

President's Letter

Geneva Griswold

Dear Members,
Greetings, and welcome to a new year. Spring has already sprung in Seattle – backyard garden beds are filling with compost, our rain is giving way to sun breaks, and the cherry blossoms are bursting. See for yourself via the University of Washington's cherry blossom webcam at <https://www.washington.edu/video/campus-webcams/>.

At the time of writing this letter's first draft, we were seven days into 2021. Sustained Black-led organizing in Georgia had just stewarded an unprecedented number of voters to the polls, meanwhile it was the day after an insurrection at the Capitol by white supremacists whose ransacking threatened lives and cultural heritage. Anthony Veerkamp, former director of policy development for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, offered

an opinion: he supports the preservation of select damage “as a reminder that our monuments, our institutions, and our values are all vulnerable, and must be constantly cared for” (New York Times, Jan 7 2021, “Curators Scour Capitol for Damage to the Building or Its Art”).

I wish you all constant care. Hope is rising as the pace of vaccinations accelerates nation-wide! By the time of publication we may all be on our way to, or will have arrived, in a new normal. Just in time to witness the cherry blossoms in person, or to plant your favorite tomatoes in celebration.

Speaking of food, the WAAC Board's mid-year meeting will occur remotely this year. We will miss seeing one another in person over cheese and wine at the Beverly Hills Cheese Shop, which (I hear) is a truly drool-worthy experience, yet we will not be without sustenance! Los Angeles members will get lunch baskets from the Shop, and those farther away will receive funds and instructions to purchase something special to indulge in on the day. Susi Friend, mid-year board meeting coordinator, always finds a way.

In February, vice president Jan Burandt organized a successful meet-and-greet for WAAC's Regional News Reporters. It was wonderful to see one another and to hear what each are up to! Thank you to Ellen Carrlee (Alaska), Gina Watkinson (Arizona), D. Thor Minnick (Hawaii), Virginia Rasmussen (Los Angeles), Silvia Marinas-Feliner (New Mexico), Corine Landrieu (Pacific Northwest), Julie Parker (Rocky Mountain region), Frances Pritchett (San Diego), Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz (San Francisco Bay Area), and Kenneth Grant (Texas) for your continued dedication to WAAC. It is vital to share and to celebrate WAAC members' accomplishments.

2021 Meeting update

The Board has decided not to hold an in-person meeting in Seattle in fall 2021 due to shifting Covid-19 travel and gathering restrictions throughout the West. However, we recognize that WAAC – that we all - have a great desire for connection. We will host a virtual gathering in fall 2021. Stay tuned for details!

WAAC leadership changes

Thank you to the outgoing WAAC board president, Tricia O'Regan, who organized a stellar slate of talks at a stunning location. I sincerely hope that the lost Tahoe 2020 meeting will be resurrected in future. Our paddleboards await. Thank you to members-at-large Anne Getts and Jacinta Johnson who completed their terms.

Thank you to everyone that ran for election in 2020. The Board warmly welcomes Jan Burandt as vice president and the new members-at-large (MALs), Harriet F. "Rae" Beaubien and Adam Fah. Thank you to second-year MALs Kent Severson and Sophie Hunter, Colleen O'Shea who is serving a second term as secretary, and to Chris Stavroudis (membership secretary), Carolyn Tallent (*Newsletter* editor), Justin Johnson (web editor), Christina O'Connell (social media liaison), and Donna Williams (fulfillments) who continue in their appointments.

Best wishes, Geneva

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