



Missouri NEWS

Auto & Truck Recyclers

Serving the Membership of the Missouri Auto & Truck Recycler Association

June/July 2013

From the President

By Brad Schwartz
You Get What You Pay For

We all wear multiple hats running our individual automotive recycling facilities. However, to what extent are you personally involved in running or overseeing the daily activities that make up your operation? The question is have you possibly stretched yourself too thin overseeing every aspect of your company. Are your 'hats' so cumbersome that you are too entrenched in the day to day basic activities and can't see the bigger picture? Who does the bookkeeping, writes the checks, and mails out the monthly statements? Who reviews the auction lists and purchases the vehicles? Who inventories the salvage, maintains the inventory, sells the merchandise, packages and routes shipping items, updates the software, assigns the dismantling lists, calls the past due accounts, and performs all the other continual jobs of running the business?

Granted, we are all in the same industry, yet our differences can vary greatly. We all have different attributes, or variables that guide the focus of our individual businesses. Some of us have large yards that operate on 20 plus acres, while others successfully operate on 3 acres. You may have a tremendous amount of local walk-in trade or need a fleet of delivery trucks for outside sales. Shipping might account for only 5 percent of your total sales, or be your main income stream at 80 percent. Your inventory could consist of mainly late model vehicles or older vehicles. Your niche could be focused on foreign salvage, domestic salvage, rebuilders, a self-service yard, or scrap metals.

However, no matter what your business's focus, it's important to surround yourself with knowledgeable and responsible employees, especially in the management positions. Find individuals of integrity with whom you feel comfortable delegating responsibilities. Some owners believe employees are untrustworthy, and feel they need to supervise every aspect of their business. I have visited numerous salvage facilities, and have found that owners who delegate and entrust always run a more successful and cohesive operation. With the owner who attempts to do too much, quality will always suffer. When there is a lack of trust and teamwork, the environment is often thick with tension and negativity.

To achieve the goals you set for your business, you must find qualified individuals who fit your vision and understand expectations. I strongly believe that you get what you pay for. If you buy a cheap bike, you get an inferior piece of equipment that requires constant maintenance. It is worth paying extra to get the quality you need to achieve the goals you have set. Their involvement will more than compensate financially, and their strengths will balance out your limitations.

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MATR Executive Director Report

By Brian Bernskoetter

The 1st Regular Session of the 97th General Assembly has drawn to a close. While there were many priority bills passed, much of the session was dedicated to clashes between the Governor (and his administration) and the Legislative Branch.

Chief among these is the ongoing "scandal," wherein the Dept. of Revenue is scanning and storing documents necessary to get/renew driver's licenses and concealed carry permits. Also, a major sticking point with the legislature and the administration was the decision on the use of funds from a Highway Patrol discretionary fund to purchase a new airplane.

While these issues dominated much of the discussion, there were substantive bills passed by the legislature. After nearly five years, the Second Injury Fund fix has been resolved. Also in the legislative package was a remedy to bring toxic occupation disease cases into the worker's compensation system.

In an attempt to address the ongoing border

war with Kansas, the legislature passed a corporate and personal income tax reduction. This reduction, which will phase in over 10 years, would reduce personal income tax from 6% to 5.5% and corporate income tax from 6.25% to 3.25%. The Governor has made early indications that he will veto this legislation.

While the budget process had its contentious moments, it was much smoother sailing than in years past, where major cuts were necessary because of reduced revenue. Revenues to the state are currently trending up by approximately 11% and, by some estimates, there could be as much as \$500 million more in the state coffers than they initially budgeted for FY 2014.

While there were certainly some successes, there were also an equal number of bills that didn't pass despite concerted efforts. Chief among them was the lack of comprehensive tax credit reform. In past years, the pressure from the budget shortfalls has created the need to reign in these spending programs, but with revenues up and the inability of the House and Senate to agree on some cornerstones, the compromise never materialized.

The legislature did pass a bill to eliminate the renter's portion of the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit, but the Governor has already vetoed this bill because it wasn't part of the larger tax credit proposal he had hoped would include reduction to Low Income Housing and Historic Tax credit programs.

The Governor also championed expanding Missouri's Medicaid program in order to take



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advantage of the federal government incentives to pay for the increased enrollment in the program. While there were numerous rallies and different legislative proposals to expand Medicaid, it ultimately never passed. However, there will be an interim study of the issue to revisit the issue for next session.

Another significant platform measure for the House and Senate was passage of an energy bill to allow electrical companies to invest in infrastructure with public support. While there was a great deal of talk about these measures, none of the bills were given significant floor time in the House or Senate.

Issues Of Specific Interest To MATR That Passed:

SB 148 and SB 51 – Several MATR members have noticed that customers were having problems transporting salvage titled vehicles to the Highway Patrol for inspections because of the change in the law regarding drive away permits. MATR teamed up with some legislators to pass legislation to solve the problem. These two bills allow the Department of Revenue to issue drive away permits to individuals for the sole purpose of driving a salvage titles vehicle to the highway patrol inspection station.

HB 103 and SB 157 -- These two bills modify the current scrap metal laws by adding catalytic

converters to the list of "metals" for which records need to be kept. The exemption we were able to include several years ago for purchases of metals that are a component part of a larger item remains intact. This bill could however impact anyone who purchases a single catalytic convertor for cash.

HB 428 – This bill provides for a more streamlined process for an insurance company to receive a salvage title for a vehicle received from a claims settlement where the title has been lost.



MATR Dates of Interest

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6-9 **ARA Annual Convention & Expo**
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Playing the Technology Card and Making it Work for You

By Michelle Keadle-Taylor

You've heard it all before. The automotive industry's number one gripe is that it is becoming very difficult to obtain quality salvage – thanks to the Internet. You've also heard that in order to expand your business and stay competitive as we go into the future, you'll need to embrace the age of technology and use it to your advantage.

Whether you see technology and its constant changes as a friend or a foe, it's here to stay. So, you might as well make it work to your advantage and increase your business. That's exactly what Tom's Foreign Auto Parts in Waterbury, Connecticut has done.

Wednesday, May 8, 2013 will mark ten years since Tom's Foreign Auto Parts began using eBay and over the years they have learned how to use the Internet and social media sites to greatly enhance their business. In fact, eBay has become their biggest outlet for used parts sales on the Internet and will continue to be so in the future according to Jim Eitvydas, President, Tom's Foreign Auto Parts.

"We are always looking for new ways to sell more parts in more places," said Eitvydas, "Our future depends on technology and Internet sales. More and more, do-it-yourself customers and shops are using the Internet to find parts. We will make sure that we are where they look when they are looking."

Not one to shy away from technology and the endless opportunities it offers, Eitvydas started using eBay ten years ago. His wife, Diane, started their eBay business by selling owners' manuals on it. They sold over 700 owners' manuals in the first year alone and realized they were on to something. After two years, they hired an employee to work full-time on eBay. That employee, Dan Tole, E-Commerce Manager for Tom's Foreign Auto Parts, joined the team and has been expanding the opportunities (along with two other employees) for e-commerce ever since.

"Jimmy hired me when I was about 22 years old," explained Tole. "I had worked on and off at Tom's Foreign Auto Parts as a teenager. My father had known

Jimmy when they were younger and also worked here part-time. When Jimmy hired me I had been working at a parts store, building computers and selling on eBay myself. Between Jimmy and myself, I don't think there has ever been a time we have been afraid to try something new in regards to the Internet or technology."

One of the ways that Tom's Foreign Auto Parts makes technology work for them is to use it to automate repetitive tasks such as pictures, YouTube videos, updating online inventory, modifying inventory, making price changes, and more. They use custom programs



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for inventory, ordering, and narrating videos of all of their parts vehicles.

"Why waste time doing tasks computers can do for us?" asked Eitvydas. "We find that by using these custom programs, it helps us to sell more parts."

"Our most used custom program is for images," said Tole. "We are able to use wireless cameras and bar coding to take pictures and automatically upload them into our inventory system as well as onto multiple market places. We knew that having pictures of every part was becoming extremely important, but the time to manually rename them and move them around our network was a bottle neck for us. Now we make it a point to take a minimum of three images of every part our staff handles. Pictures sell parts online. It allows us to set customer expectation before the sale by showing them exactly what they are getting.

Tole says that video has also become important to their online customers. They take a narrated video of every car they inventory and post it to YouTube. Then, they use a custom program to log the YouTube embedded codes so that they can automatically insert them into part listings around the Internet. According to Tole, they currently have over 3,000 videos on YouTube and are just weeks away from hitting one million video views.

Posting videos to YouTube evolved as their eBay business expanded. "As our eBay business grew we started to look for more opportunities to reach our customers online and describe our parts better," said Tole.

"Sales-wise eBay is the biggest outlet for used parts for us and will continue to be for the foreseeable future," said Eitvydas. "Amazon is the fastest growing Internet site but offers a lot of challenges for used parts. It's been good for us, but on a much smaller scale. Craigslist has helped us get a lot of local traffic and allows us to link directly to our Web site. It has to be used in moderation though, to keep from getting posts pulled or banned.

"I think for anyone wanting to increase the way they use the Internet for sales, I would encourage them to not be afraid of trying new smaller market places as you find them," says Eitvydas "Ultimately creating your own e-commerce site has the best long term benefits.

Our own e-commerce Web site Tom'sForeign.com has been extremely successful. We sell exactly the same parts on that site as we sell on eBay and Amazon.

"In order to have you own successful e-commerce Web site you must be willing to put effort into it. This doesn't mean building a site with a few pages and using a different company's dynamic look to make yours look interesting. The best results will be from a full-fledged e-commerce site, rich with updated content. Content is the key to getting your site found online."

As technology changes, there are more and more opportunities for recyclers to attract potential business. Yet, although it offers exciting and endless opportunities, many recyclers may find that they are still reluctant to take the time to make it really work for them or they simply may not be sure how to maximize technology to increase their profits.

The team at Tom's Foreign Auto Parts has learned that a key to maximizing their presence on the Internet is diversification. They have put their business on all the social media sites they can. They have created an e-commerce Web site that provides fresh content and is updated regularly. They also are on eBay, Amazon, Craigslist and any other social media site they can find.

"You have to work social media," said Eitvydas. "Used parts are not exciting, but you have to find ways to make your business exciting and interesting to your followers. Give them a reason to follow you. Be consistent and deliver content to your customers daily. No online marketplace is a 'set it and forget it' deal. It constantly needs to be monitored, added to, revamped, and updated."

The Internet thrives on fresh content, suggests Eitvydas. "Having a dynamic parts search will not get you traffic, but fresh content will. You also cannot rely on just eBay or your Web site alone. What would happen if one of them was to fail? Would you be out of business? You have to look at all new market places and figure out which ones you can adapt to your business." Another way to diversify your presence to customers and keep providing updated and fresh content is by producing a weekly e-mail newsletter.

You might ask, how do you make your parts sound exciting? Tole admits that there really "aren't any ways

to make OEM parts exciting," but they have devised various other ways to attract potential customers. For example, they try asking their followers questions about their cars or about their opinions on hot news topics. They post funny pictures and videos to get people's attention. They have found that videos of cars being crushed and other parts of the auto recycling operation are interesting to people and attract many viewers.

"I guess the point is to not flood people with ads about an alternator sale," said Tole. "It's important to engage and interact with your customers so that when they do need something your name will be on their mind. Make social feeds valuable to them so they keep reading and don't ignore you."

So, for yards wanting to really start using technology in a more effective way, where's the best place to start?

"The good news is that these things can be accomplished by any size salvage yard provided they use technology to simplify it," said Eitvydas. "I would encourage you to embrace it and don't run from it. Start to work it into your staff's daily processes. For most yards, starting on eBay and growing from there will be the most feasible path."

According to Eitvydas, it is vital to get everyone in

the business – from the employee taking inventory to customer service staff to the employee working in the yard – to take ownership of your e-commerce business or it will not work.

"There are several important parts to making your e-commerce business successful," says Eitvydas. "First, it's important that every employee owns it and sees the value of your e-commerce business. We accomplish this by keeping the lines of communication open and showing our employees the benefits and results of using e-commerce.

"Another important part of e-commerce is setting customer expectations and delivering on what is promised. Be transparent, offer a good warranty and make it easy for customers to send parts back. Make sure that every customer is happy no matter what it takes. The last thing you want is bad feedback, bad reviews, or negative talk about your business on social media outlets. Those are things that can negatively affect your internet presence."

Eitvydas feels that as social media goes, the number one place to start is on Facebook because it's free, it's easy and your customers are probably already using it.

"I would encourage auto recyclers to create a fan page for your business and keep it updated," he said.

"It takes no time to post a status update and by posting things like questions for your followers, a funny image, news, or even a coupon, you will prompt people to interact with you on a more personal level. This shows that your business has a personality. Social media is a great path for growth in the future. Will your business go under for not doing it? No, but it's free, easy, and puts you in front of customers every day so why wouldn't you use it?"

You may say to yourself, this all sounds good but I still have no idea how to navigate my way around all this technology.

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“The only way to learn technology is to start using it,” said Tole. “I would suggest starting slowly and doing things one by one. Don’t try to take on the whole world all at once. It’s ok to make mistakes and ask others for guidance. Many sites and off the shelf software offer help sections and how-to write ups. eBay, for example, makes it easy for a complete Internet novice to list items, yet still offers tools for advanced users. This allows you to start small, learn the system and then step into more advanced selling when you are ready.

“It can take as much time as the yard wants it to. It really depends on how far they want to go and how fast they pick it up. There are too many variables to say it will take ‘x’ amount of time every day. At the end of the day, the sales and customer satisfaction will reflect the time that is put into it.”

Tips To Getting the Most out of your Technology

- If you aren’t tech savvy, start slowly but start using technology. Don’t be afraid to ask advice and to learn from mistakes. Approach one aspect of technology at a time.
- Make a conscious effort to use technology in your daily processes such as with inventory, ordering, videos of your inventory etc.
- Build your eBay business.
- Start to diversify your presence on social media sites, Amazon, Craigslist, etc. The best place to start is with Facebook. Create a fan page for your business and post something that would interest your viewers daily.
- Give your business personality through your posts that encourage personal interaction with your customers. Examples of this include, funny images, questions posed to your followers, videos of the more interesting aspects of your business.
- Jim Eitvydas recommends checking out the following links: Internet Retailers Conference, www.irce.internetretailers.com and Channel Advisor conference, www.channeladvisor.com.

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Compliance Burden

By Kelley Stoklosa

The scrap recycling industry continues to bear most of the weight of scrap theft compliance.

Few demographics know how troublesome and far reaching metals theft is better than recyclers. Scrap yard managers know perhaps better than anyone that a couple hundred dollars worth of copper wire stripped from a building drains time, resources and money for far more people than just the victim of the theft. Thus, few would be surprised by the findings of a recent study by the U.S. Department of Energy, which shows the total value of damages to industries affected by the theft of copper wire would likely exceed more than \$900 million each year. While scrap theft is not new, nor does the problem appear to be slowing down, the ways in which recyclers comply with state and local regulations pertaining to it are changing and gaining traction.

Welcomed Additions

With a lack of federal legislation for scrap theft, the burden falls on states and the recycling industry to ensure scrap sales are legal.

Forty-eight states have some form of scrap theft legislation, with North Dakota and Alaska remaining as the last two states without scrap-specific laws. As recently as 2009, five states had yet to adopt these types of laws.

Also of note, Ohio, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama have passed additional laws in the past year. North Carolina recently enacted a requirement that scrap dealers must collect digital photographs or video of customers standing with the material they intend to sell. Effective Jan. 1, 2013, all scrap metal and bulk merchandise container dealers in Ohio must be registered with the Ohio Department of Safety and report all transactions through the newly created electronic reporting system. More information about Ohio's new electronic reporting

and registration system may be found at homeland-security.ohio.gov/scrap_metal.stm.

Sellers of scrap metal in Alabama now must be photographed, provide an identification card and information about their vehicles. In Florida, the electronic registration applies to most businesses that sell secondhand goods, for example jewelry or household goods.

Scrap metal dealers in some states, such as Florida and Ohio, have expressed concern about how certain laws will or do affect their businesses. A scrap dealer in Florida says the new requirement that sellers must bring scrap in a vehicle may deter long-time customers who do not have access to cars. At a recent training session on Ohio Senate Bill 193, which amends and enacts various sections of the Ohio Revised Code to make changes to the 2008 law governing scrap metal dealers and bulk merchandise dealers in the state, hosted by the Ohio Department of Public safety, scrap dealers also voiced concern and confusion about parts of the laws. When put into practice, some wondered if portions of the law made sense, such as having to turn away customers with criminal records from 20 years ago or some customers who are having a difficult time proving ownership.

Bob Schlicher from Ohio Homeland Security stressed how important it is to work with local law enforcement in these situations, adding that there often is a solution.

Rapid Communication

Also at the Ohio training session, Schlicher and other speakers repeatedly said the new law is designed to put those dealers who choose not to comply out of business. The best action scrap dealers could take, Schlicher said, was to report other deal-

ers who were not following the law. Rapid communication, he added, has repeatedly proven to be the most effective way to slow crime.

ScrapTheftAlert.com is the vehicle scrap dealers are using to do just that. According to the website, developed by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries Inc. (ISRI), Washington, D.C., it is a tool for law enforcement that allows scrap dealers to report stolen material. Reports are then emailed to all subscribers within 100 miles of where the incident took place.

Schlicher recalled a recent instance where wire from a telecommunications tower went missing. A local scrap dealer reported that the missing material was believed to have shown up at the yard's gate. The dealer gave the information to law enforcement and posted it to ISRI's website. As a result, Schlicher said, the material was quickly located by police.

ISRI officials say they are working to make the website more available to the industry. For example, Ohio scrap dealers who register with the department of security will be registered for ScrapTheftAlert.com. The organization also maintains a list of best practices on its main website, www.ISRI.org, and routinely lobbies Congress on behalf of the scrap recycling industry.

Billy Johnson, ISRI director of political and public affairs, says, "We must constantly remind policymakers about how much the scrap recycling industry does for the local, state, national and international economies as well as how it protects the environment, conserves natural resources, creates jobs and generates tax revenue. If you aren't out there speaking for yourself, someone else will speak for you—and not necessarily with your best interests in mind." As of yet, no federal legislation has been passed regulating scrap metals theft, though bills have been introduced in Congress.

National Attention

The most recent bill has some industry insiders wondering how it could affect them. Recently, U.S. Sens. Charles E. Schumer from New York, Amy

Klobuchar from Minnesota and Lindsey Graham from South Carolina announced legislation designed to make metals theft a federal offense and to make it more difficult to sell.

When announcing the bill, Schumer said, "It is time to put thieves who steal scrap metal from Long Island schools, streets and even gravesites behind ironclad bars. This practical plan will combat this rash of metal theft by requiring recyclers to keep detailed documentation of metal purchases, capping the amount of cash recyclers can pay for scrap metal, ensuring that those selling metal are authorized to do so and by making metal theft a federal crime."

The Metal Theft Prevention Act, as the bill is called, incorporates many of the measures individual states adopt when implementing scrap theft laws. The proposed legislation would require recyclers to collect documentation from individuals interested in selling metal that shows ownership of the metal or that the person is authorized to sell it.

The proposed legislation also would "create a specific federal crime of stealing metal from critical infrastructure" and allow the U.S. Attorney General and state attorneys general to enforce the law.

Critics of the bill, including ISRI, have called it redundant and confusing. ISRI also has released a statement describing the legislation draconian and focused on recyclers rather than the actual criminals.

Congress could vote on the Metals Theft Prevention Act sometime in 2013.

As the states that have enacted legislation iron out related problems and logistics, only time will tell how such laws affect materials theft.

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The Paradox of Freedom: Putting Freedom Into Context

By Joe Caruso

“Freedom’s just another word for nothin’ left to lose...”

Those words are from the great Janis Joplin song, “Me and Bobby McGee.”

While most people would agree that this is a nice sentiment, it has very little to do with reality. In reality, **freedom is directly and proportionally related to responsibility.**

Think about it. There’s a name for the group of people who have almost no responsibility – people who go to sleep each night and wake up each day responsible for almost nothing, to almost no one. They’re called prisoners. If you think about it, prisoners have about as much responsibility as they do freedom. The very responsibilities that you

and I see sometimes as burdens or pressures aren’t even options for those whose freedom only lies inside guarded walls. (Of course I assume you’re not reading this from prison.)

When it comes to the relationship between freedom and responsibility, the truth is that the people in this country who have the most choices daily, are the people with the most responsibility. It is a virtually unavoidable paradox. With responsibility we gain opportunities and we get options; with options we make choices; and with choices we have freedom.

Put Freedom into Context

When we take freedom out of the context of responsibility, we begin to see an “enabled” culture, where people expect the freedom to make choices but disregard the responsibility from which those freedoms are afforded. Taking freedom out of context can create attitudes that are unproductive. It can also create dialogues that are too one-sided and cannot handle spirited debate or discussion. This attitude toward freedom might have the power to undermine the big decisions being made, or not being made, about the path our country takes to grow stronger again.

Be wary of perpetuating a culture that consumes freedom without the currency of responsibility. This is really a simple concept, but not always an easy one. It’s a concept that conscious, aware parents and educators try to teach our children and teenagers. It’s a concept that older generations of Americans come to understand that their parents were teaching them.

Let’s not lose site of this awesome responsibility; **let’s make responsibility the context by which we enjoy our freedom.** It will only afford us more and better choices, and healthier dialogues, by which we improve the quality of life in our country.

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The Paradox of Freedom Part II: A Cage in Which To Be Free

By Joe Caruso

Since we're talking about freedom, I wanted to share another paradox of freedom. It's a concept I've been sharing as part of my Success Strategies for years. And it's directly connected to how our minds work, and how we simply cannot behave to a story that is inconsistent with our driving truths. Great leaders understand the paradox of *the cage in which to be free* not only for their own success, but for how successfully they influence others.

Each of us lives according to our own specific myths (stories), contexts, and definitions. We choose these myths, contexts and definitions (some consciously and some subconsciously) for ourselves. This is why I continually remind the leaders I work with that our perception is our reality. Not only do our perceptions (our myths, contexts and definitions) determine how we live, but they also determine the limitations we place upon ourselves.

You Determine the Context of Your Boundaries

This means that the concepts by which we choose to live become the boundaries of our potential—the bars of the cage in which we live our life. Our insecurities might lead us to believe that we are naturally driven to perpetuating pain and anxiety, but that's only because we're allowing ourselves to be controlled by our fears. **By picking good myths, contexts, and definitions—the ones that serve us best—as our boundaries, we can ensure that the cage we've built for ourselves will provide us with whatever we need in order to grow and enhance the meaning of our lives.** A leader cannot control another person's perception – each of us creates our own – but they can certainly provide an environment where the cage is one of positive tenets, rather than fear-based ones. That's why it is imperative that leaders fully understand their organiza-

tion's story or narrative, and set the context by which people understand that story.

Boundaries Give Us the Freedom to Act

Paradoxically, we all need the rules and boundaries that define our reality in order to feel free. The times we're most likely to panic and become paralyzed by fear are when we can't see any boundaries at all, when we're floating at sea or lost in the woods or stranded in the desert. We need to see where we are in the world in order to function. As individuals, we have the ability to fix our own boundaries; we choose whether they are created out of fear, or love, or some other driver.

This feeling of panic and paralysis applies to organizations as well. Think about a company that might be feeling lost in their changing market, perhaps they are going through major changes internally in an attempt to respond to market forces. When the rules and boundaries change and they aren't effectively communicated, accepted, and embraced, it creates fear, uncertainty and doubt among the employees. Leaders of organizations also **have the ability to fix the boundaries, to create roomier, more positive contexts that allow employees to grow rather than choose contexts that limit and confine them.** Given that choice, leaders need to commit to a vision that is bound by a positive context, rather than one that is driven by fear.

Successful leaders and individuals who reflect on this, understand it well, and consciously create a cage that serves them are generally the more successful people you will encounter. They push out the bars of the cage so they can soar. These are the kinds of leaders I would like to follow. How about you?

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