

Mike Elser, Soaring Eagle  
Personal Statement, Vision and Resume'  
Chairman MKP USA

My name is Mike Elser, Soaring Eagle. I was initiated at Buena Vista, Colorado in May of 2005, joined an I-Group that July and have been active in my home Community, New England ever since. My active involvement at the national level began in 2009 with my election to Center Director of MKPNE. I am a Declared Elder in the New England Community and have worked closely with both the local Leader Body and Lodge Keepers Society.

I am running for the position of Chairman of MKP USA because I passionately believe that The ManKind Project makes a profound difference in men's lives and is on the cusp of being able to make a profound difference in our world. MKP USA is at a point in its development where it must make the transition to an organization that is professionally managed, fiscally sound, communicates in a transparent way and is structurally ready to tap the strengths of a vibrant volunteer workforce. Although first steps in that direction have recently been taken there is much work yet to be done.

I believe my background in business and within MKP USA make me an ideal choice to lead this transition. I have extensive experience as a member of senior management within a major corporation as well as a solid track record in small business. My resume' includes work in marketing, sales, finance, administration, IT and corporate restructuring. These are all areas of expertise that will be required as MKP USA makes the transformation to a new way of being in the world.

We have historically been a volunteer organization asking men to do extraordinary things while working on the margins of their time. Despite this, we have accomplished many good things; however, in the process we have proven to be particularly good at one thing - burning men out. I have watched as men of passion have worn themselves out while working heroically to accomplish the tasks they were presented. Many have stepped back for years or even withdrawn from MKP altogether.

IMJ, the existential problem facing MKP USA revolves around creating an organization that supports and mobilizes its volunteers in such a way that they are invigorated and ready to accomplish more. We need to build an organization that regularly and routinely accomplishes its goals – without extraordinary efforts. I want to see MKP USA become an organization that supports ordinary men in achieving extraordinary results. Most of us are ordinary men. I know I can build an organization that produces that result because I have done it before.

The following section will lay out my vision and identify what I believe to be the most critical strategic and tactical objectives for MKP USA to attain over the next two years. My intent is not to post a laundry list of items, but rather to give you an idea of where my focus will be if I am given the honor of serving this organization as its next Chairman.

The final section will lay out my personal, business and New Warrior resumes. My hope is that the three sections taken together will provide a clear picture of who I am, what my vision for MKP is, and why I believe I am the right man to lead MKP USA now.

# VISION

My vision is to create an organization that melds the expertise of a professional headquarters staff with the power of a volunteer membership. The organization must be capable of sustaining itself while consistently accomplishing the goals of supporting its membership and bringing the work of MKP to the world. The successful transformation to such an organization will require the implementation of two mutually supportive strategic initiatives:

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **STRUCTURE:** The first initiative, one highlighted by ACT II, is to build a small, professional headquarters staff. With funding from Fund the Plan, MKP USA has recently made solid progress on this initiative by hiring a new Executive Director and starting to fill other professional positions (Marketing, IT etc). Although this is a solid first step, it is only a first step. To be successful we must take the next step; we must create an organization that facilitates a small professional staff to effectively support and empower its volunteer workforce. MKP USA is, right now, composed of a loose confederacy of 32 more or less independent Centers creating 32 stovepipes and untold informational bottlenecks. The new structure will be a vertically integrated, relatively flat hierarchy that intentionally creates multiple, lateral paths of communication and interaction. I believe one of the keys to such an organization will be found in the realization of the potential of the AREA Concept proposed by the Consolidation Implementation Committee. All of this, of course, falls under the umbrella of Consolidation/Unification.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** The second initiative, also highlighted in ACT II, is to create a “Robust Member Relations/Communications Cycle.” That cycle requires us first to communicate with our members, asking them what they want/need. The second step requires us to act on that information and start meeting those wants/needs. Completing these steps in proper order will put us into position to then ask for monetary support. Unfortunately, for the last several years we have put ourselves in a financial position of having to begin with step 3 – asking for money. With the introduction of new IT software system, CIVIcrm, and the implementation of a philosophically solid Membership Program we are now ready to begin over again with step 1. Frequent, open, honest and transparent communication with our members around financial issues, program development, new initiatives and member concerns will be critical to our future success.

## TACTICAL OBJECTIVES

Within the strategic framework laid out above, here is what I see as our most critical tactical objectives. We must reach these objectives sooner rather than later.

- **Financial Transparency** – MKP USA does not have a stellar reputation within the New Warrior Community for the way it has handled money in the past. There is mistrust within the general community – especially around financial matters. The way to reverse the mistrust is to consistently and transparently communicate with our members regarding our financial goals and the progress we make toward those goals. First, that means producing, distributing and explaining financial statements on a timely basis. It also means telling the story of how we raise and spend money. With Fund the Plan we have a great story to tell. Fund the Plan monies were raised for specific goals and are being spent with stewardship according to those goals. Such stewardship lays the foundation for trust. We have begun to tell that story but not sufficiently. We need to continue to build on that story by taking all Capital Campaign revenues and treating them exactly the same way

we did with Fund the Plan monies. Doing so will create the understanding with our membership that every dollar is received gratefully, held in sacred trust and spent with wise, intentional stewardship.

- **Becoming A Membership Supported Organization** - Having established the “rules of the game” for the membership program within an inclusive and philosophically sound framework, we need to move quickly to secure an MKP USA membership base of 5,000 to 7,000 members. Such a base will generate annual membership revenue sufficient to meet operational needs, take the pressure off NWTAs fees and allow us to begin addressing long term strategies. I am not saying that we eliminate NWTAs fees. Let’s just break the addiction.

- **Socializing a Consistent Fund Raising Process** – We have recently begun to clarify the types and purposes of various fund raising programs. However, there is still confusion among men at all levels as to the difference between strategic funding and tactical funding and the fund raising vehicles associated with each. This problem was exacerbated by launching all three primary fund raising programs at the same time. The work of the future will be to build an institutional and cultural understanding that each of these programs is a highly focused and differentiated way of supporting the work of MKP USA.

- **MKPI Fees and International Relationships** – We need to continue negotiating with MKPI until we can reach a well defined and documented agreement that fairly represents the ability of MKP USA to pay while recognizing the unique contribution (tangible and intangible) that MKP USA makes to the international organization. Whatever agreement is reached must fall within our financial means to pay as well as distribute costs and responsibilities equitably across all Regions. We need to de-link this agreement from the NWTAs and find other ways to establish and apportion fees. Finally, we need to pursue ways to reduce redundancies between MKPI and MKP USA, which will help reduce the overall cost structure of both corporations.

- **Constituency Support and Development:** As we consolidate and become a membership supported and sustainable organization, we must seek ways to support the national Lodge Keepers Society, Leader Body and Elder Body – financially and otherwise. The constituencies are vital to a healthy transition to the new organizational structure by providing the spiritual grounding, leadership and wisdom to help move us forward consciously. Also, I want to see the I-Group Community begin to function more overtly as a fourth constituency.

- **Program Development:** There is a vital need to begin creating addition training opportunities and support materials for the New Warrior community as well as producing alternate streams of income for the organization. I believe the following programs can be developed and implemented with very little impact on the proposed 2012 & 2013 budgets through grant requests and designated gifting opportunities.

- **I-Group Support** – It is time to start delivering on the MKP USA promise as defined in Straw-man I and II to make the Man sitting in his I-Group a primary focal point of our efforts by providing needed training materials and facilitation support. Publication of the newly revised PIT Manual will be a good first step. Now we must begin the fact finding process to define the support men sitting in I-Group want.
- **Next Level Training** – The NWTAs offers an unsurpassed training experience which begins the process of helping men become emotionally aware and mission-oriented. It is now time to build the next level training. The NWTAs is college; now let’s create the graduate school experience.
- **Training and Educational Resources created by our Members** – New Warrior Brothers have been building training and educational events for years. These efforts have primarily been in parallel with MKP USA rather than in conjunction with it. Let’s figure out a way to tap into this ready resource and add them as MKP USA-sponsored trainings. We already have a reservoir of men who are strong facilitators.
- **Transition Training** – The motto adopted at the 2010 Glen Ivy Business Meeting was “Men Mentoring Men Through the Passages of their Lives.” Let’s begin by developing a “Transition to Elder-hood” training to be prototyped during 2012 and introduced in 2013. The framework for

such a training is already in place. I believe this training is especially well suited subject for funding through grant and designated gifting.

- **Additional Leadership Programs:** It is time to begin defining leadership paths for I-Group Facilitation and Community Leadership. The Consolidation Implementation Committee's report suggested that there may be real power in the creation of local groups of men trained in hands on, day to day, I-Group support including initial PIT trainings. This would be an extension of what some have called "traveling magician teams." Also, the need for trained and qualified local community leaders is self-evident. It is well known by such groups as the Boy Scouts and Toast Masters that men gravitate to programs that provide progressive achievement and recognition. The addition of these two programs will widen the leadership opportunities within every community.
- **Other:** There are, of course, many other functions, including Marketing, IT and Finance that ought to be addressed. However, this may suffice for the moment.

## Resume'

### Business & Educational Resume'

- Mansfield State University: graduated Jan. 1970 – BA in Performance – Clarinet
- Mansfield State University: teaching certificate – May 1970;
- Warrior Run School District: taught High School and Elementary Instrumental Music 1970, 1973-1980;
- United States Army: 1970 – 1973 attaining rank of Specialist 6<sup>th</sup> Class as a Clarinetist in the United States Field Band – Pentagon attached.
- Ithaca College: Graduated 1978 – MA in Woodwind Pedagogy
- Susquehanna University: taught part time woodwinds 1978 -1979.
- Aetna Life and Casualty: 1980 to 1994
  - 1980 to 1984 – Brokerage Representative/Field Sales Representative.
  - 1985 to 1986 – Selected to work with the McKinsey & Co to plan and execute an Aetna Corporate restructuring.
  - 1986-1987 – Liaison between the IT Department, Product Development and Marketing/Sales Department in the Personal Lines Strategic Business Unit.
  - 1987 to 1994 – Promoted to an Officer of the Corporation with responsibilities for advanced life insurance sales, estate and business analysis, and pension design.
  - Professional Designations - Certified Life Underwriter, Chartered Financial Consultant, Certified Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU - completed 5 of 10 parts); Certificates in Estate and Business Analysis, Personal Estate Planning and Pension Design.
- 1994 to present – PAK MAIL Centers of America, Inc. (PMCA) - in partnership with Donna, my wife.
  - 1994 - Established a Pak Mail franchise in West Hartford, CT. It was the fastest growing franchise in company history.
  - 1996 to 2009 – Member of the Pak Mail Advisory Council; president 2005 – 2008.
  - 2002 - Awarded a "FRANNY" trophy – given by the International Franchise Association for lifetime achievement within the franchise industry.
  - 2007- Authored the current Pak Mail business model – "The Pak Mail Experience," and donated it PMCA.
  - Developed and held copyright to a proprietary pricing plan, Profit Neutral Pricing, that was sold exclusively to PMCA in 2009.
  - 2004 to 2009 – Acquired Pak Mail Master Franchise rights to Maryland, New York, eastern Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Sold the Master Franchise to PMCA in Spring 2009.

- 2005 – Acquired Pak Mail franchise location in Newburyport, MA which Donna and I currently operate. We are preparing this store for sale in the immediate future.
- 2008 – Sold West Hartford, CT Pak Mail Franchise Location.
- West Hartford Chamber of Commerce Board
  - Member 1994 – 2005
  - Board Member 1997 – 2000
  - Executive Committee 1998 – 2000

## **New Warrior Resume:**

- Trainings – NWTa, PIT, BSDT, LT1, LT2, GUTS, Shadow Workshops, Tosi Couples I & II, Hollow Bones/Mondo Zen (2 Sesshins), Father/Daughter Training Weekend
- Staffings – NWTa – 13; Tosi Couples I – 3; Father-Daughter Training Weekend – 1.
- Elected Offices – Center Director, MKP New England 2008 – 2010.
- Fund the Plan Team – 2010 -2011.
  - Chaired the March 2011 Fund the Plan Drive.
  - Member of the Fund the Plan Expenditure Oversight Committee 2010 to present
- Consolidation Implementation Committee - Member 2010 – present.
  - Chaired the Financial Workgroup – report presented at Glen Ivy 2011.
  - Co-Chaired the Area Workgroup – report presented at Glen Ivy 2011.
- Membership & Development Committee – Member since inception in 2011.
  - Membership Workgroup – Member since inception 2009.
  - Current Chair
- North East Area Feasibility Workgroup – Member since inception – 2011 to Present

## **Personal Biography**

I was born in Coco Solito, Panama in Dec 1947. I have one sister 6 years older and a brother 10 months younger. We were Navy brats. My dad was a Chief Petty Officer who retired after 22 years active duty. In following dad's reassignments, we moved 10 times between the time I was in elementary school until I became a sophomore in high school. I received many rich lessons from that period of my life.

I married Donna Jeanne Simpson 40 years ago last July. We have a son and daughter – both married – and two granddaughters. Donna and I currently reside in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, having moved here three years ago.

My mission is to co-create a world of connection and understanding by learning mentoring and creating. My Shadow mission is to create a world of chaos by judging harshly and blaming.

**Shadows:** When I am under intense pressure from deadlines or very tired I have a tendency to introvert, avoid connection and focus on “the objective”. What that looks like is highly focused, laser beam intense energy that has little regard for people “in the way” as I pursue my objectives. It will show up as lack of connection, anger and frustration. My work with MKP and regular meditation practice have helped me in harnessing this powerful energy and directing it in a conscious, intentional and wise way. I find that reaching out for connection, especially when I don't want to, is also very helpful. Another shadow that I am aware of is feeling that I should be perfect AND get it all done regardless of the workload – 100% is just not good enough! This



will show up when I am most heavily tasked as a tendency to keep saying yes to requests and an unwillingness to set healthy boundaries. It is often a prelude to creating “intense pressure” for myself leading into the first shadow above. In LT2 I identified this way of being as “habitual yes”! My WIT (Whatever It Takes) program after LT2 focused on a new way of being – “Conscious, Intentional, and Wise”.

### **Gold:**

**Servant Leadership:** I consciously and intentionally seek to bring an attitude of Servant Leadership into my life. As a Servant Leader, I am conscious that I have a responsibility to use my authority in ways that support those I lead in reaching their own personal and professional goals in addition to reaching organizational goals. For me that means actively seeking ways to mentor and develop those with whom I come in contact.

**Elder Energy:** As a declared Elder, I am becoming more aware of the power that blessing has to empower men to act from a place of gold. Through a disciplined meditation practice and other work I am learning to be more present and less wrapped up in the trappings of ego.

In mid October I attended the MKPNE Elder Gathering at which I requested an Elder Court asking for their blessing in preparation for running for this position. The elders present gave me two pieces of gold that I want to share. The first was described as a “both/and” attitude. What they said they saw was a willingness to take the time to see all points of view to a problem and then seek creative solutions that included as many perspectives as possible. The second was my desire to be prepared, to get the facts and do the research prior to making decisions. Learning is an important component of my mission. I know there is gold in striking a balance between the patience required to *know enough* with the understanding that I do not need to *know everything* before acting.

## **SUMMARY**

The ManKind Project in the United States is at a crossroads. If we are to bring the gift that is MKP and men’s work to the world we must change - and, of course, change is usually difficult and often scary. We are at a moment in time that is pregnant with possibilities and at the same time fraught with danger. It is time to do more than survive. It is time to grow up, to wake up, to stand up and to show up. To successfully navigate the dangers of the present while discovering and manifesting the possibilities of the future will require a clear vision and strong leadership. It will also require skills in communications, organizational design, finance and marketing. I assert that I have these qualities. I judge my experience and background support that assertion. I would be honored to be chosen to serve as Chairman of MKP USA and I am honored to be considered.

I humbly submit this to you for your review and invite you to connect with me on any questions you may have. I can be reached by email at [mikeelser2@gmail.com](mailto:mikeelser2@gmail.com); by telephone at 860.985.0013; or by Skype at michael.k.elser.

Blessings

Mike Elser, Soaring Eagle  
Charter Life Time Member  
MKP USA