One person, one vote. This concept has helped make our country a strong democracy. It is also how our Society functions; one member, one vote. We have just concluded a vote for our officers and on bylaws changes that will dramatically improve how our Society functions. But the leadership of our Society rests on the shoulders of more of us than just our officers. Each member can help keep the Society vibrant and dynamic by volunteering to serve on at least one committee. A list of committees is found at www.soils.org/about-society/committees. Choose one or more and indicate that you’d like to volunteer for that committee—it’s as easy as that to sign up.

Volunteering is easy, but having an effect on the Society requires a little more effort. Committee appointments are more than merely resume builders. Be active! Express your ideas! Do not be discouraged if your ideas are not embraced immediately. Act for the common good of the committee and Society. In short, if you are on a committee, or chair a committee, do something on the committee. These committees are there to help all members of the Society and to inform and guide the leadership on issues, programs, and directions that the Society needs to be aware of. If you are passionate about something, bring that passion to a committee. If you feel the Society needs to move in a certain direction, help guide it. Get involved!

Committees do make a difference. Recently, the Membership and Society Identity Committee began a redesign of our website that will be more attractive to folks outside of soil science. Attracting a more diverse audience will lead to a broader understanding of our profession within other disciplines. The K-12 Committee has actively worked to bring soil science to the next generation of scientists through books, websites, lesson plans, and workshops. Awards committees choose the best of the best for recognition every year. Editorial committees, boards, and reviewers are necessary for us to disseminate the critical research of our sciences. These committees are vital to our Society. The more active the committee, the greater its effect will be.

Committees are generally open to all members—from undergraduate and graduate students to early career individuals to emeritus professors to retirees. All that is required is an interest in serving and a commitment to be active. Although I encourage all members to volunteer, I personally encourage those of you just starting out in our Society. Our younger (newer) members may feel tentative, but we need new, enthusiastic voices in our Society. Over the last few months, in choosing members to serve on committees, I have appointed an early career or student member whenever possible. This has included soliciting names from advisers as well as from direct contact with individuals. Remembering back to my first committee appointment (Membership Committee in 1987), the thought of serving can be intimidating. However, for those new to the Society and/or a committee, you may bring a needed fresh point of view to the group. It’s also a chance to get to know folks that will become mentors, colleagues, and friends, which is far more worthwhile than simple resume building.

Remember all of the elected officers are volunteers, so help them and the Society out by volunteering today. To borrow from President John F. Kennedy: “Ask not what your Society can do for you; ask what you can do for your Society.”

doi:10.2134/csa2013-58-4-7