

President's Address, December 2017/January 2018

As the tree trimming season begins in earnest, I look down the rows and see my mistakes from this past season. Well, let's be positive and call them opportunities for improvement. There's a few spots where the weed control was less than adequate. There are some broken limbs from over-cropping where I got nervous and didn't apply enough thinner. There's some pest damage that I need to make sure I get on top of this upcoming season. I'm sure you see some opportunities in your orchards as well. This is the time to analyze the data, make notes, and start formulating a plan to do better next year. That's what we do as fruit growers. Try to get a little better each season, in search of that ever elusive "perfect crop".

What better way to begin formulating that plan than by attending the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable convention in Hershey, and winter Extension meetings in your local region? I look forward to the winter to get that much needed rejuvenating break before a new season begins. I also look forward to broadening my horticultural education. I have been attending the annual convention and winter Extension meetings for over thirty years, and I have always walked away with something that I could take back to the farm. Continuing education is the only way to stay on top of our ever changing industry, and to remain viable in future years. Don't miss out on the opportunity.

Since my presidential term ends later this month, this will be my last entry as the President of this wonderful association. I'm reminded of the musical *The Sound of Music*, when the children file out of the room to their beds and sing to the guests as both a thank you and a farewell. There's a mix of both happiness and melancholy in that song, which seems fitting. I have had an extraordinary time, and I wouldn't trade this experience for the world. I would highly recommend a position on the SHAP board of directors as something you should add to your bucket list. For me, the SHAP board has taken networking within our industry to a whole new level. The people I've met and worked with and the wonderful experiences I've had will never be forgotten.

As I look back over this experience, I can't help but to think about all the people who were instrumental to my success. Some of these people led by example. Some taught me the ropes, and others encouraged me to keep trying and helped me to start again after something didn't work out the way I hoped. I hesitate to thank individual people for fear I leave someone out. However, I do want to mention one person in particular, our associations Executive Secretary Maureen Irvin. Without her leadership and guidance, SHAP would be a shell of what it is today. I thank her for helping me through the rough spots, keeping me organized, and being patient with me as I learned my role as president.

I leave you in good hands. Chris Baugher will be taking over the reins as SHAP president in 2018, and I am sure he will fill the role well. The SHAP board of directors is filled with very competent and passionate industry professionals. The SHAP committees are chaired by committed, experienced people who understand and excel at their role. I am honored to have

had the opportunity to serve as SHAP president, and I wish future board members and officers much success.

So, as I once sang when I played the role of Fredrick in the Sound of Music many years ago, Adieu, adieu, to you and you and you.

Hope to see you all at the winter meetings,
Tad

Tad Kuntz
SHAP President