



March 2025 Red Jacket Days PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Last October, I called around 90 women and asked the same question, “What is the purpose of the Republican Women”. The answers were nearly identical and aligned with my own beliefs. There were three women, whom I hardly knew, whose names would not leave me alone. I asked them to run for office with me for this Republican Women’s organization. After we were voted in, I was amazed at how we all fell into our roles so perfectly. I have an outstanding executive team.

Humans have an instinct to insult, rather than understand, but in the BCRW, we have a goal to have better conversations, to replace animosity with curiosity, to listen and question in a respectful way that fosters deeper understanding.

We believe that women were blessed with a divine nature and that we should embrace our femininity and nurturing ability while remaining steadfast and firm. We can show strength in a balanced, respectful and productive way.

Since being voted in we have held a Christmas party, with a fun women’s vocal group called The Bettys, Toured Nest Pregnancy Care Center which offers free services for both men and women finding themselves with an unplanned pregnancy, and had the director of the center speak to our women at our January meeting.

At our February meeting, we had Representative Horman speak to us about her efforts in our legislature and answer our questions. We also had Christine Buxton, a licensed counselor, speak to us on understanding what seasonal

depression is, and how we can use self-care to treat it. You wonderful ladies also voted to make a donation to the women of Ebeye in the Marshall Islands.

Nan Hancock had the superb idea of delivering valentines to those needing a little extra love. In a few short weeks, our wonderful women made and delivered over 350 valentines to senior living centers, senior rehabilitation centers, our local men's rescue mission, a safe house for women and children, and diners at the soup kitchen. One of our dear ladies, Marilyn Mills, had a special experience. Her stepbrother walked into the soup kitchen, recognized her and gave her a hug. She hadn't seen him for many years and she'd wondered how he was doing. She was able to take a picture with him, visit, and said the experience was a godsend.

Our Membership Committee Chair, Angie Joiner, also raised over \$1,000 by soliciting local businesses to make a fabulous wine and dine Valentine's gift basket for auction.

March was really busy with meetings of our Programs & Armed Services committees, and with Representative Ehardt giving us a legislative update. We also did the hard work of reworking and passing our bylaws and are waiting for state edits and approval. You all should have received a copy on email with your agenda.

April-baby shower for Nest client in need (met her needs- watch for the blog post).

What we have on the horizon is a full report on our Marshall Islands project, in May- a special meeting honoring our armed services, June a collaboration with 107.9 radio station for a fundraiser dinner & Bingo for Babies night to help support the pregnancy center, a picnic in August, and special constitutional America 250 kick-off event in September.

Our February Marshall Island Humanitarian Project

My sister has lived on a tiny chunk of coral in the Pacific Ocean for the last 3 years. Her husband works for the Army Corp of Engineers on the military base

on Kwajalein (Kwaj). No family has been able to visit because it's too far away from.. everywhere, takes too long to get there, and cost too much.

We had talked about it several times over the last few years and decided that the logistics were just too challenging, but the thought would not leave me alone. Last October I began feeling anxious about going to the point that I was worried that something bad was going to happen to one of them. I didn't know at that time what God had planned for our group, or myself.

In January my sister reminded me that their contract was up October and our chance to visit them there would soon be gone. When Robert and I spoke that night, we agreed that if we missed this opportunity, we would regret it.

My literal mantra in life and theme song is "Leaving No Regrets" so we decided to make it happen.

I thought it would be a great visit and we would do a lot of snorkeling & fishing, which we did, but it ended up being so much more.

I had learned from my sister of the terrible plight of the Marshallese women, the poverty, abuse, lack of resources and running water, no refrigeration, and more, and began speaking to Jackie Blumenauer, director of the Yokwe Yuk Welcome Club, a US registered non profit on Kwaj. I wanted to help her organization while I was there, then thought, wait, I have a group of incredible women that would help if they knew the story, and I believe it's important to understand how other women live and how grateful we should be here in the US and especially in Idaho.

I learned that six months prior, even Tulsi Gabbard had visited Ebeye to see if they could make a safe house for the abused women there.

We were met with many challenges, but many miracles. We only had a few short weeks to pull this together. Our suitcases were full of books for the Marshallese children and Idahoan potatoes so we shipped the rest of the donations.

The ATI military plane that makes deliveries to the island broke down and the resident's there were not receiving any mail. We were worried the donations would not make it for our scheduled delivery.

We arrived on Valentine's Day and my sister received notice that night that a mail flight had finally come in, but when they took their bicycle and cart to pick it up, only some of the items had arrived. Next we stopped at the Yoke Yuk Mic Shop to meet Jackie. We had left our home nearly 30 hours ago and were functioning on terrible airplane food, no sleep and probably about 2 braincells between the two of us. She told us that she had not yet received a response from her contact on the island of Ebeye and had no confirmation of the drop off. I was mortified. I was responsible for representing our club and delivering these items. I was frustrated and in my arrogance, I thought, How difficult is it to make these arrangements?

Well, as it turned out, a large shipping vessel had dropped anchor somewhere between Ebeye and Guam and broken the internet cable. There is no cell service, and limited places on the island with wifi. Their only means of island to island communication was gone, with the exception of a ferry. A few days later more items came in and arrangements were made and we scheduled to take the ferry in two days to meet the Queen of Ebeye. We were back in business!

The next day, Jackie informed me that the school we had planned to take the books and musical instruments to was shut down because of the power being out on the island, which happens with some frequency. I was heartbroken, but I should have remembered the prayers of you wonderful women here for the success and safety of our trip.

My incredible sister got to work and rallied other neighbors on Kwaj to make arrangements with Michael, from Care Ministry Gugeegue, a Christian-based school that helps kids learn music, nutrition and the Bible. (Gugeegue-area at the very end of Ebeye). I couldn't have pulled this off without the support of my amazing husband and my sister Jill and her husband Karl.

The next day we were able to meet with Michael and deliver 24 musical recorders, 16 musical bells and Idahoan potatoes. He was so excited because they had been given a few recorders before, but not enough for all the kids. His positive attitude was infectious!

After he sent the thank you videos to my sister and I, he said the kids were so excited about the bells that the school was going to try and get 2 more sets so they could all play them. I was going to ask you all about it, but my sister beat me to the punch and immediately ordered two more sets for them. They are so excited!

Next, we went into the Wellness Kitchen on Ebeye, a place that serves nutritious food, especially for those fighting diabetes.

We met with the Queen and gave her a gift bag that included some special huckleberry items and an Idaho Spud candy bar (which somehow survived the trip). We then gave her the donation of 100 hygiene kits, a set of Tuttle Twins books, and several bags of Idahoan potatoes.

The remainder of our items arrived on the day we left the island. I got a call from my sister late the following Wednesday. She had taken the ferry to Ebeye to deliver the 500 tampons and 48 pairs of flip flops to the Weto in Mour office, a division of the U.S. Army's WUTMI organization (Women United Together Marshall Islands).

Jill and I had talked on the ferry, on our way back from Eybeye, about what could be done to do something more sustainable to help the people there. She wondered out loud about growing some sprouts regularly to take over to the Wellness Kitchen. I loved the idea of giving them such a good source of condensed nutrition!

A miracle happened a few weeks later, after I was home. Someone from the little thrift store on Kwaj called her and said a person leaving the island had just donated a sprouting unit and thought she might be interested in it. What?! She was so excited when she called me and has picked up a brand new huge

\$800 sprouting unit for about \$100! She is just getting ready to harvest her first batch!

Our trip did not look exactly how I had envisioned it, your life is probably not exactly as YOU envisioned it, but we find our way, we work it out, and we learn God makes up for our weaknesses.

I have learned that when we are about doing good in the world, and we work together with faithful women, God will step in and direct the events of our life, and he can do more with **more** of us.