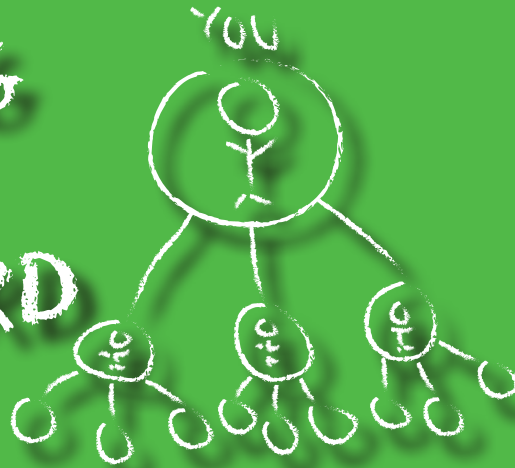


PRESIDENT'S LETTER

**PAYING
IT
FORWARD**



Steven Wood Schmader, CFEA

With spring winding down and the official start of summer just around the corner, you'd think my mind would be on the plethora of festivals and events happening throughout our industry; from fireworks to sporting events, art fairs to music festivals, parades to airshows, and everything in-between. And I suppose it is; just from a longer point-of-view.

Spring is also the traditional season for school graduations and this year my son, Scott, will be graduating from high school and preparing for the next chapter(s) in his life as he begins his college years and career path explorations. At this point in his journey he sees himself, down the road, as a Disney Imagineer or in a similar position with another creative and cutting-edge company serving our industry. And I believe (as all good parents should) that whatever path(s) he chooses to follow, that he will accomplish and be a part of many remarkable things. Partly, I hope, because of the fine job of parenting that my wife, Karen, and I have done and the examples that we have tried to set, but also, to a large degree, because of the examples that he has paid attention to and been inspired by, as many good friends in our industry have taken the time to include him in their events, their conversations, their visions, their successes and their challenges. They have and continue to open doors, encourage his passions, share their time (perhaps

their most valuable resource) and set examples that I, personally, am proud to point to as representatives of the best in our business and in life.

As I thought about what and how he has learned some of life's most valuable lessons – from commitment and quality to friendship and loyalty; from details like clipping the ends off zip ties to valuing volunteers; from storytelling and humor to cultural appreciation and acceptance; to understanding and recognizing the difference between good and great – I realized how much of that came from his very fortunate exposure to many of you.

Scott has had a band director for the past four years (Phil Hartman) who retired just this week after 27 years of teaching at the same school. As part of a 'celebration concert' that the band boosters produced to recognize that occasion, over 100 alumni came back (many from long distances) to play in an alumni band under his direction, one last time (ala Mr. Holland's Opus). And while he was presented with a number of nice gifts of gratitude during the evening, the real gift that he received - and gave throughout his career – was the legacy carried on by all those student alumni that he has touched along the way and who now are sharing those gifts with others in their lives.

Now, tying all of these personal experiences and revelations into my professional life (and this letter, I promise), the IFEA has just started our very first 'official' student chapter at California State University, Chico, under the guidance of another great

teacher and IFEA friend, Jeff Jiang. The 45 founding members of the chapter (representing academic majors across the board, ranging from event management to finance/accounting; marketing and public relations to business and hospitality; and many more), working with a dedicated and passionate leadership group, have been highly impressive in their desire to affiliate with and play an active role in our industry; to get to know all of you and your events. Like my son, they all have dreams and passions, but could use a few good mentors and internship experiences to set the stage for their future successes.

We all have a very real opportunity to play those roles; with the students of Chico and those from many other fine academic institutions serving our field. We can provide the experience, the lessons, and the legacies that will ensure that our industry will be around and run, for decades to come, by the 'alumni' that we are able to touch along the way. As you look around your events this year, I encourage you to see it differently; to see it as a training ground; an educational institution for those desiring to enter our field; and to design your future events and budgets to include those type of opportunities for those future leaders who will come after us. Consider it a graduation gift for the students or an early retirement gift for yourself. Either way, the rewards will be well worth the investment!

Have a great summer!