

President's Message for AYR Website

This year began with an opportunity for our AYR Regional Vice Presidents to travel together and meet for three days at our national AYR headquarters and offices located on the campus of Springfield College. Donna Dunn, AYP CEO and her staff provided a great deal of support and input as we prepared for a phone conference meeting of our National Board. We gathered primarily to review our strategic plan for the next three years. Bill Cameron was present to give us input and clarification on that plan. We were also working to prepare for a series of training events for chapter leaders to be held in May. I am calling these events, "Twenty Four Hours in May." These sessions will be designed to capture the best practices and models that are currently being utilized by our chapters as they recruit and retain members by having successful and productive meetings and activities available. We hope to have every chapter represented at the trainings.

While we were on campus in Springfield, we also had an opportunity to meet with Harry Rock, Director of the Springfield College Office of YMCA Relations and some of the many students that are preparing for YMCA careers. It is a proud moment, and inspiring, to have chats with young persons looking forward to Y careers. Dinner with those students restored much of the pride and excitement felt during our decades of service in the YMCA. Just being in the Stitzer YMCA Center, visiting the YMCA Hall of Fame and selected YMCA archives, provides a reason for AYR Chapters to continue the goal of preserving and expanding their own archives and historical input from members.

The minutes of our Board Meeting still stand to be approved and distributed, but we moved ahead on actions that are part of the three year plan adopted in 2011. AYR is moving to combine membership enrollment so our members can join a chapter when they are joining AYR. We are also moving to have chapters decide whether they want to handle the enrollment process or delegate that task to our staff in Springfield. More details will be forthcoming. The board has also approved moving to a fiscal calendar year commencing in 2013. It is believed that change will eliminate some of the confusion created by having a membership and donations that are part of two calendar years.

I remain available for personal contact and like so many others these days, I prefer E mail messages as I have a chance to prepare a response, but my cell phone number will remain on our website should the need for immediate contact arise. I am very impressed with our three regional vice presidents. Jack Tillman, Ralph Christian and David Bast provide me with a near fulltime level of support. I am deeply appreciative. I hope that chapter leaders and members will consider them as the first line of contact if you need something done or improved. They are your representatives for our goal as a national organization: that AYR exists to better serve our chapters and our members.