

Connection

CODA International, Inc.

December 2019 • Volume 36, Issue 4



President's Message

by MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams



MateoLuis at
Amber Fort, Jaipur,
Rajasthan, India

Hello Flammy,
It's been a
heck of a ride
these past few
months!

CODA CON!
2020 sold out
in a record 41
hours. Many
factors were
in play with
this. The roll-

out of the new payment
plan, the fact that there isn't
a 2021 conference and it
will be in the US again. This is
amazing. To me, this speaks
to the need and readiness
of our membership for our
organizational restructure. The
strategic plan has been in the
works for several years. A big
part of this is the restructuring
of CODA regions, regional
reps, and the board of
directors. We as a board are
working on finalizing this to be
ready to present for approval
at the next Business Meeting in

San Diego. There will be more
information disseminated in
the upcoming months. I am
excited and also overwhelmed
at this progressive change.
I also know that we as an
organization are ready to
move forward in response to
our growth.

I will be in San Diego this
December to touch base with
the local committee, check out
the hotels and offer support in
any capacity. This conference
will be one for the books!

As I close, let me leave you
with this parable. An elder
sister was teaching her
younger brother the alphabet.
He asked her why is it ABC
and not ACB? The elder sister
said because we have B (be)
before we can C (see). My
brothers and sisters, right now
we Being so we can See.

*In humble service,
MateoLuis*

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If you were a newcomer in
Fontainebleau, Paris and are
interested in being a panelist
in San Diego, USA before
conference opening 25 June
2020, please contact Millie at:
milliebrother
[@codainternational.org](mailto:milliebrother@codainternational.org)



From the Founder • *by Millie Brother*

As I write this article in November for the upcoming December newsletter, I am full of celebration and gratitude.

We acknowledge CODA's 36th birthday this month. It seems it was just a short while ago that I was finger pecking away on a manual typewriter to produce the first five years of newsletters and handwriting notes to CODA members and friends around the globe. Now, we are instantly reaching members in all parts of the world via the Internet. Who could have imagined a conference registration would fill up in a matter of hours with throngs of Codas? What a difference technology has made!

Gratitude comes about with American Thanksgiving and reflection on all those deserving our deepest thanks. CODA has reached a milestone 36 years due to the dedication and hard work of so many volunteers keeping us afloat. I salute all of you for your efforts and patience as we have blazed a CODA trail.

It feels like we have moved forward together as a family unit. This is not always easy, but certainly is rewarding as you feel the bonds and see the head nods and hugs when we're together. So in this month I say to Codas and CODA, "happy birthday" and "thank you" for our lifelong Coda family.

With Love, Joy and Appreciation – Millie

"Incredible things can be done simply if we are committed to making them happen." – Sadhguru

From the Stand-in Co-editors

by Rose Morba & Nancy Creighton

You're probably wondering what "stand-in co-editors" means for this issue of CONNECTION. Due to the Connection Committee being in transition, the Board hired Nancy Creighton, professional, Deaf, freelancer of Purple Swirl Arts, to do the design and layout of this issue of the newsletter while the permanent committee is recruited from the membership.

NC: I asked Rose to be an editor because everything works better when done together, and I needed a Coda eye on things. We had the pleasure of working together when creating the CODAhaven program book and yearbook, and I had the chance to teach Rose about Trello, the software I use to organize the work, and some details of the editing process.

RM: When Nancy asked me to assist her with this issue of CONNECTION, my first thought was— do what Rebecca (Kindblade) did these past few years— I don't think so. Those are big shoes to fill! But because of my commitment to CODA and my confidence in working with Nancy, of course I said I would volunteer!

I learned first-hand how much time and effort goes into designing, reviewing and proofreading a publication, and the work that goes into the different versions of the layout. Reviewing the submissions for this issue of CONNECTION reinforced how much CODA means to me and how much I learn from my Coda family. I was deeply moved by each person's story.

NC & RM: We thank everyone who contributed stories, articles, and updates for this issue and the Publications Committee for their assistance.

Like branches on a tree, we may grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one. Each of our lives will always be a special part of the other. –Unknown



Help Wanted

Volunteers needed for CODA, Inc. Committees. If you see a committee you are interested in learning more about, see [page 10](#) for information about volunteering. We would love to have you on board!

CODA CONNECTIONS NEEDS PEOPLE TO HELP CONNECT US WITH CODAS AROUND THE WORLD. We need two people to produce the CONNECTION newsletter.

The role of the Publications Committee is to proofread any and all announcements and memos that go out to the membership, including the CONNECTION newsletter. Publications co-chairs receive documents to be proofread, submit them to the committee to do the proofreading, as well as report to the Board.

The CONNECTION newsletter is produced by the editor and designer/layout person who work independently of the Publications Committee, however Publications does help with final proofreading.

CODA is in need of an editor who does the nitty-gritty work on the words. That's not just copyediting (spelling, punctuation, etc.), but includes working with writers to create a better flow for their story, and cutting for clarity and/or space. It's also the art of nudging— getting people to keep to deadlines and collecting photos and captions for the photos.

Designer/Layout people put it together on the page. The designer/layout person chooses fonts, colors, proportions, set principles for the use of logos. They also input the copy into the space available; tell the editor of any problems; make corrections given by the editor; finds or makes appropriate graphics as needed; does the work of preparing photos that will be included.

While many smaller publications give one person the job of editing and layout, it's uncommon that one person has both skills equally. CODA has grown to the point where two separate people are preferred.

Interested? Send email to coda_connection@codas-international.org.

Biographies • Board of Directors

Get to know the people on your Board of Directors better! We are excited to share with you the biographies and personal stories of your regional representatives. Happy reading!

MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams President & Region IV



Hello all. I'm MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams, your current Region IV Representative.

I was raised in Colorado. I have Deaf parents and three amazing Coda siblings. My Colorado mentor has been and still is Ann Topliff. She and I met for the first time when I was five years old. Then we met again at my first Coda retreat some 14 years later. I went because she worked with my parents to get me to attend. If you don't know Ann, let me tell you one thing about her. When she asks something, I know to not say no. I just say, ok what's the plan? I have worked at local retreats, KODA camps and was the director of KODA-rado at Aspen camp. I have a passion for CODA and where we are going.

When I was elected Region IV Representative, I was living in Colorado. Then, I took a job that has me based in Mumbai, India. So I left the 2018 CODA conference and went straight to Mumbai. I honestly thought it would be the same, yet different. What I've learned is that infrastructures are vastly different when one leaves the US. Things I took for granted, such as the internet, are not always consistent. So there are many days I'm without internet or enough bandwidth to do all I need to do. Access to the internet/data is very costly outside of the US. If I go over my 2 GB per day, I have to wait until the next day, the next

cycle. A majority of my daily CODA duty is done on either my phone or iPad, which is dependant on internet access. This has an impact on my full participation in Board work. This experience teaches me a lot about privilege. These are things I'm thinking about as I do my work.

I have had experiences of communicating with Codas and their parents here. I find the themes to be common. For example, how close-knit the deaf community is here. And how the C/Kodas organically connect and create community amongst themselves. It reminds me of growing up in a Deaf church and my precious ties to my childhood C/Koda friends.

It's been my privilege to be part of an international organization. If you have any ideas, thoughts, or feedback regarding Region IV, feel free to send me an email at region4@codainternational.org. If you have general feedback or questions, feel free to contact me at president@codainternational.org.

Tshepiso Aina Vice-President & Region VII



My name is Tshepiso Aina from South Africa. I'm from a family of five (4 girls and

1 boy). I am the thumb and the last babies in the family are the twins. Both of my parents are Deaf, Mom passed on in 2005 due to cancer. My mentors and people who played a vital role in my life are my paternal uncle, for the work he did in the Deaf

Board of Directors

President & Region IV Rep

MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams

region4@codainternational.org
president@codainternational.org

Vice President & Region VII Rep

Tshepiso Aina

region7@codainternational.org
vice-president@codainternational.org

Secretary & Member-at-Large

Jenny Blake

memberatlarge@codainternational.org
secretary@codainternational.org

Treasurer & Region III Rep

Abby Long

region3@codainternational.org
treasurer@codainternational.org

Region I Rep

Lily Pacheco

region1@codainternational.org

Region II Rep

Jarlath Bloom

region2@codainternational.org

Region V Rep

Stella Butora

region5@codainternational.org

Region VI Rep

Adrian Bailey

region6@codainternational.org

Member-at-Large

Cedar Jones

memberatlarge2@codainternational.org

communities of Africa, my parents, and my paternal aunt. I was brought up among strong women who taught us to dream big! Also vital to me are the women in my foundation, the Tshepiso Mokoena Foundation, especially the board members! The support, leadership, and wisdom they have offered is what keeps us going.

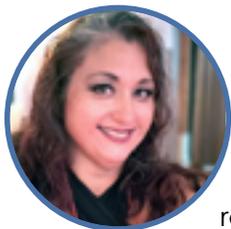
I am the current representative of Region VII and serving in the Executive Committee as Vice President. I have been serving the CODA International Board for two terms as the Region VII representative. The main objective of being part of the Coda family is to connect Codas worldwide and to raise as much awareness in my country of birth, South Africa, and the region I represent. Coda pride and Coda awareness in Africa is still a journey we are traveling and we will surely get there. CODA International empowers me with the knowledge and resources that affords me the opportunity to interact with Coda family worldwide. I am excited to see the growth of CODA, Inc. internationally especially in Regions 6 & 7.

Professionally, I have worked at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and South African Parliament as a South African Sign Language (SASL) Practitioner, a freelance SASL Interpreter for ENCA South Africa (a news channel), and Cape Peninsula Hospitals. In 2018, my foundation launched a program dubbed #DeafGirlsCode in partnership with iSchool Africa in which ten Deaf girls were trained in coding.

Working alongside my paternal uncle who is Deaf, I have initiated various advocacy programs for the Deaf communities since 2001. I also serve on the Boards for Equal Health For Deaf People (Cape Town, South Africa), and Immense Grace Foundation (Lagos, Nigeria).

My first CODA Conference was in 2016, which was made possible by the generosity of Cedar Jones. The following year I hosted two Coda Retreats in Cape Town and Johannesburg. I am reachable at Region7@codainternational.org or Vice-president@codainternational.org.

Jenny Blake Secretary & Member-at-Large



Aloha! I was born and raised in the beautiful state of Hawaii, with both parents being Deaf. I am mixed-race being that my mother is Chinese and Hawaiian, also raised in Hawaii and my father is Caucasian coming from New Orleans,

Louisiana. I also have two Deaf uncles on my mother's side. I have a younger brother and sister, which makes me the oldest of three. We all grew up using sign language in our home, and as the oldest, I was the designated interpreter. No surprise there, I'm sure.

I am a mother of four and have been working as a freelance sign language interpreter for the last 21 years. Growing up, I never had the desire to work in this field but I am truly grateful that the universe brought it into existence. I had always struggled with my identity as a youngster. I tried various groups to become involved in but never seemed to feel quite like I fully fit in. I could never figure out why that was the case, until...I found CODA.

I had my first real taste of the Coda experience when I attended my first conference in 2001. It was held in Miami Beach, Florida, and it completely changed my life. It was there where I finally found the place where I finally fit in! They could relate to me because they also lived that different life. I was able to discover who I was and why I did things the way that I did. It was all because I had Deaf culture embedded in me and that in my heart I was very deaf in spite of the fact that my ears could hear. That was the moment I found my Coda self.

Over the past 18 years, I have attended 14 conferences and hosted one that occurred in Waikiki in 2004. I have made so many lifelong kinships, friendships, and buddies, thanks to this wonderful organization. I had begun my journey of becoming a whole person in a world where 99% of my life, I've felt incomplete.

In 2005, at the Las Vegas conference, I opened a whole new door to my journey. I successfully claimed my space as a multicultural Coda with deeper experiences that I needed to share and explore. I began to have conversations with other people like me who come from backgrounds reflecting additional diversity such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and any other culture that goes above and beyond the standard American culture that I live in. I live in Hawaii, raised in a mix of Asian, southern American, Hawaiian, and Deaf cultures. How could I not be confused? With the Deaf culture being dominant, I lacked adequate knowledge of the others. Hence, the multicultural breakout group was born and has been a presence in every conference since.

I joined the CODA Board of Directors in 2018 as a Member-at-Large. I wanted to be in a leadership position representing Codas like me who are underrepresented in our



membership. I wanted to be a voice in extending our outreach to those who have shared my struggle of identity through an intersectional lens. Who better to guide the organization in the direction of inclusion of Codas of Color, than the ones who have lived it. I am honored to share this role with Monique Clark, Lily Pacheco, Tshepiso Aina, and MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams. We've got big shoes to fill, and we shall!

Feel free to contact me anytime at secretary@codas-international.org. I would love to hear from you.

Abby Long Treasurer & Region III



Hello! Glad to introduce myself to you as the Representative for Region 3 and current CODA International treasurer.

My name is Abby Long.

I currently reside in Chicago, Illinois and I am a teacher working with

Deaf and Hard of Hearing students on the southside of Chicago in Chicago Public Schools. I have been a teacher with CPS for almost 20 years. I enjoy the challenge of working with DHH students and teaching them writing.

My parents are both members of multigenerational Deaf families. My dad is second-generation Deaf and my mom is third generation Deaf. I have aunts and uncles on both sides who are Codas. My cousins on my dad's side are also Codas. I have three younger sisters. Suzy was born deaf, making her the 3rd and 4th generation deaf in our family. Melvia and Damara were born as Codas. Now my nephew, Suzy's son, is the 4th and 5th generation deaf in our family.

I first learned about KODA/CODA when I was in Washington, DC and attended a program at Gallaudet University designed for Kodas to learn about KODA. My parents brought me once a month during the 1982–83 years and I learned about having two worlds, deaf and hearing. Years later, in college, I had a Coda friend bring up attending CODA International conference. It was too expensive for us at the time and so we decided not to attend. Looking back, I wish I had attended the conference at that time, regardless of expense. It took me another 10 years before I thought about CODA again, when my mom brought up the CODA conference in Las Vegas that year, 2005. I did not go then, but that encouraged me to look for CODA events in Chicago.

I still was very hesitant to attend CODA events, but a friend took me to see an *Abababa Show* in Chicago. After his stories, I KNEW I had to make CODA events a priority for myself because being a Coda was who I was. I attended my first retreat in Region 3 in Springfield, Illinois in 2009 and I still cherish the group picture that we took. During the following years, I was able to persuade my sister, Melvia to join me in attending Region 3 retreats and eventually conferences. This year, I am very excited to have my youngest sister, Damara, finally join Melvia and me in attending CODA CON! 2020.

I finally feel accepted in one land and not divided between hearing and deaf worlds. I feel that I can speak English and sign ASL simultaneously, if needed, or make a choice to speak only English or sign only using ASL or even speak in ASL order and I will be understood in my communication preference. I finally have shared experiences with flammy other than my own. When I attend retreat, conference or local gatherings, I am at home and I have come to enjoy and cherish these times with other Codas. It's like everybody understands and knows your life growing up and I don't need to be anyone different. I love learning about other Codas' stories and histories and how they may be the same or different than mine. Knowing this has helped me grow into a better person and learn more about myself and my abilities— more than I ever knew was possible.

If you currently live in the Region 3 area and have questions about local get-togethers or retreats, please feel free to get in touch with me at region3@codas-international.org and I will gladly provide you with answers or direct your question to someone who would be able to answer your question.

Lily Pacheco Region I Representative



Ms. Lily Pacheco is the first born of five children to Deaf parents. All of the siblings are fluent signers and the biggest fans of the Deaf communities. They are also active in supporting deaf art, deaf entrainment and deaf culture.

Pacheco is a native New Yorker, a Pace University alumni, with a B.A. in Business Administration, an RID Certified Interpreter, and successful business owner. She has been elected to serve as



CODA International's Region I Representative. Besides being Region I Representative, Lily is also Board Liaison for the Volunteer Committee.

Lily's first CODA conference was in Barcelona, Spain in 2007. She has since attended CODA conferences in Tempe, London, Austin, and Providence.

Lily is proud to serve on a CODA Board that has become increasingly diverse. She looks forward to sharing the next two years with Codas all over the world.

Feel free to reach Lily at region1@codainternational.org.

Jarlath Bloom Region II Representative



Hello everyone! I am the appointed Region 2 Representative for this term, and hail from Rochester, New York. I am an OHCoda. My parents are Richard Bloom from Youngstown, Ohio—

class of '72 NTID, and Lorinda

Kronenberg-Dreyer from Bay City, Michigan. My sister is Jacinda Parks.

I joined the Marines when I graduated high school, spent a year in Japan, had two tours to Iraq, and eventually ended up in Washington, DC by way of California and Florida. I've had a lot of exciting jobs over the years, ranging from Correctional Officer Trainer to a Marine Salvage and Rescue communications specialist helping with the BP Oil Spill clean up. Currently, I am a Technical Account Manager for a Big Data software company and help some of the largest financial institutions and government agencies with their cybersecurity problems. I also am the co-lead for my company's Disability Employee Resource Group, where I am working to bring a focus to interviewing and hiring Deaf employees.

My responsibilities for CODA also extend to being Webmaster and Board Liaison to the Web Committee. You can reach me at region2@codainternational.org, I look forward to seeing where we can take this organization!

Stella Butora Region V Representative



Hello my fellow Codas. Let me introduce myself. I am Stella Butora, your Region 5 Representative coming to you from Arizona. I have been active within CODA International for the last seven years.

My first conference was in New Orleans, and I've only missed one since. I finally decided to turn up my volunteering after attending several years of the Board of Directors' face-to-face business meetings held at international conferences, where I went from working on the silent and live auctions to being more involved by becoming a Rep.

I currently work as a job coach with VR (vocational rehabilitation) in Arizona. In my position I have learned how to strengthen being a team player, an advocate and a leader. In my short time on the Board of Directors, I took on a retreat planning where we raised approximately \$1000 for CODA CON! 2020. My duties include liaising with the CODA CON! 2020 planning committee and we are already making plans for the 2020 regional fall retreat. I look forward to serving my region and the entire membership.

If you have ideas, questions or would like to assist in any fundraising events in the region, please reach out to me. I can be contacted via email at region5@codainternational.org or come up and chat with me if you ever see me at an event in the neighborhood. I'm usually there.

Adrian Bailey Region VI Representative



Hello everyone, I am Adrian Bailey and I am Region 6 Representative—in this role I expect to hold the best interests of Codas in the Northern Hemisphere foremost

in my thoughts—and as such, contribute to making CODA International a truly international organisation. Together with Tshepiso (Mokoena) Aina, the Region 7 Representative, we represent the two regions that transform



CODA International and that make it more diverse, internationally representative, and global.

I was a write-in candidate for Region 6, a sign that Codas in the organisation recognise the potential I have to make a difference. This is reinforced by my experience in other local and national professional and social committees, including professional teachers' associations, and CODA UK & Ireland.

In terms of my personal life, I live in Bristol, England and I'm a Coda with two deaf parents— my Dad is John, deaf from London and who has one deaf brother (Stewart, who has a deaf husband, John V), and my mum is Beverley, deaf from Durban, South Africa. I love good food and sport, especially football, (I'm a Tottenham Hotspur fan), rugby (go Springboks!) and running. I also love languages— I know British Sign Language, American Sign Language, and spoken French, German and Italian— and I work as a sign language interpreter. However, I'm very aware of the importance in making sure that our organisation maintains broad appeal and I'm especially keen in reaching out and learning from Codas who are not interpreters.

My priorities for my tenure are to significantly develop and coordinate activity in Region 6. There are increasingly more national Coda associations that don't have any structure to coordinate activities between themselves. This needs to be addressed and I will liaise with these groups in due course. Each country has its own priorities and I would like to work with a group in each of these countries to support the group and develop Coda participation and leadership in all parts of the Northern Hemisphere.

If I can come to visit you and see the work you're doing, I'd love to do so. As your Region 6 Representative, it is an honour to serve and I look forward to spearheading a period of sustainable growth and to further internationalising our international organisation. Feel free to contact me at region6@codainternational.org anytime.

Cedar Jones Member-at-Large



I was always a chameleon. Growing up I had joined different groups— jocks, theatre, choir,

student government, etc., I always felt welcomed, but I never felt I “belonged,” until I went to a CODA conference. After that, I was hooked. It took me a few years to navigate, slowly I started to volunteer for small things, then bigger things.

Service has always been a big part of my life. At a young age, my parents always “voluntold” me. I am an expert packer and mover because we helped many families who moved in or out of the deaf church we attended. As a youth, I was involved in planning and executing service projects— from painting over graffiti, cleaning up beaches or parks, building homes, to performing household chores for those in need.

It makes sense that I would volunteer for an organization that I love. I wanted to share with others how I felt about CODA. I wanted people to have the opportunity to experience that, “I am HOME,” or “I found my TRIBE,” feeling.

On my own, with my own money, I started looking for Codas and Coda groups. I reached out to them, starting a dialogue, inviting them to events and sharing about CODA International. From there I was asked to officially do outreach.

From Outreach to the Board, I want to see more growth in our organization. When I attended my first conference in 2010, there were few Codas of Color that I could identify. Fast forward to 2018, now an established group, Codas of Color filled the stage. Hands waving! We have had more Codas attending conferences from countries other than the US than ever before. In 2019, more than 50% of the people attending the conference were from countries outside the US. All the continents have been represented, except for Antarctica. If anyone knows of a Coda living there, let me know, smile. We have made strides and there is a lot of work still to be done. We need to continue to spread the word.

We need our Coda Asian, Black, African American, African, European, Indian, Latinx, Middle Eastern, and Polynesian (and any others that I may have missed) siblings. With all of us, it will make us a richer organization. And truly make us International.

You can reach me with ideas, concerns, and questions at either memberatlarge2@codainternational.org or outreach@codainternational.org.

I will end with my favorite quote, “Be the Change.”

Be the Change!

Sorry

by Kas Stogis, Region IV

Apologies are rare, at least to me. Dad's father was a manager on a manor in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Then, it was occupied by the Czar. Grandpa's father died early, thus splitting the family. Grandpa had to live with his aunt's family and they were mean. It was a hard life. At the age of eighteen, he fled to Chicago.

Sometimes Grandma would say Grandpa would bark, meaning he had argued with Grandma. He was stoic for the most part. Grandma was the storyteller and said he was strict. Grandma said Dad suffered "under the belt".

Way back in Michigan, I was visiting my grandparents for a Sunday early dinner. Then it was watching television on my grandparents 1950s blonde cabinet TV. We had none. During a TV program Dad wanted to go home and he signed for us to go. I didn't want to until the program was done. Twelve or fifteen miles later, after we got home, Dad ordered me to take off my pants in front of my three younger siblings. I remember being embarrassed in that yellow kitchen with the red and white checkered curtains. He used his belt strap and struck me on my butt and leg. He told me to say sorry. I thought, "I'm not." So I did not. Again the strap stung the back of my legs. Again I was told to say I'm sorry. Failing to do so I felt the burn on both my legs and face. A burn with red shame like those curtains, my siblings watching. I knew he would not stop so the apology came, quick, and not so sincere.

A constant source of arguments for Mom and Dad was money. In the Chicagoland area, he took me a couple of times to the race track, colors of silks on harness horses. I can still see Mom as an orphan at age

fifteen and had no home to go to during the depression. Dad had parents for many years. That's why Mom saw to it the mortgage was paid off early.

Later, in Illinois, Mom and Dad argued a lot. Was a divorce pending? It was then Dad asked me if I wanted to live with him or Mom. I signed, "I don't know." I found out two siblings said Mom, the other sister I had to ask. Dad took to a decade and more of drinking. I know Grandma told Dad he had to keep a family of four kids together. Long ago, Grandma and Grandpa were separated but reconciled to keep their two boys together.

Fast forward to Florida. Mom and Dad retired. Dad was seriously sick with emphysema. Mom, like Grandma, told many stories. Dad and Grandpa kept things to themselves. Alone with Dad—he was in a recliner in their Seminole, Florida condo. He looked at me, putting his right fist against his chest and circled gently. An earnest apology. By then, others came back into the living room. No elaboration. It was simple. A father, signing in American Sign Language, "sorry" to his son.

Today I ruminate. Was the apology for the arguments they had in front of us? Was it for the embarrassment he caused his oldest son? Was it for the most difficult question he asked of me? Where, when, did he learn to apologize? Did Grandpa apologize to Dad, too?

My dad impressed me. He taught me arithmetic, which nuns and public school did not. It took him just one session on the dining room table. It took a lifetime to use the word and sign "sorry."

Thank you, Dad.

How Important Are YOU?

by Bonnie Whitener, Volunteer Oversight/Membership Co-Chair

It was in CODACan that I realized just how big CODA International has grown. I also finally grasped just how much work goes into making our organization run and conferences happen as successfully as possible—in light of all the needs we share on an international platform.

The countless hours our boards have put into our precious organization cannot go unnoticed and unsaid. If you think about it, only nine board members oversee and run an entire international organization and make themselves available as much as possible to answer our many questions and comments—some good, some not so good. It is easy to criticize, but also easy to help.

So I ask you, implore you even, to ask yourself what does CODA mean to you? Where do we focus our energy and time? How can we contribute? Here are a few areas to consider:

Membership These annual dollars are spent (in conjunction with the thousands of unpaid volunteer hours) to make our organization exist. They are crucial to the ability of CODA to function. Many of us only join to be part of the conference, please consider sponsoring someone who can't afford to join or making your membership renew on an annual basis!

Volunteer We have several committees in place that can use your time and attention. We are Codas, we have an amazing ability to accomplish things individually (many self-taught) but imagine what we can do if we truly come together and utilize our talents on teams.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfL0PrNvS1yIVCjiw0A0yERYZ-ZHW5ItAFQJxRM5421ZTzO9A/viewform>

Elections & Business Meeting YOUR VOTE MATTERS! Be sure to cast your vote for each election cycle. The business meetings happen at each conference and this is where you can learn more about what is on the agenda and upcoming for our organization.

First and foremost CODA International is a scholarship fund! Our parties (aka conferences) are epic, but they are secondary to what we represent. They require even more involvement in both funds and time from our membership to make happen. We are now at a 500-person conference, the largest ever! A great feat for which we can praise and applaud! It also points us back to our growth and our highest need ever for your help.

Committees • as of 12/18/2019

Bylaws

Chair: Marie Alford
Members: Bruce King & Amy Williamson
Board Liaisons: Executive Board

CODA CON! 2020

Co-Chairs: Abby Coyer, Jackie Harris, Margie Brooks & Penny McGee
Board Liaisons: Jenny Blake & Stella Butora
Email: 2020@codainternational.org

Conference Waiver Committee

Co-Chairs: Jayde Perry & Ray Williams
Members: Michelle Simoneaux & 2019 Local Committee Member
Email: waivers@codainternational.org

CONNECTION Newsletter

Editor: **VACANT** Layout: **VACANT**
Email: coda_connection@codainternational.org

Distinguished Service Award

Co-Chairs: Millie Brother & Ann Topliff
Members: 2019 Recipients
Board Liaison: Jenny Blake
Email: milliebrother@codainternational.org (dsa@codainternational.org not operational as of 11/23/19)

Fundraising & Grant Writing

Chair(s): **VACANT**
Members: Jayde Perry, Sue Nace
Board Liaison: Stella Butora
Email: fundraising@codainternational.org

KODA2CODA Committee

Co-Chairs: Chair Leah Monson, Apollonia Moriarty & Celeste Owens

Members: Chris McQuaid, Jade Girvan & Jerome Dobson
Board Liaison: MateoLuis Ruiz-Williams
Email: koda@codainternational.org

Membership

Co-Chairs: Abby Coyer & Bonnie Whitener
Members: Jennifer Hensley, Karla Boudreaux & Tshepiso Aina
Board Liaison: Cedar Jones
Email: membership@codainternational.org

Intersectional Membership Committee

Members: Tshepiso Aina & Vicki Wan Slattery

Memorial Fund

Co-Chairs: Dennis Joyce & Diane Hazel Jones
Board Liaison: Jarlath Bloom
Email: memorial@codainternational.org

Millie Brother Scholarship

Co-Chairs: Su Isakson
Members: Michelle Simoneaux & Melvia Valiente
Board Liaison: Abby Long
Email: scholarships@codainternational.org

Nominations & Elections

Co-Chair: Sue Nace
Member: Bonnie Whitener
Board Liaison: Board Secretary
Email: elections@codainternational.org

Outreach

Chair: Cedar Jones
Members: Monique Clark & Sophia Yesuneh
Board Liaison: Tshepiso Aina
Email: outreach@codainternational.org

Publications

Chair(s): **VACANT** Suzanne Nace, temporary
Members: Suzanne Nace & Abby Long
Board Liaison: Adrian Bailey
Email: publications@codainternational.org

Research Review

Co-Chairs: Jeffrey Levi Palmer & Erin Finton
Members: Amy Williamson, Bob Hoffmeister & Rose Voss
Board Liaison: Jarlath Bloom
Email: research@codainternational.org

Social Media

Co-Chairs: Alex Laferriere & Robin Dragoo
Members: Tshepiso Aina, Stella Butora, Janet Maxwell
Board Liaison: Adrian Bailey
Email: socialmedia@codainternational.org

Strategic Planning Committee

Co-Chairs: Jayde Perry & Dr. Jennifer Hensley
Board Liaison: Executive Board
Members: **VACANT**

Volunteer Committee

Co-Chairs: Bonnie Whitener
Members: Stella Butora, Elodia Mottot & Isabel Banda
Board Liaisons: Lily Pacheco & Tshepiso Aina
Email: volunteers@codainternational.org

Website

Chair: Nick LeFors
Members: Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Robin Dragoo, Rose Voss
Board Liaison: Jarlath Bloom
Email: webmaster@codainternational.org

Distinguished Service Awards

1994–2019

In 1994, CODA began a tradition of recognizing some of its members with a Distinguished Service Award. Each year at the International Conference, awards are presented to those individuals who have contributed their time, effort, talent, and dedicated service on behalf of CODA.

2019

*Billy Collins
Abby Coyer
Rebecca Kindblade*

2018

*Darlene Ensenat
Shirley Galvin
Dennis Joyce*

2017

*Sandra Boe
ValerieLynn Cloud
Janie Powell*

2016

*Linda Hines
Sean Henriques*

2015

*Marie Dimond
Ava Hawkins
Jennie Pyers*

2014

*Kathleen Austin
Allyne Betancourt
Ann Joy Lieberman*

2013

*Margaret Collier
Mariann Jacobson*

2012

*Jason Hay-Southwell
William Hay-Southwell
Mary Ann Hickman*

2011

*Suzo Lange
Dirk Tabbert*

2010

*Jo Ann McCann
Manuella Moeller*

2009

*Carolyn Borso
Mark Colonomos*

2008

*Alan Abarbanell
Emily Dorman*

2007

*Carmel Batson
Sabine Gossner
Olga Swenson
Richter*

2006

*Alan Marcus
Bert Pickell*

2005

*Brenda Warwick
Mark Whisenant*

2004

*Judie Trelloggen
Bonser
Peter Bonser*

2003

*Sherry Hicks
Michael Velez*

2002

*Trudy Schafer
Hoffmeister
Diane Hazel Jones*

2001

*Amy Mathews
Amundsen
Paul Preston*

2000

*Elliott Aheroni
Betty Colonomos*

1999

*Dave Eklof
Ann Topliff*

1998

*Bob Hoffmeister
Roz Prickett*

1997

*Sue Russell
Harrington*

1996

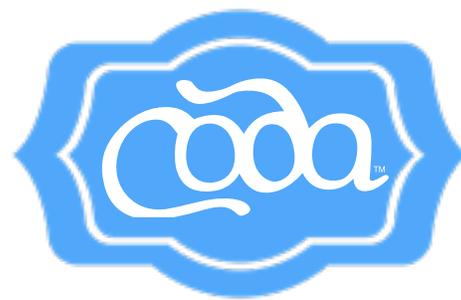
*Carol Mullis
Darlene Prickett*

1995

*Randy Meyers
Hugh Prickett*

1994

*Millie Brother
Tom Bull
Sheila Jacobs
Mariann Jacobson
Bonnie Kraft*



NOMINATIONS WANTED

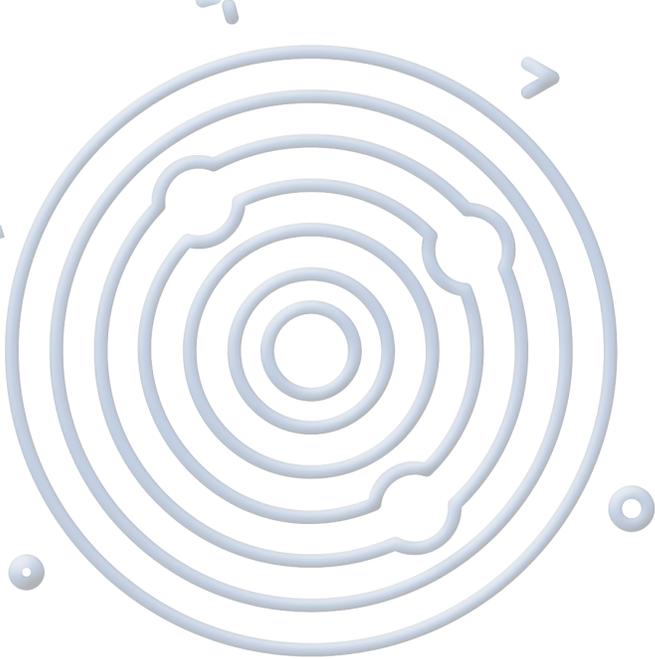
for the Distinguished Service Award

We are looking for recipients for the 2020 awards. If you

know someone who has contributed much to the CODA organisation, please send that nomination with a description of what he/she has done for CODA. Criteria for consideration is:

- current membership (previous recipients and current Board members excluded),
- longevity and consistency of membership,
- active role in the organisation,
- dedication to the CODA mission.

All nominees must be Codas and we are looking at leadership activity on local, national and international levels. Send nominations to Millie Brother at milliebrother@codainternational.org **before 30 April 2020.**



Mission

CODA celebrates the unique heritage and multicultural identities of adult hearing individuals with deaf parent(s).

Statement of Purpose

CODA (Children of Deaf Adults, Inc.) strives to achieve this mission via conferences, retreats, publications, scholarships, resource development and fundraising to enrich the experience of Codas.



You can donate painlessly to CODA International, Inc. throughout the year, just by doing your regular shopping at Amazon—and you don't have to be a member!

Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com, Search for "Children of Deaf Adults" when selecting your charity.

CODA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WAIVER MEMORIAL FUND

The Memorial Fund accepts donations in memory of individuals with Deaf parents who have passed away. Furthermore, donations are welcome in the memory of supporters of CODA International whether or not they have deafness in their families.

All donations are used to provide conference registration waivers for Codas in need who wish to attend a CODA International conference.

A minimum donation of \$25 USD is requested. Upon receipt, the honoree's name will appear on the CODA International Memorial website.

Honorees who are Codas will also be remembered during a memorial service during the annual CODA International conference.

To make a donation please send a check or money order, payable to CODA International, at the following address:

CODA International Memorial Fund
c/o CODA International
41041 Trimboli Way #1788
Fremont, CA USA 94538-4832

Payment may also be made via PAYPAL through the CODA website: www.coda-international.org

Please be sure to identify the person whom you are honoring with the donation, identify if the person is a Coda or supporter of CODA along with your name, address and contact information.

Thank you for your support of CODA International and the Memorial Fund.



Region 6 News

by Joan Fillmore and Clara Ryall

Germany

- **CODADach: CODA retreat** in Berlin, Germany, from 21–24 May 2020. Final registration is 20 February 2020. All countries welcome.

- **Koda Camp 2020** ages 13–17. 26 July–1 August 2020, registration opens mid January. More information found at <http://codadach.de/> for both events.

Canada

Alberta:

- Starting to assemble their own **provincial CODA group**, with meetings and hangouts. Preparations for Mother Father Deaf Day starting.

Ontario:

- **Winter retreat** for the Ontario Deaf community called Winter Family Camp, 2–5 January 2020, anyone and everyone is welcome. Contact deafwintercamp@gmail.com for any questions or additional information.

- Ontario Deaf communities are busy planning **150th anniversary celebrations** for the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf (originally named Ontario School for the Deaf) 1870–2020.

- **Abababa show** coming to Toronto area, location to be determined, on 29 February. More information to come.

- Silent Voice is running up **Mother Father Deaf Day** in April again for the Toronto area. More information to come.

British Columbia:

Ava Hawkins and Liz Elliott volunteered to do story telling at the 4x4 KODA Christmas party, 52 KODAs attended, Ava did the signing, and Liz did the speaking of the story “Polar Express”, happened on the 29th of Nov.

UK & Ireland

- **CODA Camp 2020** will be from 7–10 August 2020. More details will come on the Facebook page for CODA UK & Ireland, or at <http://www.codaukireland.co.uk/>.

- Fellow CODA in UK, **Rachel Vann** has won a prestigious award for her wonderful work in helping improve technology for better accessibility for people with disabilities. Article can be found: <https://wearetechwomen.com/rachel-vann-lloyds-banking-group/>.

France

- **CODA Christmas gathering** was held on 14 December in Paris. It involved a secret Santa gift exchange, and drinks. More information at <http://coda-france.org/>.

Deadlines & Events Coming Up!

1 January 2020: Membership renewal due. Membership@coda-international.org

1 January 2020: Application for financial assistance (conference waiver) opens. <https://www.coda-international.org/CODA-CON>

15 January 2020: Nominations for Regions 2, 4, 6, Member-at-Large opens. Email elections@coda-international.org with candidates name & contact info.

31 January 2020: Second payment for CODA CON! 2020 due— this is a hard deadline. <https://www.coda-international.org/CODA-CON>

1 February 2020: Deadline for articles and contributions for the Q1 2020 issue of CONNECTION. coda_connection@coda-international.org

27–29 March 2020: Region 2 Spring Retreat in Alabama. More info: region2@coda-international.org

30 April 2020: Nominations for Distinguished Service Awards, see page 11.

Region 7 News

by Dorothy Amondi Oloo and Isabel Banda

Gratitude to CODA

by Dorothy Oloo, Nairobi, Kenya

I just want to take this opportunity to thank the CODA International Scholarship Committee for granting my application for the Millie Brother Scholarship back in the year 2016. I cannot thank you enough, but may God bless the fund so that many other Codas may be able to benefit as well.

When I had my graduation this year on July 25th, I flashed back to how I first learned about CODA. It was in 2015 during the Mother Father Deaf Day celebration. Before this, I did not even know that such a day even existed and neither did I know that Coda existed. Thanks to Mum and Dad who heard about this from their friends and informed us on time, we were able to attend. This was just the beginning of my "codaship" as I can call it. This is a gratitude letter from my heart, thanking CODA for enabling me to make a milestone in life, CODA Forever.



My best moment!



With my sister



CODA sign

— Regions —

Region 1, US states

Connecticut
Delaware
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Vermont
West Virginia

Region 2, US states & territories

Alabama
Washington, DC
Florida
Georgia
Maryland
Mississippi
North Carolina
Puerto Rico
South Carolina
Tennessee
Virginia
Virgin Islands

Region 3, US states

Illinois
Indiana
Kentucky
Michigan
Minnesota
Ohio
Wisconsin

Region 4, US states

Arkansas
Colorado
Iowa
Kansas
Louisiana
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
New Mexico
North Dakota
Oklahoma
South Dakota
Texas
Wyoming

Region 5, US States

Alaska
Arizona
California
Hawaii
Idaho
Nevada
Oregon
Utah
Washington

Region 6

Northern Hemisphere, excluding United States & US Territories

Region 7

Southern Hemisphere

How to Apply for a Visitor Visa to the USA

Info gathered by Tshepiso Aina

For those of you who are going to the US for the CODA CON! 2020 conference, or if you are planning a brief visit to the US for business or tourism, you might need to apply for a visitor or a transit visa. These are the steps you should take.

Find out if you need a visa

Check to see if your country participates in the US Visa Waiver Program (VWP). If you don't see your country listed, you will need a non-immigrant visa to visit the US. For a list of countries see: <https://www.dhs.gov/visa-waiver-program-requirements>.

You should apply for a visa 90 days prior to travel.

Determine which visa you might need for your visit

Most business and tourism travellers use B-1 and B-2 visitor visas.

- **B-1 visa** classification is for business travellers to consult with business associates, attend a conference, settle an estate, or negotiate a contract.
- **B-2 visa** classification is for tourists on vacation and people coming for medical treatment, a social event, or participation in amateur contests for no pay.

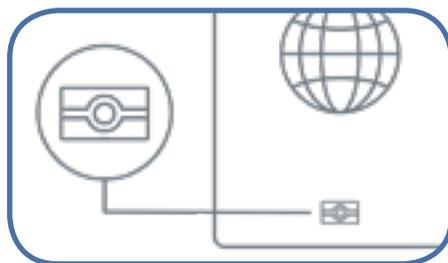
Apply for a visa

The process of applying for a visa will vary depending on the US Embassy or Consulate where you apply. **Follow the specific instructions for the country that you're in.** In general, you will need:

- To complete online form DS-160, the non-immigrant visa application form,
- A photo,
- A visa application fee,
- To schedule an interview.

Waiver Program for Tourists and Business Travellers

International travellers for business or pleasure who are citizens of one of the 38 countries that participate in the US's Visa Waiver Program (VWP) can get a waiver. While you do not need a visa to come to the US for your business meeting or for vacation, you must get an approved travel authorization prior to your trip to the US. Visa Waiver Program travelers are encouraged to apply for authorization as soon as they begin to plan a trip to the United States.



e-passport with chip

How to Apply and Get Approval to Travel to the US

- Check the list of 38 countries that participate in the VWP. For a list of countries see: <https://www.dhs.gov/visa-waiver-program-requirements>.
- You must have an e-Passport to use the VWP. This type of passport is also known as an electronic passport and has a chip embedded in it.
- Fill out the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) online application. ESTA determines the eligibility of a visitor to travel to the US under the VWP.
- The processing fee is \$4.00 and if you are approved, there is an additional \$10.00 authorization charge. Learn how to pay your ESTA fee.
- When you fill out your application, you will get an ESTA application number. Use this number to check the status of your application if it has been accepted to travel to the US.

Visitors travelling to the U.S. for tourism or business meetings or conferences under the VWP can stay for up to 90 days without a visa.

Source: <https://www.usa.gov/visas>

Tips for a Successful US Visitor Visa Interview

Info gathered by Tshepiso Aina

You must be sincere and honest in your efforts, and not give an officer a reason to refuse your visa.

- Understand the process well (accurate information and knowledge is half the battle).
- Provide complete and truthful information.
- Prepare well for the interview.
- Applicants should use the same passport to purchase their receipt (or pay fee) as they will use at the time of interview.
- *If your passport expires within the next 6–12 months, it is advisable to obtain a new passport prior to purchasing a receipt for a visa interview.*
- All questions in the application form must be answered correctly.
- All Visa applicants should indicate clearly their Last Name and Given Name. It's often seen in the case of South Indian names that passport issuing authorities write the whole name in the Last Name field.
- Applicants should check their passport and if the whole name is given in one line, they should get the name changed by the passport office before applying for a visa.
- Indicate your current address and not the permanent address on the visa application form.

These useful tips can be a great help in getting your visa.

- Host or sponsor in USA should send complete and readable documents. It is better to have

computerized printouts so that it can be easily readable.

- Send complete instructions, and procedures for getting the visa. There should be no discrepancy in any of the information given by you and by your visitor.
- Provide all authentic and clear answers to the consulate staff. In case of confusion, don't hesitate to ask a person nearby or consulate staff in a polite manner.
- If language is a problem, you may request to talk in your native language.
- Consulate might ask for return air tickets, medical insurance etc. Tell them those things will be done after the visa is approved.
- Complete the visa application form neatly. In case of error, ask for another form. Do not overwrite.
- Visitors needs to understand the procedure and each document to be submitted.
- Upon receiving your visa, carefully check for any kind of mistakes such as name, date of birth, type of visa, validity date, etc.

Remember, the date of expiration of your stay is the date on the I-94 form which will be attached to your passport at the port of entry into the USA, and not the date stamped on your visa. Usually, these are the same dates, but in some cases, they might differ.

Source: <https://www.path2usa.com/tips-for-a-successful-visitor-visa-interview>

CODA CON!

SAN DIEGO • 2020

San Diego, California, USA • 25 June 2020 – 28 June 2020

<https://www.coda-international.org/CODA-CON>

Red Alert... RED ALERT... R E D A L E R T!!

Wait a minute?? Someone has been watching too many episodes of Star Trek— again. Sorry about that. The Co-Chairs for **CODA CON! 2020** want to take a minute and share a quick update about the latest in our planning shenanigans.

First of all, THANK YOU for your patience as we worked with the liaisons and the Board to find a solution to the incredible and overwhelming response to **CODA CON! 2020**. We were able to increase the number of attendees to 500 and the hotel has been fantastic to work with to make it happen. Due to the number of rooms needed, we found it necessary to find and contract a second hotel to accommodate everyone (it is 1/3 of a mile away) including providing us with around the clock shuttle services. We also set up a roommate app to help attendees find a room to share or share the room they already have.

Now that we have the facilities, hotels, shuttle and everything ready to rock-n-roll...we are now turning our attention to the program. Soon you will be receiving surveys and 'Call for Presenters,' 'Call for Entertainment,' among other 'Call for____' emails. Please be prompt and thorough in your responses so we can keep the momentum going.

For some fun facts about San Diego:

<https://www.careysandiego.com/blog/20-fun-facts-about-san-diego>

About this Issue

CONNECTION

Volume 36 • Issue 4
ISSN 0885-7962

41041 Trimboli Way #1788
Fremont, CA USA 94538-4832

Children of Deaf Adults, Inc.
distributes this newsletter four
times a year throughout the
world to its members.

CONNECTION is currently seeking
an editor and a design/
layout artist. See page 3 for
more information, or email
[coda_connection@coda-
international.org](mailto:coda_connection@coda-international.org).

Article Guidelines

1. Articles for THE CODA CONNECTION should not be more than 350 words long;
2. Short “codatalk” phrases (with English interpretations) are fine, but the majority of the text must be in English;
3. Submissions may be edited for clarity and space, however, anything requiring more than that will be returned to the author(s) for revision (and reediting) so that every contribution maintains the flavor, integrity and respect of authorship;
4. Some submissions may be best suited to the theme of a later issue and may be “bumped” accordingly;

5. CODA maintains the right to refuse to print any submission;
6. CODA maintains the right to reprint any submission.

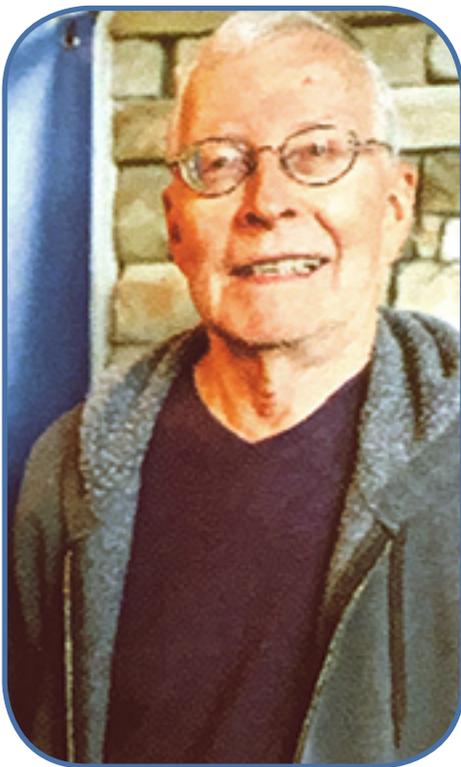
Article & Contribution Deadlines:

1 February, 1 May, 1 August,
1 November.

Reprinting Newsletter Contents

Permission to reprint articles must be given by author of original works printed in the CODA CONNECTION. All reprinted articles must contain an acknowledgment specifying the following: author’s name, newsletter name: *The CODA Connection*, and date of publication.

...and more



**Kas Stogis, Region 4, author
of “Sorry,” page 9**

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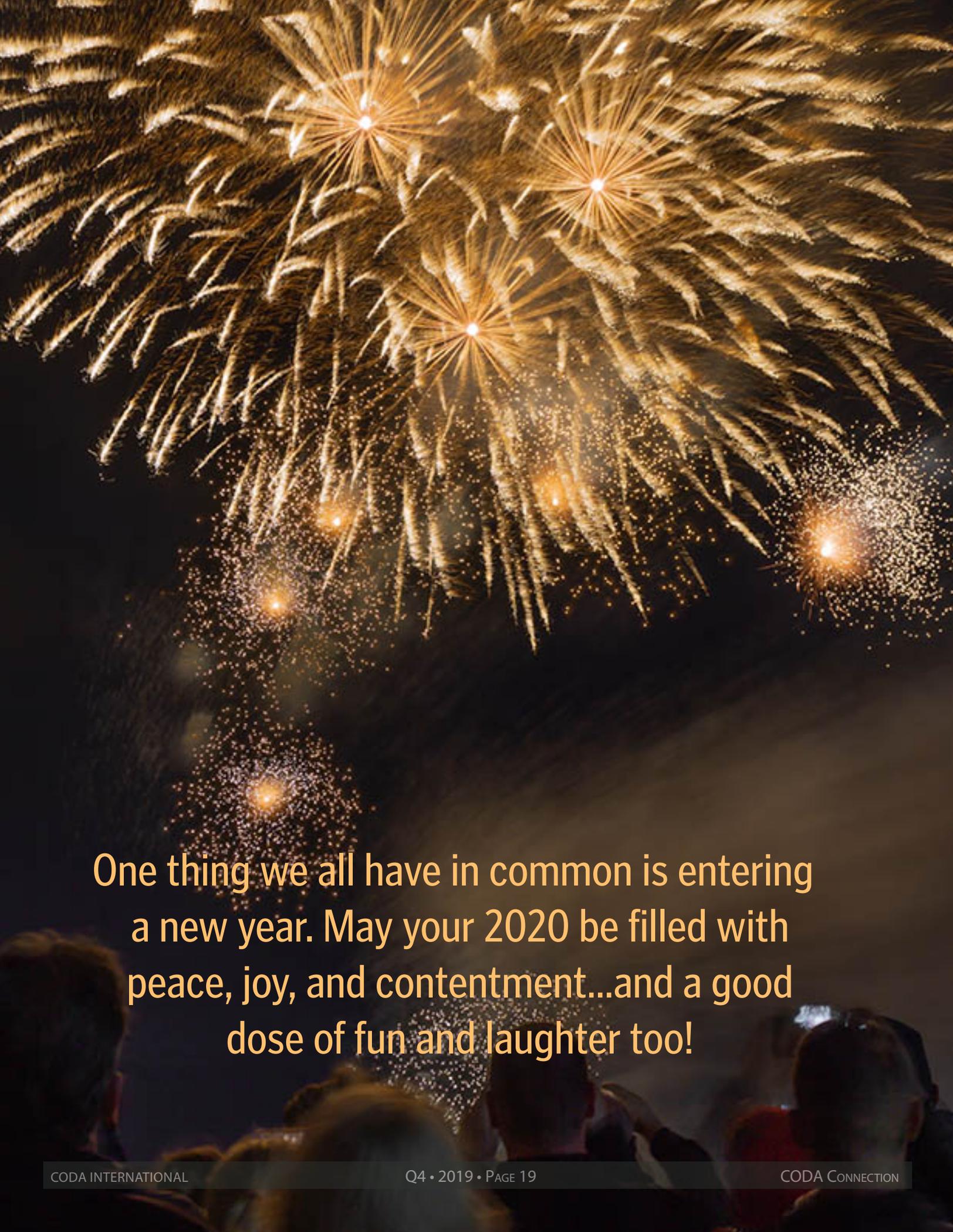
A note about navigation

This issue is interactive, in that
you can use the links to move to
specific pages, send emails and
view webpages.

Email addresses are in **russet**,
web URLs are in **gray**.

Click on the item in the table of
contents on the first page, called
“in this issue” to go to that page.
Click on the footer to go back to
the first page.

Links have only been tested in
Adobe Acrobat Reader.



One thing we all have in common is entering a new year. May your 2020 be filled with peace, joy, and contentment...and a good dose of fun and laughter too!