

2008 President's Message

As the President of WIT-LA for 2008, I would like to start by thanking our membership for participating in the Women International Trade Los Angeles Association. I have personally been active on the WIT-LA Board for five years; this association has always held a special place in my heart because as a trade association, we make it a priority every year to give back to the community.

Our Charity of Choice was announced during WIT-MAS in Italy this past December. **Room to Read** partners with local communities throughout the developing world to establish schools, libraries, and other educational infrastructure. This organization seeks to intervene early in the lives of children in the belief that education is a lifelong gift that empowers people to ultimately improve socioeconomic conditions for their families, communities, countries, and future generations. Through the opportunities that only an education can provide, they strive to break the cycle of poverty, one child at a time.

I am pleased to report WIT-LA was able to donate \$3,000.00 from the WIT-MAS auction and raffle. This will provide a scholarship for one girl's career in school - covering such expenses as monthly school fees, school uniforms, supplies (books, stationary, and backpacks), a female Room to Read staff member to oversee the program and mentor the girls, as well as additional tutoring as needed. It also covers transportation (such as a bicycle or bus fare) for girls living far from school, lunch money if the girls live too far from school to eat at home, medical check-ups, and field trips. If our donation can do so much to change one girl's life, just think what we can do this year.

I am very excited about working with the WIT-LA Board this year. We met as a group on February 1st and I am happy to report that everyone has an opinion about what we need to do to make 2008 for our WIT-LA membership memorable. During the Board planning session I was reminded of the quote by Frederic Herzberg, "If you want people motivated to do a good job, give them a good job to do."

As I see it, the job of the President of WIT-LA is being responsible for the educational programs that support our members businesses as well as unite us as an industry.

In January I attended the AAEI West Coast Conference in Newport Beach, and was fortunate enough to attend the lunch featuring Robert Bonner former Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Mr. Bonner left the law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher in 2007 to become the Senior Principal of the Sentinel HS Group, a homeland security consulting firm, where he specializes in providing strategic advice and counsel regarding homeland security customs and international trade, and border and supply chain security and facilitation issues.

Mr. Bonner's passion for this new field was apparent and although he empathized with the audiences concern over the Security Filing Requirements, 10+2, and Congress' attempt to require 100% scanning of cargo he also threw the proverbial ball back in the court of the Trade

stating it is our responsibility to educate Congress on the operational processes of our industry.

One of our goals is to help our membership communicate to our local Congressional members our concerns with their new policies and what the Trade industry is doing to combat Terrorism and protect our borders as a community.

WIT-LA will be organizing summer and fall mixers which will allow us to show appreciation to our membership as well as offering networking opportunities to introduce existing members to individuals just joining WIT-LA. The Board is also planning to involve other Associations that would like to partner with our Organization in offering new benefits to our membership.

WIT-LA is looking forward to supporting our members' business practices and to this end we are very excited about our March 19th event entitled "**How to keep the cash flow – flowing!**" Discover ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution). Mrs. Phyllis Pollack of PGP Mediation will be our guest speaker, addressing issues that many Companies in our industry run into such as: How to protect your self from non-payment when shipping overseas or better ways to handle employee disputes. Looking forward to seeing you there.

I consider it an honor and privilege to be serving as the President of WIT-LA for 2008.

Warmest Regards,

Sarah Stroth