

# THE BOARD TABLE



## One Universal Characteristic We All Share

As I write this first column of my tenure as IFEA's Chairman, it is Super Bowl Sunday. Though not an official federal holiday, it is a national day of celebration in the U.S. none the less. So what is the appeal of this single sporting event? Clearly not everyone is a Patriots or Giants fan. Heck many are not even (American) football fans, yet this day seems to captivate such attention.

I think the spirit that attracts so much interest and excitement in the Super Bowl is the same spirit that is the underpinning of our profession in producing festivals and special events in our communities. It is the human need for shared camaraderie, anticipation, excitement, and celebration. It is the essence of creating organic experiences that impact people on an emotional level.

While few of the events we produce reach the number of people the Super Bowl does, I believe

the impact we make in our communities is just as profound if not even more so. Festivals break through our hectic schedules as well as the isolation of our online world, connecting people, celebrating local heritage, culture, arts, historical events, holidays and all types of special interests. We are the promoters of anticipation, the gatekeepers of tradition, the builders of experiences and the makers of memories. What an awesome way to make a living!

I have been a member of IFEA for nearly 30 years. I have been both personally and professionally enriched by the thousands of people I have encountered over the years who have been eager to share their experiences and ideas with me. My connections with IFEA have taken me across the U.S. and Canada, to Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

What I have discovered is that there is a universal network of those of us who create events. I have met volunteer directors of small harvest events in Texas, CEO's of iconic events like the Pasadena Rose Parade, creative directors of remarkable ice cities in China and government officials in Dubai, charged with building tourism through special events.

Of all the skill sets we require in this profession, from planning and logistics, to creativity and production, to sponsorship development and finance, to volunteer recruitment and management, the ONE universal characteristic we all seem to share is passion. Passion for our communities...passion for the medium of festivals and special events...passion for the quality of what we produce...and passion for the legacy we leave behind.

It is my true desire to add to the legacy of IFEA, during my year as your chairman. I hope you will help me by providing your ideas, your experiences and your vision for the future. Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime. Here's to a great 2012!

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