

November 1, 2015

Dear Presidents,

What a beautiful fall we are experiencing. The colors have just been magnificent. I love the light in the fall, it is so clear on the sunny days and reminds me of the light in Venice, Italy. I had the opportunity to visit Venice several times when my daughter and son-in-law lived in Italy and the light is indescribable.

The MAHA Fall Conference was held at Crystal Mountain this past month and some of you were there. I believe the conference was one of the best I have attended. Every speaker was excellent and the topics were relative to our times and needs. Seventeen members represented the SWD including six "first timers".

"The Five Must-Haves for Retail Success in 2016!" was a great presentation. They were 1) Customers need to see the connection between their lives and products and services you offer. 2) Connect to your customers senses (and their cents). 3) Connect to your influencers and storytellers. 4) Connect your gift shop's touchpoints. 5) Connect to purpose. And Bonus Must-Have 6) Connect to MY own heart and wellness. Speaker, Cheryl Karpen is the author of the "eat your peas" books. You can learn more about her presentations and books at www.eatyourpeas.com. Also, visit www.mahaonline.org to download presentations from the conference to share with your membership.

Two networking sessions were presented by MAHA board members. I attended "The Changing Role of the Volunteer" led by Mary Lu Cramer, MAHA Vice President. Those who were there came away with information to help their groups adapt to the changing scenes of hospitals today. The room was overflowing with attendees, ideas and thoughts. The other session going on at the same time was "Issues for Small Hospital Volunteer Programs". It also was attended by a large crowd. A sure sign of changing times.

This only represents a small portion of the conference, but you get the idea that I found it very informative. It is rare for me to attend a meeting and not come away with new ideas. Learning is an everyday process. It was also very enjoyable to meet and greet the attendees from our district and to get to know them as well as others from around the state.

The Hillsdale Community Health Center celebrated its 100th year in service in September! What an accomplishment. Be sure to congratulate our members from Hillsdale. I visited the Sturgis Hospital auxiliary board the first Monday of October and I will be visiting the Paw Paw group and the Hastings Pennock group this month. Please let me know when I can visit any of the rest of you. I enjoyed the drive to Sturgis as well as the visit. These visits give me a better sense of connection to you.

Be sure to remind the individual who completes the volunteer hours report that it is due the first week in January. If you haven't received the form from MAHA, you will very soon. This is an important report as it provides all of the volunteer hours performed for the state of Michigan hospitals. It is also a great topic to share with your volunteers.

I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving. Enjoy your families and friends during this holiday season that is rapidly approaching.