

LIFE IS THE JOURNEY NOT THE DESTINATION

(Installation of International President, Sharon DeShazer, Charlotte, NC 1999)

Reach for the sky and touch the stars. Aiming for the stars has taken us to the horizon of the new millennium. We have grown and strengthened under the leadership of this year's Executive Board, the Board of Directors, many committee chairmen and volunteers. Hard labor has given birth to the new ideas and visions that will influence our association for decades.

Life is the journey not the destination. Remember, when aiming for the stars reach for the earth. When you aim for the mountaintop, reach for the valley below. Proceed, ever caring about your journey while stretching towards your destination. Everything is within your reach. When you think you have reached the end, reach out, touch a new beginning.

That is what tonight represents. A new beginning. A Journey. Experience the adventures and forget the destination. Journey through a book, poem, movie, and a song. Journey without directions. Take a path less taken.

Marcel Proust wrote, "The real voyage of discovery exists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

Scholars, poets, composers and artists have shared experiences of great journeys throughout time. Noah, Christ, the Titanic, Space. We have journeyed through Wonderland with Alice, across the desert with Moses and into space to walk on the Moon and chase Mars.

Wander with wonder. How does a rainbow feel? How do angels sound when they sing? What if you had chosen a different road? Take a journey in your heart, in your mind. Compose a different song for your life. Make a flashier entrance. Walk barefoot. Reach out and touch a rainbow.

One of the most famous and unforgettable stories of a journey starts on a very hot day in Middle America. The barometric pressure was high, winds were picking up, and it was cyclone weather. Everyone was working hard. They had things to get done. Ima Dorothy Too was bored. She wanted to meet new people, have new experiences. She was hot and cranky.

Executive Board of 1998-1999 Please stand

You are the foundation of this association. United and strong. Collectively contributing and sharing your talents for the success of Credit Professionals. You have all influenced this girl from Kansas. You are her friends and family.

Would the Board of Directors and Committee Chairmen for 1998-99 also stand?

Making your own journeys, leading others while following. The key to this journey is in knowing that if you want to be a leader, you must also know how and when to follow. Follow in another's footsteps, only until you have carved out your own. Thank you for what you have done.

Now, back to our story: Yes, it is cyclone weather. Everything seems so overwhelming in this heat. If only there was a way to have more fun, to change things. Then, the wind begins to roar dust starts whirling. Our traveler and her closest friend, Toto were scared.

Somehow she had been pulled into the whirling winds. Sucked in the storm. This seems like a dream. She was now in the middle ofwhat?

Leaving her upwardly mobile home she discovers she has hit something. Fear catches in her throat as she looks around to discover she has no idea where she is. She's landed on someone! "Property of the wicked witch of fear and doubt" reads the tag on its shoes. "Oh my!" she thinks. "Look what I have done! I don't think I'm in Kansas anymore". She begins to cry. She has killed and is lost. Ima Dorothy Too is in a panic!

We the people are all so pleased that doubt and fear is dead. We've been through this ourselves. We have all made contributions to this place. Each of us starts as a stranger. The winds of change have blown new travelers here yearly. We support them and encourage them to follow their dreams, choose their own path. We follow until it's time to follow another. (Would the Past Presidents please come forward)

Past International Presidents:

You know this journey. Our new leader will need your experience surrounding her. It takes courage to ask for directions. Give her what she would request of you. Pledge to follow her. She will discover her path, just as you found yours. Follow her. Commit to the journey. Do you pledge her your support? (You may be seated)

Ima Dorothy Too likes these people of OZ. There are talented leaders of the greatest abilities. They come from all regions. She promises to visit as many as she can while here. Right now though, all she can think about is how does she get back to Kansas? How does she find her way out of here?

District Presidents:

You are the thread that holds our tapestry together. As the board of directors you will accomplish much during this next year. Thank you for your dedication to this dream. Will you dedicate this year to the journey?

Gracefully entering the scene is the good fairy of the East. She has just been through this journey herself. It falls on her to point out the path for our traveler to follow. This is Gail the Good.

Gail Ottinger, you are that person. You will be watching over our traveler as she sets out on her journey. You will always be there for her. You will guide her way, without setting her path. You know the secrets of this place, and will share them along the way. You make this journey easier for our friend and for us. Thank you for what you have done and what you will continue to do.

Gail the Good tells Ima Dorothy Too that she will begin the last part of her journey right where she stands. With the magic that only this place can provide, she is given a new pair of red

traveling shoes that look a lot like those that were on the wicked witch of doubt and fear. Gail the Good, explains that she must follow the path in front of her. It is a yellow brick road. Where does it lead? St. Lou OZ. She bids an energetic good bye and starts out along the uneven and very old path. Uphill, downhill, it goes on and on and on forever. She only stops long enough for an occasional sneeze passing the flowered fields lining the road.

Coming to a rest area she decides to take a break. She spots at the corner of the yellow brick road and Silverdale crossing, a very interesting being. Getting closer she sees, perched on a high pole, a person stuffed with straw, whose job it was to keep the birds out of the fields. She had to find a new job, but was not sure how. I need brains, I need to be educated. Ima Dorothy Too introduced herself and asks her if she would like to join her. Scare AKA Mary Lou Crow eagerly agrees to join this adventure, and just maybe she could gather knowledge, or better yet a brain in this place called St. Lou OZ.

Mary Lou Addy, First Vice President, do you agree to continue this journey ever at the President's side, assisting her while growing yourself in the knowledge that will be imparted to you about our association and its members? Your job is to increase membership and associations with the assistance of the District, States and Local Associations. Do you accept the challenge?

Ima Dorothy Too and Scare follow the yellow brick road, hand in hand. They talk about everything. Learning about each other's backgrounds and dreams. They bond and share for hours and discover that they have come a very long way but they are very tired. They stay the night at the edge of the forest.

The next morning they awake to a faint cry for help. Searching around the area they discover a silver colored woodcutter. Finding a can of oil marked "motivation lotion" they begin applying it to its joints. She can move!

Very grateful she explains that she has worked very hard for years in this education forest, cutting down trees for the Foundation of many educational projects. This delights Scare because she really wants more education, real brainpower. Ima Dorothy Too likes her too and is glad she has an ax just in case.

Eager to learn more, they invite Nona Ellzeytin to join them on the road trip. She agrees sensing that the bond these two already have formed would surely teach her how to love them and a dream, even though she was made of cold metal with nothing much inside. Not even a heart.

Nona Ellzey: Second Vice President, do you agree to join the executive board full of heart and caring for this association, ever promoting it and its leaders throughout this year? Do you promise to compile the best in educational opportunities and information for the members through the manual and other publications?

Following the yellow brick road, the new friends share stories of their lives, and work, losing track of time. They are now very deep into this dark forest of the unknown, but still on the path.

RRROOOOAAAARRRRR!!!!!!!!!!

Out from behind a tree jumps a loud roaring and very imposing lion. She scares them all to death. Ima Dorothy Too loses her grip on her puppy. She turns to the lion and shouts, "How

dare you scare us! You are new to us and fear is not a good way to make friends.” Mary Jolion King of the forest, stood there sobbing and explaining that she too had spent a lot of time in this forest of knowledge and had just this last year been looking for new opportunities but was too terrified to get out on the road alone. There are animals out there you know. Exchanging looks of understanding they invite this less than brave king of the forest to join them.

Mary Jo Mularz, Secretary/Treasurer, do you promise to demonstrate courage and stamina in carrying out your duties this year in the recording of our business and balancing of the funds? Do you promise to continue the journey with the executive committee providing balance to the team?

Our band of travelers continues on, towards their goal. The place where all the answers are. St. Lou OZ. Each of them will get what they have been looking for. There were many terrifying roadblocks. There were those who would not help, others who helped so much they wanted to take over. As time passed they saw out before them what appeared to be a shining star at the end of the road. St. Lou OZ. They entered the gates and found the best records, history, and support staff ever. They found information that would help them, but not what would take Ima Dorothy Too home, or what her friends thought they lacked to be in leadership.

Now what were they to do? There is no great Wizard of Wishes.

Again Gail the Good appears. As if being carried by a bubble, smiling she comes before them. You have worked so hard to get to this place. You have given of yourselves more than you have ever thought you could. Look at yourselves.

Mary Lou (Scare Crow), you are so knowledgeable about so much, how could you ever doubt that you are not educated and with the best of brains? With that Gail the Good gave Mary Lou her Education Award and bid her to share with others for the growth of the association.

Nona Ellzeytin, you have shown so much caring for this association in so many capacities, how could you ever doubt that you have a heart? She received a beautiful valentine of red from Gail the Good who encouraged her to share her love of CPI.

As for you Mary Jolion, why would you think you are not brave enough for this journey? You have had the courage to say you would join this band of travelers and protect them from harm. You agree to keep guard over precious information keeping it true. For her she had a badge of courage.

Gail Ottinger: Past President, do you promise to support and encourage the executive committee with your knowledge of the past and your insight to the future? Do you promise to keep the magic alive on the journey through careful selection of candidates to join the journey?

Ima Dorothy Too stands quietly alone. She is thrilled that her friends have received those things they felt they needed to be the best that they can be, but what about her? She wanted to go back to Kansas. Oh don't get her wrong, she loves and appreciates her new friends and traveling companions but she thought she would be home by now.

Her friends turned to her showing they loved her and were grateful for her leadership on this journey, but she was so sad. They stood in silence. They didn't want her to leave them. To go home to Kansas.

Gail the Good spoke up. You have always had the choice to go back home, but you chose this road. You knew you had things to offer. You have always had your friends with you and your traveling shoes. Use them, and continue your journey. Enjoy this year. Travel somewhere over the rainbow.

You have come from Slash to a President, you cannot stop now. You can do this. Step up, stand tall and be proud.

Sharon DeShazer: President, you have chosen to lead this association for the coming year. Your leadership will take us into the change of centuries. Your footsteps will be forever imprinted in our history. Lead us now into that century with the courage to be our President and preside at our meetings. You have the heart to take on new projects, goals and to implement new ideas for the betterment of Credit Professionals and the courage to ask for help along the way. Do you accept the challenges of being President?

You are now on your way down the yellow brick road of you Presidency. Enjoy the Journey, the destination will be waiting, for Life is the journey, not the destination.

No, Sharon you are not in Kansas but your journeys will lead you back there. After next year's conference, just click your heels together three times, close your eyes and think.....There's no place like home, there's no place like home. So once you have presided in St Lou OZ you can go home.

Remember that there are no little people, there is a Wizard of Wishes. Who do you think has been reading this, I am the Great and Powerful, OH Hum. Follow the yellow brick road. Run Toto Run!!!! Ladies and Gentlemen, Sharon DeShazer, your President.