

President's Letter

Tricia O'Regan

Dear WAAC members,

First, my thoughts and sympathies go out to everyone who has been affected by the Coronavirus.

This is a somewhat impossible letter to write. Traditionally, a WACC president's message in the May issue would focus on the upcoming annual meeting and selling the tantalizing details to potential participants.

As I write this, none of us has much certainty about, oh, *anything*, and so I have no idea what the situation will be when you receive this newsletter!

My own workplace, FAMSF, shut down on Friday, March 13th, and I, like most of you, have been home since then doing my best in the current normal. I have been keeping busy cleaning up files and databases, participating in our museum's digital outreach, and even managed to brush up on the MCP thanks to Chris and Nina's online workshop. It's difficult for me, however, to break away from the pull of the constant Corona news, as we all become amateur epidemiologists and public health experts and speculate about the future. I've had the time to be in touch with colleagues all over the world, as we all commiserate about the unknown road ahead and navigation of changes for our institutions, university programs, and private practices.

It has given everyone time to reflect, and hopefully, to connect and to access what is important and essential both at work and in life.

I do have moments of guiltily enjoying this unexpected time with my family. With homebound husband, Mike, and twenty-something daughters, Oona and Lucie, the loss of our usual hectic schedules has given us rare time to slow down and "do nothing" together. We take long walks in the Berkeley hills, watch streaming videos, and cook, all at a leisurely pace. Daisy, our rescue dog, is in heaven with multiple walks a day, too many treats, and a wider choice of bedmates to sleep with. The sound of giggling fills the house as the kids enjoy some rare extended time with each other too. Thanks to their talents in the kitchen, Mike and I feel like we live in a bakery and have dinner each night at a gourmet restaurant. I may never fit out my front door again.

Other upsides to this enforced sabbatical are that my house has never been cleaner or more organized, and I've temporarily won an epic battle with the weeds in our cracked driveway! I started by pulling them, and as the weeks rolled into months, I washed out the cracks with a high pH solution and followed by filling every groove in the cement. I didn't go so far as before and after photos, but I think I really need to get back to work. The neighbors are beginning to talk.

But about the meeting. We do have (or did have?) a great conference planned at Stanford Sierra Camp for September! The abstracts I have received to date are fascinating; thank you for the submissions. The camp will be (would have been) a peaceful and gorgeous location to mingle with old and new friends, learn, hike, swim, paddle, and just sit and stare at one of the prettiest lakes in the world.

As of today, May 12th, as I listen to Gov. Gavin (each day at noon!), there does appear to be a bit of light at the end of this tunnel, and we may well be back to some sort of "normal" by the time you read this. Stanford intends to decide during the first two weeks of June if we can go ahead with the conference. If so, fantastic! And we will make the meeting as safe as possible. If not, I do hope the WAAC meeting can be held at Fallen Leaf Lake sometime in the post-vaccine future!

So, knowing very little, I will sign off:

"Onwards to Stanford Sierra Camp in September and/or Seattle in 2021!"

My best to you, stay well, and wash your hands!

Trish

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