***President’s Message***

***November, 2013***

A few weeks back I read an article designed to point out how current naysayers have encouraged us to think societies’ problems are new and unsolvable. A famous naturalist was quoted as follows: “A change in our climate…is taking place very sensibly. Both heats and colds have become much more moderate within the memory of the middle-aged. Snows are less

frequent and less deep….The elderly inform me the earth used to be covered with snow about three months in every year. The rivers, which then seldom failed to freeze over in the course of the winter, scarcely ever do so now.”

Concerned about the destructive effects of this warming trend, he also noted how “an unfortunate fluctuation between heat and cold” in the spring has been “very fatal to fruits.” Perhaps you recognize the language of the 1700’s and suspect the quote is from Thomas Jefferson. The author revealed it at the end of the article and surprised me with its origin. I don’t dispute the climate is changing, but perhaps a balance of reading history and watching

the nightly news is best!

This morning I am freshly back from the November meeting of your Board of Directors. It was certainly good to reconnect with friends and to hear of their successes and tribulations over the past season. And I need to apologize to a few members for not passing the candy dish sooner. There is much good going on in Pennsylvania orchards and the caliber of young growers

who have energy, vision and skill is encouraging. We need to do as much as possible to unclog the arteries from government regulation. One never knows when their communication with lawmakers could make a difference.

Progress stalled this fall on immigration as Congress has been preoccupied with other issues. Health care and food safety regulations may require full time staff for some growers. ‘Plowing ahead’ just doesn’t mean what it used to for farmers! There are sessions committed to these issues at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention in Hershey January 27-30. What better way to spend a cold winter day than to learn about laws and regulations! If you are able to pawn those meetings off on someone, there will be a myriad of great topics sure to appeal to everyone. The meeting schedule is introduced in this issue-be sure to check it out and plan to attend.

Much time was spent at yesterday’s meeting discussing ways to increase funding for research projects. Thank you to all who contributed directly this past year. Pennsylvania is unique in that the research fund is not a state mandated program. There are no administration fees because of that so every dollar you give is a full dollar. It also allows for more grower input concerning what projects get funded. The next communication you receive from the committee will have check-off topics that allow you to rank your interest. It can be returned in the same envelope you send your contribution in. Please. A large factor in getting our new plant pathologist, Dr. Kari Peter, was the commitment fruit growers have historically shown to supporting their own research. This in turn attracts other talent and the snowball gets bigger. One effect of retiring personnel that don’t get replaced is there would be no one to speak or question at twilight meetings. Refer back to paragraph 2. Young growers need the older generation to put forth dollars so they will have people to go to for answers. Personally, I like spending money on myself and my own business, but it doesn’t take too much foresight to realize kicking out some cash for research is a golden idea. Think about your farm size, your 2013 crop and your appreciation for being able to find answers when you needed them, and then please consider a year end contribution to the SHAP Research Fund.

***Carolyn McQuiston***