

President's Message

by Joan Kemp



TO WORK TOGETHER.....

Two years ago I wrote an article on “consolidation” within our industry associations and specifically related it to having three joint committees between the WMMA[®], WMIA[®], and AWFS[®]. These committees were to be a Joint Education Committee in which AWFS took the lead, a joint Technology Committee with WMIA taking the lead, and a Joint Public Policy committee with WMMA in the lead position. The purpose of this consolidation of committee work was to eliminate duplicity, to gain strength and effectiveness by increasing numbers, and to decrease costs for each association. It seemed like the most logical step to take in serving the good of the entire industry. I am sad to report, this exercise started off very well but appears to have fallen by the way side. What happened?

Two years ago there was a real synergy between the three associations. Everyone was out to benefit the long range welfare of the entire woodworking industry—not just one association. There was a willingness to work together: to help each other, thereby helping the whole industry. We at AWFS still work toward our mission statement to “promote a growing and financially sound woodworking and furnishings industry”. To us this means to look toward the future and find ways to improve the status not only of *our* members but of the entire woodworking industry. If the industry is healthy, AWFS will be healthy and it is up to us to help that goal to be attained.

AWFS Board members work to set up programs, seminars, and trade shows to promote the industry and educate members how to work smarter, faster, better. Granted, during the most recent economic down turn, everyone was putting in extra hours at their “real job” and some of our programs were slowed down a bit. Now that the rebound or uptick is just beginning, AWFS is in full swing presenting new opportunities for businesses to improve. The 2013 AWFS Fair in Las Vegas will help companies position themselves ahead of their competitors. Participating companies will make connections with the right buyers, strengthen existing relationships, and most importantly, have a chance to present their new products and technology to people who are looking for ways to improve their businesses. The AWFS Fair helps the **entire** woodworking industry – not just AWFS members.

We are planning on working diligently to bring young people into our industry thereby securing the future of the woodworking industry in the United States. We will plan to continue the Fresh Wood competition where secondary and post secondary students submit their woodworking projects for cash prizes. AWFS plans to support its scholarship program by providing scholarships again for students in woodworking as soon as it is feasibly possible. We also are one of the largest financial contributors to WoodLinks, USA and AWFS takes the lead in supporting SkillsUSA! We care! We are investing in the future of woodworking – now, not later!

Let's get rid of all of the small differences and once again get on the path to enhance and benefit the entire woodworking industry. ***We need to work together to meet to needs of the industry. Won't you join us?***