

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

THA: The "Go To" Place for Hosiery and Socks

Let me paraphrase one of my favorite public figures, Robert F. Kennedy:

"The future does not belong to those who are content with today, apathetic toward common problems and {other members} alike, timid and fearful in the face of bold projects and new ideas. Rather, it will belong to those who can blend passion, reason and courage in a personal commitment to the great enterprises and ideals of {our association}." (Within the {} are my words)

That's how I feel about THA. It is time to set timidity and apathy aside. It is time now to lay the groundwork for what we expect to be in the future. Last year we met in Charlotte and made such bold statements as "We want to be the **"go to"** place for information, for ideas, for communications, for camaraderie for networking.

We said we wanted to be that **"go to"** place for our members, for the various legislatures, the press, consumers, trade officials, and retailers.

We need to work towards that goal aggressively now. I don't believe we will reach our goal over night. I don't believe we will reach our goal with staff doing all the work. I don't believe we will reach our goal without sharing our money (and time) more generously. I don't believe we can reach our goal without more companies participating. But I do believe we will reach our goal.

I believe we will reach our goal because we are not timid souls. We will reach the goal of being the **"go to"** place because we all came together and said that this is what we wanted to become. There were too many people in that room who have overcome major obstacles in their personal lives and their corporate lives to let movable, changeable things stand in our way.

If you are **"content with today"** then I'm either very happy for you or very sorry for you. Happy if your business is that good – sorry if you think the state of our industry is good.

So what are the **"great enterprises and ideals"** of our association? It would take many issues to articulate them all but let me touch on some of them.

The goal of being the **"go to"** place for dialogue is being accomplished as we speak. A strong DMC headed by Charles Cole has done amazing work for that viewpoint over the past few years and one has to be proud of their ability to accomplish even if they disagree with the accomplishments. I see no reason to suspect that anything but hard work and aggressiveness can be expected in the future.

Now, under the leadership of Sandy Browder, GMC will begin its task of being just as aggressive and just as successful for those folks who are inclined to grow their business through globalization. Expect to hear more from Sandy in the future.

So THA becomes – what it intended in 2001 – neutral. Not neutral and weak and with no opinions. We will be neutral with strong voices on both ends of the spectrum.

Since I quoted one of the Kennedy brothers, let me mis-quote President Kennedy who said something like:

The seal of the Office of The President depicts an eagle who holds in his right talon an olive branch and in his left talon a quiver of arrows. We intend to give equal attention to both.

Now, using that quote can be considered in two ways when discussing THA. I do not mean that we will be at peace with some and at war with others – we've tried that and that simply divides and weakens. I mean we will give equal attention to both opinions so that THA can be the **"go to"** place for correct, helpful, and timely information for those of us who want (need) to know -- especially those of us who have found ourselves in the position of using both methods for the survival and growth of our businesses.

We are becoming the **"go to"** place for trends and awareness of the "runways" depiction and use of legwear whether socks, sheers or the great in between.

We are becoming the **"go to"** place for fit and sizing of sheers. I am so proud of the efforts led by Dan St. Louis and representatives of the sheer industry who have come together in recent weeks to discuss, debate and reason about what to measure, how to measure it and how to communicate those decisions to the ultimate **"decider"** – the retailers.

We have had folks actually volunteering to serve on committees and many more saying, **"Let me know what I can do to help."**

Our staff and HTC's staff are working to **"make a splash"** at MAGIC and WSA.

Hosiery News is a great magazine – well designed, interesting and filled with information.

The web-site is becoming a **"go to"** website for our members and will become a site that will have so much proprietary information that folks will join so they can get their hands on what you can.

THA staff markets our association and therefore your business and your industry. Every day they **"put a face"** on the industry that you can be proud of and lets others know that here is an association of hosiery people who have their act together.

We are developing new programs of regional and specific subjects so that more of us can get involved with programs that can help us.

We are trying to determine new ways to get revenue so that as we do these many things we don't have to **"go begging"** to the same folks all the time – you. If we're going to be successful, we have to have money and what money we get we have to spend wisely and we have to spend it like you want us to and so we need your input always.

To sum all this up – let's not be timid about the goals that we agreed on last year. Let's become the **"go to place"** for all the things we need to make us a stronger industry, a stronger group of individual companies, a proud bunch of folks making our way into the future boldly.

Larry Small

