

## 2021 National President Linward Hedgspeth



### Do Not Get Discouraged! There are Bigger and Better Things to Come!

It is incredible that we are already into our second quarter of 2021, and the bitter reminder of the coronavirus of 2020 is becoming a distant memory. Day-by-day we

are becoming more confident and eager to get back to holding in-person meetings and life as it was prior to the pandemic.

The past few months have been challenging but also rewarding as we plot our direction for the future.

"When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened." - John M. Richardson Jr.

I believe Ruritans are part of those who are concerned, caring, and eager to make it happen. You are eager to make it happen because you continue to be a part of those who want to contribute to your communities and to make a better life for all. I can assure you this holds true for your National Directors and Staff. They are on board to make the necessary changes to make the future the best it can be for our organization.

The National Board and Committee members learned with an extremely short window how to hold board meetings and manage business virtually. We held the 2nd virtual Board of Directors meeting this year in April. Once again, the Board demonstrated how we can adapt to changes and still cover a phenomenal amount of complex business in one day.

Some changes are temporary. Hopefully very soon we will revert to something more normal, like in-person meetings and having personal fellowship. But there are surely to be some changes that will remain permanent.

Sometimes things come to an end and a door closes to get us ready for something new. Do not get discouraged when things suddenly change. There are bigger and better things to come. New doors, new opportunities, and new relationships to be born.

May was Ruritan Awareness Month, unfortunately, the annual Founders' Day Parade and festivities, sponsored by the Holland Club did not take place because of the pandemic restrictions and precautions. Please join Ruritans across the country that will be conducting special projects by serving others and bringing awareness to our communities. This is a great way to support recruitment of new members and to let people know what great things your Ruritan club is doing in your community.

Youth Camp Is Canceled. The Youth Committee held a virtual conference and voted against holding a Youth Camp for 2021. Their decision to cancel was based on the stringent restrictions and mandates by the Governor of Virginia.

Our Leadership and Development Committee is diligently working to pull together a memorable Leadership Conference this year. The previous venue used for the conference (New River Community College) was not available for rent because of the pandemic restrictions. The conference will be held at the wonderful, newly renovated The Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, Virginia. Thanks to our National Staff, this venue was obtained at a nominal cost. The date for the Leadership Conference is Saturday, August 14, 2021.

The National Board of Directors Meeting will be held on Friday, August 13 at The Hotel Roanoke (same location) one day before the Leadership Conference.

The National Convention is in the works and will be held at the Kingston Plantation Embassy Suite at Myrtle Beach, SC, ocean-front. The Board of Directors Meeting will be held on January 5, and the National Convention will be January 6 – 9, 2022.

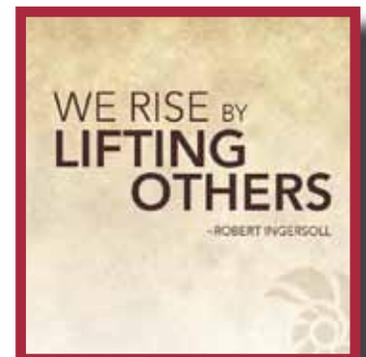
Please mark your calendars for these important events.

Let us plug back into our communities, so they know we are still here and active despite the coronavirus. They will support us even more once they realize we are still a vital part of the community. Let us join hands and ensure that the Ruritan opportunity is open and available to all in our communities.

Finally, there are many Ruritan Districts that have lost members since the pandemic. However, others have grown in membership.

If we focus on our strengths and commend others for the good things they are doing, we will improve our relationships. People improve when you praise them for their good qualities. Encourage them for their good deeds and cheer them on for what they are doing. Be a voice that pushes them forward!

***We are all better and stronger when we "Work Together!"***



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