

BULLETIN

## Regional Directorship takes dedication, hard work

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by JACKIE SPAIN

About two years ago I was in the process of deciding whether I had the right skill set ... and indeed the determination, motivation and conviction ... to hold the position of HSA Regional Director for Region 9 (Kootenays).

I was also at the point that I knew it was time to embark on a new life path. I was ready to experience the learning and increased challenge that comes when you advance on one of life's adventures.

I knew of the long meetings and had surmised the difficulty of dealing with the major decisions that are made at the Board of Directors table.

I understood the structure of the board with the 10 Regional Directors led by an ever-competent Cindy Stewart, with the support of the HSA staff. I knew that each of the Directors was expected to chair or sit on an HSA committee. These positions are determined at the June Directors meeting in a democratic process conducted by and among the Regional Directors.

I fully expected that I would have to speak in public, a thought that evoked the feelings that I had only felt on speech day in English class. At my first Annual Convention as Director I bolded my name in red on my papers because I had this horrible feeling I would forget who I was.

I wanted to jump this hurdle and I did. The position of Director has given me all the things I expected it to and so much more, both positive and negative. I found out very quickly that it takes courage to stand by your convictions. At the Board table each decision is discussed in great depth and there is plenty of vigorous debate. With the number of able minds, the breadth of experience and expertise, we strive to make the best decision for the organization as a whole. At the conclusion of Board meetings I have been both elated and disappointed. A wimp you say? No, just an ego growing up.

I have discovered ways to keep balance in my life and the lives of my children. Good organizational skills have been my salvation.

Sometimes, it is difficult dealing with the disconnection from my workplace as I move between two very

different work environments. I am thankful for my 20years experience in the laboratory as this makes returning to work easier. I havealso received wonderful support from my colleagues at work and HSA members throughoutRegion 9. It is hard work, with many hours spent on the computer, on the road, and atmeetings.

The Directors and some Members-at-Large who spend a good amount of timeaway from home start to live their lives in a cocoon state, sometimes devoid of friendsand with limited social activity outside of the close ties that develop between those ofus doing similar work.

As the Region 9 Director I find myself spending many hours travelling.At first I was lonesome but I have met many interesting people along the way, and I havecompletely bonded with my car, having driven many kilometres on HSA business.

Each time I leave my home I gain a new experience in the university oflife. It is a challenge and commitment only akin to the time when I made up my mind toreturn to high school and have a career, after having left both school and home at the tender age of 16.

I love this work, and have found I thrive on the challenges. I believein what I am doing and the reasons for which I am doing it. The lessons have been tough,but so is the big world. And the teachers are first class.

*Jackie Spain represents Region 9 onHSAs Board of Directors.*

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