

## Rental Rag December 2003

Happy Holidays  
To all our ARA-NJ friends  
(give yourselves a present and check on the Telephone Seminar information included)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Holidays!!

With some exciting economic news on the horizon, I am pleased that we are approaching a new year with our economic potential on the upswing (8.2% improvement in GDP last quarter)! I hope that many of you will take advantage of the national convention to expand your thinking and to help upgrade your prospects for the coming year! What a great place to generate new ideas!

I also want to wish Joe Mihalko the best of luck in his new Region 2 Director position. I know that he will do great!

If you can't get to the convention in February, please try to get to more association events: January 21 is a must for those who want improved telephone skills to be reflected in their business. Better telephone usage equals greater sales for any rental store! Dave Hinck is chairing this event- any questions, do call Dave.

Last month's event, a Round Table at Maywood Furniture, hosted by Ken Persson, was well attended (in spite of heavy rain) and was meaningful to all of us. Brian Higgins did a terrific job in putting it together.

I want to thank all ARA of New Jersey board members and other active members for their help over the past two years. Your cooperation made it a pleasure to serve as your president. I know that Megan Jones, your incoming president, will do a fantastic job with some creative and relevant programs. I know that she will still need your help- so please let her know of your thoughts and how the association could be improved.

Meanwhile, I hope that you all have a great Holiday Season and that it, and 2004 brings lots of happiness and rewards to you and your families!

Howard Heller

---

## A HARD FOUGHT BATTLE PRECEDED ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS FOR THE ARA-NEW JERSEY

OK, so it wasn't so "hard fought." As a matter of fact the new slate of officers for the upcoming 2004-2005 term were elected unanimously at last months meeting at Maywood Furniture. Our new officers are:

President - Megan Jones, Celebration Party

Vice-president - Dan Mihalko, Do It Yourself

Treasurer - Tom Lade, All County Rental Secretary - Judy Boulhouwer - Friendly Rental

Having been denied a chance to give a campaign speech we're allowing our new president some space here in the Rental Rag for a very important message. Go Megan:

---

### **Question: How can ARA of NJ work for You ?**

### **Answer: Your Participation!**

As your President Elect for 2004 I began to ponder what I wanted to bring to this organization.

The answer was to obtain more active members. So the question, is how do we do this.

We all become a member of ARA of NJ when we join National, but there is a small percentage of us who actively participate.

All the reasons as to why not jumped out: too far to drive, not enough time, not interesting enough, I do not get anything from it. But the reasons as to why you should participate far exceeded the why nots!

(continued from page 1)

I was in the why not position when I first started my business; however, I met and became friendly with an active member and from there it mushroomed.

I have established some great relationships with other members on a business and personal level.

Through these relationships I have grown as a business owner. I now have other people whom I can bounce ideas off on. We share our bad experiences and learn from each other. I can lean on these people for assistance when extra equipment is needed or even a helping hand in time of a crises. My partner/husband was out of commission when he had knee surgery, the outpouring of assistance was amazing.

If a new customer calls and has rented from another member previously, I can call and get their perspective.

I have gotten some good jobs from the relationships established. Rental company referrals is a network of companies who trust one another to work in conjunction with each other on a job or

completely turn a job over to someone else based on location or work load for that week.

We bond together with our policies, just as some of us did during this September's Hurricane. We all got together and decided how we were going to handle that week.

My participation in NJARA got CPR an article in Rental Management Magazine back in 1997 and Rental Person of the Year in 2000.

I was asked to be on committee's for ARA National and a Speaker for The Convention, Event & Tents, MATRA and Special Events.

I get called on frequently by Rental Management and Special Events as a contributor for stories that are published in their magazines.

And through the friendships established, we have had some nice dinners and fantastic parties.

When I asked other members what was the one thing they have gotten from being an active member they responded as:

"The more we learn about the rental business, the more successful we become.

The Best benefit is the ability to network with my peers. This gives me a great insight into the happenings in our rental community," Steve Kohn, Millers Party Rental

Tom Lade, All County Rental "I joined ARA of NJ many years ago because I was told the organization would be a good source of information. Everyone whom I have asked a question of has been most helpful with any issue I have had. I get advice and information on any topic I have ever asked about. Basically its the free flow of information that makes our organization so great!"

"Socialization with others who have common interest, learning from other member's successes and failures, comparing ideas and venting frustrations. Getting others perspectives on the business climate. Better understanding of competitors, develop and build rental industry awareness and improve my business", Dave Hinck, A Party Center

Howard Heller, M&R Sales, "To better understand the rental industry and my customers- and to help where I can. I benefit from better understanding my customers & their needs. Being an active member has also helped build relationships with them to the point of their becoming more than customers- they have become friends!"

So I ask why not participate.

To make this organization stronger, we need active members. People who want to enhance their business and personal lives.

You will find some new changes in the next two years and I do hope it increases your interest in participation. The board is always looking for suggestions so don't be shy with your comments.

This is truly a membership run organization and if your not getting anything out of it, it's only

because you have yet to see the value of the opportunities that exist in it. I hope this article entices you to come out of your shell and play! We'll be looking for you.

..... Megan Jones - Celebration Party

Congratulations are in order too for Megan, not only for her election as President of the ARA-NJ, but because she's also now the first lady of Clinton, NJ as hubby Matt Holt has been elected Mayor.

---

## *Winter Weather Driving Tips*



Winter is upon us and it brings hazardous driving conditions such as icy streets, narrowed roads, and decreased visibility. On top of that is the problem of dealing with drivers that don't know how to drive safely when the weather gets bad. Here are a few tips to help you navigate the winter safely:

- Check your wiper blades and replace them if needed.
- Check your tires. If they are worn, replace them as the tread is designed to keep the vehicle in contact with the road.
- Make sure all lights are operating properly. Use your lights during day and night so you can see better and others can see you.
- Make sure the heater and defroster are working properly so the windows don't fog.
- Keep proper emergency equipment in your vehicle such as a spare tire and jack, snow chains, road markers, fire extinguisher.

It's also important to adjust your driving. Slow down, Use your lights, Increase your following distance, and watch out for hazards. You should meet with your staff and review this information with them as they are the ones driving your vehicles.

I wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

..... Brian Higgins, Kay Insurance Associates

---

# RENT-A-HOLIDAY

I've outgrown last minute Christmas shopping – it's gotten so I can no longer stand the heart pounding excitement of hunting for a parking space within walking distance of a shopping center. Call me picky but I require that that stores be visible on the horizon from where I park. Besides, I've developed an aversion to poverty. I'm too old to assume long term debt (it'd be embarrassing to have the family pay for their own presents should I be trampled to death by a team of disgruntled reindeer before I pay down my credit card). So it is that now I shop early and sensibly. Mostly early.

More and more I utilize catalogs. My favorite shopping is shopping for toys. We receive toy catalogs almost daily. I floundered when our kids grew out of toys and favored funny clothes and noisy record albums instead. That was the era of the money card. Receiving money is no fun – you don't get a box to open (though I can imagine being happy with a box of money). There was a long dry shopping spell that lasted until grandchildren came along to fill the void.

I've been looking through the latest toy catalogs to decide on the best gifts for each of our grandchildren. It's not as easy as you might think. I adhere to strict guidelines to insure that each child gets just the right toy. Of course safety is an important consideration but the prime consideration is whether or not it's something *I* would enjoy playing with. This may seem self serving but you must consider that, more often than not, I'm the one who pulls playmate duty.

I don't like board games. Chutes and Ladders on up to Monopoly bore me and I cringe when I'm asked to play a board game with the children. Perhaps it's because the kids have a longer attention span than I do. After all, my attention span had a lot of years to wear down. I don't mean to brag but I've elevated the selection of toys to a high art. Even my children, when they're buying for their children, check with me before they commit themselves. I insist that every toy must pass the Grandpa Test.

..... Carl Sparacio

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**January 21 - Phone Skill seminar - Murray Hill Inn, New Providence, NJ. See Telephone Skills Chairman Dave Hinck's article in next column and brochure and directions for this event on the following page.**

## January 21, 2004 Telephone Skills Seminar

What a convenient time and a great way to inspire your company and boost its productivity!

This program is designed specifically for rental stores. It will include a review of "cold calls" made to our very own stores (calls will not be identified so as not to embarrass anyone participating). The presentation was done last year with the Pennsylvania Rental Assoc. with

all participants giving positive reviews (including our Howard Heller). They are experienced and anxious to come to New Jersey to make your telephone contacts more effective and productive by converting calls into sales. They will show you how to make each of those sales larger and how to get your customer to call back more frequently.

At a cost of \$75 per person which will include "coffee and" before the meeting, lunch, and approximately a 7 hour professional interactive presentation, this is not to be missed!

Signature Training Solutions (STS) will conduct the meeting. It will be held Jan. 21 in conference rooms at the Murray Hill Inn, 535 Central Ave, New Providence, N.J. (tel. # 908-665-9200) If you wish to get a better understanding of what STS does, you can check out their web site at [www.legendary.net](http://www.legendary.net).

The seminar is appropriate for tool and/or party stores, and while it speaks to rental people, it is appropriate for anyone using the phone to communicate with the public.

If you know anyone who could benefit from superior business phone skills (a friend, any employees) sign them up! Your productivity is at stake!

If you have any questions please call me at 973-575-1190 David @ A Party Center.

---

# THE SIGNATURE SEMINAR

PRESENTED BY THE ARA OF NEW JERSEY

Wednesday, January 21st  
2004

At

The Murray Hill Inn

535 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ

Coffee and served at 8:00 AM

Seminar starts at 8:30 AM

(Lunch is included)

Don't miss this exciting program on TELEPHONE SKILLS presented by SIGNATURE the leading customer service and sales training company for the rental market - brought to you by the new Jersey Rental Association.

With this exciting, motivating and relevant training from Signature, your management and counter staff attending this training will be able to:

Utilize the phone as a sales tool

Implement an easy to use system of converting calls to rentals

Identify upselling opportunities

Listen to and evaluate actual rental calls

Raise the service standards within your rental store

Identify your return on investment from converting more calls to rentals

You and your staff won't want to miss this valuable Seminar

To reserve your place, fill in the following coupon and mail with your check to:

ARA-New Jersey c/o Carl Sparacio, 28 Refy Avenue, Ramsey, NJ 07446

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending @ \$75 per person

\_\_\_\_\_ Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

enclosed

# DIRECTIONS TO MURRAY HILL INN

## From Newark Airport and Route 78 Westbound:

Route 78 to Exit #43 onto Diamond Hill Road. At second light, turn right onto Mountain Avenue. Turn left at 3rd light (South Street). Hotel is on the left, after next light (corner of South Street and Central Avenue).

## From Route 78 Eastbound:

Exit #44 to traffic light onto Glenside Avenue. Proceed to next left turn under Route 78 toward New Providence (road becomes South Street). Continue to second light. Hotel will be on the left side of road (corner South Street and Central Avenue).

## From New Jersey Turnpike:

Exit #14. Stay to the left through toll. Follow signs for Route 78 - Express Westbound. Follow Route 78 Westbound directions.

## From Garden State Parkway:

Exit #142. Follow signs for Route 78 West (those traveling from the south will make a U-turn at Hillside-Irvington exit). Enter express lanes at first opportunity. Follow Route 78 Westbound directions.

Murray Hill Inn Phone Number:

**908-665-9200**

---

## REPORT ON: DELAWARE VALLEY'S WINTER TENTING MEETING

Brother Mike ( yes brother *MY brother Mike* ), Tom Lade and I attended DVRA's Annual Meeting last night at Main Line Party Rental in King of Prussia, PA.. **This meeting is the only meeting for DVRA this year. It was very well attended 48 people were in attendance about 10 - 15 different store and vendors.**

**The meeting started promptly at 8:00 PM with President Hal Kodikian of Rental World**

**reading the Antitrust Compliance Statement ( which we ALL need to become aware of and should incorporate into our meeting ) then the DVRA's business portion of the meeting, just like ours with reports from the committees. There was concern the attendance and interest might be down due to MARTA being last week, however even though fully half the people there had been to MARTA attendance and interest seems to be very good. Nancy Marshall-Vokorokos, introduced me to the group as the incoming Region II Director and spoke about ARA.**

**The program for the evening was "Winter Tenting" presented by Steve Believe of Anchor, Mike Thorpe of Top Tec and Loren Breck of Eureka!. Steve took the lead and the presentation covered pretty much everything you wanted to and needed to know about Winter Tenting that could be covered in the 50 - 60 minutes they had. This included stacking, strapping, Dave Hincks favorite; Heating, flooring the whole gamete. The new thing I got from the presentation was that you can double wall a tent to help with heating and insulation. ( Even a tool guy can get something from a meeting on Tents ). The meeting ended PROMPTLY at 9:30 PM and all who attended seemed glad they did.**

**Respectfully submitted, ..... Joe Mihalko**

---

**DO NOT OVERLOOK THE UPCOMING  
TELEPHONE SKILLS SEMINAR  
IT WILL LIKELY BE THE MOST  
PROFITABLE MEETING  
YOU WILL ATTEND**

---

***THAT TABLE RENTS FOR HOW MUCH?***

If you attend the last meeting of the ARA of NJ at Maywood furniture you had the opportunity to join our round table discussions. One of the topics that came up was how to price a piece of equipment for rental.

I thought I might share this simple formula with you. Pricing is not an exact science and many factors come into play that are difficult to calculate, such as actual storage cost and labor cost. Sometimes the best you can do is guesstimate.

Let's say you purchase an 8 ft banquet table for \$65.00. Let's go on and make these assumptions:

1. Table will remain in inventory for two years
2. Each time the table goes out a cost of \$1.00 is associated with it, this takes into account labor only
3. A \$10.00 cost for adding table to inventory, which includes the time and materials for poly coating and labeling
4. You would like to make 4 times your investment
5. You expect to rent the table 26 times per year (50% of weekends)

OK here we go.....

**Step 1:**

\$65.00 (cost of table) + \$10.00 (initial cost) + \$52.00 (handling each rental) = \$127.00

**Step 2:**

\$127.00 x 4 = \$508.00 (expected profit) \$508 / 52 rentals = \$9.76 per rental

So charging \$10.00 for an 8 ft table makes great cents (sense). Charge \$5.00, \$6.00 or \$7.00 per table is a poor business decision.

Let's keep in mind we are not adding in any overhead such as insurance, rent or fixed cost, not to mention cost of living increases.

Hopefully you price your equipment to make a decent profit. Picking a price simply based on what your competitor charges is not only an uneducated decision its just plain \_\_\_\_\_. Fill in the blank yourself.

Respectfully, ..... Steve Kohn



ARA of NJ  
Copyright © 2003 MWENTALP. All rights reserved.  
Revised: 12/19/2003