

Grapevine

Reflections on the past four years

by *Rebecca Sommers, outgoing president, Mennonite Women USA*

I am looking at Webster's definition of "reflect" which says "to think or consider seriously." That's what I am doing as I look back at my years with MW USA. I began my tenure when Sister-Link was beginning, Women in Conversation retreats were in place, and church leadership scholarships continued through the International Women's Fund. Women leaders were encouraged and resourced by Preparing, Resourcing, Encouraging and Praising (PREP) Conference leaders' meetings.

An endowment had begun and our Lydia Circle was forming. Cathleen Hockman-Wert was editor of *timbrel*, All this was good.

Yet, since coming on board there has been "growth & newness" with the birth of our Miriam Group giving circles, the African Anabaptist Women Theologians Sister-Link relationship developed, and we saw more than 100 wall hangings sent to new MDS homeowners through our Housewarming Sister-Link. Laurie Oswald Robinson became *timbrel* editor and provided leadership for the magazine redesign. We welcomed Patricia Burdette as editor several years later and we watched Sister-Care unfold. I felt a new respect for MW USA from the broader church.

During my tenure I have been blessed by the women who have given energy and willingness to serve on our board. What a great group of women! I have also been blessed by the many women I have met across the U.S. as I heard their stories, and encouraged and affirmed them in the ways they serve the church. I was also blessed by the way people continue to support the ministry of MW USA through prayers as well as through their finances. Altogether, I have enjoyed my time as president of MW USA enormously! 🍷



Rebecca Sommers



Women at a Sister-Care Seminar in Franklin, Pennsylvania, January 31, 2009. Go to <www.mennonitewomenusa.org> for upcoming seminar dates and locations.

Photo by Rhoda