



PAN AMERICAN ROUND TABLE OF EL PASO

**REPORT OF THE
EL PASO TABLE
2016-2017**

Warm Greetings from the El Paso Table:

The Nominating Committee called, as expected, in March of last year but what was not expected was the news that I was to be Director three years before I was supposed to be. This announcement was accompanied by many assurances that everyone would help me in every way possible.

After being voted on in March, I began the task of filling the many committee positions for the coming year. I chose my theme for the year which was "A Pan American Palette" celebrating the beautiful place where we live and the wonderful artists who paint it. Art has always been my first love and I decided to put one of my paintings on the cover of our yearbook. What a thrill!

There was a meeting of Past Directors who brought me up-to-date on all things Pan American - they have been most helpful.

The location of my installation luncheon in May had already been chosen but I picked the menu and chose the decorations. Since we have no money budgeted for table decorations I bought real artist palettes to be interpreted for the May luncheon which was done with paint brushes, tubes of paint, miniature artwork and flowers and greenery...beautiful. The palettes were to be interpreted in various ways throughout the year.

At my table for the installation luncheon were family and close friends which was so nice. My husband died twelve years ago, but my daughter and her husband were there.

We recently voted to have the incoming Director in attendance at the Membership meeting in June. I was to have no vote and was asked not to comment but as an observer I felt that I would be better prepared to chair this meeting next year.

We voted in seven outstanding new members and it was so much fun to visit these new members in their homes along with Leticia Aber, the immediate Past Director.

Our yearbook was published at the end of the summer. We have all benefited from having a photo of each member by her name and information. Since we are the largest Table it helps to be familiar with our membership. The yearbooks were distributed at our October meeting at Ardovino's Desert Crossing. The program at that meeting was "The Twelve Travelers" presented by Jody Schwartz who has been a guiding force in this sculpture project. John Houser is the sculptor and you

may have seen his magnificent, large sculpture of a horse and rider as you leave the El Paso International Airport.

On the way home from the October meeting I was visiting with Esther (Tiki) Ledesma Spence and she reminded me that her mother had represented our Table at the very first Alliance meeting in 1944, in Mexico City, and that she still had her mother's photos and agenda from that meeting. We both thought it would be a fantastic idea to present copies of these photos at the upcoming Centennial Celebration in San Antonio. After speaking with Martha Stumbo who would be the presenter of this memorabilia it was agreed that we should present the idea to the Director General who loved it and wanted the presentation to be made during the Opening Ceremonies of the Alliance Meeting. We were thrilled and honored to have our idea develop in such an exciting way!

Our First Associate Director, Carolyn Breck, and I attended the Alliance Meeting in October in San Antonio and came back to El Paso with important information, and treasured memories.

Our November meeting featured an excellent program by Krystina Robbins, a local artist of Polish descent. She had been invited to visit Poland by the ambassador of that country and to paint there. Her program described her Polish adventure and was enjoyed by all. To this meeting I brought, as my guest, Genie Schuster Swingle who is the granddaughter of our founder, Eugenia Schuster. We all loved visiting with Genie.

December brought our annual Christmas Tea which was held in the home of one of our new members, Bert Blackburn, – talk about jumping in with both feet!! It has become tradition for members to bring checks for our Scholarship fund to this event.

In January we honored our Past Directors with a ceremony that included presenting each one with a lovely rose. Our program that day featured Alberto Escamilla, a local artist from the nearby San Elizario area which has become an art colony. A day in San Elizario is a wonderful way to entertain guests – especially from out-of-town.

Our February meeting honored our six Scholarship recipients. The Scholarship Committee this year was led by Olivia Hashim and they had quite a difficult time choosing our winners because each of our many applicants was very deserving. Our chosen recipients were the cream of the crop and were all at the advanced degree level. Our speaker that day was Vincent Burke, of the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) Art Department who gave an up-to-date view of projects at the University.

In March our meeting was a Merienda at the beautiful International Museum which is the former Turney Mansion. Since I serve as Vice-President of the Board of

Directors at this museum I had also held both the August and the January board meetings here. Our Merienda in March was a big success and a reminder of past Pan American meetings at this location. Mario Parra was our speaker at this event. Mario is an artist from Juarez and filled us in on the art scene in Mexico.

It is disappointing that our State Convention conflicts with our celebration of Pan American Day in El Paso this year but we will be well represented by Martha Stumbo and her two sisters, Ceci Miles Mulvihill and Elvia Miles Doyle.

Congratulations on another successful year and we wish you a wonderful and productive convention”

“One for all and all for one” “Una para todas y todas para una”

**Mary Jo Melby
Director, El Paso Table**