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Find your tribe

Some of the most memorable television shows and theme songs all have a common thread: camaraderie. Camaraderie is a “mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together.”

Think back to Cheers (“where everybody knows your name”) and Friends (“I’ll be there for you”). These shows centered around a tribe — people who are in the same boat you are, with all the struggles and joys that go along with that.

Well, the OAN is our nursery tribe. A tribe of plant lovers. A tribe of folks who don’t mind getting dirty. A tribe of people who spend long hours getting it done. A tribe of caring individuals who will help you when you need it. A tribe of some of the friendliest folks you will ever meet.

It’s where you belong, where people know you.

I came into this tribe when our business, F & B Farms and Nursery, joined the OAN and the Retail Chapter to meet potential customers for our greenhouse operation. Quickly I got involved, and spent many hours checking folks into meetings, and getting introduced (literally!) to the industry.

Following that came stints on the Farwest Show and Yard, Garden and Patio Show committees, forays into the Research and Government Relations committees, work on the Sustainability and Lean initiatives, and finally the State Board and Executive Committee. This year I will be taking on the role as president of your association.

So for me, stepping into a meeting or onto the Farwest Show floor is like homecoming week. The familiar cast of faces. The chance to visit with a customer and look for those win-win situations and shared opportunities.

Chatting with members of committees you have served on, and finding ways to move the ball forward on a project. Discussing issues of the day with fellow nurserymen. Searching for solutions to problems we all face. Saying hello to an

OAN staff member and thanking them for answering your question and steering you in the right direction.

Shaking hands with outgoing President Mike Coleman, and telling him how I appreciated his service and management of the association during his tenure.

And with each new season, there are changes. New characters appear on the scene. There is the bright young riser. They are full of energy and enthusiasm exhibiting that can-do, anything-is-possible attitude. You walk away from meeting them with renewed drive and hope.

There is also the industry expert full of wisdom and historical knowledge. Their expertise adds to your toolbox of skills that empowers you to make those critical decisions. These folks infuse you with inspiration and new ideas to make next year newer, better and stronger.

Lastly, there is you.

Each individual is an important part of our tribe. I have learned so much from all of the folks I have met, and honestly enjoy their company.

What will I find when I meet you? How can our relationship contribute to the success of the industry and yourself? What talents can I ask you to share with a committee? What knowledge or experience can you share with me, and the next generation, at a chapter meeting? Will you join the leadership of the OAN to help shape how your association looks, feels and functions?

I look forward to building that mutual trust and friendship with you — my tribe!

Want to meet me? Then join us at the OAN Convention, “Friends in Growin’ Places,” November 13–14 at Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond, Oregon. ☺



By Leigh Geschwill
OAN PRESIDENT

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