

Time flies

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While trying to figure out a topic for the final President's column of my tenure, I reflected on how quickly the last year has passed by. As a matter of fact, my four-year volunteer stint on the Executive Committee seems like it just got underway.

It has been an incredible experience that gave me an inside look at the value the OAN provides to our member nurseries. I certainly encourage anyone interested in learning more about that value to sign up for a committee — even the Executive Committee. There are many opportunities available to help.

The OAN, as an organization, got smaller as our industry did. Oregon's nursery industry peaked in 2007, with close to \$1 billion in gross sales. That dropped more than 30 percent by 2010, as grower revenue went down by \$312 million.

The OAN's budget today is roughly one half of what it was in 2008. Despite this challenge, our OAN staff has done a remarkable job staying relevant to our industry and serving our membership well. Our industry has rebounded strongly, and the OAN continues to serve us well, in large part due to our efficient and professional staff. They have made my term as OAN President extremely rewarding, and I thank all of them for making my job easy.

What has this remarkable team of staff and volunteers accomplished? We have an outstanding record of legislative accomplishments that have benefited all our members — large and small, young and old.

Going back to 2007, these achievements include estate tax reform, metal theft legislation, funding for pest and disease, funding for water feasibility projects, funding to secure and keep markets open, creating the *Safe Procurement and Production Manual*, fighting and

changing the pre-notification law regarding shipment of nursery products, and many other battles too numerous to mention in this column.

This list of accomplishments does not include the many challenges to the nursery industry that the OAN stopped before they could become harmful to all our operations.

What's more, the OAN continues to provide many services to our membership, including the nationally recognized Farwest Show, the online and print Nursery Guide, the OAN Member Update, member training, insurance, and many other benefits (including *Digger*, the magazine you are reading right now). You can obtain the complete listing of member benefits from the OAN website or by calling the OAN office.

The website even has a member savings calculator to show how much you can save by joining. Just place your cursor over "Join OAN" on the menu, then click the "Calculate Your Savings" option.

Along with the exceptional OAN staff, our membership can look to future guidance from a dynamic group of young volunteer leaders. I am one of the "old guys" at 48, and this remarkable group of young leaders has the knowledge and skills to keep the OAN growing towards a bright future.

But the OAN needs all members to participate to make it successful. There are many opportunities to make your voice heard on the various committees and governing boards, both at the chapter and state levels. The OAN is what the members want it to be — so be the change you desire. ☺



By Mike Coleman
OAN PRESIDENT