officers. Those presented by the nominating committee were:

President: Brian Higgins

Vice President Brian Kreger

Treasurer Tom Lade

Secretary Megan Jones.

With no nominations from the floor, the President instructed the Secretary to cast one unanimous vote for the entire slate.

The attendees were divided into three groups for the program - a series of three round table discussions on three separate topics present by Steve Kohn, Brian Kreger, and Brian Albers of Newell co., the advertising agency for ARA National. Each discussion leader

circulated at timed intervals so all attendees could participate in all three very informative discussions

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

YOUR ARA-NJ CALENDAR

January 23, 2000!

CASINO NIGHT!

March 15, 2000

At Taylor Rental center, Berkeley Heights

Program on Customer Service.

April 19, 2000

Location to be determined:

Program: Vendors Table Top Display

May 10, 2000

Nite at the Races! (final date requires conformation from Meadowlands Racetrack).

August 23, 2000

Take me out to the ball game! ARA-NJ will attend a Somerset Patriots game.

October 25, 2000

Regular meeting - Location and program to be determined.

November 15, 2000

Annual Round Table meeting - Location to be determined.

Please note: The new meeting schedule departs from the every other month format of the past. This was done to facilitate attendance at regular meetings.

Rent-A-Millennium

I will not come of age at the millennium - I will just age.

I can foresee what's going to happen after we reach the millennium. Just a few years into the new century young people will be incredulous when they ask my birth date. They will say, "YOU WERE BORN - WHEN!"

That's the way I felt about Abraham Lincoln when I was growing up (in fact I still do). He was from another century and now, though it may be hard to accept, all of us will soon be, too. "Nineteen hundred and whatever" was a very good year and today it doesn't seem such a long way off to have been born then - but wait a few weeks and "nineteen hundred and any number" will be way back in ancient times. The last century. Long ago.

As everyone prepares to celebrate the millennium new year,

I approach it with sadness. It's not likely I'll celebrate. What's to celebrate about the millennium taking us into a new century when my century is the old one? I have no business in the twenty-first century, the twentieth century was mine - the 1900s were my time in this world. I was born in it, I was married in it, my children were born in it and I had a great time in it. No matter that I flunked Latin 101 in it - they were very good years.

One way to ease the pain, I suppose, is to go along with the school of thought that says the new millennium won't come 'round until 2001. At least that'll allow me another year to be comfortable in my own skin in my own time. But, on the down side, I'd be aligning myself with the nitpickers and worse, with my luck, we'd probably have to go through Y2K all over again.

So, to everyone born in the last century, allow me to wish you a Happy New Century. May you enjoy health and happiness for the next hundred years, may all your competition be "small box" stores and may all your customers be nice people.

Thanks to all of you, too, for being part of my century and helping to make it such a fine one.

..... Carl Sparacio

The BIG GUYS Are Coming!

No, it's not the title of a porno flick, it's a warning we, as independents should all be aware of. Consolidations and the starting of rental centers by some "Big Box" stores are becoming very prevelant in other parts of the country and *they're coming our way!*.

Several *Home Depots* have already opened rental centers, and it's probably only a matter of time before some other big players come into our areas. the key to continued success is going to be the *level of service and product we present to our customers*.

Don't lose customers to these guys because you don't do what you've done for so long well enough. Read what they say is the key to success: *CUSTOMER SERVICE*. Educate your people - anyone on your staff that comes in contact with your customers *represents the company*. Make certin the understand this and treat the customers the way you do.

Brian Peterson, head of *Wickes* rental operation (*Wickes Lumber* chain) admits that he won't be able to hurt a well run independent rental center, but a poorly run one will not be able to compete with him. I believe he's right.

.....Brian Kreger (The Veep)

THE NEXT MEETING

7 PM

March 15, 2000

at

Taylor Rental Center

284 Springfield Ave.

Berkeley Heights

Host: Lori Mathison

Tel : 908-464-9611

Program: An afternoon seminar (\$5.00 charge) on Customer Service. The topic will be extended into the regular meeting (no charge) at 7 PM. Additional details will follow.

DIRECTIONS

From 78 West (Newark) take Exit 43, Diamond Hill Road, Go up hill until end of road. Turn left onto Springfield Avenue, Taylor Rental is 1/2 mile on left.

From 78 East (Basking Ridge) take Exit 41, left (at stop sign) off ramp, Left at "T" traffic light intersection. At second light make a right turn onto Springfield Avenue, Taylor Rental is 1/4 mile on right.

Rent to Own - Again

Trenton: It's an annual ritual at the Statehouse. At the end of each year, a controversial bill designed to protect the rent-to-own industry from lawsuits is advanced, only to be shot down.

The bill's sponsor, Assemblyman Guy Greg, R-Morris, vowed to bring it back again, maybe as soon as this month. One may wonder what his agenda is given that the rent-to-own "contracts" rip-off consumers who can least afford it by charging exorbitant interest rates.

It concerns us only because it tarnishes the image of the regular rental industry. Perhaps we should petition Assemblyman Greg to change its name From Rent-to-Own to "Lease-to-Own."



ARA of NJ

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Revised: