CSSA President’s Message

Membership Has Its Privileges

If the headline of this column sounds familiar to some of you, it’s because American Express used it as its advertising tagline from 1987 to 1996. Now, quit googling it to figure out where you heard it, and finish reading this column!

As I was thinking about writing my final column for CSA News magazine as CSSA president, several topics and thoughts came to mind. First, how truly blessed I have been to serve as the president of CSSA this year and on the executive committee for two years with one more to go. To the CSSA membership, I sincerely thank you for the opportunity. Prior to serving as president, I had been actively involved with the C5-Turfgrass Science Division of CSSA and felt I was very knowledgeable regarding how CSSA, as well as ASA and SSSA, operated. Hindsight tells me that I was very naïve in my perceived understanding. Perhaps it was provincial on my part, as is unfortunately typical of many people who might be an expert or authority (or at least think they are) in a subject matter or discipline and have difficulty seeing the forest for the trees, or in my example, the Society for the Division.

This leads into the topic of this column. Information on membership benefits is readily available on any of the Society websites. It is worth the effort to give this information more than simply a cursory review. Some may not realize that the DL (not down low, but Digital Library!) is much more than 16 journals, including the new, open-access Agricultural & Environmental Letters. Learn more at https://dl.sciencesocieties.org. The Science Policy Office (www.crops.org/science-policy) is an amazing enterprise. Member recognition via awards and scholarships (www.crops.org/awards) offers opportunity to nominate and receive significant accolades for all member categories from student to long-term members. Publication (www.crops.org/publications) in relevant and rigorously reviewed journals provide the conduit to the great work you do to the masses. Networking with colleagues of like and sometimes, not so like, mind at the International Annual Meeting (www.acsmeetings.org) offers opportunities for collaboration and professional discord. If your interests lean towards servant participation and leadership, volunteering (www.crops.org/about-society/committees) for Society committees and/or editorial boards can be extremely rewarding.

I have only scratched the surface of the benefits and privileges that arise from membership, not only in CSSA, but ASA and SSSA as well. A pessimist may see membership cost as a necessary evil or worse yet, a waste of money. An optimist sees dues as a prudent investment in their professional journey. I prefer to be an optimist.

One last note before I end my final column. I could have mentioned the staff at headquarters and in DC earlier as a member benefit, which they certainly are. The staff, however, are much more than simply member assistance. They have been amazing to work with, the epitome of professional, outstanding problem solvers and are the most critical cog in the wheel that brings the members together. The core values of CSSA are: Excellence in Science and Scholarship; Solving Problems through Science; Science-based Decision Making; Integrity; Service to Society; Diversity; and Environmental Stewardship. We could not strive to achieve these values without the generous dedication of the Society’s staff. They deserve a ginormous thank you from all members.

As we prepare for one of the most daunting challenges of the century (feeding the 9 billion people), developed and developing nations, academic institutions, multilateral and bilateral organizations, and the private sector must join forces to invest in natural resource inventories and make such information accessible to farmers and other land managers to fully reap the benefits of increased access to agricultural inputs for sustainable livelihoods for all. We owe this to each other and to future generations.

C. Kome, Presiding Leader of the Gaining Access to Agricultural Inputs Community of ASA. For more information on this community, visit: http://bit.ly/1SWfyM.