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Link

Welcome Clubs International, Inc.

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Eshrat Demougeot and Jocelyn Jones at the Wessex Conference

CONFERENCE 2002

Mark your Calendars

WCI Conference

Taipei , Taiwan , Republic of China

April 20-28, 2002

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CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF CONFERENCE

How absolutely amazing!!! Our dear friends in Welcome to Wessex outdid themselves in hosting our 2001 Interim Conference attended by 33 delegates and 18 spouses representing 17 of our sister clubs.

We were also delighted to have as observers Ismelda Pellet, Chairman of Open Door, Mr. And Mrs. Lois Tzen, Representative of Taiwan, Republic of China, Mrs. Behiye Muftuzade, wife of the Representative of Northern Cyprus and Mrs. Aysin Yilmaz President of FIWAL (Federation of International Women's Associations in London). Furthermore, we were honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Winchester, Therese Evans and her husband.

All in all the conference was a great success. Not only did we further strengthen our bonds of friendship, but established our course of action for the future.

We now have to pursue and accomplish the task we have set for ourselves, namely:

- To contribute to education and foster caring on a worldwide basis, and
- To explore the possibility of affiliating ourselves with a World Women's Organisation that is consistent with our own.

We are especially grateful to Jocelyn Jones and the members of Welcome to Wessex, whose organisational abilities, warm welcome and sunny blue skies were instrumental in making the Conference a success.

Eshrat Demougeot

VALUE OF WCI IS CLEAR

If anyone in Welcome to Wessex was having difficulty in understanding the exact raison d'etre of WCI, then taking a part (however small) in the interim Conference must have clarified everything. The atmosphere of international camaraderie during the four days was palpable, the exchange of views and ideas extremely stimulating and the unanimous commitment towards common goals exciting and reassuring. Those of us fortunate enough to experience this event at first hand can see more clearly the interrelationship with other Clubs and the value and relevance of our Club within WCI.

Susan Cuff, Wessex

KUDOS TO WESSEX

WCI is especially grateful to Stuart Vause of the Cathedral Chapter in Winchester, not only for the use of the Cathedral room as a meeting place for the two days of the Interim Conference, but also for the lovely souvenir note cards that each member of the Council and Executive Committee received, as well as the useful notebook and pencils.

It was a pleasure to meet Therese Evans, the Mayor of Winchester, who addressed us at the typical and hearty English Sunday luncheon, which all of us enjoyed.

We are also grateful to Elizabeth Thomas and Sonia Blandy, Welcome to Wessex members, who arranged for the marvelous classical guitar concert by the Segovia Trio, and to all the other ladies who hosted us, made us welcom e, chauffeured us, and extended the arm of friendship to us with a friendly smile, warmth, and graciousness. It was a wonderful experience.

Editor: Ann Gut,

Publishing: Trudy Hawkins Lorenc,



Stella Schumann, liaison International Women's Club of Hamburg

WCI Steps into the Twenty-First Century

After group discussions and debate, delegates gave a two-thirds majority vote to add a new aim to Welcome Clubs International, namely that WCI should add a philanthropic dimension to its aims and objectives.

To implement this goal, Jocelyn Jones will now contact each club Liaison to ask for a volunteer to join a WCI Sub Committee aimed at raising awareness of women to all the less fortunate women in the world who need our support. Information on this objective will be sent to clubs as it develops.

WCI: Development and Communication

WCI welcomes new clubs whose philosophy and aims match those of WCI and is happy to help them organise, if such help is requested.

An information packet already exists, explaining the goals and objectives of WCI which can serve as a guideline to potential member clubs.



WCI Executive at the Conference in Wessex

It is recognized that it takes a serious commitment to form such a club, but once it is established, it is free to apply for membership.

Communication remains an important element between Clubs, and also between WCI and each Club. Personal visits are encouraged between Clubs and also with representatives from both the Council and Executive Board of WCI.

ADVERTISING

WCI encourages the use LINK as a conduit for classified advertising, especially for private vacation homes or apartment rentals around the world. Rates are $5/line for members and $6/line for non-members, with a maximum of 6 lines. Please submit advertising to the Director of Communications, Ann Gut.

CALL FOR YOUR INPUT

Interesting articles, information, stories, opinions, and letters are requested for the next issue of LINK. Deadline: 1st November, 2001. We would like LINK to become a Forum for your opinions on cultural or social issues, adaptation to a foreign country, language, or school; problems of repatriation, expatriation, intermarriage, or divorce. Personal experiences always make interesting reading. Please contact Director of Communications, Ann Gut.

WELCOME CLUBS EXCEL AT HOSPITALITY

One of the successful achievements noted by all Clubs, is the ability to welcome strangers, introduce them to the local culture , and help them adjust to a new climate, and sometimes even a new language, but most important to offer them the opportunity to make friends, enjoy activities, and adjust to a new living situation. Often, our Clubs are the only solution for a wife, who otherwise would be homesick , to adjust without adding to the problems of her husband, who also suddenly finds himself in strange territory, and a new working environment . Often, when members leave because their husbands are transferred elsewhere, they leave warm thank you notes acknowledging their debt of gratitude to the Welcome Club involved.

OPEN DOOR BENEFITS WCI

We were pleased to welcome Ismelda Pellet, the chairman of "Open Door", as an observer to our WCI Interim Conference. Open Door is an apt name for a network of associations of International Women who keep up an interclub contact by "opening their doors to each other". The idea started in 1980, and now numbers 93 different groups of International Women's Clubs located in 48 countries, and from whose network of individual clubs many new members have joined our various Welcome Clubs around the world.

ANKARA: , BERKSHIRE (USA): ,
CAPE TOWN: , COLORADO: ,
FLORIDA: , GREENWICH (USA): ,
HAMBURG: , ISRAEL: ,
ISTANBUL: LONDON: ,

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

As WCI continues to move forward, and expands, it becomes increasingly important to have the funds necessary to keep in contact with the worldwide body of women's clubs that share the goals of helping women, and thereby their families, whether it be on home territory or far away. To this end, the Circle of Friends has been established, and every Club within the network is encouraged to promote the idea among its members to make donations to the fund, whether it be to honour a fellow member, congratulate someone, simply help WCI financially, or memorialise a friend. To date, members of Welcome to Florida, Welcome to Israel, Welcome to Washington, and Welcome to Zurich (ZIWA) have contributed to the Circle.

Some of these people are now a Friend as well as a Patron. Donations, from $50 and over, are gratefully received by Lois Fisher, Treasurer of WCI, who suggests a travellers cheque made out to her, if you do not have a US dollar account. Her address is y , U.S.A.

NEED TO AFFILIATE

As WCI looks forward to becoming a cog in the place of women in the world, some members have suggested that we would achieve this goal more readily, if we were to affiliate with a global organization interested in the welfare of women, thereby assuring that children would also benefit at the same time. With this goal in mind, the Council voted at the Interim Meeting to continue to explore possibilities. It was pointed out that it would have to be an organization that would not exclude any of the affiliated member Clubs that belong to WCI.



Farewell Dinner at the Conference in Wessex

WCI CONFERENCE 2002

Everyone should note that all members of all Sister Clubs are eligible to attend, and members are urged to mark their calendars now, in order to assure that they will not have a conflict at Conference time. Members are reminded that this is a preliminary schedule, and may be subject to some changes. Approximate costs for the Conference package (which includes the registration fee, hotel accommodation, transportation, all museum visits, all meals, gratuities, transportation to and from the airport, etc., as well as accident insurance coverage between 20 -28 April) is U.S.$1,400 for seven days and U.S.$1500 for eight days. Registration deadline will be announced once the details are definite. For further inquiries, email Bess Shih.

Tentative program:

April 20: Council Member Arrivals

April 21: Other Delegates arrive. Council Meeting, while other participants will have an optional City Tour.

April 22: Opening Ceremony followed by lunch. Afternoon: Council meeting, while other Conference participants visit the Lung Shan Temple. Evening: Welcome Reception and Dinner.

April 23: Round Table Discussions followed by lunch with Keynote speaker. Afternoon: Visit to training centre for hearing impaired children. Evening: Formal Dinner at Grand Formosa Regent Hotel.

April 24: Trip to Hualien with visit to Buddhist Relief Foundation.

April 25: Morning sightseeing; visit to Rose Stone and Marble Factory. Afternoon: Return to Taipei. Evening: Dining in local homes, in small groups.

April 26: Morning: Visit to Palace Museum followed by lunch at Tamshui. Afternoon: Visit Chief Designer at Grand Crystal Workshop. Evening: Formal Dinner hosted by Mayor of Taipei.

April 27: Visit Ju Ming Open-air Museum. Afternoon: Visit Jade Market and Flower Market followed by visit to Taiwan Handicraft Centre. Evening: Formal Farewell Dinner at the Grand Ballroom of the Grand Hotel.

April 28: Breakfast followed by transfer to airport according to flight schedules. Tentative travel arrangements are being made for participants who would like additional travel time in some part of Asia.

WCI CELEBRATES 15 YEARS



Marian Adair

LINK has already published the story of how Marian Adair not only had the idea, but went ahead and formed a committee with eight other interested ladies to start a club to welcome international ladies in Washington, D.C. in 1959, known as Welcome to Washington, that would be very special and different from any of the other organizations that already filled the nation's Capital.

Marian attributes her interest in international culture, language, and people to the early influence of a high school teacher from Paris, who was her French teacher in a small town in Michigan. Until then, Marian had little exposure to the rest of the world, although later in life, she was to marry a man who became a Congressman, and thereafter the Ambassador from the U.S. to Ethiopia. Because Marian is, and always has been, a woman of vision, she anticipated that this new club she was starting would be dedicated to women who would be willing to donate their time and talents to others, and at the same time, be self supporting, and interested in building bridges of international understanding.

Because everything in Washington was filled with politics and protocol, not to mention the influence of money, and because they did not want to compete with other established clubs, Marian and her committee decided to adopt a policy that would be different from all the other organizations. That policy specified No politics, No protocol, No projects (money raising) and No pay (everyone would work voluntarily).

By 1986, Welcome to Washington was well established, and Marian, who in the meantime, had been living in Indiana, now returned to Washington, where Ruth Munn who was then the president of W/W, asked Marian to take over the position of Sister Club Liaison. Again, Marian formed a committee and made contact with other former members of W/W who had now started clubs in such places as London, Denver, Brussels, and eventually Florida, Zurich, Ottawa, and Taiwan, wherever W/W members had moved and felt the need for a Welcome Club in a foreign land among foreign neighbours, with a foreign language.
The vision Marian worked to achieve was to build both understanding and friendship between women of different cultures and her ambassadors of good will were none other than former members of W/W. The group adopted the name of Welcome Clubs, International and it was wholly subsidized by Welcome to Washington.

One of the first biennial trips, although at that time it was only a loose concept, and not a Conference as would later develop, was a group of ladies, mostly from Washington, who travelled to Taiwan in 1988 at the invitation of the Taiwan club. Two years later, a group visited the London club, and by 1992, when Ruth Munn was Chairman of WCI, having succeeded Marian, a loose conference was held in Brussels consisting of representatives from many of the so-called Sister Clubs. They held a meeting early in the week to introduce the representatives from around the world, and at the end of a wonderful week of sightseeing, entertainment, and fine eating, another short business meeting was held, mostly to determine where the next Conference would meet.

Betty Carey was influential in convincing Denver that they should be the next hosts for 1994, and everyone that attended that Conference came back with glowing reports of what a wonderful experience it was. Denver introduced the "one on one" dinner, to which all the attendees were divided into groups of 3 or 4, and invited for a home cooked meal in a private home so that hosts and guests could get better acquainted. It was a huge success and was repeated (in 1996) in Zurich, and (in 1998) in Florida.

In the meantime, WCI was continuing to grow, and after the Conference in Zurich, it was realized that an interim business meeting would be advantageous, and this took place in Washington, until then, still the sponsoring organization of WCI. Faye Wickersham became the third chairman of WCI, and during the Florida meeting, a set of Guidelines for WCI was drawn up. In addition, it was noted that financial sponsors were desperately needed to help defray expenses. It was decided to seek $100.00 from 100 people, and in fact the list of sponsors became oversubscribed by a few, giving WCI a much needed boost to cover office expenses, and to help defray the expenses necessary during the planning stages of conferences. During Faye's administration, WCI continued to expand in the world, and in fact, began to break loose from Washington, since it became clear an international organization had to be just that, namely international, and it could not continue to be seen as an appendage of Welcome to Washington.

In 2000, a very interesting Conference devoted to the theme of "When Women Care" took place in both Ankara and Istanbul. The value of Education to the country as a whole was stressed, throughout, and the Conferees had a chance to visit some of the educational institutions to see first hand, how volunteers were able to enrich the lives, both mentally and physically, of the poor and illiterate. It was proof positive that caring makes a difference, and that a group of women world wide, can help one another!

WCI is definitely on its way, living up to the vision that its founder Marian Adair has stressed from the very beginning, back in 1959 with the founding of Welcome to Washington.

At the Conference in Turkey, Eshrat Demougeot became the 4th Chairman of the WCI Council/Executive Committee and at the interim meeting in Washington a few months after that, it became obvious that the time had come to enter the electronic world, and again the need for funds was noted . WCI, Inc. now has a website, http://www.welcomeclubs.org and all the Sister Clubs are connected. In addition, there is now a Circle of Friends available for anyone who would like to contribute (for whatever reason) to the financial support of WCI.

Now, all eyes are focused on the next Conference, planned for 2002 in Taiwan.

Ann Gut, Editor

Executive–Eshrat Demougeot: , Donna Suddeth: , Trudy Hawins Lorenc: , Haifa Al-Kaylani: g, Fran Luessenhop: g, Susan McCreary: g, Lois Fisher: org, Jocelyn Jones: , Nancy Marshall: , Ann Gut: , Peggy Silverman: , Marian Adair: