

ADJA Member Spotlight: Mike Lonneman

Mike Lonneman has always had a passion for being a mobile DJ. He just didn't realize how strong that passion was until a little over a year ago. In the fall of 1992, the then 14-year-old Lonneman went with his parents to attend a wedding of their friend's son. That night, Mike was all eyes on the DJ. He had this feeling inside him saying—"I wanna be that guy someday—the guy that makes it possible for everyone to have a good time." Lonneman was shy at first, but he eventually got the confidence to approach the entertainer and introduce himself. Mike asked the DJ, Kelly Kerkman, questions all night and of course was blown away by the *light show!* After the dance ended, Lonneman shared with his parents how much fun he had talking to Kelly and how he was so excited about maybe doing that someday. What he learned next would impact him forever. His parents explained that Kelly was the groom's best friend and that his mom (Kelly's) had just passed away that day. When Kelly called the bride and groom to share the bad news he said, "The show must go on. I made a promise and Mom would have wanted me there for you." Tears rolled down Mike's face as he realized that the guy he watched that night was so much more than a DJ, he was an amazing friend. Mike continued to talk with Kelly and became good friends with him.

In the fall of 1996, Lonneman started doing dances at the middle school he attended and eventually his high school. By 1998, Lonneman had a season of weddings booked and was really enjoying his new found passion, but he still felt like something was missing. He didn't know if he could earn a living doing what he really loved. Fast forward to April of 2003. An equipment vendor that Mike had done business with invited him to Chicago

to listen to a seminar on improving his mobile DJ business. Lonneman took a risk and bought the next ticket to Des Plaines, Illinois. That night he met the guest speaker, Peter Merry, from the American Disc Jockey Association. Peter spoke about "Getting Better Bookings With Better Presentations." Merry also shared with Mike some of his personal experiences and the challenges he faced. It was that night that Lonneman started to realize everything he knew about the mobile dj industry was only the tip of the iceberg. "I was at an unsure place in my life about my business—I didn't know whether I should sell my business or just quit completely," Lonneman says. "After hearing Peter Merry speak, I didn't hesitate one moment to join the ADJA." He says one of the biggest benefits he realized was just speaking with other DJs who were also passionate about growing and changing in their business. "I asked more questions and finally felt like I had direction. The ADJA gave me that." Since that weekend in April of 2003, Lonneman has spoken to other DJs in his area about the benefits he's realized and the wealth of knowledge he's gained. He continues to try and learn new ideas and unique ways of performing in front of audiences by attending national DJ conferences and subscribing to disc jockey-related forums at Disc Jockey America and ProDJ.com.

Mike is a part time mobile disc jockey and owner of Stunning Entertainment in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and focuses primarily on marketing to wedding clients. With the help of a local



web design artist, Lonneman was able to express the personal touch and uniqueness of his business through his website. At his fulltime job, he calls on companies to help solve any telecommunication issues. Although the two jobs are not closely related, he has adapted a no-pressure sale approach to both jobs. In addition to daily business operations, Lonneman is working with two ADJA members in his area to start what may become a future chapter of the ADJA in the Sioux Empire area. (SE South Dakota, SW Minnesota, NW Iowa).

Recently at the ADJA national meeting in Las Vegas, President DJ Dr. Drax appointed Lonneman the council of 13, a group set up to address communication between local chapters and the national office. Visit his website www.stunningdj.com.

