

Rental Rag October 2002

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I can't believe that we are into the fall season! Where has this year gone?

It has been a terrific year in many respects- but challenging in others. With the stock market bottoming out and with other mixed market signals, we need to prepare for the upturn - it is due! We need to be asking ourselves: What can we do better? How can we be more effective in the same amount of time? Where is that niche that can bring us that new edge? How can we fine tune our strengths?

Regular attendance at our NJARA meetings can help bring you some ideas - share the good ones and others will come your way - guaranteed! On the other hand, you can keep going on your own as you have been. If you are satisfied, then keep doing it?

Keep your eyes peeled for word of a January social that is in the works.

The convention in Anaheim is just around the corner- make your plans early and take advantage of the lower airfares. It's a nice place to visit in February, attend terrific seminars, and at the same time, finalize your spring buying plans.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting- we welcome any ideas for future events and any volunteers to help with them. Call me, or any board member with your thoughts.

Howard Heller

Highlights of M.A.T.R.A. Conference

Nov. 5 - 7:30 am Registration

November 6 - 10:30-11:45 am Tour of Tents (a guided tour)

11:45-1:00 pm New Product Demonstrations

5:30-7:00 pm Vendor Displays, Cocktail Reception

November 7 - 8:30-10:00am Exhibits open - Continental Breakfast

1:30 pm Start takedown of displays & tents

What's Wrong with New Jersey

Have you gone out on a delivery lately? Is going from Point A to Point B become a darn right pain in the ass? Do you remember the day when you could just zip through 10 or 15 deliveries per truck in an hour or two? Even going to work in the morning has become somewhat of a challenge for me, my detours have detours. Are your vehicles experiencing more mechanical breakdowns due to faulty roads? What is going on?

I realize we live in one of the most densely populated states in the country and we have more roads per person than anybody, but again I ask what is going wrong and what we are going to do. Hopefully you are not one of those companies offering free delivery. Ponder for a moment how much your delivery cost has risen in the last 5 years. Did you know that since 1991, when the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act was passed, New Jersey has spent less than 2 percent of transportation-related federal funds on transportation improvement measures.

Well I decided to do a little research and find out what has gone wrong with our transportation system in this state. Listed below are some quotes taken from recent article. Take a minute to read what the experts have to say:

John Hassell (Newark Star-Ledger, 1998-06-28) "New Jersey's aging, pockmarked highways are taking their toll on cars. Drivers spend six times more on auto repairs caused by bad roads than the state spends to fix those roads, according to a study released Tuesday by two public interest groups. That's worse than the national average, where the cost of car repairs outpaces road repairs by four times. ... The result: Nearly 36 percent of New Jersey's urban highways are rated poor or mediocre -- 13th worst in the United States, according to the study.

Neal Thompson and Jeff Page (Bergen Record, 1997-09-17) "The purpose of this letter is to express my utter dismay over drivers and driving conditions, especially in Newark. I don't think Route 21 has changed since the '40s, except for increased traffic, of course. As to the drivers, I have never seen so many discourteous and aggressive drivers anywhere. As a driving instructor ... I was appalled at the reckless disregard for the rules of the road and the safety of others."

Thomas F. Halpin (letter, Newark Star-Ledger, 1998-07-10) "With the highest pedestrian fatality rate in the country, New Jersey ... I have conducted research for 25 years on urban transportation throughout the United States, Europe and Canada and have never found motorists as inconsiderate, impatient and reckless as in New Jersey. Car drivers flagrantly violate the legal rights of way of pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections, ... In contrast with California, drivers here almost never yield to pedestrians in mid-block crosswalks, and they often endanger pedestrians at intersections by making right or left turns through crosswalks, even speeding up to beat pedestrians through."

John Pucher (Newark Star-Ledger, 1998-10-22) "With so many drivers, highways and destinations, what can explain the dreadful state of New Jersey's road signs? ... I counted more than a dozen infractions. They included signs placed behind trees or light posts or past the exit points they identified; signs with faded, barely legible lettering; signs that were unreadable at night; signs that were confusing or flat-out incorrect. But at least these signs exist. The most common problem by far is the lack of signs. ...

Scott Schaffer (letter, Newark Star-Ledger, 2000-01-10) "Over the last three years, about 20 percent of New Jersey's traffic fatalities have been pedestrians. New York is the only state with a higher rate."

Brian Cook (letter, Newark Star-Ledger, 2001-03-25) "New Jerseyans paid the biggest bills for auto insurance in the nation in 1999, for the seventh year in a row ... New Jersey's average auto insurance premiums were \$1,033.88 in 1999 ..."

David Ress (Newark Star-Ledger, 2001-06-08) "New Jersey drivers say they have tried just about everything in their quest to contact the E-ZPass [automatic toll collection] customer service center. They call early in the morning or late in the evening. They use speed dial and redial, and they dial during lunch. Often they get the same message, time and time again, a recording that tells them everybody's busy and then cuts them off ... Those ... fortunate enough to get through to the telephone system's main menu usually end up spending more time on hold than they bargained for. 'I actually fell asleep with the phone by my ear waiting for them,' says Emil Halupka of Cranford, who says he woke up 40 minutes later, still waiting for his call to go through. ... Using e-mail has been just as futile, according to some electronic toll users who say they received 'undeliverable message' responses ..."

Joe Malinconico (Newark Star-Ledger, 2001-07-30) "The little sign says, 'Please Enter Here.' So you follow it, down the narrow lane created by the sort of stretch barrier belts you see in banks until you come to a wall, a dead end. Then you turn around to see, across the barrier, another little sign that says: 'Wait Here for the Next Available Teller.' But you can't get there without ducking under, or jumping over, the barrier. So you sidle your way back up the entrance lane, trying to avoid bumping into other puzzled people who have foolishly followed you, and get to the obvious entrance. It bears a sign: 'Exit Only - Do Not Enter.' Welcome to the E-ZPass Customer Service Center in Secaucus."

Bob Braun (Newark Star-Ledger, 2001-08-06) "Traffic congestion in New Jersey costs \$7.3 billion a year in lost time, fuel and additional vehicle operating costs, according to a study released yesterday by the New Jersey Institute of Technology."

Associated Press, 2001-10-10 "... Several watchdog groups filed a lawsuit yesterday accusing the state of reneging on its commitments to repair bridges and roads. The activist groups say the state's proposed 2002 budget fails to adhere to pledges made last year to fix half of New Jersey's deficient roads and bridges and to build 1,000 new miles of bicycles paths over the next five years."

Have you read enough yet! Transportation is a critical part of our businesses. We require goods to arrive to us on time and in turn we have to deliver products and services to our clients on time. Because of the situations in our State (that are not going away soon) this is going to require more creative thinking.

I suggest at our next meeting we discuss options available to all of us. Many of you I have already talked to. Some great suggestions have been mentioned, including

- deliveries during off peak hours,
- discounts to customers who pick up orders,

- Delivering orders earlier to tie in with deliveries scheduled in a specific area.,
- using couriers to deliver smaller orders
- And my favorite idea adjusting delivery rates to meet the specific situation.

Looking forward to a great discussion.....Steve Kohn

AMERICAN RENTAL ASSOCIATION

of NEW JERSEY

Minutes of the 8/21/02 meeting

At A-1 Tablecloth

The meeting was called to order at 8pm by president; Howard Heller and everyone introduced themselves.

Minutes of the previous meeting were not available to be read.

Treasurer's report, Tom Lade reported \$5086.78 in the Fidelity account and an ending balance of \$6069.85 in the Chase account: deposits were \$902.20 and checks paid were \$783.55.

Committee Reports:

Administration: None

Associates: Roy Feragallo and Brian Higgins discussed taking out ad space in the Rental Rag \$25 a year (6 issues) for a business card.

One insertion each:

¼ page - \$25, ½ page -\$50, full page -\$75 Speak to Carl if interested.

Education: Dave Hinck discussed Rentech. It is designed for employees of rental stores and the topic would be how to handle the phones. Any recommendations on other subjects should be directed to Dave. The location of the seminar is unknown, but most likely in the Cherry Hill area. This program will be combined with members from Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Legislative: Joe Millialko stated that if you rent trucks, a domestic security tax would be imposed: \$2.00 per truck per rental. Joe also addressed two issues regarding inflatables: (1)

licensing fees have more than doubled for a \$4000.00 inflatable as

compared to multimillion dollar roller coaster, and (2) annual inspection for each inflatable, usually during summer months is very inconvenient.

National: Steve Kotin commented on how rental stores are popping-up all over and are applying for insurance. With their inexperience, there a lot of claims, so therefore rates go up. National is coming up with a list of criteria that would be beneficial for new

storeowners and employees. Steve also mentioned that you could apply online for the scholarship fund.

Safety: No comments

Social: Need a social event for January

New Business: The next meeting will be held at Pioneer Rentals on 10/16/02.

Howard mentioned that Doug Forester, who is running for senate, was invited to the meeting. The subject will be about a customer's experience with a rental store, how were they treated, what they need, etc. Megan Holt commented on the Events & Tent show tro be held this February in Anaheim, CA. The training seminars will provide more quality content and will take place Saturday and Sunday before the trade show.

The meeting adjourned and we had an opportunity talk with the vendors, Garden State Bobcat, Biljax, Inc, R A Markert & Associates, Maywood Furniture, Ditch Witch of NJ, Millenium Steel, Viking Representatives, and JK Data Systems.

Thanks were extended to our host, Murray Vale of A- 1 Tablecloth for an exceptional meal and a tour of his new facility.

Secretary

Judy Boulhower

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October 16th - Regular Meeting at Pioneer Rental - a fascinating program.to make you aware of what your customers expect from from a rental store..

November 13th - Board Meeting

DIRECTIONS TO THE OCTOBER 16th MEETING

PIONEER RENTAL INC

North Passaic Avenue

Chatham, NJ

973-635-7870

From Route 280

Use exit 4A. Take Eisenhower Parkway south to the Livingston Mall, make a left onto South Orange Ave. At Exxon Station, turn right onto Passaic Avenue. Bear right at the next light (do not go through light). Pioneer is located about 1 mile on the left.

From Route 10

Travel to Livingston Traffic Circle. Follow signs for Eisenhower Parkway (South). Take Eisenhower Parkway South to the Livingston Mall, make left onto South Orange Avenue. At Exxon Station

Turn right onto Passaic Avenue. Bear Right at next light (do not go through light) Pioneer is located about 1 mile on left.

From Route 287

Exit at Madison Avenue onto Route 124 East for approximately 6 miles. Turn left onto North Passaic Avenue. We are located about 1.5 miles on right.

Or:

Take Route 287 to Route 24 East, Exit on Route 510 (Columbia Turnpike) East. This turns into South Orange Avenue. At the Exxon Station just past the Livingston Mall, make a right onto Passaic Avenue. At the next light bear right (do not go through the light) We are located about 1 mile on left.

From Route 24, 78, Parkway or Turnpike

Take Route 24 West to exit 7A which is Route 124 West (near Short Hills Mall). This turns into Main Street Chatham. At third light turn right onto North Passaic Avenue. We are located 1.5 miles on right.

PIONEER RENTALS INC.

Passaic Avenue

Chatham, NJ

(Directions on previous page)

Tele: 973-635-7870

Our hosts for this meeting are Jeff Sheats & Vern
Mott

Doors open at 6:45 PM for food & socializing

The meeting starts promptly at 7:45 PM

Our program:

NOT TO BE MISSED

CUSTOMER'S NIGHT!

It's payback time - we give a couple of customers a night to shine.

Wouldn't you like to know what your customers expect from you?

How you measure up in their eyes?

ARA-NJ members were asked to invite one or two of their customers to address us regarding rental store performance. Hear what they have to say. It can only improve your service.

Contractors who will address us: Blair Werthmen of B.C.E.W Construction

And John Sweeney of Grandview Landscaping

Our Party person is Karen Rosenthal, Director of Sales & Marketing, Event Works

RENT-A-SURGERY

I've written a book. It's short but informative. It is meant for the medically uninitiated and will be of service to the easily terrified. The title of my book is, "Same Day Surgery for Dummies." Long a believer in the *ignorance is bliss* school of medical knowledge for patients, I will subtitle it, "Everything an Outpatient Needs to Know but Would be Better Off Not Knowing."

A recent experience qualifies me to write on the subject. I've been a hospital patient several times in the past but never as an *outpatient*. An outpatient is one who is admitted to a hospital for less than life threatening surgery. It is sometimes referred to as *same day surgery* or *minor surgery* though nowhere is it ever defined whether the surgery is minor for the patient or minor for the surgeon. Why, though, if the surgery is deemed minor for the patient, would the hospital request a copy of his Living Will as this one did?

Used to be when a person went to a hospital for pre-op testing he was admitted the day before surgery and remained overnight until he went *under the knife* (a frightening phrase) usually the next day. Modern practice, however, requires that you visit the hospital a few days prior to your "procedure." This allows hospital personnel to do their poking, bloodletting and other unspeakable pre-op things without requiring the patient to stay overnight. This is not for the patient's well being. It's meant, rather, to keep his insurance company from throwing a tantrum.

I have no argument with this. If nothing else, it fosters a sense of security because everyone is extra nice during pre-op. This leads one to believe that the surgery won't be at all as traumatic as you had expected. The feeling of well being is enhanced during pre-op because your body is never completely separated from its clothing. My pre-op went so well, I actually began to look forward to the upcoming surgery.

I was duped.

Sure, it started out very well. We (my wife came along to insure I wouldn't be a no-show) were greeted by a valet parking attendant and I had been given a bright red Express Admittance card so I wouldn't have to wait in line. I had been instructed to leave my Mr. T jewelry at home and be prepared to doff any removable appendages (eyeglasses, teeth, etc.).

They directed us to the Same Day Surgery section - in the basement! This was the first hint I had that this might not be the lark I had been anticipating. My apprehension increased when my wife informed me that, when she was a practicing RN, the only procedures done in the basement were in the morgue.

Once there I was led to my "room." It had one solid wall. The other walls were made of not so solid curtains that had built-in hair triggers to allow them to snap open instantly when one was least prepared for visitors. There were eight "rooms" in my section. I overheard depressing pre-op instructions given to each of my section-mates and watched as they were wheeled off in the direction of the morgue.

Someone in a white coat appeared and insisted I sign a paper that absolved the entire world of liability should my surgery be less than successful - a possibility that had not previously even been hinted at. Later a nurse materialized, as if in a puff of smoke, through the (ha-ha) "privacy" curtain.

"Remove your clothes and put on this gown!" she bellowed. The hospital gown was a jigsaw puzzle of arm holes fabricated of a material so flimsy and translucent it could only have been ordered out of a *Victoria's Secret* catalog.

The nurse anticipated my next question.

"Yes, take off your underwear, too," she snapped.

"But they're only going to remove a polyp from my nose," I protested.

"Take 'em off," she commanded and turned to leave.

Undaunted, I asked, "Can I keep my socks on?"

She stopped in her tracks and said, "No, remove your socks too. You won't be doing any walking."

"But, why?" I insisted, desperately trying to hold onto some semblance of dignity.

"It's a prophylactic measure." She answered.

"Heavens to Betsy," I gasped, and raised my eyebrows quizzically to my wife.

"It means *for sanitary reasons*," she explained.

The nurse disappeared as suddenly as she had arrived so I yelled at the still rustling curtain, "WILL THE DOCTOR BE WEARING SOCKS?!"

There was no reply.

In short order I was put to sleep. I never saw my surgeon that day. I'm happy to report everything went well and the patient looked lovely in his peek-a-boo gown.

I'd love to tell you more about the outpatient traumas exposed in my book but it's time to leave for my doctor's office. He's going to remove the packing he stuffed up my nose during the "procedure."

This time I'll check to see if *he's* prophylactically correct and is sock-less.

I am. I don't wear them anymore - for sanitary reasons..



ARA of NJ
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