

President's MESSAGE

Your WAA New Year's Resolution

Greetings from Titledown!

First of all, I want to wish everyone a happy New Year. I hope that 2007 was successful for you and that 2008 is full of good health and happy times for you, your families and your friends. I'm sure that a good majority of us have made some kind of New Year's resolution in which we are trying to improve upon some part of our personal or professional life. For a lot of us, New Year's is a time in which we can reflect upon the past year and promise ourselves that we are going to set a different direction or try to accomplish new goals in the near future.

Reflecting Upon the Past

The WAA has always had an outstanding track record as an ISA chapter. This past year I have represented the WAA on many occasions, and while talking to members from other chapters about the WAA, I couldn't help but swell with pride describing all the functions, services and benefits we provide the membership. When I tell people that we are still an all-volunteer association, I am often responded to with amazement and disbelief. But like any organization, resting on our laurels is good for the short-term, warm-and-fuzzy feeling, but does little to help move the organization forward. As one of our directors so wisely stated, "If the WAA is not striving, it's dying."

So, at the board of directors meeting held this past December, we created time to reflect on our past accomplishments, become aware of our current challenges, and discuss the future direction of the WAA. As part of this reflective process, a consultant who specializes in working with governing boards had the WAA BOD complete an assessment survey and volunteered to analyze the results free of charge.

The survey results were not only a refreshing confirmation of the reasons we chose to be involved in the WAA, but also a wake-up call to the challenges we face.

Looking at Our Future

The most common fiber the members of the BOD share is their passion and dedication to the mission of "improving the understanding of trees and the practice of arboriculture."

The BOD recognizes that we must stay committed to keeping our core functions solid and attainable to the membership. Conferences, workshops, networking opportunities, newsletters and the Web

page shall be delivered in the most productive and cost-efficient means possible. Maintaining a fiduciary responsibility of high integrity was also cited as a reason for our long history of success and must never be compromised.

However, the WAA also faces some challenges that include membership growth, fund raising, hiring staff and finding the future leaders that will keep this great association moving forward. The survey provided much-needed insight and direction about how to more effectively and efficiently be responsible members of the BOD. However, we all agreed that membership input provides direction and is essential for the WAA BOD to move our organization forward.



Moving Forward

This is where I put forth the challenge to each and every member of the WAA. Ask yourself: What can I do? What can I say? What if I did? What if? What if? What if?... That will help move the WAA forward.

YOU are the WAA! And it is your input that the BOD relies on to set direction and develop strategic goals for our association. The BOD wants to hear from you as soon as possible. Better yet, join one of our committees to experience for yourself running the WAA. If you are not sure what is available or whom to contact, to the immediate left of this message is a listing of your current BOD members. Our e-mail addresses are listed in the directory for your convenience as well. Finally, the Planting Seeds section of this newsletter provides a description of the different committees and volunteer opportunities available.

I would like every member to make a New Year's resolution that promises to sound like the following: "I will do at least one thing or present one idea this year to help the WAA advance our cause."

I am proud to be president of such a fine association and can't believe how fast this past year went by. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me along the way in my roles within the WAA. I have enjoyed working with all of you and look forward to many more years of advancing the WAA.

Thank you,
Mark Freberg,
Your soon-to-be Past President