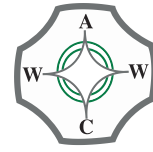




Area President's Newsletter

Bonnie Teeples
USA Area President



**RURAL
WOMEN
IN ACTION**

Last month my husband and I had the opportunity to spend a few days camped on the Oregon Coast. Knowing the weather wasn't going to be super, I took along books to read, computers to "get some work done," and supplies to write a few notes. I enjoy watching and listening to the waves crash on the shore, I find it almost mesmerising. I can feel the stress wash away with each wave. The Oregon Coast is not known for calm seas and light breezes, especially in the spring. This time the wind blew hard most days and the last night we were there it sounded like our awning over the slide-out was being ripped to shreds. We were grateful come daylight to find out it was all in one piece. But, it was not one of the most restful nights we had while we were there! Most late afternoons we sat on the shore and watched some hardy souls play in the surf and on the beach. One young man was trying his hand at surfing, most likely as a beginner. We watched him try wave after wave, sometimes to ride it in a ways, but most times to be overcome by the waves. I found myself thinking about how quickly our life circumstances change. We, like the young surfer keep getting up when the waves of life knock us off the board and into the water. I so appreciate all of you and the resilience you have shown during the pandemic. You have found ways to "get back on your surf board" and keep your organisations, groups and clubs moving forward. Needless to say, I didn't "get much work done" while we were at the coast, but I got some much needed rest and time away from the stress of our store and all the issues that come with being a business owner during this difficult time. (and I did get a few things crossed off that ever-present "to-do" list while we were there!)

The agonising decision to change the USA Area Conference from an in-person conference to a virtual conference had to be made. There are still too many members in areas with restrictions, still too much uncertainty surrounding the virus, and some members have told me they do not feel comfortable flying and being among groups of people they are not around on a regular basis. Taking all that into consideration, I felt that a virtual conference would be a safer way to go. I also feel that if we hold the conference virtually we will open the way for more members to attend. I will use one of the days of the original schedule to make things easier for those who have already planned their summer schedule. Mark your calendar for August 1-2, 2021! I am working with Nick at ACWW for the technical portion of the conference, and will need to make sure which date will work best for him. I attended the South Pacific Area virtual conference Nick set up, it was well done and gave flexibility for speakers and presentations.

By now, I'm sure you have all received the news that the ACWW Triennial in Kuala Lumpur has been changed from May 2022 to May 17-25, 2023. Thank you all who participated in the Special World Conference and helped make the change happen. It is almost unbelievable that such a tiny virus can disrupt our lives and plans for so long. I can understand the issues surrounding holding a world conference in another country, when it is so hard to hold a smaller conference here in our own area. We want members to feel safe, be safe, and stay healthy. After experiencing the virus first hand, I certainly do not want others to go through it.

There are several State and National Society conferences on my calendar and I am excited! Some are virtual and some will have the glorious opportunity of being in person! I'm looking forward to attending all that I can. It will be so good to meet in person again, and share our experiences and life's happenings.

Thank you to those of you who are keeping me informed of the activities you are having and the projects you are working on. It is fun to hear

about them. I so appreciate those of you that send me your newsletters and emails that keep me up to date on the USA Societies. As I read through the emails and newsletters, I am pleased to hear about the service projects members are working on and the many places our members serve. Several groups are making items for 'Days for Girls', others have served as bell ringers for the Salvation Army, some groups gather items for homeless veterans while others are making quilts for children, veterans, and nursing homes. Many have held virtual or in person (where allowed) fundraisers for scholarships for high school students, some are making bags and or kits for books that are used for reading to babies and children. Which ever society our members belong to, they are willing to serve others and make this world a better place to live. You all have such loving and giving hearts.

Harriet Beecher Stowe is quoted as saying "It is a matter of taking the side of the weak against the strong, something the best people have always done." I count all of you among the "best people" I know! You spend time and effort in taking the side of the weak and lending them your strength. In the CWC News Sheet article I just finished, I noted information about the Independent Sector's valuation of one hour of non profit volunteer time. Every hour you donate is worth \$28.54! Every Volunteer is so valuable to the world around us. The world economy could not possibly function without volunteers. I am so grateful to volunteer for organisations that help those who have less, and who live in very hard situations, to have a better life.

Many of you have donated to the ACWW Appeal for funds for 2021. Thank you so much for your donations. Please know that these donations can be made all through this year. Pennies for Friendship are always welcome and appreciated. I hope you were able to attend the virtual 'Afternoon Tea with the World President' and The Great ACWW Quiz. They were both available on social media platforms. A link that gives you the opportunity to download the ACWW Quiz is available within the latest issue of the "Country Woman." And just a note as a reminder that the current issue of the "Country Woman" will be sent in four emails, one per week during this month.

There are many things in the world of nature that can be related to our lives. Hermit crabs do not grow their own shells. As the crab grows it leaves the shell that is too small and finds another larger shell. During the time of changing one home for another, the crab is particularly vulnerable to predators and outside forces. Unfortunately, the crab must experience that vulnerability simply because it is growing. As we experience growth in our lives we can feel vulnerable also. Many of us do not want to change, we do not like change, we don't want life to be hard, we do not like the feeling of being vulnerable to others and outside forces. BUT, we can do hard things, in fact sometimes we MUST do hard things. Doing hard things turns us into people better equipped with the empathy needed to help others and make a difference in the lives of those around us. So embrace change, and embrace that vulnerability that comes through growth. Most importantly embrace the 'you' that you become as you move into your 'new shell'!

As always, I love to hear from you, please email me at usa@acww.org.uk