



A LOOK BACK AT APRO'S 2002 CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW AT MANDALAY BAY IN LAS VEGAS

APRO 2002: ROAD TO MANDALAY, THE ASSOCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE RENTAL ORGANIZATION'S ANNUAL CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW, WELCOMED MORE THAN 1,000 RENTAL DEALERS AND VENDORS TO THE MANDALAY BAY HOTEL AND RESORT IN LAS VEGAS IN JULY. HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S SHOW:

- ✎ 2001-02 APRO PRESIDENT GARY ROMINE TOOK OVER THE HELM FROM GARY MCDUGAL, WHO SERVED A CONSECUTIVE THREE-YEAR TERM AS APRO PRESIDENT.
- ✎ THERE WERE 218 BOOTHS IN THE EXHIBIT HALL REPRESENTING 110 COMPANIES. "MANDALAY BAY WAS A SOLD-OUT SHOW! THE EXHIBIT HALL WAS PACKED WITH EXHIBITORS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS, ALONG WITH NEW EXHIBITORS DISPLAYING PRODUCTS THAT THE ATTENDEES WERE HAPPY TO SEE. THE SHOW PROVIDES SUCH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DEALERS TO SEE WHAT IS NEW IN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES," SAYS APRO MARKETING DIRECTOR CINDY FERGUSON.
- ✎ WAYLAND RUSSELL OF RAINBOW RENTALS INC., LARRY CARRICO OF RENT ONE, GARY HUGHES OF AAA RENT TO OWN, JOHN ROGERS OF HIGH TOUCH INC. AND THE INDIANA RENTAL-PURCHASE DEALERS ASSOCIATION ALL RECEIVED "BUDDY" AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY CONDUCT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INDUSTRY DURING THE 2002 AWARDS BANQUET (SEE PAGE 48 FOR DETAILS).
- ✎ THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE PRESIDENT AND CEO KWEISI MFUME KICKED OFF THE SHOW WITH A KEYNOTE ADDRESS. MFUME SHARED WITH ATTENDEES HIS VIEWS OF RENT-TO-OWN AND WHAT THE INDUSTRY CAN DO TO IMPROVE ITS PUBLIC IMAGE.
- ✎ THE 2002 RENTAL-PURCHASE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR WAS AWARDED TO RONNIE D. WILLIAMS, AN ACCOUNT MANAGER AT THE HARRISBURG, IL, RENTWAY STORE (SEE PAGE 45 FOR DETAILS).





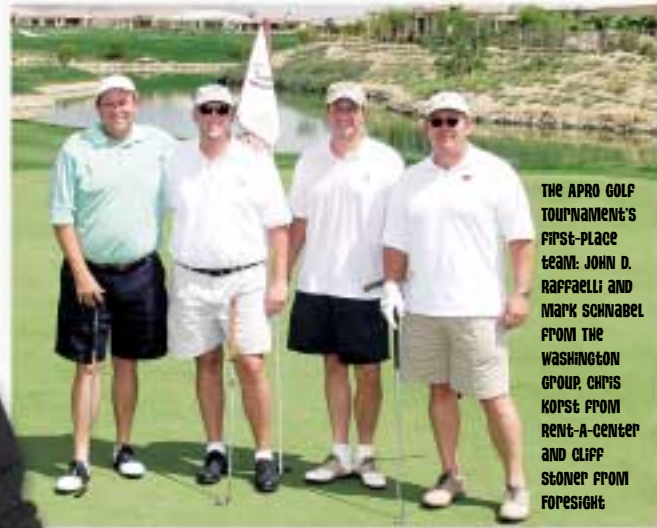
APRO'S PRESIDENT GARY MCDUGAL AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER KWEISI MFUME START THE SHOW



APRO'S LEGISLATIVE MUSCLE: CHRIS KOPST, GARY MCDUGAL, RON DEMOSS, MANNIE HARPER, LYN LEACH AND THE WASHINGTON GROUP'S JOHN RAFFAELLI, TANYA SAUNDERS AND MARK SCHNABEL



APRO'S NEW PRESIDENT GARY ROMINE



THE APRO GOLF TOURNAMENT'S FIRST-PLACE TEAM: JOHN D. RAFFAELLI AND MARK SCHNABEL FROM THE WASHINGTON GROUP, CHRIS KOPST FROM RENT-A-CENTER AND CLIFF STONER FROM FOPESIGHT



APRO's 2002 Rental-Purchase Employee and Rental-Purchase Customer of the Year

Once again, this year's winners of the 2002 Rental-Purchase Employee and Rental-Purchase Customer of the Year are people who are exemplary. They give back to the communities in which they live and serve as examples for their peers, friends and families. They each deserve this special recognition for not only what they contribute to this industry, but also for their humanitarian deeds that have nothing to do with rent-to-own. These individuals truly characterize the many different types of people who work within the industry and the wide variety of compassionate customers we serve.

Ronnie D. Williams and Norma Burgenger have been named the 2002 Rental-Purchase Employee and Rental-Purchase Customer of the Year, respectively. Store managers, owners and supervisors submitted nominations for both categories either online or by mail. The finalists were chosen for the exemplary contributions to the industry and to society at large.

The 2002 Rental-Purchase Employee of the Year, Williams has been an account manager for the Harrisburg, IL, RentWay store for more than three years. He was nominated by Jason Casteel, his store manager, for not only maintaining an exemplary card close, but also for being reliable, dedicated and working well with all of his customers.

What stands Williams apart from the rest is that he is also very involved in filling the needs of his community. A father of six, Williams is the son of a preacher and manages the Harvest Deliverance Center and spends a lot of his time assisting there. The center is a homeless shelter and provides food and clothing for the needy. Every holiday, Williams and his father prepare and serve meals for the men and women who are unfortunate enough to find themselves without a home or family with whom to spend the holidays.

"Ronnie also organizes food drives," says Casteel. "With his caring attitude and outstanding professional performance, I think Ronnie deserves the recognition as

the 2002 Rental-Purchase Employee of the Year."

The 2002 Rental-Purchase Customer of the Year is Norma Burgenger of Vinita, OK. Burgenger was nominated by Bobby Pierce of Stanley's Rent To Own, also of Vinita, situated in the far northeast corner of Oklahoma.

Burgenger has turned to Stanley's Rent To Own to assist her as she opens her home to strangers in need through a local center for the needy.

"Norma is a non-biased person who takes in boarders in times of need," says Pierce. "Even though she lives on a fixed income, she takes in people who need a temporary place to stay regardless of their background or current situation. We think she is extraordinary because



she is on a fixed income, but manages to help others get them on their feet again."

To accommodate her boarders, Burgenger turns to Stanley's for items ranging from a dishwasher, extra televisions and furniture. "Norma is a very caring person who does whatever it takes to help someone out. Without us, however, she might not be able to assist these folks in the manner she would like to," says Pierce.

Both Williams and Burgenger exemplify the wonderful individuals associated with this industry. With employees and customers like them, the industry has more than enough reason to celebrate and honor those who bring just that little bit of extra care and concern to those in need in their communities.



2002 state association awards

State Association of the Year: Indiana Rental-Purchase Dealers Association

The State Association of the Year award was presented to the Indiana Rental-Purchase Dealers Association. The criteria for this award includes the following: the state association has a well-defined leadership structure, including periodic election of officers; a continuity of organizational structure with

Under the guidance and leadership of RPDA President David P. David of Full-O-Pep Appliances in Bloomington, IN, this state association has seen a tremendous success with its annual Mid West RPDA Trade Expo. The sold-out 72-booth show attracts dealers from Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Also this year, with the assistance of software vendor High Touch, RPDA kicked off a new Web site at www.rpda.org/. The site



"TIGER" JOHN CLEEK, RIGHT, PRESENTS THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR AWARD TO INDIANA REPRESENTATIVES CHRISTY KOONTZ, DAVID P. DAVID AND TAMMY GREGORY.

annual or regularly scheduled meetings; and, most importantly, the State Association of the Year must have sustained membership support over time and demonstrated strong legislative and educational performance.

is not only informative, but also is a cut above the rest. RPDA also boasts a very active and loyal membership. As for charitable activities, the state association raised more than \$15,000 for the Children's Miracle Network in 2002.

In 1991, RPDA was honored with this award. To recognize its growth and increased level of activity, RPDA was bestowed again with the 2002 State Association of the Year.

2002 Continued Excellence Awards:

- Arkansas Rental Dealers Association
- Florida Rental Dealers Association
- Illinois Rental Dealers Association
- Missouri Rental Dealers Association
- Nebraska Rental Dealers Association
- Ohio Rental Dealers Association
- Texas Association of Rental Agencies



BILL KEESE, SECOND FROM LEFT, AND "TIGER" JOHN CLEEK, RIGHT, PRESENT THE MOST-IMPROVED STATE ASSOCIATION AWARD TO CALIFORNIA'S PAUL AND MAY DAVIS.

Most-Improved State Association of the Year: California Association of Progressive Rental Organizations

California rental dealers Paul and May Davis took the initiative to reorganize and reactive CAL-APRO, which had been a non-functioning state association for several years. They designed a Web site, printed a new membership kit, culled through membership lists and held the state association's first meeting

Firefighter of the Year: Wisconsin Rental Dealers Association

Wisconsin rental dealers have had to put out several fires in the past year with the state attorney general's incessant litigation against rental dealers, the governor's last-minute veto of RTO legislation last summer and a continuing barrage of anti-industry press in Milwaukee and elsewhere in the state.

Several rental companies have pulled up stakes and quit doing business in



JEFF LEBAKKEN, LEFT, RECEIVES THE "FIREFIGHTER" AWARD ON BEHALF OF THE WISCONSIN RENTAL DEALERS ASSOCIATION FROM BILL KEESE, CENTER, AND "TIGER" JOHN CLEEK, RIGHT.

this year. With this award, APRO recognized their efforts for assuming leadership of this large state network of rental dealers.

the state altogether. Those who remain, however, are united and tireless in their determination to validate the industry's rights.



2002 Buddy Award winners

THE APRO "BUDDY" AWARDS ARE PRESENTED EVERY YEAR TO THOSE OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE RAISED THE LEVEL OF WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BETTER THE INDUSTRY FOR EVERYONE. AT THE ANNUAL APRO AWARDS BANQUET, HELD JULY 25 AT THE MANDALAY BAY RESORT IN LAS VEGAS DURING THE 2002 APRO CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW, THE RECIPIENTS OF THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE, THE RENTAL DEALER OF THE YEAR, THE NORM SMITH VENDOR OF THE YEAR AND THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR WERE NAMED. HERE ARE THIS YEAR'S WINNERS:

APRO Lifetime Achievement Award: Wayland J. Russell, Rainbow Rentals

Not many rental dealers have gone from riding a Harley-Davidson in a biker gang to Wall Street mogul, but this year's recipient of the APRO Lifetime Achievement Award, Wayland Russell, has.

Today, Russell is the CEO and chairman of the board of Rainbow Rentals Inc., one of the five pub-



licly traded RTO companies in the country. As leader of Rainbow, Russell has not removed himself at all from the fray. He still prides himself as being a "great account

manager" within his company. He is still in great demand as a speaker at Rainbow training seminars. In fact, the Rainbow Rental Account Management Program, based on the concept of "respect and dignity" for the customer, was developed by Russell and is the cornerstone of Rainbow Rentals operations.

Russell has spent 26 years in the industry. He started out his career in RTO under the tutelage of Chuck Sims as a Remco store manager in

Houston, TX, in 1977. From there, he went to RAC as operations manager in 1980. He then opened his own rental store in Cleveland, OH, with his father and wife. He sold that store a few years later to Bob White at Crown Leasing and went to work for that company where he rose through the ranks becoming vice president of personnel and operations before leaving to start his own company.

Rainbow Rentals started with one store in 1986 and went public in 1998. Today, the company is the fourth largest RTO chain

with 113 stores and is the market leader in annual revenue per store. Rainbow Rentals is also the industry leader in computer rentals. In 1999 and again in 2000, the company was named in *Forbes* magazine's list as one of the 200 Best Small Companies.

Russell also finds the time to serve on the regional board in Ohio for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and is on the missions committee at his local church, Highway Tabernacle. He is on the board of directors of Hope for Youngstown and an honorary chairman for the American Cancer Society. Both Russell and his company are actively involved with Heartreach Ministries, a ministry for inner-city youths, and with Grace Place, an inner-city hospital in Youngstown.

For more than two decades, Russell has been a force for good and a champion of integrity for this industry. He exerts that same influence in his company, his family, his church and his community. His quiet walk along the paths of righteousness makes Wayland Russell a rare, special and valuable

member of the community of rental dealers.

President's Award of Excellence: Larry Carrico, Rent One

One of the highest honors an APRO member can achieve is the President's Award of Excellence. This is presented to the person who exemplifies the best of the industry through store operations, involvement and support of industry goals. This award can go



to anyone who represents what the industry strives to be as a whole. Larry Carrico, owner/operator of Rent One stores, based in Mt. Vernon, IL, was presented with the 2002 President's Award of Excellence.

An APRO member since 1990, a current APRO board member and chairman of the APRO Education Committee, Carrico was instrumental in getting the Rental Training Online interactive education program off the ground. Today, rental-purchase employees have completed more than 1,000 sessions of the three courses currently offered.

Carrico has served as president and treasurer of the Illinois Rental Dealers Association. His company, Rent One, is a frequent and generous contributor to United Way and Habitat for Humanity. Rent One has stores located in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee.

Carrico has been in the business for 21 years. After four years as a rental employee, he became an owner in 1985. Before his career in RTO, he grew up with a blue-collar background, which has given him empathy and understanding in dealing with his rental customers and has contributed significantly to the success of his business.

He values education and before taking on the APRO Rental Training Online program, he developed a volunteer tutoring program in the public schools where he lives. This program has become very successful and well established.

As a recipient of the Association's president's award, Carrico is the only rental dealer to have received the "Rental Dealer of the Year" distinction as well. Carrico was named "Rental Dealer of the Year" in 1998.

Rental Dealer of the Year: Gary Hughes, AAA Rent To Own

The 2002 APRO Rental Dealer of the Year was awarded to Gary Hughes of AAA Rent To Own dba ColorTyme in Clarkston, WA.

Hughes has served on the APRO board of direc-

tors during the past year. He has focused his efforts toward APRO in the advancement of the rent-to-own industry. Since his election to the APRO board, Hughes has single-handedly recruited more than 20 ColorTyme (a national rental-purchase chain of stores) franchisees to join APRO, tripling the number of ColorTyme APRO members.

Currently, Hughes operates 24 ColorTyme locations in seven states: Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Oregon, Nevada and Hawaii. He opened his first ColorTyme store in 1990. In 1995 and 2001, Hughes was honored with ColorTyme's "Franchisee of the Year" award. He has been elected to the ColorTyme Franchise Advisory Council for five consecutive two-year terms and has been elected council chairman twice. Hughes also has been awarded a Top Ten Franchise Award for the past nine consecutive years.

As the 2002 Rental Dealer of the Year, Hughes joins an elite group of rent-to-own owners/operators who exemplify the dedication to furthering the interests of the industry, superior customer

relations and ethical business practices.

Vendor of the Year: John Rogers, High Touch

The Norm Smith Vendor of the Year award is given to an outstanding associate member who has supported the Association and its activities. This year, John Rogers, director of sales for High Touch Inc., received this award. Rogers has been an active member of APRO since joining in 1984 and has served on the APRO Vendor Advisory Committee since 1997. Rogers is currently the committee's vice chairman and an APRO board member.

High Touch Inc. is one of the premier point-of-sale, accounting and Internet software companies servicing the rent-to-own industry. Due to Rogers' involvement, High Touch has provided invaluable services to several state associations and APRO in designing and maintaining their Web sites. In addition, Rogers has worked to improve the promotion of new



vendor membership in the industry. He has been successful in getting more vendors involved in important industry initiatives, such as the federal legislative efforts in Washington, D.C.

Not one to sit idle, Rogers has attended many state association meetings, conventions and trade shows and has actively vendors' marketing efforts to the industry. Today, High Touch Inc. serves more than 3,000 rental-purchase stores across the country.

Rogers and High Touch always seems willing to go that extra mile for whatever RTO industry group or cause that needs them. For that, he was honored with the 2002 Vendor of the Year award.





Imposters!



THE AWARDS BANQUET ENTERTAINMENT INCLUDED SOME FAMOUS (ALBET FAUX) VEGAS LEGENDS: BETTE MIDLER, MADONNA, MARILYN MONROE, TINA TURNER AND FRANK SINATRA.

Treasure Hunt winners

EVERY YEAR DURING THE APRO CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW, A TREASURE HUNT IS CONDUCTED IN THE EXHIBIT HALL FOR ATTENDEES. PRIZES RANGE FROM CASH TO ELECTRONICS. HERE ARE THIS YEAR'S WINNERS:

PRIZE

Optical mouse (two) for computers
 HP digital camera
 Leather reclining rocking chair
 1.3 cf microwave oven
 Butcher block knife set
 Butcher block knife set
 1,000 collection door hangers
 1,000 collection door hangers
 11-piece Classicor cookware set
 Taylor graphite driver
 Silk floral arrangement
 Three-piece pillow pack
 Diamond pendant
 Two "Freedom Pad" utility blankets
 Ladies diamond and amethyst ring
 Personal CD player
 DVD/VCR/MP3 Zenith combo deck
 Portable television entertainment center
 RAC 20" Tru Flat stereo TV/DVD combo
 Choice of picture from show samples
 "Rock 'N Fold" video chair
 Career direction assessment
 Three applicant assessments
 Potential manager assessment
 Potential manager assessment
 Diamond pendant
 Progressive scan five-disc DVD player

DONATED BY:

Fleet Lease Disposal
 Alliance Computing Technologies
 Klaussner Furniture
 GE Appliances
 Ultra Shield
 Ultra Shield
 Inform Business Services
 Inform Business Services
 Innova
 Central File
 Botanical Silk Accents
 Royal Sleep Products
 Continental Diamond
 United Distributors
 Jerry Bogo Co.
 RES Marketing
 Zenith Electronics Corp.
 Coventry Furniture
 Thomson multimedia
 Mirror Dynamics
 The Step2 Co.
 Achievement Tec
 Achievement Tec
 Achievement Tec
 Achievement Tec
 ABS Jewelry
 Toshiba

WINNER

Jeff Sebers, Gizmo's Lease Purchase
 Trent Agin, Rent One
 Richard VanCleave, Rent It Right
 Jen Mitchell, Majik RTO
 Ben Moore, Central Rent To Own
 Terri Chapman, Chappy's RTO
 Robert Wilson, Mustang Enterprises
 Vince Nelson, Show-Me Rent-To-Own
 Noel Salazar, Central Rent To Own
 Bev Baechler, Show-Me Rent-To-Own
 Cynthia Baber-Strunk, Babers
 Paul Hasty, Show-Me Rent-To-Own
 Cindy Evans, Hometown Brand Center
 Steve Puryear, Transcendant Holdings
 Jim Percival, Jimani LC
 Shannon Strunk, Babers
 Joey Sisson, Rent One
 Rodger Poteet, Economy Rentals
 Bryan Yakel, Lebakkens
 Cindy Nelson, Show-Me Rent-To-Own
 Mike Little, Quality Rentals
 Tom Mitchell, Rent Rite
 Courtney Chapman, Chappy's RTO
 Carrie Peterson, H&H Furniture
 Diane Marsh, Customer's Choice
 Mike Howerter, Howerter Appliance
 Pat McGee, Partners Rental

Cash prizes were donated by Alliance Computing Technologies, American On Hold, Jerry Bogo Co., Central File, The Crosley Corp., Essex Street Products, High Touch, Innova, Klaussner Furniture, Mirror Dynamics and Royal Sleep Products. The cash prize winners were Brian Knight of Central Rent To Own (\$75), Bob White of Babers (\$185) and Suzy Rainey of Central Rent To Own (\$500).