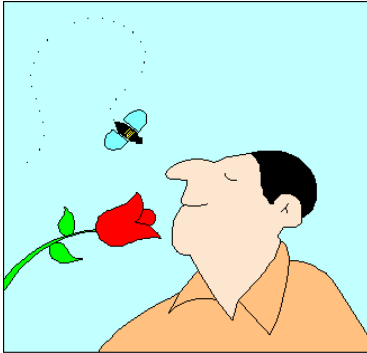


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Where has the spring gone? I find it hard to believe that 2003 is half over!

I want to thank Mike and Marie Avolio, and Kristen Redmond for hosting our April meeting. Thanks to Megan Holt-Jones and Ted Vetrini, we had two interesting programs on Stress Management and Water Recycling Systems. These are either close to our hearts, or, close to our wallets.

Speaking of wallets, I hear that certain of our members walked out of Pegasus with heavy wallets- a good time had by many with a great meal! Thank you Tom Lade for making the arrangements.

I hear some optimism on the street: the stock market up, interest rates low, profits returning, and a tax cut putting more money in customers' pockets. Standard & Poors is projecting over 4% increases over the 3rd and 4th quarters this year (compared with 1.4% & 1.6% for the same quarters last year). Now we can do our part and have a good second half!

With fall programs coming up, we are aiming for a roundtable discussion session- any relevant ideas, please contact Brian Higgins who is chairing the program. Dave Hinck is working on a telephone skills seminar- details will follow.

I thank all those who have contributed time and efforts to your association's programming. Anyone who is interested in becoming more involved, please let me, or any board member know.

Have a great summer!

Howard Heller

ODDS & ENDS

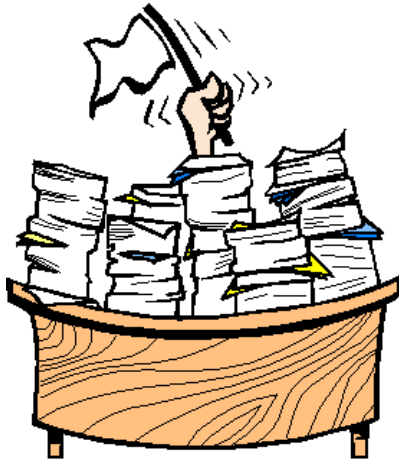
Business conventions are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.

Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?

There are no new sins ... the old ones just get more publicity.

Scratch a dog and you'll find a permanent job.

RED TAPE -TO THE EXTREME



Who would of ever thought that as an owner of an Event and Party Rental business I would find myself in Guatemala City at the US Embassy petitioning for employees to work for us. And during a war to boot!

Finding good help in the rental industry is hard enough, but when you find it and have to make sure you are in compliance it makes being a small business owner much more difficult. Let's face it, the new labor force is Hispanic and we are all dipping into that pool.

You get the INS card, the social security card and have them fill out the I-9 which says "it is illegal to discriminate against eligible individuals, future expiration dates on documents and employers cannot specify which documents are to be accept from an employee."

We are told it is up to the employee to provide the proper documentation, but when social security comes knocking years later telling you a number is not good you, as the owner, have the problem and now social security will fine you for each bad number! All the time and money you put into training, not to mention it's May and you are left strapped!

I have heard horror stories from rental owners all across this country about hiring Hispanic labor, INS raiding them, wiping out their labor force and fining them an unbelievable amount of money regardless of all the documentation they had.

We had an incident with an employee who has been with us for five years. Social Security called and said his name and number didn't match. This is after five years! How do you justify that? So, we hired a company who assisted us with getting a job title developed for the party industry and approved with NJ Dept. of Labor. We then petitioned for H2B work visas through the INS, and finally the Guatemala and Mexican embassies. We down loaded the information from the embassy web sight and filled out more paper work than you can imagine.

Seven months later we received a phone call from a young woman in Guatemala who said she was turned down. Two other people had the same story. We contacted the embassy and they faxed to us seven pages of conflicting instructions of how to register our company and get the visas. The bottom line was that we had to go to the embassy and this is how I ended up in Central America!

True bureaucracy at it's best occurred when we were there. We met with all the future employees and spent several hours creating new folders on each of them which included two applications for the visa, two photos, a passport and copies of the original petition from our company. The next day we take all of this to window #9 and stand in line. Upon arrival to the



window, the woman gets the consul who informs us that the people who have already come in on their own can no longer be on our list and that all the forms we filled out yesterday, the ones downloaded from their web sight, were changed and we had to fill out new ones. In addition we had to redo the

photos because they now require 2x2 not the standard passport size that we had. Four hours later we return to window #9 with all the new information. She takes it and gives us a ticket so we can come back three days later to pick up the visas. Of course we already had a flight back to NJ prior to then, so we had to give her the name of a person who would come back to window #9 at 3pm.

I inquired about why the people who were turned down could not reapply, It states in the instructions downloaded that if a person is refused for a H2B visa that they can reapply. She said they could reapply in writing and the refusal notice indicated they could. Okay, so why did the consul tell us they could not???

, back in NJ we receive a phone call, they turned down two more people on our list. We are now five employees down. But, no worry we can get others to fill those positions.

I called the Embassy and spoke with the woman at window #9 who assists me in how the refused people can convince the US to issue the visas. She does and I forward this on. Two weeks later I get a call from the young woman who was turned down and she was accepted.

Eight months, a few thousands of dollars, a trip to Guatemala and lots of gray hair we final have approved visas in Guatemala. Now the question remains....will I be visiting Mexico ? The final answer is NO. The Embassy in Mexico City was much easier to work with and our employees there had no trouble what so ever.

The other obstacle we had to overcome once they were in the United States was getting the social security card. It took over a month. Then if you want to drive, you have to go to Trenton to get your visa scanned for authenticity and take the driving test.

So what is a H2B visas and why is it so great for our industry?

It allows Aliens to come into this country to work for 9-10 months. The employee must return to his or her country for the remainder of the year. Saving you, the employer, the winter payroll.

Was this process worth all the aggravation and expense? You Bet It Was!

The word has spread via the Hispanic population about what we did and, we have had other companies in the area call us about the process. We already paved the way for the job description and that was the hard part.

If you are searching for assistance let us know and we will be more than happy to forward to you the company we hired to assist us with this process.

We are hoping the second run will go much smoother!

..... Megan Jones
Celebration Party Rental

The following letter was received by ARA-NJ Vice President, Megan Jones, from NJ State Senator, Leonard Lance:

Dear Megan,

Thank you for contacting my office to express your opposition to Senate Bill No. 1489, which would set standards and procedures for use of \$242.8 million of federal "Reed Act" funds and appropriates \$37 million of those funds for the improved administration of the unemployment insurance benefit payment and employment service systems.

I appreciate your sharing your concerns. Senate Bill No. 1489 is currently in the Senate Labor Committee, of which I am co-chair. This bill was held in committee in March and again in May due to my concern about the effect it may have upon small businesses. I hope this information is helpful.

Best wishes.

Sincerely, Leonard Lance, State Senator

THINK SAFETY - DO IT SAFELY



As we all get busy in the rental industry we still need to take time for safety. Take that extra couple of minutes to explain to your customer how to use a piece of equipment when they rent it. Also don't forget the safety equipment that the manufacturer requests is to go with the item

On Sunday, May 25th, we were making a pickup in Mahwah. We saw what we thought were two children riding razor scooters. As it happened it ended up being one child and one elderly woman. The child had a helmet on but the woman did not. The woman fell and hit her head on a rock. We administered first aid until the paramedics arrived. This woman is still in the hospital with several fractures in her skull and she is in a coma. This could have been avoided if she had been wearing a helmet. Always think SAFETY FIRST!

..... John Futcher, Jr. Unirents

American Rental Association Minutes of the 4/30/03 Meeting at United RentAlls

The meeting was called to order by Howard Heller at 7:30pm, after a delicious meal provided by the Avolio family.

Treasurer's Report: Dan Mihalko reported \$5126.11 in the Fidelity account and an ending balance of \$1916.40 in the Chase account: deposits were \$900.00 and checks were \$3280.65 with a service charge of \$7.00.

Committee Reports:

Associates: Maywood Furniture has portable bars available.

National: Steve Kohn stated that 44 scholarship applications were submitted and a decision will be made on May 9.

Social: Night at the Races, Pegasus on May 14. Six people still have to submit reservations.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Weiss from The Get Well Center, discussed how stress impacts our lives. Suggestions for dealing with stress (1) massage, (2) humor, (3) ask for help, and (4) look at the big picture, appreciate life and be grateful for what you have. You may get physiological changes in your body when dealing with stress, such as increased heart rate or sweaty palms. Exercise is one of the best ways to dissipate stress. Diet also impacts the ability to handle stress, take a good multivitamin.

Ted Vetrini, Viking Representatives, introduced Bud Oleski from Clearwater Technology. Bud stated that the US EPA has passed Phase II rules, henceforth, the NJ EPA has developed the Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program. This program addresses pollutants entering our water from certain storm drainage systems. Municipalities must eliminate the unpermitted discharge of equipment and vehicle wash wastewater to the waters of the state from municipal maintenance facilities by installing a vehicle wash reclaim system. This could be a major concern for businesses within the next 3 years.

..... Judy Boelhauer

Secretary



June 17 - Keystone Rental Assoc. Meeting regarding ARA's Rental University program. (7-9:30 pm including dinner)

July 16 - Board Meeting

August 20 - Seminar on phone skills (location to be advised)

September 24 - Board Meeting

October 8 - General Meeting - details in works

November 19 - Roundtable Discussions. Location to be announced.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT



Greetings from the great rainy state of South Jersey. I am sure that we are all thankful for the rain, although it would be nice if it would hold off until a weekday.

As you read in March's Legislative Report from Joe Mihalko, I was your New Jersey representative to the ARA National Legislative

Caucus . As a newcomer, I arrived knowing very little about lobbying or the nitty-gritty of Washington politics. I left in about the same condition. However, John McClelland, the new Senior Director of Government Affairs for the ARA, and Chris Wehrman, CEO of ARA, did a great job of putting me on the road to understanding.

John introduced us to the main issues that he is dealing with in our Capitol (besides parking.) The issues include TEA 21, a large spending bill that could include up to \$375 billion on transportation infrastructure, the elimination of Federal estate taxes, establishment of Association Health Plans, and introducing our legislators to the inconsistencies of surge brake regulations. Other issues that made it into the recently passed tax cut include increasing small business expensing from \$25,000 to \$100,000 for 2003 through 2005, and reducing the tax on dividends and capital gains. ("Ask and you shall receive".)

I had an opportunity to meet with some N.J. Representatives and present our case for these important issues. I shared with them how these issues effect our everyday business and how we think they can help everyone in New Jersey. Although the response was generally along party lines, I was excited by the opportunity to get into their offices, talk to them, and to make our needs known.

I came away with is a sense that things get done in Washington (just like in our businesses) through relationships with our representatives. I was able to meet with some Representatives who do not represent my 3rd district and feel that those meeting were productive. However, the best people to communicate the needs of rental stores throughout New Jersey to each of our 13 Representatives and 2 Senators are the rental store owners from each of those districts. Politicians listen best when the people who keep them in office are talking. So get involved, write letters, support a candidate. When we get involved with a campaign, we get known. If we are known, we get heard. Involvement can take more forms than just sending money. Give them your time or other resources to help with their campaign. Get known, be heard.

John McClelland is a wonderful resource for answers to you questions. ARA has taken a big step forward in hiring a full-time lobbyist to represent us in Washington and he is there for you. You can contact him through his email: john.mcclelland@ararental.org. He would love to hear from you and get you started in contacting your Representative. My email is craig@taylor-rental.com if you have questions for me.

..... Craig Fisher Taylor Rental

TRAILERS & TRAILING



name a few.

There are many safety issues when we think of trailing equipment. Weight, size, hook up, lighting, and speed to

Weight a big issue when trailing. Here are a few things to watch for. First of all the weight that the trailer can handle. Once you have determined this you need to be aware of the weight of the equipment. Making sure not to exceed the trailer's limits. After adding these together look at how much weight your vehicle can tow. The potential of the vehicle to tow is not in question as much as the stopping power of the vehicle.

This is were gross vehicle weight comes into play. Most vehicles will show this on the inside driver's side door (were the door latches). Once this is settled make sure the equipment does

not hang over the sides. This is not acceptable. You can however hang off the back. More than two feet you do need to have some sort of a flag tied to the end. That's to make drivers behind you aware of potential danger.

Before you go, make sure you have hooked up and "lighted" the trailer properly. Chains or tie downs are tight and secure from the equipment to the trailer. Pintle or ball hitches latched properly. Hitch chains are crossed when hooked to the vehicle. Also make sure any safety brake chains are secure. Then plug in your lights; remembering to check them every time before you go on the road. I put parentheses around "lights" because reflective strips down the side are a law. Leaving us with speed. DON'T DO IT. It's not a race and remind your employees they get paid by the hour. What will cost you more, one accident or a few more minutes on the road.

When trailing your trailer think safety.

..... Dan Mihalko

Do-It-Yourself

SENDING BULK E-MAIL

Now, that many of you are all a little more internet savvy. I thought this would be a good time to share some do's and don'ts on sending bulk emails, which has become a popular and effective way to mass advertise in the rental industry.

The key to remember is that your advertisement has to fit certain criteria so it is not considered SPAM (Unsolicited Commercial Email). Spam is a growing concern on the internet, and it won't be long until laws are enacted and enforced to limit its use.

1. Don't falsify your name as the sender. Such as using "US government" rather than XYZ rental center, unless you have permission from the sender name that you have chosen.
2. Don't falsify the subject line to mislead readers about the content of the e-mail message. For example "You have won the lottery" rather than "Discount on rental equipment" is a no no
3. Always include the option for the recipient to unsubscribe from future messages from your company, and include valid and responsive contact information of yourself or company.
4. Tell respondents who provide you an e-mail address how the address will be used for marketing purposes.
5. Don't harvest e-mail addresses from chat rooms or other such venues with the intent to sent bulk unsolicited commercial e-mail without consumers knowledge or consent.
6. Don't send bulk unsolicited commercial e-mail to an email address without a prior business or personal relationship. Business or personal relationship is defined as any previous

correspondence, transaction activity, customer service activity, personalized marketing message, third party permission use, or proven offline contact.

Many clients are now using anti-spam software to guard against unsolicited mail. By following proper procedures, you will have a better chance of your message being read and acted upon.

Despite the many challenges facing e-mail marketing, its not going away any time soon. It's a big part of the marketing and promotional landscape today. E-Mail marketing is growing up and as rental stores we need to be aware of it and respect it so we can use it effectively.

..... [Steve Kohn](#)

RENT-A-HEART ATTACK

We had a discussion at our house the other day (a discussion is not quite the same as an argument – our voices are more modulated in a discussion even though sometimes we speak between clenched teeth). We were watching a lady named Lydia make Fettuccini Alfredo on TV. It really looked delicious.

"That would make a great breakfast," I remarked.

Well, from the reaction this statement got you would think I questioned the morals of Mother Theresa.

"Are you out of your mind?" My wife stabbed, "Don't you realize how rich that is?" (She speaks in questions when she questions my sanity).

"No richer than a regular breakfast," I replied. "It has eggs, it has butter and, if you consider the pasta as a bread or toast substitute - what's so different? Oh, yes, and it has cheese. I sometimes have a cheese omelet for breakfast. See, it's all breakfast food."

"Aren't you forgetting about the heavy cream?" she nyah, nyahed yet another question at me.

"I like heavy cream," I said, "but, in the interest of my clogged arteries, I'll substitute skimmed milk." This lie was offered more to end the discussion than as a solution.

When did we get away from the belief that breakfast must be the most substantial meal of the day? Was it when we moved off the farm? That rule needs to be re-instituted if we value our health.

It took me years to convince the in-house cook that a grilled cheese sandwich was a proper breakfast. Now, at least, I get it once in a while. It seems most people are kind of stuck in a rut when it comes to what we

should eat and when we should eat it. Breakfast is the most boring of all meals. I mean, how can anyone get excited over cereal? There are times, especially after a heavy dose of bran flakes, I could easily become a cereal killer if I wasn't afraid the bran would get to me first. And most hot cereals look like the gruel served at a Charles Dickens orphanage. Yeech.

Pancakes and waffles are both great but you need to pile on the butter, syrup, blue berries and whipped cream and dress them with bacon or sausages to get any semblance of a meal. Without the toppings you might as well eat unadorned Wonder Bread.

Eggs are fine, too – I love eggs, but at our house the cook rations them. No eggs allowed two days in a row and no more than one egg at a time. No matter that the guy who wrote those rules passed away eons ago when his arteries collapsed from lack of a substantial plaque frame. (You should see the expression on the wife's face when we eat out and I order a three-egg omelet).

We've also been bogged down in a sausage "discussion" in the past. What's wrong with links of Italian sausage, or kielbasa, or bratwurst with your eggs in the morning? Unfortunately, that's not to be, either. What do I get instead? I get those skinny little "breakfast sausages" – the ones that look like something a small animal left on your lawn overnight. The kind Jimmy Dean embarrasses himself over on TV when he tells us how wonderful they are.

I had a cousin who ate cold pizza for breakfast. My admiration for him knew no bounds. I told him I would prefer hot pizza. "*Domino's* doesn't deliver this early in the morning," he explained.

Domino's is missing a great bet.

Except for Brussel sprouts, I can't think of anything that wouldn't be good for breakfast. OK, so maybe there aren't any vegetables that would make the cut. Scratch that – French fries would be great for breakfast! And you gotta love that you can count them as part of your daily vegetable requirement. Throw in fries as a side dish and your Fettuccini Alfredo is on its way to becoming a well-balanced breakfast. Note that a buttered bagel does not make a balanced breakfast. You must round it out with lox, onion, and cream cheese but it may still lack the nuances supplied by an assortment of side dishes. Coffee doesn't count as a side dish – chips and dip do.

I do draw the line at jelly donuts as a breakfast entrée. Jelly donuts are a breakfast dessert and should be enjoyed only after you've finished, as they say, breaking-the-fast,. Left over pie makes a good breakfast dessert - especially if it's coconut custard.

I expect to hear from the folks at the IHOP and Perkins Pancake House when they hear of this. They'll likely want my input on new breakfast menu suggestions. Here's one I know they'll appreciate – how does Rice Crispies Stroganoff grab you?

Great, huh? Right - you're my kind of people.

[Carl Sparacio](#)



ARA of NJ
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