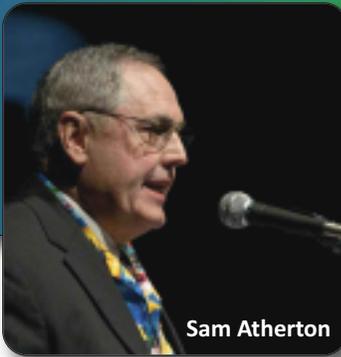


# 46th Annual KRWA Conference Opening Session

## “Hey, let’s all pull together”



Sam Atherton



Susie Santo



Paul Froelich

“Hey, let’s all pull together” – shouted KRWA staff members Pete Koenig, Rita Clary and Greg Duryea.

Pull what? Well, it was a small cart decorated like a Hawaiian parade float with KRWA President Sam Atherton seated, strumming a ukulele and singing a song – with the added allure of two of the Aloha girls from the night-before Luau party.

“Whoa! Oh my! Where are we?” Atherton questioned.

This had to be one of the most unconventional entrances by an organization president to the podium. And that was just the beginning of a 90-minute opening session that was greeted with warm applause and loud laughter by the 1,500 who gathered in Concert Hall at the Century II Convention Center. It was all good fun – and something completely unexpected.

Once President Atherton regained his sense of location (he really is a good actor and knows how to ham it up). Sam gave the welcome to the 46th Annual Conference and Exhibition. Paul Froelich, City Superintendent from Enterprise, provided the invocation. Susie Santo, GoWichita, welcomed the attendees to Wichita; she spoke of the improvements that the city continues to make in facilities and services.

The incomparable Headliners from Butler Community College again filled the stage with a rousing musical review. These young folks were awake at 4:30 a.m. to head to Century II to meet their 7:00 a.m. stage call and sound check. A phenomenal group under the direction of Valerie Lippoldt Mack, The Headliners have performed for many KRWA conferences. The audience showed their appreciation with a standing ovation. All that was a warm up for keynote speaker, Kent Rader.

## Kent Rader: “Let’s Pull Together!”

*The following are excerpts from the Opening Session Keynote address by Kent Rader.*

**Y**ou know you’re getting old when you no longer understand the technology that your generation developed... for me it’s the cell phone; for my parents, it’s the television. I was with my parents last week and somehow the captions got switched over to Spanish. It must have been that way for a while because when I asked my mom about it, she just yelled out, “Su Papa el loco.”

I just spent ten days with my dad while he was recuperating; he had both knees replaced. I’ve seen my future, and it’s not pretty. In 30 years I’ll be driving so slow farm equipment will be passing me.

You folks have a lot of great programming this week and you’re going to learn a lot but this morning, this presentation is about taking care of yourself. We’re going to talk about stress and then we’re going to talk about why humor is such an important tool in reducing stress as well as bringing us together to work together.

Our bodies are built for physical stress; our bodies are built for someone trying to hurt us, for someone trying to steal our food. There are more than one hundred psychological changes that take place in our bodies when we experience physical



Kent Rader



# 2013



stress. These include increase in respiration, increase in your heart rate, increase in your metabolism, and an increase in your blood pressure. All these psychological changes are preparing our bodies for fight or flight – to fight somebody or turn away from them.

Our bodies and our minds don't recognize the difference between physical stress and emotional stress such as having too much to do in too little time to do it. As we experience emotional stress, our bodies continue to go through all those same psychological changes preparing us for fight or flight and what research shows us is that with those psychological changes taking place, without the outlet of fight or flight, is that those psychological changes begin to suppress our immune system and as you know our immune system is what keeps us healthy.

It is estimated today that U.S. businesses spend \$150 billion a year on job stress-related illnesses alone. It is also estimated by the American Medical Association that 75 to 90 percent of all physician office calls are related to a stress-related illness. Stress-related illness can be as minor as headaches and insomnia, to as major as high blood pressure, heart disease, strokes, and three years ago, they actually found that some forms of cancer are caused by the suppression of our immune system; two of those are colon cancer and breast cancer. These cancers affect something like one in eight people in our country. So not only is stress a major aspect of our health care system, it is a tremendous aspect of your own individual health care. I think it's important to understand where these stresses come from and then find ways to reduce them.

One of the best books I've ever read was by a guy named Richard Carlson. You've all seen the book in bookstores, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff? Richard Carlson wrote those as well. But before he

became a big star, Richard Carlson wrote a book entitled, You Can Be Happy No Matter What. In the book he points out there are five components of healthy psychological functioning that can lead to contentment even though your life may not be perfect. These include your thoughts, feelings, moods, accepting psychological reality and living in the present moment. I want to touch on the first three – our thoughts, our feelings and our moods.

Most people believe that stress is just inherent to a situation. For example, I'm in rural water, so I'm just naturally going to have feelings of stress. Or I'm a single parent and I'm just naturally going to have feelings of stress. Richard Carlson points out that before you have any sort of feeling or emotion, you have thoughts that precede that feeling or emotion. If you feel happy this morning, it's because you've had happy thoughts that preceded those feelings of happiness. If you feel sad today, it's because you've had sad thoughts. Finally, if you feel stressed out, it's because you've had stressful thoughts.

Any time we experience a situation, we instantly have thoughts about that situation. Our thoughts are our attempts to interpret that situation. Based on our interpretation, we have an emotional response or feelings. That is why two people can experience the exact same situation and have completely different emotional responses. They have different thoughts that go through their minds.

They did a study of the top ten fears that Americans have. Anybody know what they are? The Number One fear Americans have is of public speaking. Number Two is death. I don't get this at all. There are more people in our country who are more afraid to speak in front of a crowd than there are to die which I think is kind of sad. Jerry Steinfield says, "That means if you're at a funeral, you'd rather be in the box than delivering the eulogy. I am one of

those sick people who can't wait to be in front of an audience. Any time I think about being in front of an audience, I have different thoughts that go through my mind. If you learn nothing else from me, begin to recognize that you are the architect of your stress. Your stress comes from your thoughts that you find stressful and they are no more important than your thoughts about any other situation – they are simply your thoughts. Just because you have thoughts about a situation doesn't mean you have thoughts based in reality – they are simply thoughts.

When Elmer mentioned the conference theme about "pulling together", he told me it could be because of some of our politics today are really sad. I read yesterday on the plane that 90 percent of Americans think Congress is doing a poor job. Seriously? That's 27 million people in our country that think that bickering, gridlock, and acting like a pre-schooler are signs of quality work. I believe this proves our country's meth problem is worse than we thought! And I don't know about the great state of Kansas, but down in Oklahoma, instead of going after meth dealers, the legislature actually passed laws to make law abiding citizens feel like criminals every time we go buy our sinus pills. You have this? Do you have to show your driver's license? Do you have to sign a form promising you won't use it to make meth because, you know, drug addicts, they'll kill, they'll rob, they'll prostitute themselves but they'd never lie at Walgreens! And then they limit how much they can buy, and so during ragweed season, the only people who can breathe are on meth! Well, I've got a better rule. Sell the sinus pills only to anyone who has more than three teeth!

You've been a great audience; I hope that you have a great conference and I know that if we all pull together, you'll help make great things happen. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here with you today.

# BUTLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE HEADLINERS PROVIDE ROUSING OPENING REVUE



**T**he Kansas Rural Water Association conference-goers have enjoyed a rousing opening musical revue by The Headliners from Butler Community College for numerous past KRWA conferences. Under the direction of Valerie Lippoldt Mack, the Butler Headliners again filled the stage in Concert Hall for KRWA with an extensive array of song and dance numbers. These young people rise at 4:30 a.m. in El Dorado to make the 7 a.m. stage call at Century II.

The Butler Community College Headliners show choir is a vocal and dance performance ensemble made up of 36 singer/dancers and a five-piece instrumental combo. The show choir performs for high schools, regional and national conventions, community functions and college events. The show choir draws from the full music spectrum – from classic rock, modern pop hits, swing, power ballads and musical theater.

The Headliners have participated in America Sings! festivals in Washington, D.C., and Houston, TX. They also participated in National Showstoppers Competition in Nashville, TN and participate in the National Branson Jubilee Showchoir Competition in Branson, MO. They have also traveled to Disney World, Niagara Falls, Las Vegas, Denver, San Antonio, Kansas City and Canada. In 2010, the Butler Headliners were finalists in NBC's TODAY's "Show Choir Showdown".

Valerie Lippoldt Mack is music chair and dance instructor at Butler Community College. She has gained recognition as a music educator and professional choreographer throughout the

United States. Her choreography has been featured at Carnegie Hall, Disney World, national ACDA conventions and MENC workshops, the Miss America pageant and various national showchoir competitions and festivals across the U.S.

Each Headliner is on a vocal music scholarship at Butler Community College, and also performs with the Concert Choir. Other Butler vocal ensembles include the Butler Ladies, the Chamber Singers, Butler A capella, Smorgaschords barbershop quartet and the Noteables Ladies quartet.

The five-piece combo accompaniment to The Headliners is under the direction of Joel Knudsen. Joel has been an instructor of music at Butler College since 1998. He teaches First Year Music Theory and Applied Piano, along with other music courses. He has been the pianist for the Wichita Symphony since 1984, and maintains an active private studio of piano students.

KRWA sponsored the Headliners with two \$1,000 scholarships in 2013. And the audience showed their appreciation with a standing ovation.

