

WOCP Area I Director
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As an Area Director, have you heard, "If requested to serve in this leadership role, accept because you don't have to do anything?" Does this expression sound all too familiar? It does to me because this is exactly what I heard!

Having retired from a teaching career of 40 years and attempting to teach students to accept responsibility, my nature dictates that if I accept a leadership role, I must be willing to give that position 100 percent--anything less just isn't acceptable. Having been asked to write an article as Area Director I, I was hesitant because my first year has truly been a year of learning. I have fallen short on many occasions; but, I'm willing to brush myself off and continue to press forward and strive to fulfill my assigned duties.

As I read the brief overview of the duties a Director is to accomplish, I thought this is simple enough--the responsibilities are to visit conventions in the assigned area and be of general help to the WOCP members or President, if required! Simple, right? Shortly after returning from my first Board meeting during the Museum's Open House, I sat down and composed a letter to the seven presidents in my area. The letter was an introduction of myself, an offering to establish a direct line of communication between the presidents and me, an offering to share any concerns that the state membership might have with the Board, and a plea for help to avoid WOCP's decreasing membership! With this letter, I enclosed a newsletter I share with my state briefly outlining the actions from the Board meeting!

Now for a pat on the back because I'm off to a good start! Wrong! There was much more to do, and my ignorance was NOT bliss! I fell far short of handling duties!

As noted, Area Directors should attend the conventions of the states that they serve. With declining membership on the state level, Arkansas joined with Oklahoma and Missouri to form a Tri-State group (soon to be Multi-State with Kansas joining us). Having attended the Tri-State Convention, I felt good in saying I had visited two of my states. Then, I attended Kansas' WOCP Convention. As a director, I wanted to be a part of their convention--not just an attendee! My wife, Judy, (also a painter on porcelain) and I arrived on Wednesday. As I observed the vendors moving in, I immediately offered my assistance. Also, Judy and I had been asked to judge the club tables as well as individual items from various categories. During the WOCP meeting, I was given an opportunity to express the value of Arkansas' joining the Tri-State consortium. I must say there never was a time we did not feel totally welcome and a vital part of the convention. It is not always possible for an Area Director to attend all conventions (some of the states we represent are not WOCP members). But, when possible, do attend. It will give you new and fresh ideas to take home to your state and to share with others you represent!

One of the next assignments was to furnish the Corporate Secretary with the names of the voting delegates of those attending the World Convention in Fredericksburg, VA. Not an easy feat, but with much telephoning and emailing, this task was accomplished!

As a trial, the Area Directors were asked to work with the local chair on the world level and contact the states they represent to determine the number of tables needed for each state display and to issue a plea for items from each state for the hospitality bags! Again, not an easy task, but a task that could be accomplished.

Immediately following the Biennial Membership Meeting at World, the Areas broke into Ad Hoc Committee sessions to elect members for the WOCP Standing Committees! After arriving home,

I wrote an individual letter to each of the Committee members outlining the duties with a copy being sent to the Committee Chairman.

The old adage is, "Teachers never die . . . they just lose their class and continue to ramble on!" Ramble is exactly what I've done! Now, I wish to throw out a gauntlet for all Area Directors. We need to communicate . . . communicate . . . and communicate some more! Let's join together and set a new example where we no longer have the stigma, "Oh, you don't have to do anything." Let's communicate with our states and keep them updated. Determine if there are problems/suggestions that need to be reported to the board. Let's communicate with our area's committee chairs and members and share with them their duties and offer our assistance when needed. Let's attend state conventions when possible and attend their board meetings and get a grasp on their needs/problems with which we can offer assistance. My challenge: as Area Directors, let's change our image and communicate, communicate, communicate. By doing this, I think our membership will appreciate our efforts!