



Member's Corner

A lot has happened since our last newsletter . . .

by Steve Grossman, CPMR

Former IHRA President & Chairman

. . . and I believe most of it is good stuff. We had a good IHRA board meeting that Jim Adams, your new President, will write about in a future issue. I thought most of us had a good Show. Manufacturers and retailers are excited about the 2004 March Show date and I attended the best MRERF (IHRA's Foundation) board meeting in 4 years that I have been your delegate. I will now address each one.

IHRA Board Meeting: You have a good and active board that wants to serve the membership. Send in your ideas on how we can serve you better. Contact your executive board or Bill Weiner if you have some time to volunteer, a few hours a month, to improve your industry and fellow reps. You can make a difference!

2003 Housewares Show: I know it is a lot of walking, but you probably attend the best-run show in the world, so say the major retailers. The only major attendance that seems to be down was the representative attendance. There are still plenty of good lines out there but you have to hunt them down thru our "Lines Available" program, fellow reps, and just plain old asking when you see something interesting. (I have learned to ask can I talk to fellow reps that have the line. If I get a stall job, I become very cautious.)

2004 Housewares Show - Saturday, March 20 - Monday, March 22: Expect an expanded show to possibly include patio, luggage, gourmet foods, and up-scale housewares. The show will probably be extended with some parts opened one day and others opening a day or two later and closing later. Remember this

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IHRA very active at 2003 International Housewares Show

From Thursday's Annual Board of Directors Meeting through Tuesday's Show closing, IHRA officers, directors and staff kept "hopping." As usual, the IHRA Hospitality Room was a great member benefit, providing a place to hold meetings, get away from the show traffic and just do what reps love to do at industry events . . . network, network, network! Almost half of IHRA's membership visited the Room during the Show.

The Annual Board of Directors Meeting was held on Thursday, January 9, 2003. Here is a summary of the discussions and actions of the Board:

Association Overview: This year the association broke new ground with its first annual membership breakfast and program. Scheduled for Monday of the Show, more than 75 members have preregistered.

IHRA executed a strategic plan that brought in 24 new members, had a booth at the Gourmet Show, hired new legal counsel with an excellent member service, planned an orientation for new board members, added new signs for the Housewares Show and, in general improved the newsletter.

Steve Grossman reported on AMRA and MRERF activities and the reasons IHRA should continue to support these rep association "umbrella" organizations.

James Ayotte gave his membership report. There are 206 rep firms and 4 manufacturer members. 37 rep firms did not renew for 2003. The Board approved accepting payment of dues via credit card. Staff and Board Members will develop methods to improve retention for 2004.

Gourmet Show: The show will be longer this year (May 3-6). Because of budget considerations, it was agreed that IHRA will not have staff at the show. Also, with IHRA supplying the data, show management will print and distribute an IHRA Locator at the show.

Public and Industry Relations: A more concerted effort will be put forth to get IHRA articles and activities into the industry press.

Finances: A task force was created to study IHRA's current dues structure. Member dues have not changed for eight years, even though costs continue to rise. Action on the 2003 budget was deferred until Bill Weiner gets out of the hospital.

Executive conference calls/meetings have been changed from once a month to every other month to reduce costs.

Bylaws: They need to be updated.

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INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION

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Grossman (from page 1)

show opens on Saturday, so plan on principle meetings probably starting on Wednesday.

MRERF: The first question you have is what is it? It is the organization that most rep organizations such as IHRA belong to, supporting education and research in our chosen career — representation of manufacturers. Manufacturers' Representative Educational Research Foundation. \$5.00 of your dues goes to support this needed foundation that was started with seed money from ERA reps a couple of decades ago. Most of the funds that now support MRERF are done thru educational classes and donations.

Educational Opportunities: Over the last few years I have urged all of you to take advantage of the programs offered by MRERF to give you the competitive edge to run your agency and improve your selling abilities. These programs are specifically designed to support our unique rep function. The first program you can take is **Skills for Sales Success**, offered in Chicago May 6-9 and Sept. 23-26 and comes with optional certification. This program is designed for owners and employ-

ees. A second program designed more for firm owners is the **CPMR** program that I attended. It is a one-week course taken over 3 years at Indiana University in August or Arizona State in January. Upon completion you carry the designation of a CPMR (Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representative).

Both of these courses are endorsed by more than 30 rep associations. In some industries it is a requirement for at least one of the principals of the rep firm to be certified in order to keep the line. In today's challenging times, don't you owe it to yourself and your firm to sharpen your talents so you can be a more effective salesperson and be a more professional rep firm owner?

We are challenged to work smarter not harder in today's fast paced changing times. You are not alone out there, even though it seems that way at times. You have IHRA, IHRA fellow members, MRERF, and 30,000 other reps that are there to support you. Please contact Bill Weiner or myself if you wish more information on these superb educational programs. Email at steman4@aol.com.

IHRA very active (from page 1)

IHRA Website (www.ihra.org): The website will be updated on a regular basis. The new Officers, Directors and Past Chairs will be included, ASAP.

National office operations: The office operations were approved. The 2003 Locators were printed and sent to all members. An addendum was placed in the book with all of the changes brought to our attention after the printing was completed. The Board agreed, that in the future, the Locator will only be available as a PDF to be eMailed to the membership and to manufacturers who purchase it, instead of a printed book.

Election of Officers & Directors: The slate presented by the Nominating Committee was approved and the new positions are to take effect after the Housewares show. (The complete list is elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Information for Hot lines: It was agreed that HOT Lines sent to IHRA members must contain the following information or they will not be run: years in business, national sales volume, commission rate, and products. The same requirements will apply for inclusion in the Lines Available list distributed prior to the 2004 Housewares Show.

The next Board of Directors Meeting will be Wednesday, March 17, 2004.

Strong presentations mark 1st Annual IHRA Membership Breakfast & Program

Monday, January 13, 2003 - the second day of the Housewares Show - marked the first successful attempt by IHRA to produce a membership educational event. More than 50 attendees gathered in the IHRA Hospitality Room from 7:00 - 9:00 AM to glean knowledge from four rep-function experts on how they could improve themselves and their businesses.

Gerry Newman, IHRA's legal counsel and partner in the law firm of Schoenberg, Fisher, Newman & Rosenberg Ltd., led off with complete coverage of the avenues available to representatives in collecting commissions due them following termination by principals.

In Newman's "Review & Update of Sales Representative Protection Acts" he pointed out that 35 states plus Puerto Rico) have such laws. He pointed out how such laws provide statutory jurisdiction over out-of-state principals; the right to payment following termination and possible damages, attorney's fees and costs that could be collected by the terminated rep.

Newman then covered "Contract Provisions to Avoid in Your Rep Agreements (and provisions which every rep agreement should include)" After his presentation, Newman was available for one-on-one legal advice.

Pat Brown, IHRA's Employee and Group Insurance consultant updated attendees on the state of medical insurance; what is driving costs and how the RepCare program could possibly be an answer to IHRA members' needs.

Gil LaCroix of dynaMACS Software presented the various software options available to help run a rep company and **Larry Robinson**, president of MRERF, explained MRERF's role in improving the rep function and the CPMR designation.

IHRA ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2003

The International Housewares Representatives Association, at its Annual Board of Directors Meeting during the Housewares Show in Chicago, elected its Officers for the year 2003.

Chairman of the Board is **Donna Peake**, The Barrington Group, Hinsdale, IL; President, **Jim Adams**, Jack L. Wallace Co., Dallas, TX; and President-Elect is **James Ayotte**, Michael James & Associates, San Leandro, CA.

The balance of the newly-elected Executive Committee includes three (3) Senior Vice Presidents: Industry & Membership, **David Silberstein**, Silberstein Associates, Inc., Rockville, MD; Fiscal, **Kent Kulovitz**, Kulovitz & Associates, Dallas, TX; and Legal & Education, David Friedman, The Northeast Group, Westwood, MA.

Steve Grossman, GM Partners, Arlington Heights, IL, continues on the Executive Committee as IHRA's delegate to MRERF and AMRA.

Directors of IHRA include: **Jeanmarie Bettencourt**, Bettencourt, Seattle, WA; **Mark Glotter**, Markshare Sales, Inc., **Bob Kroll**, Kroll Marketing Company, Newbury Park, CA; **Mark Levy**, Dworkin-Rill, Co., Inc; and **Richard Spitaletta**, Enterprise/Skyliner Sales & Marketing, Hackensack, NJ.

Here are Some of The Benefits of Your IHRA Membership

Hot Lines

Designed for manufacturers seeking immediate representation, line available announcement is eMailed or faxed to IHRA member firms within 48 hours of request.

Earn Your CPMR

For complete details: **MRERF**, P.O. Box 247, Geneva, IL 60134 630/208-1466 • susannah@mrerf.org

Auto Rental Programs

Reduced rates are available to member firms and their employees from Alamo, Avis, Budget, Hertz and National. **Call IHRA for ID numbers**

Internet Presence; World Wide Web Site; eMail and more . . . from BIG TECH

From NIRA's designated service provider, this member service can help you establish your company on the Internet with a professional, eye-catching Web site, created just for you. **(Link free if you already have a web page.)**

Your "electronic company profile" will boost your firm's image and link you to and from the IHRA Web site with optional links to and from principals and/or distributors.

There are a full range of web presence packages, one of which

is sure to fit your needs.

Call BIG TECH: 312-951-5600

Rembrandt Portraits by Empowerment Concepts —

Personality testing for new hires or promotions or assessments of your work force. Rembrandt Portraits is PC-driven. It allows you to perform the test right in your own office.

Saves you time (takes 10 - 20 minutes) and money and is extremely accurate. Lets you know, quickly, whether to continue the interview. Each test (all with written reports) costs \$100-120, depending on quantity purchased.

Call 1-800-292-7182

Group Insurance from RepCare Life, Medical, Dental and Disability Insurance

Choose the program that best suits your needs. **RepCare** is the healthcare program available through the ERA / NEMRA Insurance Trust.

In business for over 35 years, it has provided excellent coverage for thousands of representatives and their families. An experience-rated group, rates are determined according to claims within the group.

West of the Mississippi, but including Illinois, Call Pat Brown 1-800-854-4636

East of the Mississippi, not including Illinois, Call John Doyle 1-888-243-0174

Expert Access

IHRA Members may contact the consultants by telephone for advice in each practitioner's specialty:

Accounting & Taxes

Stan Herzog, Applebaum, Herzog & Associates
847-405-0400 x111

Marketing/PR

John Haskell 310-476-3355

Human Resource Hot Line

Dr. Michael Santo 800-292-7182

Legal Services Program

from Schoenberg, Fisher, Newman & Rosenberg, Ltd. expands the Expert Access program for IHRA members with knowledgeable counsel and representation at lowest possible costs.

Your initial telephone consultation is free; fees are quoted in advance for standard services.

Call Gerald Newman at SFN:
312-648-2300 Ext. 309

2003 INDUSTRY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

New York International Gift Fair

February 01, 2003 - February 06, 2003
New York, NY

New York Spring Gift Fair

February 02, 2003 - February 06, 2003
New York, NY

San Francisco Gift Fair

February 15, 2003 - February 19, 2003
San Francisco, CA

Coffee Fest Las Vegas

February 28, 2003 - March 02, 2003
Las Vegas, NV

March

National Coffee Association Conference

March 06, 2003 - March 08, 2003
Boca Raton, FL

Natural Products Expo West

March 06, 2003 - March 09, 2003
Anaheim, CA

Dallas International Gift & Home Accessories Market

March 15, 2003 - March 17, 2003
Dallas, TX

Atlanta Spring Gift, Accessories & Holiday Market

March 15, 2003 - March 18, 2003
Atlanta, GA

Globalshop

March 16, 2003 - March 18, 2003
Chicago, IL

IFE

March 23, 2003 - March 26, 2003
ExCeL - London, U.K.

New York Home Textiles Show

March 28, 2003 - March 31, 2003
New York, NY

April

SIAL Montreal

April 02, 2003 - April 04, 2003
Montreal, QUE, Canada

Spring Gift & Home Furnishings Market

April 06, 2003 - April 08, 2003
Los Angeles, CA

SCAA Show

April 26, 2003 - April 28, 2003
Boston, MA

New York Spring Tabletop Market

April 26, 2003 - May 01, 2003
New York, NY

May

Gourmet Products Show

May 03, 2003 - May 06, 2003
San Francisco, CA

NASFT Spring Fancy Food & FMI Show

May 04, 2003 - May 06, 2003
Chicago, IL

All Candy Expo

May 13, 2003 - May 15, 2003
Chicago, IL

NRA Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show

May 17, 2003 - May 20, 2003
Chicago, IL

SOURCES

May 17, 2003 - May 19, 2003
New York, NY

June

IDDBA Show

June 01, 2003 - June 03, 2003
Las Vegas, NV

Coffee Fest Atlantic City

June 06, 2003 - June 08, 2003
Atlantic City, NJ

Gourmet Awards

June 06, 2003 - June 08, 2003
Dallas, TX

Dallas International Gift & Home Accessories Market

June 20, 2003 - June 24, 2003
Dallas, TX

NASFT Summer International Fancy Food Show

June 29, 2003 - July 01, 2003
New York, NY

July

Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market

July 11, 2003 - July 15, 2003
Atlanta, GA

Fall Gift & Home Furnishings Market

July 15, 2003 - July 22, 2003
Los Angeles, CA

California Gift Show

July 19, 2003 - July 22, 2003
Los Angeles, CA

Washington Gift Show

July 27, 2003 - July 30, 2003
Chantilly, VA

**Manufacturers:
Are You Looking for Well-Qualified,
Performance-Committed, Field Sales
Professionals?**

*Find them quickly, easily and
cost-effectively with IHRA's two
exclusive marketing services . . .*

The IHRA Locator

A directory of housewares
representatives by territories
covered, type of products handled,
type of customers sold to/through and
complete details about their companies.

Instant *HOT* Lines

A onetime eMail or fax that
provides immediate information
on *your line, only*, to reps in
specific territories or throughout
The World

**Call IHRA at (800) 315-7430
eMail: info@ihra.org
www.ihra.org**

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are the responsibility of the
authors alone and do not imply an
opinion of the officers or members of IHRA.

2003 IHRA Officers, Directors & Staff

Officers

Chairman: **Donna Peake**
President: **Jim Adams**
President-Elect: **James Ayotte**

Senior Vice Presidents

Industry & Membership: **David Silberstein**
Legal & Education: **David Friedman**
Fiscal: **Kent Kulovitz**
Delegate to MRERF & AMRA: **Steve Grossman, CPMR**
Executive Director: **William M. Weiner**

Directors

Jeanmarie Bettencourt
Mark Glotter
Bob Kroll
Mark Levy
Richard Spitaletta

Past Chairs

John M. Clampitt
Steve Grossman, CPMR
Jay L. Cohen
Tom Rooney
Peter Bang-Knudsen

Staff

Administrative Assistant: **Stephanie Baron**
Operations Manager & Event Planner: **Emily Elliott**
Financial Director: **Myra Weiner**

**Housewares Multiple-Line, Field Sales
Professional:**

If you're not a member of IHRA, you
owe it to yourself to join the organization
that is your voice in the industry and the
manufacturers' resource for finding
**Well-Qualified, Performance-Committed,
Field Sales Professionals.**

For complete information and
an application, contact:



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