

THE PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

This month, as president, I'm offering a blanket welcome to those new members to the ARA-New Jersey who may not have been acknowledged in the past. You may or may not know that, if your rental business is located in New Jersey, when you join the national American Rental Association you automatically became a member of the ARA-New Jersey, a state organization affiliated with national. This applies to rental store owners - those who supply rental stores (suppliers) can become members of the ARA-New Jersey as Associate Members by applying for membership.

For whatever reason, we were not always made aware when a new member joined the national ARA and, it wasn't until recently, when we requested an up-to-date New Jersey membership list from national, that we realized we had missed a few. So, If you are receiving this issue of a *Rental Rag* for the first time it is likely you were among the "unknowns" and we apologize for the slight and you are, belatedly, sincerely welcome to ARA-NJ.

Besides this newsletter there are a number of perks available to our membership - not the least of which is our very active web-site (you'll find the web address listed elsewhere in this issue) and our evening meetings, though infrequent, have recently been rescheduled so as to interfere less with members busy periods. Each meeting features a program of interest to a wide spectrum of the membership as well as updates from the national ARA, open discussions, input from Associate Members and enough time to socialize to get to know each other better and exchange ideas or get help with vexing problems.

Programs in the immediate future will concern loading and trailering featuring a speaker from the New Jersey State Police. Another meeting not too far off will put us in close contact with the American Equipment Dealers and a few movers and shakers from national ARA. After that a meeting on "Flooring" which should be of interest to both our party stores and equipment rental people is in the works.

We're not "all work" either - there are also purely social events. Much the membership looks forward to what has become an annual event - our Nite at the Races: a fun night of dinner and wagering at the NJ Meadowlands track. You can look forward, too, to a day at Atlantic City with your ARA-New Jersey friends. This is new and you'll find the first details of this event in this issue. In the past we've held dinner dances, moonlight cruises and baseball outings - we hope you'll elect to participate in whatever our social committee dreams up next.

Once again, welcome aboard! Feel free to give a call to any of our officers or committee chairman if you have questions concerning our group - they are all listed in this newsletter.

Brian Higgins, President

STEVE'S TIPS

Picture perfect: You wouldn't send out a marketing brochure that's all words and no pictures. So why do so many rental companies create Web pages without graphics or photos of any sort? If a single picture paints a thousand words, use a judicious number of them on your Web site to communicate volumes. Photos of your store or office, your products, your employees — these images make your business feel "real" to online customers. Images give you a tangible presence and let visitors get a sense of the kind of business you run

It's important to use photos on your site, but it's equally important that the file sizes are small enough to load quickly on your Web page. The other key is to use only high-quality photos, which often requires a professional photographer or a very good quality digital camera. Again, you wouldn't send out a marketing brochure filled with cheesy photos, would you? Because it's likely to be seen by many more people than most paper brochures, your Web site should be the best marketing brochure your business has ever created.

The "if I build it, they will come" delusion: One of the most common mistakes rental businesses make is to assume that if there's a business Web site, customers will suddenly start flocking to it. Don't wait to start marketing your firm online. As soon as you are happy with your Web site, get going with the basics of online marketing. I recommend at least five marketing efforts when you launch a Web site.

1. Be proactive in listing on search engines such as Yahoo, Iwon and Alta vista.
2. Start an affiliate program to encourage and reward other businesses such as caterers, contractors, hotels, etc... for sending you online customers.
3. Be proactive in finding sites with which you can trade links.
4. Consider joining a banner exchange like bCentral's [Banner Network](#) or SmartAge's SmartClicks.
5. Start collecting customers e-mail addresses on Day One right on your rental contracts, so that you can lure customers back to your Web site.

Using these five steps, you can set up an online marketing effort that will help ensure that customers come to visit the awesome new Web site you just built.

Phoneless in cyberspace: Don't forget to put your phone number *prominently* on your Web site. Many small-business executives have said the way their Web site is most frequently used is a customer looking at it while calling the company. Customers will refer to something on the Web site, but they actually buy products or order services on the phone. It's also a good idea to put your mailing address on the site. It adds to the comfort level of knowing you are a "real" business.

Respectfully,Steve Kohn

Remember, too, to make use of ARA-NJ's e-mail address: njara.org - the go-to place for updates on this organization. Even better e-mail me at tent_man@msn.com and **let me know your e-mail address** (e-mail it to me even though you think I may already have it). I'll keep you posted on rental happenings as they occur.

..... Steve

RENT A BILLIONAIRE

I'm on the road to becoming a **B**illionaire, yes, that's billionaire with a capital B. Like most of you, I've worked and struggled while the rest of the world has box seats at Yankee stadium or on the 50 yard line at Giants Stadium and I'm left to squint at a fuzzy black and white 13" TV set with a picture that rolls (except during commercials). Nobody ever said life was fair but it seems to me everybody ought to get a turn. My turn or not, I found a way out.

It came as a sign from heaven. There they were, together on the same page of our local newspaper, a pair of articles, seemingly unrelated, that will put yours truly on the road to Billionaire-dom.

The first article was headlined: "Philip Morris must pay \$3 billion to smoker." It was about a 53 year old fellow who won a suit against Philip Morris for contributing to his incurable lung cancer. The jury didn't seem to care that each pack of cigarettes he smoked bore a warning label. Aha, I'll bet you think I'm going to try the same thing. You're wrong. I quit smoking 20 years ago, and though I didn't catch anything - don't think I'm not keeping notes.

The second article's headline read: "Study says obese are **sicker than smokers**." Get the message? No? Well it gave me the keys to the kingdom. This little fatty put two and two together and he is going to sue the pants off every company that helped him get this way - obese, that is. I'm not sure of the definition of obese but I'm at least 50 pounds overweight, give or take - if not over the top, that should be close to obese. Whenever I

see my doctor he says, "You have to lose weight." And every time he says it, I say, "Sure, Doc," then I go home and sooth my wounded pride with a couple of donuts.

Who's to blame for me getting into this life threatening obese condition? I'll tell you who's to blame, the people who make Twinkies!. Have you ever read a warning notice on a package of Twinkies? Neither have I. The Twinkie people are ripe for a suit. From kindergarten on, I wolfed down Twinkies every chance I could. I washed them down with soda and chocolate milk. Not that I blossomed into a balloon right away – no, Twinkies are very sneaky, their calories are time released, like allergy medicine. Years later, my once svelte figure exploded without warning. I went from shopping in the young men's clothing section to the portly department almost over night.

And it's not only Twinkies either, that's why this is going to be the mother of all class action suits. I think of Entemann's and I see dollar signs. Dunkin Donuts better hide, too, and take their cousin, Crispy Crème, with them. I've checked our super market's shelves while gathering material for my lawyer and not one of the culprits mentioned have warning labels on their products. Neither does Mrs. Smith's pies - not to mention that other queen of calories, Sara Lee.

Why our government allowed us to become obese is beyond me. Oh, sure, you can say that the calorie cartel has Congress in its pocket and keeps it there with heavy campaign contributions, but that doesn't excuse the Food & Drug Administration. It's a plot, that's what it is, we are being assassinated by our own government! How come they see fit to ban tobacco ads from TV but look the other way when a little cartoon character sings, "Nobody doesn't like Sara Lee!"?

This is fair warning to Hagen Daas and Turkey Hill: "Save your pennies, boys. You turned this food lover into the Pillsbury doughboy and now you're going to pay. It wouldn't have cost much to add a line to your addictive products that says, 'Consuming this product has been known to cause obesity!' My bottom has expanded for the sake of your bottom line.

"It's my turn now. I'll rake in millions because when a jury sees what a pitiful example of the human race I've become they're going to throw the book at you. I can't wait to roll in the money the court will award me – I'll roll because pudgy people can't run.

"And you know what I'm going to do with the windfall? I'm going to fill our larder with the good things of life – Twinkies, Mallomars, Eskimo Pies, Duncan Donuts, Ice Cream, Cream Pies, and Tiramisu! Yes, you made me what I am today and, thanks to you, I'm going to die of obesity rolling in dough with a smile on my face."

..... Carl Sparacio

COMING SOON!

(TO A BUS STOP NEAR YOU)

A TRIP TO ATLANTIC CITY

Yes, sir, your ARA-NJ is getting a rental group together for
an AC trip.

The date is January 20, 2002

Plans are in work even as you read

What we do need in order to

hire the bus and negotiate with a casino,

is the number of those who might attend. Three stops along
the route are planned so no one will have far to travel.

Please let us know ASAP if you'll
consider it and for how many people.

Give Carl a call at:

201-327-2495

Or e-mail him at:

poppicarl@aol.com

Thanks for helping us get this trip
up and running.

The FEATURE RENTAL STORE(S)

It's coincidental that the "Feature Store(s)" for this issue, *Do-It-Yourself* and *A Party Pleasing Rental*, are hosts for our upcoming meeting. These related businesses are run by the Mihalko brothers, Joe and Mike. We'll let them tell their story:

"Do-It-Yourself was founded in 1954 in Whippany, NJ primarily as a hardware store. Shortly thereafter there was a fire which caused us to relocate to our present location: 310 Route 10, East Hanover. In this new location we expanded to be a hardware, sales and service shop with a start into some rental items. The rental end grew and expanded and the sales end evolved into a support of the tool rental end. During the 1980's when manufacturers decided *they* would dictate what parts and stock were required to have on hand, *we* decided to focus on what we did best and concentrate on rentals.

"In the mid 80's *Do-It-Yourself* opened its party division: *A Party Pleasing Rental*. The building was divided almost in half after we realized that party clients and tool customers were different in their expectations of what a rental store should look and smell like.

"Both stores ventured into branch stores at the end of the 80's. With the economic crash at that time and the passing of two of our key people, we regrouped again and refocused on our original location.

"Today *Do-It-Yourself, Inc.* and *A Party Pleasing Rental, Inc.* are owned and operated as two separate but complimentary businesses. In 1999 we expanded our existing location to better utilize the area we have. *A Party Pleasing Party* put up a 2800 sq. ft. Warehouse to better house their expanding inventory. Concentrating more and more on corporate and large private parties. *Do-It-Yourself* has expanded from a few small tools to a blend of tools and equipment suited for homeowners and contractors and catering to the local landscapers."

THE NEXT MEETING

Is Wednesday August 29th

at

Do-It-Yourself, Inc.

&

A Party Pleasing Rental

38 Route 10 West

East Hanover, NJ

Arrive between 7 & 7:30 PM if you're hungry

8 PM is meeting time.

Our hosts are Joe & Mike Mihalko

Tel: 973-887-2251 or 973-887-7264

THE PROGRAM: Trucking and Towing Regulations that Affect the Rental Operator

The subject will be covered by a representative of the New Jersey State Police who will clarify the law and attempt to clear up misconceptions many rental owners may have in this area. Come prepared with questions to insure that your particular "confusion" will be covered.

DIRECTIONS TO DO IT YOURSELF:

From North, South, East or West:

Make your best way to Route 287

Head toward Exit 39 and take Route 10 East/Whippany Exit

Follow Route 10 East 3 miles (you'll pass Do-It-Yourself/Party Pleasing in westbound lane)

Continue to the Sony Theater jug handle and head back (West) approx. ¼ mile

Do-It-Yourself and A Party Pleasing Rental are on your right next door to Mr. Chu's Chinese Restaurant, directly across from the tall Novartis Office building.

Howard Heller's

JERSEY TALK

Condolences to the Vern Mott family on the loss of Carol's father, William Maxwitat.

Congratulations to John Zoubek of Zoubek Associates division of A.H. Harris, who recently became president of AED (Association of Equipment Distributors).

It is rumored that David Hinck (The Party Center) had a hand in a Sopranos episode. Is he going to be auditioning next?

Advance Equipment, Elmwood Park, was recently acquired by United Rentals.

Down Neck Equipment Rentals is opening a branch in Sayerville.

Best wishes to Richard Wycoff who recently acquired Atlantic Tent Rentals, Freehold.

Celebration Party Rentals can now clean your tents with their new washing machine - call Matt Holt.

WELCOME NEW ARA-NJ MEMBERS!

Sam Hoffman
Millennium Steel & Rack Rental, Inc.
315 W. 36th Street, New York, NY 10018
Phone: 212-594-2190
FAX: 212-594-0522

Richard H. Wycoff III
Atlantic Tent Rental & Sales
1184 Rte 33 PO Box 712, Farmingdale, NJ 07727
Phone: 732-938-4540
FAX: 732-938-3405

Thomas DeLellis
Center Stage Productions
96 Hawkins Road, Englishtown, NJ 07726
Phone: 732-617-7060
FAX: 732-617-7061

Joseph T. Donnelly
Cape May County Party Tents
19 Washington Avenue
Villas, NJ 08251
Phone: 609-886-5200
FAX:

Peter A. Normandia
Frogbridge, Inc.
7 Yellow Meeting House Road,
Millstone Township, NJ 08514
Phone: 609-203-9050
FAX: 609-208-9052

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

August 29th - The next meeting

At: Do It Yourself (see details pg.5)

Program on Trailering & Loading

October 16th - Meeting of Board Members

**November 14th - Regular Meeting at Zoubeck Associates - Program AED
President *And folks from national ARA***

January 20th - Atlantic City trip - more details to Follow.

February 18th to 21st - ARA Convention, New Orleans

March 16th - Regular meeting at Unirents Program on flooring

(Also in the works for March, a Job Fair is being put together to aid the membership in attracting qualified employees. Watch future issues for details)

April - date to be selected: Annual Nite at the Races scheduled for Pegasus at the Meadowlands Race Track.

WANTED: E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Your ARA of New Jersey needs to add your e-mail address to our membership information.

This will aid in sending information more quickly to those of you utilizing the Internet. We've been faxing the membership with meeting reminders and bulletins but e-mail is a much quicker way to keep in touch and will allow also us to get information to you that does not lend itself to regular avenues of communication.

Take a minute to e-mail your address to Administrator, Carl Sparacio at poppicarl@aol.com

Thanks, your cooperation in appreciated!