
WOMEN AND VOLUNTEERING: IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

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The essays in this catalogue and the displays in the exhibit itself present some of the achievements of Pennsylvania women as volunteers over the past 100 years. There are underlying themes worth exploring as we re-discover this hidden history. And there are questions to be raised as we consider continuing roles for women and for volunteers in the near and far future.

The contribution of volunteers to American history is so pervasive that it becomes invisible—we rarely stop to think about the roots of most of our institutions or professions any more. Yet it is clear that most of the services and facilities we value were started by citizens who saw a need and were willing to work hard to establish organizations able to fulfill that need. It is easy to take for granted all of the aspects of modern society that volunteers were instrumental in starting.

The tradition of volunteerism in the United States is one of innovation. Volunteers were the pioneers who acted long before government or other institutions reacted. Once successful at providing a necessary service, volunteers found ways to fund their activities, hiring salaried staff to carry out the work, and freeing volunteers to move on to other cutting edge issues (or to remain as policy makers and supporters of service delivery).

Whenever we talk historically about a "movement," be it abolition, civil rights, temperance, or environmentalism, we are really describing the collective effect of the efforts of countless volunteers. What is a "movement"? It is a widespread groundswell of actions by groups of citizens. Regardless of the cause, the desire is to affect public opinion and eventually to influence lawmakers. The more formal techniques include forming committees, gathering signatures on petitions, lobbying, and mounting protest marches. Political activism of this type is a very important aspect of volunteerism and clearly is practiced by people of all races, religions and economic levels.

STEREOTYPES

This last point deserves emphasis. There is an unfortunate stereotype about who engages in volunteer work. Too many people hear the word "volunteer" and envision the "little old lady in a flowered hat and tennis shoes." Adjectives such as upper class, female, white, leisured, amateur, or "go-fer" spring too easily to mind. Some of the problem is that the label "volunteer" has tradi-

tionally been applied rather narrowly to activities that supplement the work of salaried staff. Serving on boards of directors, helping with food co-ops, union organizing, or the political activism just discussed were not always described as being volunteering—though these efforts clearly are done without financial remuneration.

The word "volunteer" was also applied to voluntary work done by women more often than to similar, unpaid work done by men. This becomes clear when we recognize that men have always volunteered—they just called themselves coaches, trustees and firemen! Men viewed their voluntary activities as "civic duty," "community service," or "pro bono publico work." Such phrases tend to emphasize that men did public service over and beyond their salaried responsibilities, while "volunteering" was an activity one did *instead of* "working" for pay. (It is this false distinction, semantic though it may be, that created the more recent feminist attacks on volunteering by women. But more on that later.)

Having pointed out that men also involved themselves in volunteer work, it is equally important to affirm the tremendous role of volunteering as a way for women to have an impact on the society around them. For it is true that women were largely barred from other avenues of influence. They could not vote until well into this century. Their identities were completely defined by the men to whom they were married, and this included financial dependence and lack of property ownership rights. Single women were controlled by fathers, brothers and other male relatives. While there are examples of individual women pursuing education or succeeding in the world of commerce, most women were homebound with few public responsibilities not connected to their families.

"Charity" work organized through churches and synagogues did involve many women (though mostly under the leadership of male elders) in helping the poor or the ill of a community. The emphasis was on aid to the individuals, not on social change, and the work called on such accepted feminine skills as meal preparation and nurturing.

WOMEN IN PUBLIC ROLES

In the nineteenth century, however, women began to play roles in more political organizations. One of the less discussed aspects of abolitionism is that its leaders allowed women to speak in public

for the first time. The seeds of feminism, or certainly of the woman's suffrage movement, were sown in the crusade against slavery. Later the temperance movement would be led by women and would take people by surprise with its ultimate effectiveness in bringing about Prohibition.

Just as re-occurred in the twentieth century when women kept the factories of America going during World Wars I and II and proved their employability in the work force, the Civil War had mobilized the support activities of the women of the country. Seen from a volunteer perspective, the Civil War demonstrated the similarities of the two sides, not the differences. Women of the North and the South found countless ways to aid the war effort, raising funds, shipping personal supplies, and nursing the wounded. When this war-in-our-backyards ended, women were not about to return solely to the hearth and home. After the Civil War, women's "clubs" became the forum for action by women on a wide variety of issues.

Women's clubs, starting in the 1870's, were an effective combination of socializing and activism. The initial impetus for the clubs was companionship among the members, a destination for an afternoon of pleasant talk, sewing, and exchange of family care hints. But these clubwomen knew that they had contributed to the war effort and that they had the potential to influence male decision-makers on peacetime issues, too. Clubs began to adopt causes relevant to the welfare of families. Among the issues addressed by these women were: consumer rights; child labor practices; nutrition; outdoor recreation for urban children; and health care during and after pregnancy.

Depending on the region and the size of the club, members mobilized to inform their neighbors, gather petitions, and generate letter campaigns. Projects were adopted that ranged from "white listing" manufacturers who did not use child labor (because "black listing" those who did exploit children was forbidden by the courts) to garden planting for the beautification of public places.

While this exhibit emphasizes the important role of women volunteering together through clubs and other associations, it should be remembered that individual women were also active as reformers and service providers during this period. Whether the cause was a settlement house in the city or a lending library on the prairie, female volunteers were having an impact on the quality of life. This was true regardless of the race or religion of the women, too. Black women structured their own clubs and auxiliaries in parallel to the organizations of white women. Jewish and Catholic women founded their own groups, both in response to discrimination by Protestant organizations and out of their own traditions of helping.

The interesting thing about volunteerism is that it is so very American. While other countries have developed various forms of charitable and social voluntary organizations, in the United States volunteerism is a unique way of life. Every citizen of every color and creed turns to volunteering as a *methodology* for getting things done. What do we do when we want a traffic light at the corner? Start a committee to contact City Hall. What do we do when we want to protest an action by a corporation or a legislator? Form a march and carry signs. Don't Republicans and Democrats structure their campaigns using volunteers? Don't pro and anti forces on the same issue recruit supporters to do similar volunteer work?

Because this exhibit focuses on women in Pennsylvania, it is pertinent to end this historical overview by commenting on what is special about this Commonwealth in terms of the subject at hand. Philadelphia was the most important colonial city, served as the headquarters for forging our independence, and was the new nation's first capital. This exhibit begins at a later time period, but the roots of volunteerism started in the early days of Pennsylvania. As the "Holy Experiment," this region had greater diversity in its citizenry than any other state. Personal prejudice may have existed, but the laws permitted freedom of religion. The influence of the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers, permeates the ways in which organizations developed here. Though they may have been outnumbered by other denominations by the nineteenth century, the Quakers set the tone for group debate and consensus and for the key role of women. Quaker women participated fully in the decisions of their communities, even if the legal system did not grant them full equality. The Quakers were the first organized group to abolish slavery among its members (albeit after several years of deliberations) and then became active in supporting such abolitionist actions as the Underground Railway. They were also early activists in the peace, prison reform, and women's suffrage movements.

Even in modern times, Pennsylvania was one of the first states to pass its own equal rights amendment and to ratify the national equal rights amendment. In such a climate, volunteerism by both sexes has flourished and Commonwealth women have grown to expect that their concerns will be heard.

NEW CHALLENGES TO VOLUNTEERISM

Even if everyone accepts the vital pioneering role of volunteers in the past, the concept of volunteerism has received much scrutiny in the present. Most relevant to this exhibit is the challenge made to the volunteer world by the newly-articulate feminists in the late 1960's. Feminist leaders questioned many of the basic assumptions around which

volunteering exists. Because so many women wanted to be supporters of women's rights and also to remain active in satisfying volunteer roles, genuine confusion resulted. In the past twenty years, the ensuing debate has clarified many critical points. In the end, proponents of volunteerism have become more aware of the issues that need resolution and know that it is indeed possible to be a feminist volunteer.

FEMINISM vs. VOLUNTEERISM: THE ARGUMENT

Feminist leaders drew a distinction between "direct service" volunteering, which they were against, and "change-oriented" volunteering, which they were for (after all, those who were active in support of women's rights were clearly unsalaried, too). Their primary criticisms of volunteering were that it:

- keeps the status of women low;
- exploits the time and talent of women;
- is often "pseudo-work," designed to appeal to the volunteer rather than to meet a real need;
- weakens the case for increased part-time employment opportunities and flexible paid work schedules;
- contributes to the lack of adequate budgeting for social services and other community needs;
- directs attention and energy into short-term, "band-aid" activities, instead of into attacks on the underlying causes of social problems.¹

Several of these arguments stem from the fundamental assumption that service volunteers are mostly women who are not part of the work force. Therefore, for the feminists, volunteering was an economic issue inseparable from women's second-class status in the world of work.

Response to these criticisms is not a matter of simple rebuttal, even today. The objections deserve close examination to determine which do or do not have validity.

Clearly the stereotype about who volunteers and why is a factor here. It is simply not true that the terms "volunteer" and "employee" are mutually exclusive. A great many women and men manage to be both at the same time. In fact, the most recent Gallop Poll survey showed that the *majority* of people who volunteer also hold a salaried job. The more critical fallacy, however, is the assumption that women are the only ones who volunteer. As we have already discussed, men are also volunteers and so we need to decide if the same

questions about exploitation or band-aiding apply to them, as well.

But there are some legitimate issues within the feminist argument. For example, it is historically true that many volunteers (particularly women) raised huge sums of money without any say as to how that money was to be spent. Similarly, some organizations seek help, not input—hands, not minds. These situations are exploitative because they "use" volunteer energy without involving the full potential of the volunteers.

Further, not every organization knows the basics of volunteer project management and so a great deal of volunteer time is wasted through disorganized leadership. This is not to imply that salaried employees do not sometimes find themselves paid for unproductive hours. But at least employees receive a paycheck even if they are not fully deployed; to underutilize the time of a volunteer is much worse because it implies that the contributed time has no value at all.

Finally, the question of whether or not volunteers contribute to inadequate funding by rushing in to fill gaps left by budget cuts is unresolved. On the one hand, it is valid to point out that legislators will feel no constituent pressure to restore funding if volunteers provide continuity of service regardless. On the other hand, who is to judge the motives of a volunteer who cares enough about a service to provide it under any circumstance?

WHY VOLUNTEER?

The real issue raised by the feminist argument is: what is the value of volunteering? And to answer that, one must examine both sides of the question: the value to the volunteer and the value to the community.

The personal benefits of volunteering are numerous. They range from social contact to career exploration to having fun. For the purposes of this essay, however, let's focus on a few benefits that are rarely articulated. One is that volunteering is a way to put one's words into action, to stand up and be counted. Giving money or voting are also important actions to support a cause, but sharing time and talent demonstrate real commitment. History might remember certain leaders and heroines by name, but the achievements of the past were accomplished by the "unsung" volunteers whose collective efforts made the difference.

Volunteering offers freedoms that the salaried work world cannot provide. Volunteers have the benefit of *choice*, the right to select a work schedule, and accept or turn down a particular assignment. Further, because volunteers are not dependent upon their voluntary work to earn a living, they can feel free to criticize or at least to offer constructive suggestions without jeopardizing their career advance-

ment. This is one reason why some people choose volunteer jobs that involve advocacy or a watchdog function.

Volunteering is an equalizer. Though certain types of assignments require specific skills or background, other assignments allow any concerned person the chance to become involved. Salary establishes rank. But in a volunteer position, people can join forces with any other concerned citizen, regardless of such factors as education, income, etc.

For some, volunteering is a way to have clout. As an employee, one is always to some degree a "servant." But as a volunteer it is possible to voice an opinion, contact decision-makers, cut across formal jurisdictions in ways not always open to a salaried worker.

This is a good point at which to enumerate the benefits of volunteers to a community. It is much too simplistic to say that we need volunteers because there is not enough money to pay for desired services. In fact, such a response is quite negative because it implies that volunteers are a second choice resource: "if we had enough money, we wouldn't need volunteers." This concept is at the heart of many of the misunderstandings about volunteers and volunteering.

The truth is that our society would need volunteers even if there was all the money in the world. Why? Because there are some things that are done better or more effectively only by volunteers.

For example, to legislators and donors, volunteers have more credibility than do employees. This is because it is more effective to hear a testimonial from someone who will not personally benefit from support than from a person who will keep her or his job if the support is given. Other audiences also listen differently to a message delivered by a volunteer than by a paid "spokesperson," which is why so much public education involves volunteer effort.

This concept of volunteers as having less vested interest is the main reason why boards of directors of nonprofit organizations would remain volunteers, even if there was money with which to salary them. Since the most potent power of a board is to decide to close the doors of an organization, decision-making should be left to people without personal risk (or benefit) from the outcome of deliberations. In all fairness, there are other sorts of "vested interest" that volunteers do bring (such as personal involvement with the cause/disease/client group or carrying the torch of the family member who founded the organization), but the public perception is that volunteers can be more objective.

Finally, the absence of a salary often makes a major difference to the recipient of the service. It means that the involvement is freely given out of genuine

caring or friendliness. To a homebound person being visited, or a prisoner being tutored, or a child interacting with an adult "friend," the reaching out of the volunteer is valued precisely because it is not "part of a job." The efforts of a salaried worker may also be appreciated, but there is an intangible difference in the response to the volunteer that frequently is the determining factor in the success of the service rendered.

So there are clearly some "first choice" reasons for volunteering, regardless of how much money may or may not be available. When there are few funds, however, the impact of volunteer help is evident in maintaining vital services. Even with sufficient funds, volunteers are able to diversify the talents of the paid staff, offer special programs, and give personalized attention to individual consumers in a way never possible with employees.

In some ways, the more women enter the job market, the more important volunteering becomes for them. Volunteering is an outlet for skills and even feelings not always tapped on the paying job. Volunteering can bring a sense of balance to a busy life, especially if the activity is enjoyable as well as productive.

CHANGES IN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The role of women has been changing constantly in the last 100 years and continues to be in flux. With the opening of more public options for participation in shaping society, women today face choices. Unfortunately, because we are still in the process of definition, there is presently a split between those women who wish to continue focusing on the home and those women who decide to pursue careers. The "careerists" are further split by those who remain single (or return to an unmarried state) and those who "want it all" and juggle the demands of family and job. With the growing divorce rate, yet another group is made up of women who have no choice about working for pay and raising children alone at the same time.

All of this impacts on women's volunteer organizations. While historically such groups allowed women to play a meaningful role in improving their communities, other traditions such as social class distinctions also are remembered by modern women considering membership today. Women often volunteered to demonstrate the successful bread-winning prowess of their husbands. The times of meetings and project activities were calculated to allow the members to be home in sufficient time to prepare dinner—volunteering did not "interfere" with the primary role of homemaker. Any public recognition of the work of members disregarding the women's own names in favor of long lists of "Mrs. Mansfirstname Manslastname."

Today's women's groups must find ways to preserve the best of the past while accepting the realities of the present. Holding meetings in the evenings or weekends allows employed women to participate, but may make involvement difficult for the women who prefer to utilize their freer daytime hours. Creating short-term assignments that permit intensive, skills-oriented volunteering with a more flexible schedule appeals to the busiest members. But how then does an organization build the continuity of leadership necessary to make long-range plans? Encouraging members to use their own first and last names recognizes the fact that even married women today retain their maiden names, but may alienate older members who have spent a lifetime enjoying the shadow-identity gained from their husbands.

For a time, this may mean a generational split, too. A good number of the established women's organizations are seeing an "aging" of their membership without finding sufficient numbers of younger women to fill in the ranks. In some groups this is due to an unwillingness to change, be it in who is invited to join, what members are expected to do, or how the work is structured. Such inflexibility probably deserves to be left along the wayside, for all organizations must adapt to social trends. But even those organizations willing to change face some difficult questions:

- Why should women volunteer today when here are so many job choices available to them?
- If a woman wants to volunteer, why should she join a club to do this, rather than going directly to a service-providing agency?
- If a woman joins a club or association, why should she select an all-female one?
- Why do so many volunteer organizations make distinctions in classes of membership based on age?
- Are some of the more well-known volunteer organizations relying on past glories and reputation, instead of one new substance? Are there other volunteer organizations that offer more substantial involvement but do not yet have the clout?
- Should men be asking these same questions?

Let's examine each of these questions separately.

VOLUNTEERING AND/OR A JOB

As already discussed, it is a stereotype to believe that people (men or women) choose only between

salaried work or volunteer work. The real "competition" to volunteer work is recreation and time with one's family. Also, the benefits of volunteer work are not the same as the rewards of paid employment, and so the need for the satisfactions and impact of volunteering remains strong motivation to become involved voluntarily.

However, it is true that most women are now in the workforce and therefore are simply not as available for many of the positions they formerly held in volunteer associations. If a group cannot offer an assignment to a woman with a timeframe that accommodates her salaried job, that woman will not be able to be an active volunteer for that group. So here is an area where adaptation can literally save an organization's life. Working women will find outlets for themselves as volunteers with those groups that can utilize their help when they are able to offer it.

By the way, it should be noted that just because someone works it does not mean she is unavailable during the weekday hours. Many jobs involve schedules other than Monday to Friday, 9 to 5. Weekend work means weekdays off; evening shifts mean free mornings; self-employment means some flexibility in work hours. So it is too encompassing to assume that all "working women" are out of consideration for volunteer club activities.

JOINING A "CLUB"

The question of why a person needs to join a club in order to contribute as a volunteer is a bit more difficult. For some people, the answer clearly is that there is no good reason. After all, each community offers interested individuals countless opportunities to volunteer directly with service-providing agencies. Such direct volunteering channels all efforts directly into the work to be done. When someone knows exactly what she/he wishes to do as a volunteer, or for what cause she/he wants to work, then club membership is simple a detour along the way.

But there are other people who do not know what they might most like to do. Through association membership, the volunteer has the chance to sample many projects, thereby assisting a variety of causes and testing personal skills. Also, the social element is a factor for some. A benefit of club membership is "belonging," making friends and sharing the work of volunteering in a pleasant, interactive way.

If the club is established and has a good reputation, membership confers upon each woman the collective clout of the organization. This can be a powerful tool in having an impact on a social concern. When local efforts are coupled with the activities of a national parent organization or even with the efforts of a few other chapters, the

cumulative effect is greater than what might be accomplished by volunteers acting as individuals.

Some projects require the collective efforts of many heads and hands; the membership association provides such "people power." Also, if an individual has a good idea that is adopted by the other members, she/he gains allies and the organizations becomes an "umbrella" for acting out the plan.

The real implication of all of this is that clubs should assess their projects. If they are little more than a placement service for individual volunteering in community agencies, perhaps there is little rationale for membership. But if assignments maximize the unique aspects of working through groups as just outlined, then members can be recruited confidently—and as a viable alternative to more individual forms of volunteering.

WHY WOMEN ONLY?

This is both a social and political question. Once again, the answer will be personal for each woman. One-sex organizations are being legally challenged because of their discriminatory membership rules, most of which continue today more out of tradition than out of philosophy. It is hard to make a case against male-only groups without acknowledging that the same accusations hold true for female organizations, too.

Historically, women's groups were formed because the men didn't want us. We created our own organizations in order to have forums in which to be active. Most of society was segregated by sex (as by race and religion), so very little thought was given to what seemed a "natural" grouping of people.

For some causes, men still don't want us. So women's organizations must remain active if any work will be accomplished to advocate a particular perspective.

Women's colleges are often posed the same question about why they remain single sex. One answer they give is relevant to women's volunteer groups as well. When an organization has only women as members, then women must fill all roles. They must be workers, but they must also be leaders; they must make decisions, be spokespeople, raise funds. In too many co-ed groups, the men take the leadership roles (often enthusiastically voted into them by the women, by the way!) while the women carry out the nitty-gritty tasks.

So there is an irony at work here. Some women choose all-female groups because they do not want to compete with men and prefer "female" company and "feminine" activities. Meanwhile, other women seek out women's groups because they wish to have more control than they believe they will be allowed in male-dominated organizations. Can the same group meet both needs? Often not, sometimes, yes.

The nature of the projects undertaken probably aligns an organization with one motivation or the other.

Finally, there is a social side, too. Women's groups are not dissimilar to male "lodges." Many women enjoy the luxury of letting their hair down with other women and building friendships with women who share mutual interests. While single women may join co-ed groups to seek male relationships, there is still a need for friends of the same sex. In fact, the busier a woman becomes, juggling job, family and self, the less time she has for her friends. Membership in a club schedules opportunities for female companionship.

AGE DIVISIONS

A large number of women's organizations delineate membership categories by age. Some, in fact, require that women past a certain age withdraw from active membership. Interestingly, except for a few examples, most male organizations do not utilize this criteria for membership.

There are some traditional reasons for this age division. First is that women's groups focused on the child-rearing concerns of their members. It was believed—not always incorrectly—that a different amount of work could be expected from women with older children than from women with toddlers or still in their child-bearing years. Using the same supposition, however, different organizations acted differently. Some assumed that younger women could not be expected to handle extensive assignments, while others felt that more mature women had "paid their dues" and should no longer be called upon to do time-consuming work.

There was also the desire for leadership development. It was felt that unless older women moved out of the way, younger women would have no chance to learn the skills of leadership. This was excellent reasoning, and enticed younger members with ambition, but it also served to cut off the involvement of more experienced members who might wish to remain active. In a society that worships "youth," how many women were proud to join the ranks of the "mature," inactive members? Adjectives such as honorary or advisory did not substitute for genuine authority.

With increasing life spans and active retirements, women were not ready to be "over the hill" at age 35 or 40, just because some of their clubs moved them along. And younger women felt segregated from the companionship of a diverse group of women when the older members were de-activated.

The most successful groups are those that can find the balance between keeping a flow of fresh leadership (a quick, motivating recognition of younger members) and retaining the involvement of active older members. Again, this concern seems to be

more prevalent among female organizations than among men's groups, perhaps because so many male organizations are structured to stimulate the exchange of skills between established businessmen and younger proteges.

THRIVING OR SURVIVING?

Because this exhibit and catalogue rightfully praise the work of so many volunteer organizations, it is hard to face the next question comfortably. But intellectual honesty forces us to ask how many long-time organizations are living on past glories and on the achievements of their earlier members. While many associations have indeed adapted to the changes around them and have continued to address critical social concerns, a number of groups are dying on the vine. Yet their previous reputation still places their officers on community advisory groups, on boards of directors, and at legislative hearings—even though these women speak for a diminishing number of members.

In some cases, it has actually become easier for such groups to raise funds (on the basis of their name) than to find volunteers to work on behalf of the funded projects.

At the same time, newer women's groups struggle for acceptance because they seem avant-garde in some way. Think of the efforts of organizations against domestic abuse in the last decade, for example. Women's organizations that 100 or 50 years ago were in the forefront of change now become the "establishment" against which newer groups must compete.

SHOULD MEN BE ASKING THE SAME QUESTIONS?

Yes and no. Men's organizations do not necessarily face the same problems of age gaps or need to adjust time schedules. This is not to say that older men and younger men do not have differences in values or lifestyles that can interfere with established organization practices. Of course they do and inflexible men's groups are dying in the same way that inflexible women's groups are.

One factor unique to men's groups is their reliance on women in unrecognized support roles. Behind every successful male association volunteer is a secretary fulfilling his obligations! Though this is an exaggeration, the truth is that men have utilized their work world support systems (clerical help, telephones, office machines) to accomplish the tasks they volunteered to do in their various voluntary organizations. They also expected their wives to participate in social and fundraising events—often by preparing the refreshments. In women's groups all the typing and baking are done by the *same* members who also exercise leadership.

The opening up of previously all-male organizations to female members offers such associations a new pool of talent already "trained" to do the full spectrum of necessary support and leadership work. Whether or not women will be given equal access to both ends of the spectrum remains to be seen. It also remains to be seen whether true participation in co-ed organizations decreases the appeal of all-female groups to women . . . or of all-male groups to men.

OTHER SOCIAL TRENDS

Beyond the issues just discussed, there are other trends that impact on the future of volunteer organizations. One is the growing rate of divorce, with its increase in single-parent homes still usually headed by a woman. The time available to such female single parents is indeed limited, so any volunteer recruitment must appeal to their legitimate special interests. Programs that deal with concerns such as daycare, domestic relations law, or consumer issues allow the volunteer to engage in a form of "self help" volunteering that benefits everyone at the same time. Assignments that can be done at flexible hours and for short, intensive periods (perhaps even at home) are more possible than an ongoing weekly schedule of on-site work.

Because of the limited time many women and men feel they have with their children, projects that allow a family to volunteer *together* are exciting new developments. This may involve the whole family unit, one parent with one or more teenagers, or a couple together. Women's organizations are natural centers for the stimulation of such projects, even if the wife/mother is the only "member" of the association itself.

Ours is a mobile society in which people move with more frequency than in years past. Organizations that relied on members living in the neighborhood for ten years, learning the ropes, and eventually achieving the presidency, may be in for a rude shock. It is still possible to seek commitment over a period of years, but by-laws should be revised to permit assumption of leadership based on talent rather than on simple longevity.

In recognition that most women will spend a good part of their lives in the work force, volunteering should be a skill development opportunity. Even for older women, volunteering is a tuition-free form of "continuing education." Organizations that keep their members informed on the issues of today and find projects that address those issues will survive. The question is not solely whether or not a certain volunteer activity was done right. It is whether the activity continues to deal with the right *need*. Annual assessment of the continued relevance of activities is important for volunteers—so that they do not waste their own time.