

THE ROAD WELL-TRAVELED

A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

In the mid '70's, when I was in my late 20's and working at a car dealership in Arizona, I had a best friend (still my best friend), Larry Pepe. Larry and I would play golf on Thursday and Saturday afternoons after work – and on Sundays – three times a week. We often spoke of how we looked forward to the day we were both 60 and retired and could play golf every day.

Fast forward to 2013. Larry and I are both past 60; neither of us is retired; we live in separate states; and we play golf together only occasionally. I asked him the other day what happened – why we are still working so hard and not playing much golf. Larry replied, "I guess because I'm a lot better at working than I will ever be at golf."

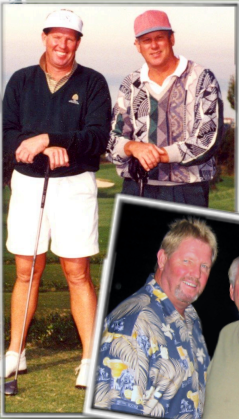
Albert Schweitzer said: "Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success." If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. You owe loving your job to everyone – to your customers, suppliers, partners, to your family and most importantly to yourself! No matter how difficult your life has been, we are all given opportunities again and again to create our own destiny. We each need to discover our unique talents: to be driven by passion, love and a sense of purpose. Only by doing this do our lives really have meaning. Doing what you love is not something for the lucky few. It's for the ones willing to work hard for it. The ones who want it badly enough. Those who refuse to settle. Those are the types of associates I try to hire, and the type of boss I try to be.

In an interview with Steve Jobs shortly before he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he said "For the past 33 years I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And whenever the answer has been 'no' too many days in a row, I know I need to change something." My goal as your boss and the owner of this company is that you have very few "no" days. My friend Larry and I still have very few "no" days. And though it's hard for us to believe, we really do enjoy our jobs more than we enjoy playing golf – though a bit of both is good for the soul. And I'm meeting him on the golf course as soon as this article is finished.

Do what you love; and love what you do. Life is too short for anything less.

David Wilson

SPRING 2013



Forty years ago, when I was a car salesman and Larry worked in a parts warehouse, we both thought we were pretty good golfers. And we certainly enjoyed golf a lot more than we did our jobs. Now Larry owns his own wholesale parts distributorship and I own seventeen car dealerships. Neither of us can even imagine not working. Ironically, we enjoy our jobs more than we enjoy golf. I must say, I think this is a great place to be. I love my job. And because I do, it doesn't seem like work. Confucius said "The man who loves his job never works a day in his life." That is what I wish for you – that you love what you do and where you work. And I believe it is my responsibility to provide that for you.

Admittedly, my job has changed considerably since the 70's. I started as a lube/oil/filter guy in the service department of a Lincoln Mercury dealership. From there I moved to sales, to finance, to sales manager, to general manager, and finally to owner. But even my job as owner has changed considerably over the years. One of my favorite parts of running a dealership was what I called "management by walking around" – walking through the dealership, talking to each of you, getting your perspectives on your job and the dealership. I miss that. I am not on site at the dealerships nearly as much as I would like – but I'm still working. I'm running 17 dealerships instead of 1, employing nearly 2,000 associates instead of 90 – and that job is much different – less personal. I believe I have hired partners and general managers in each of the stores that have my management philosophies and can spend the personal time with you. But it is still ultimately MY job to make certain you have someplace you look forward to coming each day – someplace that allows you to thrive, grow and fulfill your potential.

PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN... CONTEST

Believe it or not, the 4th of July is just around the corner; and we thought this holiday would be a great theme for our newsletter contest. What does being an American mean to you? What best symbolizes for you this great Country and the freedoms we enjoy? If you can't put it into words, perhaps you can put it in a picture.

Dust off your camera, or just charge up your iphone, and take a photo that represents "AMERICANA" to you. Every employee who submits a photo will receive a Starbucks gift card. We will also award 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes of \$100, \$75 and \$50 gift cards respectively. **Deadline for the contest is July 30.** And we will feature your photos in the next issue of the newsletter.

INDEPENDENT CITY



Independence is something that comes to most of us naturally as we mature. It is just another step in the process of becoming an adult. However, for residents of Orangewood Children's Home, and many other foster children, independence can be very frightening.

At the age of 18, teenagers living in foster care suddenly find themselves on their own - emancipated - from the home or from foster care. Without a traditional system of family support, many are unprepared for the challenges of adulthood. Most lack the experience they need or the resources to pay for basic necessities, and are at high risk of becoming homeless, incarcerated or victimized. In fact, statistics show that 50% of these children are homeless within a year of being emancipated.

Orangewood Children's Foundation is working on long-term solutions to these issues. Programs offering emergency assistance, job placement, transitional housing, peer counseling and scholarships give these young people the chance to succeed, despite their painful pasts.

One of these programs is Independent City - a mock city that serves as a dress rehearsal for these teens, presenting them with situations and decisions they will face once they are on their own. Local businesses provide volunteers to help with activities, such as opening a checking account, finding an apartment, arranging day care for make believe children, and shopping for groceries or buying a car within a budget.

Several of our associates volunteered at Independent City on April 27, and found it to be both heartbreaking and rewarding. "To see these teenagers on their own, and struggling to find their independence, is a real wake-up call," commented **Brian O'Donnell, GSM at South Coast Toyota**. "It was an honor to be a part of this program that helps them get a better start in life."

Wilson Automotive Group sponsored the Transportation Station at Independent City, where the youth could ask questions about getting their driver's license and the costs involved with vehicle ownership - as well as information on how to purchase and finance a car.

Bill Bailey, Sales Manager at South Coast Toyota, was so touched by the young people he met at this event that he signed up to be a mentor for a foster youth. "I've been very blessed in my life," he said, "and have been looking for ways to give back. Making a difference in one of these kids' lives would be the most rewarding use of my time I could imagine."

Everyone who volunteered for Independent City ended the day feeling like they had received much more than they had given. Their efforts will enable these young adults to live on their own more confidently and better prepared for the challenges adulthood brings. Giving them a helping hand today breaks the cycle of abuse tomorrow by providing hope for a better future.

For more information on Independent City, the Independent Living Program and other Orangewood Children's Foundation services, go to www.orangewoodfoundation.org.



THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT

Sophia and Isaac Orendain announced themselves to the world 12 weeks early, and barely tipped the baby scales at 2 lbs. each. As a result they spent 10 long weeks in Long Beach Memorial Hospital fighting for their lives. During that time dad **Ivan Orendain (Toyota of Orange Dispatcher)** and mom Jessica stayed at the nearby Ronald McDonald House so they could be near the babies until they could come home.



Ronald McDonald House is called "The House That Love Built" for a reason. It provides a comfortable and affordable "home away from home" for families whose children are being treated at a nearby hospital. It keeps families together when it counts most, and allows the parents to focus on one thing - the health of their child. The actual cost for one family per night is approximately \$150. However, families are asked to pay only \$10 per day. And if that isn't possible, their stay is free. For this reason, Ronald McDonald House relies on the support of individuals, corporations and fundraisers.

Enter **Amber McGuire, Toyota of Orange's service CRM.** She worked with Ivan during this difficult time, and came to realize how much it meant to him and Jessica to have the caring support of Ronald McDonald House and its staff. As a result, she decided to form a team to participate in the Ronald McDonald House Walk for Kids held on April 7. She recruited other employees, sent out emails and made sure everyone knew where they needed to be and when. Pictured above are service department employees **Amy Mesa, Amber McGuire, Ivan Orendain, Christina Maravilla, Vanessa Reveles and Lance Becker.** Dealership employees who couldn't participate supported with donations; and the Walk overall raised more than \$300,000.



Ivan said, "I know we could never repay Ronald McDonald House for the help and support they gave us. This is just our very small way of saying 'thank you.'"

And by the way, Isaac and Sophia are home now, 4 months old on May 10, and weighing in at a whopping 11 lbs. and 8 ½ lbs. respectively. They may never realize the roller coaster of heartbreak and hope that accompanied their birth. But Ivan says that when they are walking, they will be joining him and Jessica on future Walks for Kids, and hearing about the House that Love Built that kept their parents close when they needed them most.

For more information about the Ronald McDonald House and the Walk for Kids, go to www.rmhc.com.



GREAT NEWS!

Due to popular demand, we've scheduled the annual fishing trip again this year.

The trip is open to all parts and service employees of the Wilson Automotive Group on a *first-come, first-serve* basis. We have chartered two boats out of H & M Landing in San Diego just as we did last year. These are great boats, with excellent captains; and they have assured us that fishing will be spectacular in August.

Individuals who sign up and submit their non-refundable \$50 deposit will be included on the trip. We are requesting a deposit to avoid last-minute cancellations - which sometimes leave open spots on the roster when many other associates would have liked to participate. Your \$50 will be returned to you when you board the bus on Friday night.

The bus will depart Toyota of Orange at 6:00 p.m. on Friday night, August 9th, and arrive at the IHOP near H & M Landing at approximately 8:00 p.m. The boat will depart the dock at H & M Landing at 10:00 p.m. on Friday and return at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday.

[Sign up now to reserve your spot!](#)

If you have any questions, please contact your service manager or Bob Wyrick.



VOLKSWAGEN OF SAN BERNARDINO



April 4 was an exciting day for the Wilson Automotive Group - and for the City of San Bernardino. That was the day we broke ground for our 17th dealership: **Volkswagen of San Bernardino**.

The Mayor, City Council members, VW executives and Wilson corporate employees took turns with shovels and hard hats to celebrate this exciting addition to the San Bernardino Auto Center. **Casey Griffin, of Logan Asset Management**, who orchestrated the acquisition and worked with city officials to bring this project to fruition, commented: "The Wilson Group is very excited about opening their first Volkswagen dealership and becoming a part of the community of San Bernardino."

Situated on 3.5 acres in the San Bernardino Auto Center and fronting the 215 Freeway, the dealership will cover about 34,000 square feet and house 17 service bays. Projected sales of 60 new and 40 used vehicles per month will support 50 full-time employees.

Derrick Van Nieulande has been tapped to be the new general manager. Derrick has been with the Wilson Group for 15 years, most recently as the general sales manager of Newport Lexus, and says he is excited about his transition to Volkswagen. "I am proud to represent the quality Volkswagen product; and I know our store and our employees will add a positive synergy to the auto center and the community." The dealership will open for business November 15. For more information, or to apply for employment, go to the corporate website, www.DavidWilsonAutoGroup.com, or email derrickvannieulande@newportlexus.com.

PLAY - PERFORM - INSPIRE

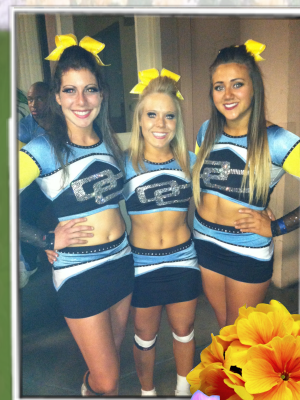
Danielle Bajhart (daughter of **Toyota of Orange Master Technician Al Bajhart**) has a goal: **USASF Cheerleading Champion**. She and her Team Neon have come very close: 1st in the U.S. and 3rd in the world. But that World Champion title has been elusive.

Danielle is in her sixth season cheering for the OC AllStars, and has taken first place at the **JAMZ National Cheerleading Championships** three years running. The JAMZ motto is "Play. Perform. Inspire," and their goal is to enhance self esteem, improve skills, and educate. Danielle says she has learned a lot and boosted her self confidence through these competitions.

Neon's JAMZ wins have qualified them to participate in the **USASF World Championships** at Walt Disney World the past 3 years. They also took first place at Spirit Sports "Duel in the Desert" in Palm Springs earlier this year.

Danielle, who is currently a cosmetology apprentice, says the most rewarding part of these competitions is the family-like bond that is created. "When we are doing these complicated routines, we have to trust each other completely. These girls are like my sisters. I would do anything for them."

Dad Al and mom Debbie are very proud of what Danielle has accomplished, though Debbie admits that some of the stunts nearly stop her heart. "Cheerleading challenges her, keeps her in good shape, and keeps her out of trouble (more or less)," Al affirmed. "We will get that world championship next year."



DUBBED OUT

Rockledge Securities connected the Wilson Automotive Group with DUB, the multi-million-dollar aftermarket company that bills itself "the voice of the urban automotive universe." As the result of a long-time friendship between **Oliver Arias** of Rockledge and Myles Kovacs, the co-founder and CEO of DUB, the Wilson Automotive Group is now the only automotive group in Orange County partnered with this cutting-edge company.

Originally DUB was street slang for the 20-inch flashy, oversized wheels that have come to symbolize DUB culture. But the company has gone way beyond trick wheels and custom accessories to represent a lifestyle that is all about individual expression and making a personal statement.

The original "celebrity-driven vehicle" publication, DUB Magazine www.dubmagazine.com, with cover features on celebrities like Snoop Dogg, Triple Threat and Shaq, now also features DUB Edition custom vehicle packages from the Wilson Automotive Group, outfitted by Rockledge. And many of our dealership showrooms display DUB customized cars and trucks. Congratulations to **James Neal**, Oliver, and their team for facilitating this great partnership.



Oliver, Miles and James are pictured here at the DUB headquarters in City of Industry.



"Get closer than ever to your customers. So close, in fact, that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves."
~Steve Jobs

DEALERSHIP OF DISTINCTION

Weir Canyon Acura received Acura's most prestigious honor - the Dealership of Distinction Award - for the fourth consecutive year. This honor is reserved for "only those select dealers that excel in providing an exceptional client experience."

Dealership employees celebrated with an elegant luncheon on Wednesday, April 17. **Owner A. J. D'Amato** and **General Manager Paul Swim** thanked the associates for their hard work and dedication; and representatives from Acura were on hand to present a custom trophy and other promotional items publicizing the store's status as a "Dealership of Distinction."

AJ shared numerous glowing emails and letters from satisfied customers before commenting "I am very proud of all of our associates for earning this prestigious award four years in a row."

The pride is well deserved. According to John Mendel, Executive Vice President of Automobile Sales for Acura, "Winners of the Dealership of Distinction award are the very best dealerships in the country. They have achieved the lofty standards established to exceed the expectations of even our most discriminating clients."



THE BEST OF THE BEST

Elite status is something many strive for, but few achieve. The Elite of Lexus award is reserved for those dealers who excel at everything they do. From sales, to service, to the overall ownership experience, these dealerships are truly in a class of their own. All three of the Wilson Lexus dealerships: **Tustin Lexus, Newport Lexus and Desert Lexus**, were Elite of Lexus winners in 2012,

To celebrate achieving Elite status for the third year in a row, Tustin Lexus associates were treated to a catered luncheon on April 23. **Owner A.J. D'Amato** and **General Manager Mike D'Amato** thanked the Lexus representatives in attendance for supporting them in this accomplishment, and congratulated associates for their consistent, outstanding attention to detail and customer care.



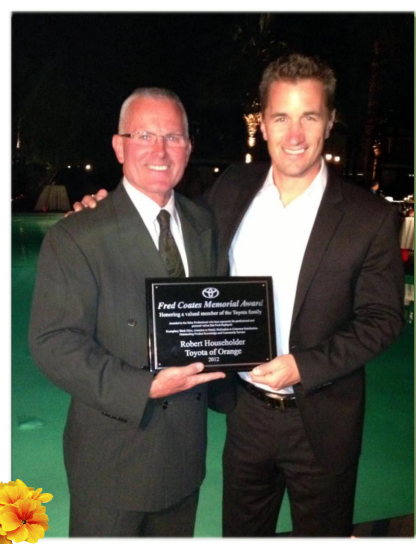
e-lite: [ih-leet, ey-leet]
noun: the choice or best...
adjective: representing the very best



Mike D'Amato wrapped up his remarks by stating, "You are the best of the best. Our Elite of Lexus status is a reflection of your commitment to excellence and world-class customer service."

Newport Lexus will be holding their Elite luncheon in June. Congratulations to all three Lexus dealerships for this outstanding achievement.

A VERY PERSONAL HONOR



Robert Householder, Toyota of Orange's Fleet Manager Extraordinaire, is the first recipient of the Fred Coates Memorial Award. Doug Eroh, General Manager of the Toyota LA Region, presented Robert with this award at the Toyota Sales Society dinner on April 28.

Fred Coates was a dedicated Toyota sales consultant/fleet manager for over 25 years at Toyota dealerships in Orange County. He built a following of customers that spanned generations. To honor Fred's legacy, the "Fred Coates Memorial Award" was established to recognize outstanding Toyota sales associates throughout the country.

In nominating Robert for this award David Wilson wrote, "Robert genuinely cares about people: customers, fellow employees, friends, or those who benefit from the many non-profits he supports. He leads by example and brings passion and infectious energy to his job every day. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award than Robert Householder; and I believe Fred would be pleased to have him win it, as well."

Accepting the award, Robert spoke from his heart, commenting on his long-term friendship with Fred, and affirming his great love and respect for him and all he meant to our industry. Robert truly exemplifies all Fred Coates stood for and achieved, and we congratulate him on this very personal and well-deserved honor.

"Here is a simple but powerful rule:
 Always give people more than what they expect to get."
 Nelson Boswell

Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.
 Bill Gates

"Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm."
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A WINNING LEGACY

Toyota of Orange does it again! **TEAM Toyota**, under the leadership of **Gary Upton, JD Greenhaigh** and **Joe Mejia**, won top honors at the 20th Annual Automotive Technology Competition in Irvine on February 2.

For nearly 20 years Gary Upton has donated his off hours to this training program sponsored by the Orange County Auto Dealers Association, which introduces high school seniors to the possibilities of a career in automotive technology. This is his fifth team to win the state championship. He, JD and Joe spent evenings and weekends, investing well over 100 hours of their own time, preparing these two students for competition.

Toyota of Orange also provided a vehicle for training and testing the students' knowledge and problem-solving skills. The hard work obviously paid off. The winning team, consisting of seniors Robert Loera and Aileen Melendez (one of the first females to ever enter the competition), and their instructor Saul Garcia, joined five other teams at the event. Over the course of two hours, the teams worked to "de-bug"

and repair vehicles, with each restored malfunction earning points. The hands-on competition is the culmination of arduous testing and long training sessions, and a comprehensive 100-question written exam given to an initial field of 14 teams last October.

JD, himself a National Competition winner who now works at Toyota of Orange, said it gave him a great

sense of personal pride to be able to give back and help these students on their way to an automotive career - just as Gary helped him.

Thanks to Gary, JD and Joe, for their time and dedication. And congratulations to Robert and Aileen, who represent the best and the brightest of auto tech students in Orange County.



R.O.I.



Return on Investment is a term we use daily in our business. It's how we market, how we sell, and how we gauge the success of our advertising. **Toyota of Huntington Beach** experienced a different kind of R.O.I. last month, when Olivecrest provided a catered luncheon for all the employees. It was their way of thanking the dealership for what they do for the Olivecrest children every year. For the past 15 years associates of the dealership have personally donated to fulfill the Christmas wish lists of the children at Olivecrest. Tim Bauer, Executive Director of



Development for Olivecrest, who presented the dealership with a plaque of appreciation, stated, "Olivecrest is dedicated to preventing child abuse - one life at a time. Toyota of Huntington Beach has been an integral part of making the world a better place for these abused, neglected and at-risk children and their families." Accepting the plaque, **General Manager Bob Miller** commented, "The smiles on the faces of these kids, and the warm hugs they give us are more than enough thanks for us. We receive far more than we give. But we're not a group to ever turn down a free lunch."

NOTEWORTHY:



Lynne Todd, Gina Gonzalez, Pam Komplexki and Terri Billings enjoy a little R & R with their toes in the sand in Huntington Beach. Four of Toyota's finest business managers enjoyed a Hawaiian luau as a part of the Toyota Comptroller's Award for Excellence. The award is given for outstanding achievement in meeting the TMS uniform accounting standards. Each year is a different event, and our ladies manage to qualify every year. Congratulations! And thanks from all of us for your hard work throughout the year.

Pictured is the exterior of the all-new **Freeway Honda!** Construction is almost completed; and a Grand Opening is planned for June. Our next newsletter will feature this dealership's incredible transformation.



Last year, the first year we did NOT do a Halloween photo contest, we got an abundance of great submissions. And though it is six months after the fact, these ladies were so creative we decided to share their photo anyway. Kudos for originality to **Mary Royalty, Heather Bohn, Lindsey Moreno, Heather Southard and Jenny Porett** of Newport Lexus. We promise to have a contest this year. So put those imaginations to work again. You could be the big winners.

LOVE MY RIDE CONTEST



The winner of this month's "Love My Ride" Contest (and a \$100 American Express Gift Card) is **Dennis Jenkins of Right Honda.**

Dennis gave up a beautiful red Corvette and a 1972 Monte Carlo to obtain his dream car: This 1932 Ford 3-window coupe.

It has a 385 small-block Chevy engine and a 700R transmission. This black beauty also

boasts vintage air conditioning, which is a definite MUST in Arizona!

Recently Dennis swapped out the wheels and tires and replaced them with these spectacular torque thrust rims and Goodyear tires – the perfect complement to this cruising classic. Beautiful job, Dennis.

Do you have a "pride and joy" at home that you are passionate about? We'd love to love it, too - and feature it in this newsletter. It can be a brand new car that you coddle, an old classic like Dennis's, or just a unique conglomeration like James Rasmussen's "rust bucket wogovan" that we featured last month. Send us photos – and enough information to write a short article. If we use it in the newsletter, we'll send you a \$100 gift card to help you fuel your passion.