

Some changes, good and sad

THE DECEMBER 2007 ISSUE OF NPN MAGAZINE IS OUR BUYER'S Guide issue. As most of you will notice, we also had a Buyer's Guide issue in March of this year. However, when setting our 2008 editorial calendar we made the decision that, moving forward, the appropriate time frame for the Buyer's Guide would be the transition period between November and January — likely the December issue.



What it came down to was either waiting 21 months between issues — far too long — or having the 2007 and 2008 be a manageable eight months apart with the production being fully on schedule for the next year. We chose the latter. We were able to update a number of the entries since March and believe we have an enhanced offering in this issue.

On a more sentimental note, this is the last issue in which Jim Fisher, CEO of the retail site analysis, market analysis and screening, and retail sales forecast modeling consultancy IMST Corp., provides us with our “Last Word” column.

Anyone who knows Jim knows he's a very busy man, who spends more time on the road than most of us spend at home. Yet, with that schedule he has always come through with insightful words of wisdom that not only apply to our industry business experience, but in many cases carry over into the broader spectrum of getting up every morning and taking part in what the world has to offer.

I had been in contact with Jim here and there over the years, but my first in-depth contact came when I interviewed him in 2003 concerning the clear trend of the majors away from any formal involvement in retail operations. I had a great interview. Jim spoke with authority and humor. But, most importantly there was candor — he told it like it was and was fine with me passing that along to our readers. And, he was right on the money. Jim predicted back then that by 2008 there would be virtually a full withdrawal from retail operations by the majors and with the recent announcements from Shell and BP, among others, that is coming to pass.

Fortunately, there will be plenty of opportunity to meet up with Jim at the assorted SIGMA meetings and NACS/PEI events and whenever I need to tap into his years of experience and intellect, I'll just pick up the phone. What will we do to replace Jim? It's hard to say just yet.

Jim stated that his main reason for moving on was that he just had too many commitments to keep up with the requirements of writing a column every month. For those who have never had to do such a thing may seem like a fairly easy process — you just sit down and type out whatever comes into your head. However those who have had to write on a deadline and try to appear insightful know how hard it can be. In some months, there are no great revelations, no great movements in the industry or even quirky anecdotes that could lead themselves to a few words of wisdom. To an extent, I face the same challenge each month with my edit notes. Obviously, this was not one of those months. ■

Keith Reid
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
kreid@m2media360.com