

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It's a Wonderful Life

In the holiday movie classic "It's a Wonderful Life," George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart), responding in desperation to a pile of mounting problems, is given the opportunity to see what life and his community would be like if he had never been born. As he comes to realize the many lives that he has positively touched and changed along his way, his affirmation and reward comes at the conclusion of the film when all those he has helped and supported throughout his life rally around him when he needs them the most.

Now, while we certainly live in a time and world of mounting problems, I am not creating an analogy here that gives anyone justification to throw in the towel or to realistically expect that all those around you who should be there when you need them the most, will even understand and play their role correctly. I am asking you - especially at a time of year when we all tend to naturally reflect on the past, present and future - to pause for a moment and recognize for yourself the many positive and lasting effects that you personally and your events / organizations have had on those around you; your respective communities; and the growing and important impact that our global industry is able to have on cities, countries, and people around the world. We are all fortunate to work in a profession that allows us so many unique opportunities (and challenges) to provide such important and positive benefits to so many.

But rather than adopt only the obvious and reflective role of George Bailey, I also encourage you to play the role of Clarence - the Angel who helps George to see the importance of his life and who he is when he is at his best. Instead of waiting for those around you to show their support, be the first to show yours to those whose role in your communities and our industry is so important, but perhaps not fully recognized. Set the example for personal involvement; share your expertise; strive to lay new and creative founda-

tions for future generations; and help others to understand the importance of their individual roles.

During the past several years, I have had the good fortune of getting to know Mayor Lee Gum-Sik of Gimje City, Korea. Many of you may have met him during our IFEA Annual Convention in Fort Worth this year. Mayor Lee has always been a friend of our industry and is obviously well-respected by those around him. This year, when I returned to Gimje City to present the Mayor with our IFEA World Festival & Event City Award, in recognition of the positive and supportive environment that Gimje City has created for the festivals and events of their city, I came to understand better all that was behind his success, as an individual and as Mayor.

Mayor Lee clearly understands the important role that all those in his city play in their mutual success - from volunteers to entertainers to government officials - and he just as clearly understands and embraces his role in recognizing and motivating each of them. During our visit, Mayor Lee was able to fill a field house with local festival volunteers; to attract multiple national-caliber entertainers home to 'their city' to participate in this special event; and to draw numerous government, education and media influentials (local, regional and national) to a massive celebration in recognition of their common success and reward, as we re-presented the IFEA World Festival & Event City Award to them all.

Mayor Lee is a humble and giving gentleman whose personal reward is seeing his city and citizens prosper; a reward clearly reflected as he personally congratulated and thanked them all. He plays his important role every-day of reminding his community who they are when they are at their best and he is rewarded in return as they rally around him to ensure their continued and common successes. His example is one that I hope all of us in our industry can emulate.



STEVE SCHMADLER, CFEA

Despite the challenges around us, the IFEA has enjoyed a successful 2011, thanks to so many of you and our many friends around the world. On behalf of the IFEA Staff and Boards, I thank you for your continued support and friendship throughout the year. Together, we are building a powerful and positive global industry that will continue to touch lives in a positive way through celebration, in the New Year ahead and for many years to come.

Best wishes for a "Wonderful Life" and a Happy and Healthy Holiday!

