

Holiday Greetings 2008

I eagerly anticipate this time of year; to catch up with family and friends, clients and colleagues; a time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the promise of the new year.

This year I am especially grateful to connect, to express my thanks for your continuing support and encouragement, and to look forward to opportunities for working together in these rapidly changing and challenging times.

Personally, I've decided NOT to acknowledge the recession and to continue to move forward with a positive attitude, sharing expertise, hope, encouragement, and, of course, stories with all of you in the coming months.

As far as looking back and catching up, here are the things I'm grateful for, that have allowed me to continue to travel, work with friends old and new, and grow in my expertise and profession:

- A wonderful contract with BHP Billiton Petroleum and the opportunity to work in Houston, designing and writing a 'Tool Kit' for supervisors, and creating and helping to facilitate the workshop to accompany it. It was a year-long project that I enjoyed immensely.
- Traveling and working internationally have provided great experiences and opportunities to work with a variety of colleagues. Working in Singapore, through Partners Conference & Event Management, while enroute to Australia, was a bonus. Australia provided several opportunities, including working with Community First Credit Union in Sydney, speaking at the Australasian Mutuals Institute's National Conference in Canberra, and speaking for the Sydney Chapter of NSAA (National Speakers Association Australia). Later in the year I was privileged to speak at MPI UK (Meeting Professionals International) in London at an very cool venue - Central Hall Westminster. And I've worked a bit in Canada as well:-)
- Other opportunities included working in the area of Women's Leadership, working with credit union organizations across the country, speaking for Vistage groups of CEOs and other senior leaders, and coaching several clients along the way. I also served as a volunteer Mentor for the August training of Credit Union Development Educators at the amazing, self-sustaining, Islandwood facility on Bainbridge Island in Washington State.
- Professional development through various Speaker organizations has also been a privilege. I facilitated a 'mega session' about storytelling in San Francisco at the NSA (National Speakers Association) Winter Conference. I am also serving on the leadership team for the Storytellers PEG (Professional Expert Group), which was launched at that NSA Conference. In July I attended the NSA Convention in NYC - an amazing time, adhering closely to the convention theme of 'NSA Rocks'. I also participated in the GSN (Global Speakers Network of the IFFPS - International Federation for Professional Speakers) meeting in NYC, where we were privileged to have a private tour of the United Nations Building. In September I participated in the GSA's (German Speakers Association) annual convention, held in Salzburg, Austria; in December I was at CAPS (Canadian Association of Professional Speakers) sharing with and learning from my peers in this fantastic profession. (Looking back over this section, I gotta say . . . "Don't you just LOVE acronyms?!")
- I also had the opportunity to attend the HSC's (Huntington Society of Canada) annual Conference in Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island. As you know, I'm an active supporter of Laura's Hope, a global research fund that provides monies for preclinical trials in the pursuit of finding a cure for Huntington's Disease. Laura's Hope is a component piece of what the HSC is doing to find the cure.

· I attended CUDE (Credit Union Development Educator) programs in Washington DC, Seattle, and Islandwood. This group of dedicated volunteers continues to be an important and vital part of my life, having made many friends along the way, as we work together to help educate others about what credit unions are and how they help their members both domestically and in developing countries around the world. In these times of financial instability, credit unions remain strong; the philosophy and business methodology of financial cooperatives, forged in the USA in the 1930's, are especially viable and important today to consumers dealing with financial challenges. (It's not a 'paid political announcement', but Susan Luke CUDE 'approves this message'.):-)

· Personally it's been an interesting year of travel, great friends and family, a wonderful partner, an amazing son, and an even more amazing mother. I've communicated, badgered, depended on, developed, and enhanced so many relationships - old and new, domestic and international, and I am blessed in my friends and family. I've seen many of you as I've travelled (including a great girls weekend in Duluth, Minnesota) and I thank you for continuing to be a part of my life. Others I stay connected to through phone calls (210-643-4367), emails (Susan@SusanLuke.com), and a variety of social networks -- thank goodness for technology! In March we travelled to Boston for the Opening Night of Chuck's (my son) 'Thesis Show'. His photography is awesome, he continues to make me so very proud, and in the spring he received his MFA (Masters of Fine Arts) from Tufts University in Boston. He and his girlfriend spent the summer in Alaska, will join us between Christmas and New Years, and I can hardly wait! In September my mom (age 98) got married! The groom (age 92) is a wonderful man she has known for a while, through her church and the retirement facility where they live. I spent a couple days with them at Thanksgiving, and they seem to have settled in to married life. We'll spend another couple days together at Christmas and I know she'll continue to amaze and astound us all! Last but not least, Warren and I move forward, enjoying time together, his two 'perfect' grandchildren, and the opportunities to travel, learn, and grow both personally and professionally.

· What's up for 2009? A redesigned website (www.SusanLuke.com), continuing opportunities to work with many of you, to travel, and be grateful for family and friends, clients and colleagues, love and laughter, opportunities to be of service, and most of all, for each of you being part of my life.

During this very special time of the year, may you each experience the wonder of the season, the joy of anticipation, and the love and laughter of family and friends.

Mele Kalikimaks and Hauoli Makahiki Hou (you can take the girl out of the islands, but a piece of my heart will always be there):-) Let's stay connected in the New Year.

Aloha,

Susan