



Kiwanis Insider

Rob Parker
CEO/Executive Director

For the Leadership of Kiwanis

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Dear Kiwanis Leaders:

The Big Mistake

The date was April 20, 1988. My six year old son AJ was getting ready for school and daddy was asking him our normal set of daily questions. When I asked him if he knew what day it was, he said "Tuesday, April 20th". I was surprised that he knew the specific date, so I asked him how he knew that. "That's easy dad, yesterday was April 19th, mommy's birthday." It was at that moment that I realized that life as I knew it was over. I had totally forgotten my young wife's birthday. How do you totally forget something that important? I remember thinking of all the possible excuses that I could use, some of which might have worked. In the end I decided to just throw myself on the mercy of the court. Unfortunately the judge of this court was having a hard time being impartial. Here was the dialog as I remember it:

Rob: I'm in big trouble aren't I?

Stephanie: Yes you are.

Rob: This is going to cost me isn't it?

Stephanie: Yes it is.

Rob: More than I even realize?

Stephanie: Probably

Rob: For a long time?

Stephanie: For a very long time.

In an effort to make sure I never made this mistake again I learned how to develop special reminders for myself. My kids become members of the birthday swat team and April 19th was the first date circled on any new calendar. The good news is that this year we celebrated the 19th Anniversary of "The Big Mistake" and my performance has been flawless each of those years. (Other than those couple of close calls in the mid-1990's)

As leaders, all of us make mistakes from time to time. Some are bigger than others and cause different levels of pain, but we all make mistakes. Many leaders hold themselves to a much higher standard than the people who are following them. The good news is that most people are relieved to find out that their leader is not perfect, and that they don't have to be perfect either. So, when you make a mistake as a Kiwanis Leader, I would encourage you to use those magic words you learned as a child and just say "I'm sorry". And the next time you make a big mistake, just remember, it could have been worse...you could have forgotten your spouses birthday!

International Board Meeting

The International Board was in Indianapolis last week for our quarterly meeting and it was one of the best gatherings of the board I have witnessed. Your Trustees worked from early in the morning till late in the evening doing committee work and making key decisions that will position the organization for future success. Following are some of the highlights of the meeting and some key actions taken:

- Considered and approved a new "Brand Promise" for the organization focused on both Leadership Development and Service.

- Considered and developed a board position on 17 bylaw amendments & one resolution.
- Commissioned a Special Task Force to do a comprehensive review of Kiwanis International dues structure with a goal of simplifying the way dues are calculated, collected and accounted.
- Presented for consideration new position descriptions for several key volunteer leadership positions including Governor, Lt. Governor and Club President
- Reviewed the progress of Project ROI and the estimated \$2.7 million that has been identified that can be redirected for the 2007-08 budget year.
- Held a difficult, but healthy discussion on the 10-year budget impact of the Regional Service Centers and the limited impact these centers currently have on our members.
- Embraced an increased leadership role for the Trustees as it relates to Kiwanis growth plans and strategies

Your Trustees are working hard, they are working together, and they are working smart. The issues they are focused on relate to leadership and governance of the organization and not to operations. It is a great mix of talents and styles and approaches and I think you should feel good that you and the other members of Kiwanis are well represented by this board.

Foundation District Chairs

The volunteer chairs for the Kiwanis International Foundation were in Indianapolis this week for education and team building for the 2007-08 administrative year. President-Elect Jane Erickson did a marvelous job of facilitating and teaching this group of high-impact volunteers. I had the pleasure of spending some time with them discussing the vision for the future of Kiwanis, and can tell you they are a group of smart, articulate and passionate advocates for both Kiwanis and the Foundation. We are fortunate to have these dedicate volunteers investing their talents to make a difference with Kiwanis.

On the Road Again

After enjoying a few weeks working from Indianapolis and sleeping in my own bed, it is time to hit the road again. An international organization like Kiwanis cannot be led from the inside of an office building. Despite the advances in communications that allow us to get our message out in a variety of new ways, some things will always require a face-to-face connection. Over the next few weeks I will be meeting and/or speaking in Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania, Montana, Washington, Indiana, California, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria and Poland. The European countries will all be part of a 'Listening Tour' by train that will allow us to capture thoughts, ideas and video images from our members in those countries. A similar tour is being organized for Asia-Pacific. These tours are part of a research and development project that will be used to help shape a new global service delivery model for Kiwanis. The idea is to discover what the needs of our members are and then to design our service model to fit those needs. Although the majority of my travel is done by air, I was able to plan the trip to Georgia and Florida by motorcycle. So, If you live in one of those states and you see a guy on the freeway with a big K on the back of his jacket, that's me. (Of course I am kidding because we don't make a Kiwanis leather jacket...yet)

Personal Happenings

As the weather warms up, we are beginning to spend more time outdoors. I have only golfed a couple of times since joining Kiwanis but I hope to find some time for it in the future. We have found a local church that we are enjoying and are committed to getting more

involved, and we are preparing for Andrea's graduation from college and her return back home to start her new career. Life is full and very good!

Rob