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Dear Members:

The Pacific Northwest Fall Conference was hosted by the Montana Chapter in Missoula, Montana with the theme: Under the Big Sky: Treasure Your Value in Construction. The Montana chapter did an amazing job hosting this event! Our chapter was represented by myself, Laura Grabar, Sarah Thorvund and Brenda Trejo. Both Sarah and Brenda were "first-timers" and we were so glad they could take time out of their schedules for the conference.

This was the first region conference for newly installed Pacific northwest Region Director Charris Sonnet-Phinney and she nailed it. She shared her personal story of being a member of the Diné people (known as Navajo) and the influence this has had on her. She shared her mantra which she says to herself every day:

I woke up.  
I have clothes to wear.  
I have running water.  
I have food to eat.  
Life is good.  
I am thankful.

Learning more about Charris and her life story really emphasized to me how lucky we are to have her as our Region Director.

While I had hoped to write this report immediately after the conference to benefit from the information being fresh, I am glad that I can go back over all the presentations and remind myself of all the nuggets that were presented. The conference was a balanced mix of business, education, personal development, networking and fun. Speakers Deb Poteet, Nancy Schlepp, Vicki Evans and Karen McNenny provided insights into the industry and on being a better person both personally and professionally.

Deb Poteet shared her story about starting Poteet Construction in 1987. At one point in the company's history, she was near filing for bankruptcy but was able to persist and bring the company back to life. An amazing story!

Nancy Schlepp grew up on a cattle ranch with 700-800 cattle. She highlighted some points to remember as you navigate life:

1. Stay in your box - your integrity box. You know your morals – stay in your moral box
2. Put your family first
3. Take words like "just" and "those" out of your vocabulary
4. Love everyone - be inclusive
5. Give back

- a. Find a mentor to mentor you and find a mentee
6. Have a weekly or occasional house cleaner
7. Be present
8. Be a good friend
9. Laugh every chance you get
10. Stay curious
  - a. Travel
  - b. Learn something new

Vicki Evans is an insurance professional from Billings, Montana. She talked about

- Humor
- Home is where your story begins
- Learn to lead from the middle or sides

Karen McNenny is all about relationships and there I took away so much from her presentations that I won't be able to capture it all here.

A few key takeaways:

1. Busyness – Are you busy to avoid, numb or distract yourself
2. Swim with the fish, not at them – This was in reference to diving but it applies to many things. In life, relax, have a sense of calm. Otherwise, you'll startle the fish and not be able to see them around you
3. Learn to say no. Ask yourself why you have a hard time saying no. Is it because of obligation or thinking that no one else can do it as well as you? When you say no, you don't have to explain yourself.

Strategies for invisible Superheros

**SUPER**

**S**illiness is a nutrient

**U**nderstand your limits

**P**ursue curiosity (versus criticism)

**E**mbrace your community (you don't have to do things alone)

**R**elease what no longer serves you

While the education and professional development is an integral part of the conference, we all agreed that the traveling, networking and fun times are a major benefit of being a member of NAWIC. I met several of the Montana Chapter members and even found a quilty friend from Oregon. Laura, Sarah and Brenda participated in the Corn Hole competition on Wednesday night and Dawn Killough from the Salem Chapter taught us to line dance on Thursday. It was so great to get to know her more through her leading us as we fumbled through the steps!

It is so great that our Chapter is able to support member's attendance at these events. I hope more members of our chapter can attend future NAWIC conferences at the Region and National level. If you are interested, please reach out myself or any of the board officers.



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Silicon Valley, CA

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Here are the upcoming conference dates:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2024 PNW & PSW Spring Forum | Honolulu, Hawaii                 | May 9-11, 2024     |
| 2024 Annual Conference      | Houston, Texas                   | August 14-17, 2024 |
| 2024 PNW Fall Conference    | TBD – <b>Silicon Valley, CA!</b> | TBD                |

Thank you to the Chapter for sending me to a great PNW Fall Conference!

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