Memories of Conventions Past …

When I get out a photo album with photos of my LWML friends, I can’t help but spend at least an hour recalling memories from past national LWML conventions. Here are some of mine.

1979 Omaha: “Sow the Seed” — I remember sitting in my basement in Omaha, typing out housing forms, five months pregnant with a 3-year-old running wild around me! My mother, Anita Mahnken, and aunt, Irene Czaplinski, came to convention with me. I remember U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale making a surprise appearance and Victor Borge entertaining. I will never forget when my mom, my aunt, and I were singing during the dedication of quilts and blankets, the first time these were collected at a convention. We not only found ourselves singing the words with enthusiastic fervor, but singing the instructions “hold up your quilts and blankets” as well, collapsing in unstoppable giggles.

1987 Fort Worth: “Radiant with God’s Love!” — I was an alternate delegate who stepped up when the delegate was unable to attend. As a first-time delegate, I sat with Susan Brunkow, a young mom like me. (Little did we know that we would someday each serve as LWML Oklahoma District President and bring our own district delegates to conventions!) I remember Rev. Edward Westcott’s message that “foreign visitors are now at our door — move out and let God be visible through you.” His words and the convention theme really made an impact on me.

1995 Kansas City: “Live by God’s Design” — I still have a photo of one district banner that had such meaning to me — a large cross made up of many different puzzle pieces. The banner made me reflect on the uniqueness of each individual in God’s overall design of His creation: Without each one of us, it wouldn’t be complete. In the same way, LWML is a lovely design with many pieces, each one important and needed.

2003 Oklahoma City: “Lord of My Heart … Our Hope” — I was on the host committee and got to attend one session at convention, the Opening Worship on Thursday night. Until you’ve worked on a host committee, it’s truly hard to appreciate the work they do and the convention they plan but don’t get to attend! My biggest thrill at that convention was getting to meet and chat backstage with my “heroine of the faith” — missionary nurse to India, Alice Brauer. In the exhibit hall, I was connected to MOST Ministries for the first time and would go on several mission trips with them in the future.

2007 Sioux Falls: “Rest on Christ the King” — Inspirational words from Orphan Grain Train’s Rev. Ray Wilke brought me to tears. One of our Oklahoma YWRs attending not only stayed active in LWML, but also went on to become a deaconess. The rock collection cross created by the district presidents was amazing.

Come! Come to Albuquerque as we celebrate memories of the past 75 years and make new memories for the future.

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Patti