

President's Message

Here we go again! I don't know about you, but every year at this time I am filled with a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Each new season brings with it the possibility of great success or dismal failure, neither of which is totally under our control. Certainly, 2018 made that perfectly clear. As we enter this new season, I hope and pray for favorable weather and right management decisions for everyone.

Things have been going well for SHAP. Through great efforts from our Farm Show committee, and volunteers who worked the booths, we had a record year. The convention was once again a great success, thanks to the efforts of many. A special thanks to Rob Crassweller, who puts together the tree fruit program, and to Maureen Irvin, who makes my job easy in so many ways.

In other news, we have a new chairman for our Scholarship Committee. Bobby Hricko has agreed to serve in this important role for us. Sidney Kuhn has agreed to, as former chair, remain on the committee to aid in the transition. Please thank each of them when you get the opportunity.

For those of you who know of any candidates (students pursuing a career in the Pennsylvania fruit industry), the Scott Brown Memorial Scholarship will be offered again this year, awarding a minimum of \$3,000. Applications need to be postmarked by May 1st, so don't tarry.

Penn State University has some exciting news as well. They have made plans to build a \$300,000 fabrication shop at FREC to be used by the Department of Ag Engineering faculty and staff for the fabrication of new automation and/or robotic equipment.

As is the way with all universities, Penn State is looking for outside sources of funding for this project. They seem determined to move forward with this project, but it is not a sure thing. Budgets being what they are, and agriculture's lack of numbers when it comes to political power, any amount of support (\$\$\$) that can be offered for this project will help assure its completion.

As you recall, SHAP lobbied hard to get an engineer to work in tree fruits, and we got two, one at FREC and one at University Park. Their chance of success will be much improved with the addition of this building at FREC.

At the March 19 meeting of the SHAP board of directors, SHAP pledged \$50,000 toward this project, payable when ground is broken and only if ground is broken by June 30, 2020.

I realize that everyone just went through an extremely difficult season, and that the financial situation for many is difficult right now. If we don't keep pace with technology, however, our financial future is not likely to improve. Please consider supporting this project, even at some small level. I believe that numerous smaller donations, showing a broad level of support, may have a great effect.

If you are interested in donating to this cause, please send checks made out to: SHAP Charitable Fund, 480 Mountain Rd, Orrtanna, PA 17353. Your donation will be then handled under the same criteria as the SHAP donation, payable when ground is broken and only if ground is broken by June 30, 2020. If the University fails to meet this deadline or to come through with construction of the building, which seems unlikely, your donations will be deposited into the SHAP Endowment Fund.

Fair breezes and frost free nights to all,

Chris Baugher

SHAP President