

## **Message from the Board – March 5, 2008**

Board members and other volunteers have begun working on a number of projects that we hope will benefit the organization this year and beyond. Madelon van Lier and John Kalivas are putting together a terrific slate of training tours for this year.

Something that we hope will add a lot of value is strategic planning. Many questions and ideas have surfaced in recent years as members think about what they want the organization to be, with topics such as continuing education requirements and membership categories. We hope to use vehicles such as focus groups and surveys so that every member can express their opinion and help chart our future. We want to make sure to include constituencies whose opinions may have been less well represented in the past, e.g. driver-guides and over-the-road guides. Eventually, the process may result in proposed changes to the by-laws, and these will be given to all members to review and discuss well in advance of a vote. When we call on you to complete a survey or join a focus group, please take the time! We need everyone's involvement, and these are forums that will not require much of a commitment.

Some of you have already been asked to volunteer on the committee that is preparing a new draft of the 2008 Rate Sheet in preparation for the DMC meeting. Once a draft is ready, we will make sure that all members have plenty of opportunity to review it and express their opinions. If you would like to work on this committee, please contact Marilee Traynor at [mdltraynor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdltraynor@sbcglobal.net) or 415-776-0490.

Regarding 2008 membership renewals, congratulations to the Certified guides, who have achieved a 90% renewal rate as of mid-February! Associate renewals are lagging, at only 60%. We always expect there to be more turnover in the Associate category, since many people join the organization as part of "testing the waters" when they're new to tour guiding, but we definitely want much more than 60% renewals! So, Associates, please send in those checks. Please contact Michele McCurry at [mush72576@aol.com](mailto:mush72576@aol.com) or 925-228-7261 if you have any questions.

If you think you might be ready to take the certification exam within the next two years, please contact the certification committee. This way we can keep track of your progress and offer assistance.

Finally, Public Relations Chair Joe Ries and Jason Cohen attended the 2008 Northern California Visitor Industry Outlook Conference sponsored by the SF Convention and Visitors Bureau. We will report back to the membership with insights from the conference.

The next Board Meeting is Tuesday, April 1, from 6-8 pm at St. Mary's Cathedral. As is true every month, all members are welcome to attend.