

September 21, 2008

My Fellow Kiwanians,

As summer slips away and the vibrant colors of autumn arrive, another Kiwanis year begins. It is my honor to assume the leadership role of one of the finest and most prominent divisions within the New York District. Before I can say anything about the upcoming year, I must congratulate my predecessor, IPLG Joseph Weiss for having done a fantastic job during his year of service to the division. We are truly fortunate to have had so many outstanding past leaders in this division. I hope that I can answer the challenge as well as they have. When elected, I promised to do the very best I could to ensure that this division would continue to be a guiding light on a path to a brighter tomorrow for our communities, our children and our country.

Renew Your Kiwanis Commitment

Shortly, installation night will be taking place for each club in which the officers and directors will pledge to perform their duties and responsibilities to the best of their ability. Inasmuch as they will pledge to work diligently throughout the year on behalf of their respective clubs and the division, I ask that each Kiwanian also renew their pledge to abide by the rules and precepts of Kiwanis you each made on the date of your induction. In short, we should start off this year striving to make this the best year you've ever had in Kiwanis.

Keep It Simple (KIS): We Are Here For The Children!

For whatever reason(s) you may have joined and stayed in Kiwanis, we must never ever lose our focus: we are here to assist those whose lives are on the precipice. We can either allow them to fall off the edge in which we may very well lose them as possible contributing members of society, thereby losing them forever; or, we can reach out and help pull them from the danger that surrounds all young people in such a dangerous world. To reach out and pull a stranger from harm's way without seeking remuneration or recognition is one of the most noble and in and of itself rewarding actions a private citizen may do. For every child we pull back from a lost life, we save ourselves a great deal of money, time and wasted efforts from a road of failure that very well may lead to a highway of success.

Building a Better World, One Community-at-a-Time

When Kiwanis was founded, nearly 100 years ago, it was decided that its motto would be "we build." Such a motto can be understood to mean many things; however, I believe it to mean that being a Kiwanian means to build within our community a better world. For example,

if each club within the division where to meet a specific need that is presently not being met by either a governmental entity or other private organization and we eliminate the need by providing that service, we have started to build a better place for each citizen to call home. If our fellow citizens feel better about where they reside, they, in turn, will have more pride and may very well be willing to expand the good intentions of the community. Of course, they could accomplish this task by joining your Kiwanis club!

“M-I-F”, Part Duex

Last year, we learned about “M-I-F” (Membership, Information & Fun). We are pleased to know that IPLG Weiss will be taking an even more active role throughout the entire district in the MIF program. In speaking with Joe, I’ve learned that the “F” part is not just about fun, but in fact deals with the foundation of building our clubs. Without a sound foundation, we cannot grow. Likewise, the more informed “I” we are about Kiwanis, not just in our own backyard, but world-wide, the better educated we can be when speaking about our mission. Further, without taking the fun, foundation and information to others outside our sphere of Kiwanis and spending a substantial part of our time on gaining new members we will fall short of our goals. Thus, we need to take the time to grow our clubs and membership by utilizing M-I-F This can be easily accomplished by actively participating in the divisional “round-up” in January as well as working on the club level July “round-up”.

What to Expect This Year

I recognize that time and money are two things we can never have enough of – well, at least we’ll never have enough time and I also understand about family, work and other commitments. I can’t expect that Kiwanis will be the most important part of your life, but I can hope that it will not be the least important part of your life.

Over the course of this year, I’d like to focus on three things: The continuation of “MIF” with a greater emphasis on the “F”; a continuation of reducing the costs associated with being a Kiwanian; and, thirdly, mutual aid. Please allow me a chance to explain.

Give Me an “F”!

While the “M & I” are important components of the “MIF” process, in my mind, the most important subcomponent is the “F”. Without FUN, we have little to celebrate. With FUN, we have a great deal to cheer about. I’m sure that most of us remember the Disney song, *Whistle While You Work*. The idea is that if you can whistle while working you really don’t consider it work; rather, it is a pleasurable act. In short, work can be fun if you are enjoying what you do. Community service can be fun, especially when you are performing a feat that will benefit others and you are sharing the load with your fellow Kiwanians. With your club

leaders, we will work hard to ensure that divisional and hands-on projects are filled with FUN. If we are having fun, we can showcase Kiwanis to our friends and neighbors that will open the doors of membership to them. If you have an idea that will facilitate this, please contact me. I'm all about having fun and I hope I can count on you to be as well.

More Than Just Change in Your Pockets

Financially, many are hurting and we all feel the pain. Although it's unlikely that I can do much to reduce the line at the international level, I, along with my fellow lieutenant governors are working on ways to reduce your burden at the district level. On the local level, over the course of the last two years, we have been most fortunate to have had two Lieutenant Governors who opted to hold the line or better yet cut back on member assessments for division purposes. For instance, last year division assessments were reduced by approximately 67%. This year, I hope to keep the assessment level at a similar level. If I can pass savings on to you please be assured I will!

Mutual Aid Program

On Long Island, we utilize volunteers to protect us from ordinary fire and rescue incidents. In the event of a larger event, local departments are able to call upon adjoining departments to help and bolster support when needed. This is commonly known as "Mutual Aid". Within this division, we have nearly 300 Kiwanis volunteers. During the course of my travels as Lt. Gov. Designate, I was informed that there have been times that a club was short-handed and struggled to pull off an event while attempting to meet the Kiwanis mission. In some instances, because of a variety of factors, the event was cancelled. In order to attain greater recognition in the community and hence to reach out to potential new members we can never allow our fellow Kiwanians to either cancel an event or to not have a smile on their face showing them having FUN.

In closing ("Finally!! He really must be an attorney".), we will have a fantastic year within the division. The question for you is simple, but two fold. First, will you be a part of it or will you miss out? I hope it will be the former rather than the latter. Second question: Will you share the FUN with others who are not currently involved in what you already know is the best kept secret: K-I-W-A-N-I-S!!!!!!

Yours in Kiwanis,

Albert E. Norato, Jr.

Lieutenant Governor 2008-2009
Suffolk East Division