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Thankful for blessings

This time of year always reminds me to be thankful for all of the people who have influenced and blessed my life. Many of the people who come to mind are a part of the OAN.

My dad and I were out visiting local growers recently. As we were driving around some gorgeous Willamette Valley nurseries, we commented how genuine and “salt of the earth” people are in the nursery industry. It makes our work a lot more fun. We couldn't imagine making a living in any other industry.

Whether they are local growers, garden centers, or the industry as a whole across the nation, we are truly blessed with people who are passionate about what they do. Many have given their blood, sweat and tears to make their businesses — and our industry — successful.

As busy as they are, they are also willing to give their time and attention to others and the community as a whole. The friendships and bonds that have formed are undeniable. I was once again reminded of this at our annual Convention, where I caught up with old friends, met members I hadn't known before, and gained much-needed wisdom and insight from others.

The OAN has been a big part of bringing people together, and the relationships can be likened to those of a family. We are better together and our influence can reach farther when we combine our skills, knowledge and products. This, however, only happens when people become involved and engaged.

New Year's resolutions are just around the corner. I urge all of you to make a resolution of getting more involved this year. Find an OAN chapter, committee or issue you are passionate about and dig in!

The OAN has a wide variety of ways to get involved, from the revitalization of chapters to government relations, education, research and communication. You can even be involved with the Farwest Show, the Convention or the Oregon Nursery Foundation scholarships. If you have a passion for an area or talents you would like to share, we have a place for you!

People will tell you that the more involved you are, the more you learn and get back. I'm finding this to be absolutely true for me. I am continually amazed at how much my experience with the OAN has taught me and helped our business.

If you wish to become more involved, simply go to the OAN website at www.oan.org, and click on “About the OAN” then select “Committees.” There's an easy sign-up form where you can tell the OAN about the ways you are interested in volunteering. Do you have a good idea for an OAN membership offering? Get involved with the Products and Services Committee. Want to affect policy that impacts your business? Government Relations may be for you! You can also call the office at 503-682-5089 or 1-888-283-7219 for more information.

As I look out my window at Oregon's winter days, I constantly remind myself that no matter what the weather looks like now, spring will be here before I know it. Until then, I'm going to enjoy the Christmas season and then look forward to the New Year and all that 2017 will bring for our industry.

I know that there will be challenges, but we can accomplish anything together and the results will be rewarding for all.

Merry Christmas and New Year blessings! ©