

President's Message – April, 2017

By Marianne Bickle, University of South Carolina

I've been a member of ITAA since the mid-1980s. Without a doubt every year I eagerly look forward to the annual conference. I initially think of the location. Where is the conference being held? Is there fun shopping nearby? How many fiber stores can I locate? How much yarn can I carry back in my suitcase? ITAA Council just held its midyear meeting at the Hilton Bayfront in downtown St. Petersburg, FL, and it looks to be another great location for strolling, shopping and dining along the waterfront.

The second aspect of the ITAA conference I consider is the presentations. Once the initial conference brochure is published on the website, I read through it many times as if it were *Gone with the Wind* (one of my favorite books). I highlight, reread and make a timetable to hear the maximum number of presentations.

The third (but definitely not the least) aspect of the conference is catching up with friends. Some of us have changed universities over the years. Others have changed from faculty to administrators. The one aspect that remains the same is our response at the opening reception. When we meet one another the memories of our days as graduate students or as new ITAA members come flooding back. We begin talking at "a mile a minute" and the laughter never stops.

The reason why I am telling you about this is the fact that ITAA is in the process of making our conferences even better...is that even possible? YES! Sheri Drago will be the inaugural VP of Conferences. Sheri is extremely well qualified for this position. In addition to being a dedicated and active ITAA member, she co-chaired the New Orleans conference. Please welcome Sheri to this new position. In the words of Rhett Butler, quite frankly my dear, I do give a darn! ITAA is becoming better than ever!