**We Need to Talk About Twitter (by Mark Jones) Marketing Team for Texas Oklahoma District 2019-2022**

Twitter and I have a complicated relationship. On one hand, I use Twitter daily to catch up on the news. On the other, I see enough hateful, mean, ignorant comments that it sometimes makes me wonder why I bother. In fact, I preface every conversation about Twitter with this phrase: “Nothing good ever happens on Twitter.” Now that I’ve gotten that off my chest, let me go over a few reasons why Twitter can be useful. Its immediacy is its most valuable feature. State and local governments, police and fire departments across the country rely on it to provide quick updates to a large audience at the same time. As far as the general public is concerned, it’s basically replaced the “news bulletin” we were used to seeing on TV or radio. The people who would have been sending the information to their parent organization in years gone by (like the Associated Press) are now sending it to everyone on Twitter. It’s just easier.

Twitter is also most journalists’ obsession. They’re on it. Their friends are on it. Their colleagues are on it. The institutions they cover are on it. It’s a tool for them, which makes it an opportunity for those who are trying to reach them. Contacting journalists on Twitter is a great way to make a connection that can result in coverage of the great work that Kiwanis does. You can also share photos, videos, links, and text through Twitter. Most journalists are on Twitter when they’re not at work, giving you a 24/7 opportunity to connect on their preferred platform. Twitter, for me, is also a treasure trove of photos. U.S. government photos. Think: Department of Defense or National Park Service. In most cases, photos taken by U.S. government employees are not covered by copyright. That’s not legal advice, that’s me telling you that if you check the fine print, it’ll say the same thing. That’s why I specified U.S. government photos and not news outlets or private citizens. There are some amazing photographers out there. **But copyright issues are very real and very important to understand**. People make their living by taking photos. They own their work and should be compensated for its use. I get paid when I go to work. So do you. They should, also. Always check. There is a definite divide in who uses which social media platform. Most Kiwanis members won’t have much use for Snapchat or Instagram Stories. Most Key Club members may only use Facebook from time-to-time. My advice is to get a Twitter account. Follow a few accounts that you think you’d enjoy and decide for yourself. My ultimate advice is to decide what helps you recruit and retain members and helps spread the good news of Kiwanis. If that is Twitter, go for it. Whatever you decide to do, make it sustainable. There is a good use for most platforms. Even Twitter.