

# President's MESSAGE

## Change for the Better

Greetings from Titledown. I'm hoping your summer was filled with lots of fun and that your fall season is being enjoyed for all the wonderful things that make Wisconsin a special place in which to live and work. Wisconsin has many traditional indicators that let us know the fall season is upon us. The Packers playing football on Sunday afternoons, flocks of geese heading south for the winter, and trees changing into their autumn splendor are just a few of the reminders that change is underway. The changing of the seasons is also a great time to take a moment and look back on the past year's plans, projects, plantings and jobs that we have all worked so hard at to be successful.

I especially enjoy evaluating our new plantings and sharing that information at the many networking opportunities the WAA provides through its conferences, seminars and workshops. I also enjoy talking to fellow arborists about the WAA and how we can make changes to improve our programs and education opportunities for the association. One small change that is beginning to pay dividends is online registration for the conferences. Getting more members to use this convenient method of registration can only be counted as a step in the right direction. A major change for the WAA this year was the separation of the summer workshop from the tree climbing championship. Attendance numbers at the summer workshop were very high and speculation from the program committee was that many climbers and judges finally got to attend the workshops because they were not participating in the events. The change in venue and trees for the tree climbing championship were a welcome challenge to the competitors. The simultaneously held, first-ever WAA Arborfest was also a change in the right direction for increasing the awareness of our industry to the public at large. The WAA is already discussing ideas on how we can improve next year's Arborfest and further change the public's educational base about arboriculture.

All the changes occurring this year have been positive steps for the growth and development of the WAA. But there is one thing that has not changed in the WAA and that is member commitment.

As I'm sure you have already heard more than a few times, the WAA is an all-volunteer associa-

tion. Volunteers dedicated to "Improving the Understanding of Trees and the Practice of Arboriculture" is what the WAA is all about. Without volunteers, there is no WAA. Please stop for a moment and reflect on the past year and your contributions to the WAA. If you have not had the opportunity to volunteer your time or efforts to the association, please consider changing for the next year. There are many ways you can help out the association. Program evaluations are one of the easiest methods to offer input to the program committee. We typically



only get a 15-25% return on evaluations and often-times have trouble finding new and exciting programs to offer. If you have heard or know of a presenter that you feel would benefit the membership, please let us know. Better yet, contact the speaker and find out what it will take to do a WAA seminar and relay that info. If you are interested in finding out about or serving on any of our committees, please don't be shy. Contact the committee chair listed in either the directory or on the Web site and ask questions, insist on helping.

If you are a past volunteer and feel you have paid your dues, you're wrong. We need your experience and expertise to help recruit the future leaders of this association to get their feet wet and get involved. If you are one of our members who currently serves on a committee, works at a conference or volunteers for the TCC, I'm sure you have felt the reward and satisfaction of being an integral part of such a fine association. I'm going to now ask you to think about the inevitable and begin training the future replacements that someday will want to feel the same rewards that have kept you committed to the WAA all these years.

As one of our wise old past presidents once said "Ask not what the WAA can do for you, ask what you can do for the WAA." While the season is changing, please consider getting ready to change next season.

Thank you

*Mark Freberg, WAA President*