



President's Message

Where Are We Going?

By WIA President Mike DiGilio, C.P.

As the holidays pass and winter sets in, the season makes me think about the WIA. I've been a member since 1990. That's a long time. As one of my friends says when we talk about how long we've been doing what we do, "Nobody does anything for 20, 30, 40 years." To a certain extent, he's right. People change jobs, cars, houses, and even spouses. Of all the guys I grew up with, only one other person worked for the same company his whole life. Most people make many changes and adjustments over their careers.

I've seen a lot of changes with the WIA since I joined. Some of the craftsmen I admired in this trade are gone, but some remain. I never traveled for work before I joined; but, over the years, our craft has taken me to a lot of places in this country. I still use many of the tools and techniques I learned when I started, and I have also adopted many new methods over the years.

It's true for the WIA, too. Our board has changed operation and hired a new management company. Our previous management company had been with us, with the exception of few years, since the beginning.

We now face many of the same problems as other associations: an aging membership, the lack of volunteerism, and rising costs. For the past few years, our board has noticed certain trends and made appropriate changes. We changed our name and updated our logo. The board took a good hard look at where we wanted to be in five, 10, and 20 years. Wallpaper may not go away, but many of our installers will; and, there are too few of us to go around anymore. Young people don't enter the trades like they used to, and even fewer enter the paperhanging business.

This is why we have conventions. We educate our members in techniques that make us stand above the crowd. Seminars help us become better at what we do. We are investing in a marketing program. The WIA has never marketed itself like we are about to do. We are getting the word out about us. We want to become the go-to group for wallcovering installations. Over the next six months, we will be working with a marketing company that will put the WIA on the map. ■

Hangin' In By the Bay

By Gerri Beauvais

The Northern California Chapter hosted a one-day workshop on February 17 at the Alameda Eagles Lodge. Titled "Hangin' in by the Bay," the workshop featured demonstrations by WIA members and included a light breakfast and lunch for participants. Topics covered the business side of commercial work, paste machines, shears and scissors, dry hanging silk and paper, and more.

For fun and games, the chapter held a raffle drawing for paperhanging products and supplies.

Contact Gerri Beauvais at sfpaperhanger@aol.com or call her at (415) 271-2762 for more information about the Northern California Chapter's annual winter workshop next year. ■

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WIA European Adventure

By Julie Young, *The Wallpaper Lady*

The trip to England was fantastic, in large part due to the organizational efforts between WIA members in England, Australia, and the U.S. We flew into Heathrow Airport in London and then bussed two hours to our hotel in Oxford.

England defines “luxury” hotel much differently than we do in the U.S. Tiny rooms do not come equipped with fluffy white robes and substitute fresh air for air conditioning.

We opened the windows and fell asleep to the sound of cow bells from the field next door. Our visit coincided with a record “heat wave” with temperatures topping at about 75° F. I wore undershirts and leggings, while all the local gals pulled out their tank tops and skimpy skirts.

The hotel was a short distance from Oxford University. In the mornings while I made good use of the walking trail behind the hotel, I watched the rowing teams practice their strokes on the River Thames. The town teamed with college students affecting a punk look and fresh ideas.

I missed the day’s final tour at Christ Church by walking to the wrong door. By the time I got to the correct door, they had admitted the last visitor. I was only about thirty seconds late. I tried to sweet talk the guys at both doors,

but no go. No matter. Walking further down the street, I chanced upon a nondescript sign that read “Musical Museum.” I opened the gate, walked down some stairs, and found the entrance. The basement museum was

filled with very old musical instruments from beautifully inlaid harpsicords to lyres to lutes to ancient wind instruments. I never would have discovered this hidden gem if I’d gone on the church tour. (On another day, I did slip into another beautiful old church again, too late to climb the famous clock tower, but in time to see preparations for a concert that evening.)

Each morning, the 25 of us boarded a large bus (same driver, great guy, neck tie and sweater, very proper) and headed out to the day’s destinations. Folks, England is small and the roads are narrow. You could stick your hand out the window and touch the vehicle next to you. City roads are crowded. One-lane, winding country roads allow no room for two vehicles to pass.

Everywhere we went, our hosts were warm and generous and very excited to welcome us.

Our first stop was Lewis & Wood, which manufactures 54-inch wide panel murals. The owner himself talked to us a talk about the company and its products. We toured the print room and saw the different qualities of several types of digital printing followed by a demonstration of how to hang these wide goods. Yeah, easy for the 6-feet, 5-inch British guy with the wide wing span. Then we were treated to lunch (sandwiches of cheddar and



chutney, charcuterie, fruit, local craft beer).

Back on the bus down those winding country lanes, we visited Allyson McDermott who warmly welcomed us into her home, a 1000-year old structure updated for modern life and still retaining its Old World look. She graciously let us crawl all over every inch of the place. The lovely grounds



included a small lily pond, classic frilly English gardens, footpaths that led to hidden “secret gardens” (I think I stumbled upon the grave of a beloved pet), open pastures, and cattle in the neighboring farmer’s field.

Back to wallpaper... over crisps (potato chips) and locally crafted hard cider, McDermott told us about her business of restoring and recreating old wallpaper – some paper dating back to the 15th century. Her work involves researching and reproducing historic pigments and papers, printing them in her studio next door using period-correct methods, and then installing the paper in whatever museum or historic home to which they belonged. An employee gave us a demonstration of authentic block printing.

The next morning we toured Anstey Wallpaper Company, which manufactures many brands. (We swore to not tell which ones.) We walked through the huge building with scores of roaring printing machines, learned the difference between types of wallpaper printing (gravure, raised-ink, screen, block, digital, etc.), and saw their quality control—two guys sitting and facing opposite directions who inspected every inch of wallpaper as it came racing off the rollers. Again, the owner took time to host us personally, and then fed us lunch. (I must say, I’ve developed quite a taste for cheddar and

chutney “sammies.”)

In the afternoon we stopped at Blenheim Palace, constructed over many years in the early 1700s and the birthplace of Winston Churchill. We enjoyed high tea in the Indian Room, the walls of which are covered with a centuries-old, hand-painted mural. Our hostess took us on a tour of the palace and tailored her talk just for us, focusing on the wallcoverings and textiles. We had enough time to tour the palace chapel and then the grounds, some of which were immaculately manicured, and some of which were wild and spooky – almost like the Emerald Forest of Oz.

The next morning we drove two hours to London. As we drove past centuries-old buildings – Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben – and crossed the Westminster Bridge, our British WIA member hushed our talk and pointed out the spot where, two months earlier, a terrorist rammed his car into pedestrians. People jumped off the bridge trying to escape, but perished in the water below. (Our trip also coincided with the Manchester bombing of the concert for young girls.)

Off the bus found us at London’s Design Centre in Chelsea Harbour. We toured the Fromental showroom (pricey, hand-painted silk and scenic wall murals), again hosted by the founder and accompanied by snacks. We also toured the Arte Showroom. Then we were free to wander the huge Design Centre, exploring



showrooms for brand names both familiar and new.

I admit I'm not big on shopping, and high-end products mean nothing to me, so I was a little lost. However our local WIA member's wife is an interior designer. She swooped down and swept me off to some showrooms of companies with which I am familiar—and I even got to practice my French with the folks at Pierre Frey.

After lunch (Jamie's Italian), we headed into a grittier part of the city. Our bus parked in front of a 3-story brick building set in little more than a deteriorating alley. We walked up narrow, creaky metal stairs—no elevator—to the third floor. Several tenants, one being a catering company, shared the building. The aroma of Indian curry floated through the entire building. My companions were a little unsettled, but I loved it. The scent reminded me of my days in South St. Louis.

Our destination on the top floor, Meystyle, makes wallcoverings embedded with tiny LED lights. The owner had flown back from a trade show in New York City just to talk with us. We were shown how the electrodes are attached, how gold leaf is hand-ironed to individual sheets of wallcovering, how the product is installed, and more. Each purchase comes complete with electrical adaptors for any country – a nice inclusion for the \$10,000 per panel price tag.

That was followed by cocktails at China Tang, a restaurant cloaked in Fromental murals.

The next morning we had a business meeting at the historic Vincent's Club at

Oxford University. This was a little intimidating, because we were instructed to dress in business casual and to show utmost respect for this revered Oxford institution. However, I didn't need the dress and heels. Vincent's Club is one dimly-lit, unairconditioned, somewhat worn room on the second floor of a building on a side street. It's respected and loved, but definitely on the casual side. Again, the caretaker hosted us personally. We sat through a few educational presentations, then met with some local paperhangers ("decorators" as they call them in England). It was fun chatting with them and hearing the differences in how we approach the same job. Again, we had lunch with local brews.

When I first arrived, I worried that I wouldn't get a chance to eat in an authentic British pub or drink a real Guinness beer. As it turns out, just about every restaurant in England is a pub and Guinness is everywhere. (In the Dublin airport, you can get Guinness T-shirts, board games, and even candy.) The pubs are loud. After three days, I just couldn't take any more of the noise or see the point of sitting at a table with your friends when you couldn't hear a word anyone was saying. So, that night I tossed more than enough money onto the table to pay my bill, fled the pub, and hoped for a few minutes of quiet. What an opportune decision this turned out to be!

Leaving the restaurant, I turned down a dark and quiet street. Around a corner, the streets of London opened before me, a blast of people and activity. I saw an art gallery across the street. Always up for a little art, culture, and



free vino, I walked in. “What’s going on outside?” I

asked. “Is some kind of festival going on?”

“No,” she said. “It’s the pubs.”

She explained that the pubs were too small to hold the crowds and didn’t allow smoking inside, so people spilled out onto the sidewalks. There were masses of them. Later I walked in and out of a few of the pubs just to get the flavor of the old buildings: dark wood, beer taps, how people interacted, and what clothing they wore for an evening out.

Back to the art gallery... I happily accepted their flute of Prosecco. Looking around, I saw the place was little more than one small room displaying a sole piece of Pier I quality artwork. Then the clerk asked if I wanted to see some art and motioned for me to follow her downstairs. Down a flight of stairs and a turn, a whole gallery revealed itself. The clerk took me from piece to piece, explaining each one. I was grateful for her explanation, because, on my own, I would not have thought much of a bunch of spoons welded together and stuck to the wall.

I left the gallery, made a quick tour of another art venue, did that once-through of a few pubs, checked out architecture, indulged in some people watching, and made it back to the original pub in time to meet my friends and get on the bus for the hotel.

The last night, because we had to catch an early flight the next morning and because I didn’t think my ears could stand another evening of raucous, high-decibel din, I declined to eat with my friends. I set off to check off the

last entry on my bucket list, an Indian curry house. I walked the streets of Oxford, full of college kids enjoying an evening out. I spotted one Indian restaurant, but had to wait for it to open. When I circled back later, I opened the door to find—nothing. Nothing but a dark set of narrow stairs heading up. I began to understand that this old, old city was short on space, that businesses were shoehorned into any sliver they could find, and that stairways can lead to magical places.

So, I walked up, and did, indeed, find a cozy restaurant stretched across the long narrow space above the store below. I asked for a seat by the open window, but the host wouldn’t give it to me. Zeesh, I thought, it’s early, you have no other customers, and I’ll be done and gone before your Friday night crowd comes in. No matter. The service was good, the Riesling a perfect complement, and I got my curry. It was authentic and delicious.

The next morning I got up at 3:00 to catch the bus to Heathrow. I was starting my day at the same time a group of young folks were just ending their night at the clubs. The two guys and two gals did not look coupled, but decidedly flirty. The girls in their short skinny dresses wobbled in their high heels. When the cobblestones became too treacherous, they flung their shoes to the pavement. One spilled her purse. Everyone fumbled to gather the contents. The women tossed their long hair, and the guys rushed to straighten it. Eyelashes fluttered. Men pranced. In a haze of alcohol and amour, they were oblivious to everything but themselves, and I was the invisible American on a bench, privy to it all.

Quite a fun eyeful, for my last glimpse of England.

WIA New Members

New Members February 2018

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At-Large

The Tampa Bay Wallpaper Installer

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Guillermo Urbina

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At-Large

NATIONAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

When you have a choice of vendors,
remember to use WIA Associate
Members first.

Advance Equipment

Manufacturing Company

AMBTRA, Inc.

Atlantic Wallcovering and Décor

Bradbury & Bradbury Art

Wallpapers, Inc.

Cavalier Wall Liner

Designtex Group (The)

Experience49

Eykon Design Resources

Fabricmate Systems

Fidelity Wallcovering, Inc.

Gardner-Gibson, Inc.

Heritage Wallcoverings Ltd.

(Lincrusta)

Hytex Industries, Inc.

Jacaranda, Inc.

Jack Loconsolo & Company, Inc.

Koessel Studios

Len-Tex Wallcoverings

LSI Wallcovering

Maya Romanoff Corporation

MDC Wallcoverings

Pacific Laser Systems (PLS)

Painters & Allied Trades LMCI

Phillip Jeffries Ltd.

Presto Tape

R37 Inc.

Roman Decorating Products LLC

Roos International, Ltd.

Wallcovering

Rust-Oleum Corporation, Zinsser

Brands

Steve's Blinds & Wallpaper, LLC

Textile Wallcoverings

International, LTD (TWIL)

The Paint Store Online

Thibaut Wallcovering

Vahallan Papers

Wallauer's

Wallpaper Boulevard

Wallpaper Direct

Wallpaper Warehouse

Williamson College of the Trades

Wolf-Gordon, Inc.

York Wallcoverings, Inc.

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Spring Workshop Northeast Region

It's February! Winter is almost over! The chapters and the WIA members are thinking of March Madness!

This year things will be a little different. The Boston Chapter will host this year's March Madness, the spring workshop for the Northeast Region.

A little while back, the Northeastern Region chapters held a teleconference. We invited Sarah Smyth to attend. She is working with Warren Reeb to gather commitments and schedule the demos for the one-day workshop. During the teleconference, we learned that Boston's chapter meeting was scheduled the following Tuesday. We hoped they would have a final list of demos at that time.

The Boston Chapter has always played a huge part in the day's events and success. We all look forward to seeing what they schedule. It's all about working smarter, not harder! The tips and tricks demonstrated that day can help you and your business, for sure!

Shake off that cabin fever and come out to the Hilton Hotel, Sturbridge, MA for a full-day event "for paperhangers by paperhangers." Join us on Saturday, March 24, 2018, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

You have already seen the "Save the Date" notice emailed to all WIA members. Come see us: we look forward to it! ■

WIA Chicago Chapter Holiday Party

By Jennifer Curtis

On January 13, 2018, 27 chapter members, guests, and associates spent the evening together enjoying a wonderful dinner and fellowship at a local suburban Chicago

restaurant. While nibbling on appetizers, delicious salads, and mouthwatering entrees, all caught up on family and holiday activities and, of course, the past year's busy business climate. WIA Associates, Greg Laux of MDC Wallcoverings and Robin Patrick of Roman Decorating Products, joined the Chicago Chapter's annual holiday gathering. Attendees created a short video filled with warm messages to

share with retired chapter member Herb Potts, who has been battling Parkinson's Disease and is no longer able to attend any of our chapter functions. ■



Regional News

Below are Region Updates (formerly known as Paste-In Notes). Take a look at what is happening in various WIA regions.

Western Region Report

San Diego and Coachella

Chapters: There is nothing new to report. Everything is the same with no activity going on with chapters.



Northern California

Chapter: Members report they are all pretty busy working and preparing for their workshop titled "Hanging by the Bay." This workshop will be held on February 17, 2018.

Colorado Chapter: Members held a chapter meeting in mid-January at the hotel where the convention will be held. They discussed building walls and took pictures of the place. They said they expected more local hangers to attend and requested flyers be sent to them for placement in paint and wallpaper stores.

L.A. Chapter: They still meeting on Saturdays each month.

Central Region Report

By Central Region

Director,

Susan Macuna, C.P.

The convention is coming! the convention is coming!

This year WIA regions are reaching out to their members for a different kind of table top event. Each region will supply a video of six to 10 minutes on a topic. Central Region's topic is three-dimensional wallpaper, inside and outside corners management. So, Central Region, have you hung this type of product? Would you like a bit of fame? Are you willing to come to convention to add to the video with live talks and demos? A dynamic duo, one in front and one behind the camera,



would be great. Think about it, it's a great way to share your knowledge for posterity. Call or text Susan Macuna at [440-669-6676](tel:440-669-6676) or send an email message to masula@yahoo.com soon!

On another help-wanted note, Central Region will hold its second annual workshop in Indianapolis, IN at a Holiday Inn on May 5th. Attendees will enjoy a continental breakfast and southwestern buffet lunch consisting of salad and taco makings. Sadly, our costs have gone up – gotta feed you all.

We are trying to interest paperhangers who are not part of our association to come, see, and join a great group of colleagues.

Event topics will include:

- Embellishments, finishing touches that elevate your project. These include vent coverings, fabric tape, studs, and welting materials.
- Getting the writing on the wall. Have you been asked to install words? Don't walk away, take on the project! Spacing and placement issues will be discussed and solved.
- Self-stick wallpaper: it's here to stay,
- Dealing with inside corners without tearing out your hair.
- A fifth topic yet to be announced.

We have speakers for the self-stick paper and vent covering sessions. I need a speaker for the words and embellishment parts. Speakers receive discounted admission and only pay for the food portion of the workshop. What a steal of a deal!

Contact Susan Macuna if you would like to help or have a fourth topic idea to share! More info will come as we get closer to the event date. ■

Denver Convention 2018

By Terri Trapp, Chairperson 2018 Unconventional Convention

The Rocky Mountain Chapter is excited to welcome you to the WIA Convention – Denver 2018 to be held September 13 – 15. Our agenda focuses on learning new products and techniques and twists on old standbys. At the “unconventional convention,” we will deliver an entertaining and tech-driven new look.

We want to share with you our love for the beautiful state in which we live and play, as well as the dynamic and vibrant city where many of

us work. Make your plans to stay and play in Colorado by visiting www.colorado.com, the official vacation guide. TIP: Ask for a mountain view when you book your room at the Holiday Inn Denver – Cherry Creek. Call the hotel directly at (888) 388-6129 and state you are with the Wallcovering Installers Association to qualify for the discounted group rate.

We look forward to seeing old friends and connecting with new ones. ■



Rocky Mountain Chapter photo participants left to right: Richard Bauer, Terri Trapp, Donna McCoy, Rex Landem, Shawn Bell, Kim Howard, Alec Ramsay. In front, is our yoga master, Lin Erhardt. Not pictured, but belonging to our chapter, are Arthur Sarlat, Beverly Smith, and Jodi Stoehrmann.

Decorah's Stacy Bolson Receives Prestigious Craftsmanship Award

By Julie Berg-Raymond, Decorah Newspapers

Anyone who knows Decorah's Stacy Bolson knows he is not a person who likes to stand in the limelight; but when you're as good at something as he is, you're bound to occasionally draw some attention.

Bolson recently received the first place Residential Craftsmanship Award from the Wallcovering Installers Association (WIA).

According to a statement released by the WIA, the award was given "in recognition of his outstanding work on a two-story foyer with a spiral staircase located in Minnesota."

"I was surprised, because I knew I was up against a lot of people who'd been doing this for a long time," Bolson said. "I feel pretty good about it."

Bolson was commissioned for the project by Marti Gray for the James A. Thompson House bed-and-breakfast in Lanesboro, Minn. Gray and her husband, David, are proprietors of the bed-and-breakfast.

A collaboration begins

When the Grays signed papers on the Italianate house in Lanesboro with the intention of restoring it and operating it as a bed-and-breakfast, Marti knew she wanted the best – and, where wallpapering was concerned, that was Bradbury and Bradbury. Founded in 1979 by Bruce Bradbury with the mission of rediscovering and recreating the best in historic wallpaper design, the company specializes in fine hand-printed art wallpapers.

"I had been studying the Bradbury and Bradbury art papers for about 30 years and when this opportunity to own and restore an



1870s Italianate home came to pass, I had already begun the design process," Gray said. "Because of the specialty of hand-cutting the papers, I knew Bradbury had a list of craftsmen who could successfully install the ceiling treatments."

She went to their site, expecting to find a qualified person from the St. Paul area (which

would require extra money to house while they installed the papers).

"Imagine my joy to find someone in Decorah who could commute," she said.

Enter Bolson, third-generation owner of S.B. Bolson & Sons, LLC, a painting and wallpapering business started in 1922 by Bolson's grandfather, Stephen Benjamin (SB) Bolson. Stephen was joined in the business by his four sons when they came of age – Hubert and Ray, both now deceased; Kenny; and Stacy's father, Spencer.

Stacy Bolson joined the business when he was 12, and went to work full-time when he graduated high school. He bought into the business in 1991, when Hubert and Ray retired.



Kenny retired in 2001, and Spencer in 2006.

Bolson and Gray first collaborated on a project for the James A. Thompson House in 2016, which consisted of three rooms: the library, living and dining rooms. The project took six weeks to complete and required working around other contractors' equipment and work in-progress.

"Stacy is a perfectionist, which was a blessing for me since I, too, have a discerning eye," Gray said. "The dining room ceiling had over 80 cuts, which are then installed like a jigsaw puzzle. Having someone with technique and heart resulted in exactly the vision I had for the room."

When it came time to restore the two-story foyer with a spiral staircase, Gray wanted Stacy to do all the work: painting, prepping and papering.

"The reason for this was because I knew my vision was going to be complicated and our working relationship from the year before was going to be critical in problem solving," she said.

She turned the space into a tripartite – which meant splitting the wall space into three distinct areas.

"My husband installed a flexible chair rail to accommodate the circular staircase and Stacy did an amazing job of installing the paintable wall covering and inventing the painting process for making it look like leather," she said. "Stacy was an excellent person to bounce my ideas off of, and together we produced an amazing highlight of this home."

An award-winning project takes shape

"As you could imagine, the spiral staircase added to the uniqueness and complexity of this project which required a lot of thought, planning and layout work prior to installation," a WIA representative said in a prepared statement about the project.

Bolson spent a lot of time laying out the 90 different pieces of wallpaper used in the project, making sure the patterns aligned and the design was balanced. All pieces had to be trimmed onsite and custom-designed to fit

the space. He constructed special scaffolding to work in the awkward space created by the spiral staircase, and actually wallpapered the area twice – first with a blank "stock" paper to give it a good base, which would be able to absorb excess moisture and lock the seams into place.

"It can be tedious work, but it's rewarding when you get to see the finished project," Bolson said. "We were doing a first-class job here, and (Marti) wanted to go all the way."

The entire project took Bolson five weeks to complete, during which time he put most other projects on hold.

In addition to feeling the satisfaction of a job well done, Bolson said his experience on the project was enhanced by the person who hired him to do it.

"(Marti) was great to work for," he said. "She knew what she wanted, and she wanted it to be the best."

And, according to the association devoted to Bolson's trade, that is exactly what she got.

"The (first place Residential Craftsmanship) Award is intended to honor individuals who have exemplified their expertise in the wall-covering industry," Kay Lowe, association executive with the WIA said in a statement. "As you can see, Stacy Bolson is well deserving of such an honor as he did an outstanding job on this project and produced stunning results."

Gray agrees.

"I can't say enough about (Stacy)," she said. "He's thorough, honest, creative, prompt and will go out of his way to please."

He is also personable and modest, she said.

"He could easily boast about his accomplishments, yet he prefers to not step into the limelight – even when I believe he should." ■

Stacy Bolson is the third-generation owner of S.B. Bolson & Sons, LLC, a painting and wallpapering business started in 1922 in Decorah by Bolson's grandfather, Stephen Benjamin (SB) Bolson. (Photo by Julie Berg-Raymond)

Director Biography: Dennis George

A Certified Paperhanger with over 30 years of experience, Dennis George now serves as the Western Regional Director for the WIA. He is a member of the Coachella Valley Chapter.

Thirty-four years ago, Dennis learned the trade from a friend's uncle who needed an apprentice. He traveled to Palm Springs, CA to assist his new boss hanging wallpaper in upscale country clubs. After a year of table work, he was ready to assume a more advanced workload and greater responsibility.

Today, Dennis primarily installs high-end wallpaper, about 60 percent grasscloth with the



balance mostly comprised of murals and now self-stick wallcoverings. When not working, he enjoys hiking and golf and watching sports.

With his decades of trade experience and two years of service as an alternate for the association, he decided it was time to step up and serve on the WIA Board of Directors. As a director, he will focus his attention on the organization's continued success and growth through membership recruitment. A widower, Dennis views service with WIA as a way to give

back to the profession all that it has given him. The fellowship among colleagues isn't so bad, either. ■