

President's Message

December 2013, January 2014

Two conclusions I have drawn from writing this column are that months go by much faster when I was on a deadline to create coherent sentences, and now that I am on my last message I have so many things to say (that I could never think of before)!

I am thankful to those whom I have served beside who pushed me to take on more responsibility than I thought I could handle. I have received much more from others than I could have possibly given. Many valued friendships have been forged through serving on the SHAP Board of Directors. If given the opportunity think twice before saying no, as the time commitment is negligible when compared to the benefits reaped, and I am not referring to the bowls of chocolate candy at the meetings!

It is a recurring theme in industry publications that funds are dwindling for research and extension. Growers are banding together to initiate private and private-government-university partnerships to insure the future of research stations and educators. Here in Pennsylvania we have worked to do this through private donations to the research fund or endowment fund of your State Horticultural Association. Our goals are lofty, yet achievable, if we all contribute according to our ability. The beauty of doing it this way is there are no administrative fees levied on your donation. The research committee, many of whom you would know and can directly influence, voluntarily meets and reviews submitted proposals. With the exception of the expense of lunch (no candy at those meetings!), the full amount is allocated to the best projects presented. No taxes, no delivery fee, no shipping, no surcharge (why am I still charged a 'fuel surcharge'?), no management fees, no maintenance fee-just compounded benefits when the resulting research produces higher profits for you.

Early registration for the 2014 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention must be postmarked by January 17. This saves \$15.00 over the walk-in fee. Being a member of SHAP gives great savings on registration so encourage others you know to join! If you haven't been there in a few years it is a good time to see the changes and may find yourself motivated by the presentations and conversations with other growers to return home and make your farm a better, more profitable place! Be sure to check out the poster session highlighting the research projects conducted in 2013 as it will be a good place to give input and ask questions.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to represent Pennsylvania fruit growers.

Wishing you and yours a Blessed and Prosperous New Year!

Carolyn McQuiston