

April 2001

## President's Message



MARY PAT KELLER

### "WTCA Chapters -- The Mouthpiece of a United Voice" by Mary Pat Keller

Traditionally, the April issue of *WOODWORDS* is used to showcase the membership of WTCA with the annual membership directory. This year, in addition to the directory, we decided to take the focus on our members one step further by devoting a majority of the content to exploring the life of WTCA Chapters and the benefits of being involved in our association at the local level.

I realize that we talk about the importance of chapter involvement on a regular basis, but an entire issue of *WOODWORDS* would not have been dedicated to this topic if we, as an organization, did not consider chapter membership to be one of the most meaningful ways to participate in WTCA. Now, I'm not talking about simply having your name on a chapter roster and paying chapter dues—I mean regular, active involvement. Regular attendance at chapter meetings is a great opportunity to keep up to date on developments both in your area and within WTCA. One great misperception is that meetings are too time-consuming, but when you consider the overall educational and networking value, it is easy to see that this isn't the case. Being involved does not take a great deal of time, but consistent attendance is necessary to become informed and stay in touch with everything that is going on within this busy association and ever-changing industry.

### **SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE**

While I'm on the subject of the reality of almost daily change in the component industry—and in the manufacturing business in general—one extremely important function of chapters should be addressed. A main purpose for setting up a network of chapters within our national organization is to encourage the exchange of information between component manufacturers in a smaller area, on a more regular basis. However, part of this communication also needs to include the dissemination of information from the national level to the local level to ensure that the industry is telling a consistent story from coast to coast. Therefore, the regular attendance of each Chapter Representative to WTCA's Open Quarterly Meetings is just as important as consistent attendance by chapter members at chapter meetings.

As a national association, WTCA strives to stay on the cutting edge of industry issues and provide guidance for how we as component manufacturers should respond to these issues. It is this approach that has resulted in the publication of documents like Standard Responsibilities in the Design Process Involving Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses. Without this industry guideline, it

would be virtually impossible to ensure that component manufacturers throughout the industry were speaking with a united voice on design responsibilities and it would be much easier for the industry to be taken advantage of in this area.

## **MAKE IT MEANINGFUL**

If you didn't already know about the many opportunities for reaching your marketplace through the work of local WTCA Chapters, this issue of *WOODWORDS* will make you aware of the variety of projects being undertaken by chapters across the country. From educational programs, to truss plant tours, to partnering with other organizations in the construction industry, this is the type of involvement that makes a chapter a vibrant part of achieving WTCA's big picture goals.

These types of activities make membership meaningful to chapter members and also attract new members. If, as a local organization, your chapter is working to make a difference in the industry, that effort will be recognized not only by the marketplace that is being educated, but also by other component manufacturers in your area that will then want to be part of the effort. As the old adage goes, "Many hands make light work."

## **BE OPEN TO THE FUTURE**

We can't fear the future. As an organization, we must stay informed and keep pace with the changes that happen in the real world. If we are closed-minded and do not discuss what is happening in our industry, we'll never be able to plan for changes. How individual companies choose to run their businesses is up to them, but at least everyone should be informed about the issues, opportunities and risks our industry faces as well as the options that are available to every business. On both the national and local levels, WTCA's goal is to stay on top of these issues, opportunities and risks and to provide options that the industry can use in a united way. I will admit, a local chapter of an organization like WTCA is a unique animal. It is a group of individual business-people who, in the day-to-day world, are obviously competitors. But the beauty of a chapter is that it provides a neutral venue where manufacturers can focus on those things that are bigger than any one company—the obstacles that can't typically be overcome by one company speaking all alone. Based on some of the specific experiences recounted by chapters throughout these pages, I'm sure you'll agree that chapter involvement isn't about one more thing to pay for just because I'm telling you it's the right thing to do.

WTCA Chapters are about speaking with one voice, in a meaningful way that will have a lasting effect on the future of our entire industry.

---

Mary Pat Keller, 2001 President of WTCA, is President of Truss Components, a family-owned component manufacturing facility in Valley Park, Missouri. Prior to her current position, Mary Pat served Truss Components for six years as Vice President.

---

## SBC HOME PAGE

Copyright © 2001 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from SBC Magazine, call 608/310-6706 or email [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info).

The mission of Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC) is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any of the affiliated associations (SBCC, WTCA, SCDA & STCA).