

Honoring the past and charting the future

The Oregon nursery industry was built with the sweat of our earliest growers.

Blessed with some of the best soil in the country, their hard work transformed unknown markets into opportunities.

There is an old photograph that is at the OAN office, and I pass it every day. It looks to be in the mid-1930s and I would guess it is an annual meeting or convention. This type of gathering has been a mainstay through good and bad times in the nursery business.

Connections are important

Yes, the nursery world has changed since the time of that aged photo. Production has expanded throughout the United States and the world. Technology has improved. Plant propagation and health have advanced. Customers can just point, click and buy.

However, my observation — after 12 years at OAN — is that connections, handshakes and being part of a community are the unsung essentials for our shared success.

The OAN Convention is a place to be together, get inspired, and talk about important issues that impact the nursery and greenhouse industry. We will gather at Eagle Crest Resort in beautiful Central Oregon on October 26 and 27 for Climbing Skyward.

The sponsored hospitality suites on Friday night are a much-anticipated social event, starting the event off strong. The past president's suite is always one of my favorites.

The Saturday morning annual meeting is focused and informative. It is astounding to have so many titans in the industry in one room. The finances of our association are shared as well as swearing in our new board and executive committee.

We will hear from our new president, Mike Hiller of Kraemer's Nursery. He'll talk about where he wants to lead the organization and how we all can help. Hearing the direction for a new year is always a highlight.

We'll be treated to insights from our guest speaker. Although the search for that person is still ongoing at this writing, last year we heard from Detroit Chamber of Commerce CEO Sandy Baruah. He is a

visionary leader who connected the dots of how to be a good leader after a recession.

Then, in the evening, we will celebrate! Outgoing president Josh Zielinski will preside as we hand out much-deserved awards, which are selected by members for the members.

Saying thank you

Committee work can sometimes have a negative connotation. Not at OAN. The Awards Committee is such a rewarding experience. This year's committee had household nursery names such as Arda Berryhill, Mark Krautmann, Rod Park, Pete Brentano, Joe Kupillas, and the awesome Treda McCaw.

We asked you, the members to nominate worthy recipients. While making choices is difficult, the industry is full of talent, innovators and leaders.

We give out three annual awards. The **OAN Outstanding Service Award** is given in recognition of long-term service to the industry and association. A perpetual trophy is kept in the OAN office; the recipient receives a smaller replica.

The **New Nursery Professional of the Year** award is given to a new nursery professional for outstanding service to the OAN and industry.

The **Chapter or Committee of the Year** award recognizes a group that is particularly successful in their service to the OAN membership, cultivating exceptional energy, new ideas and member participation.

Other awards are not given every single year, but when the Awards Committee finds someone worthy of the recognition, I am always excited to see which ones emerge.

We often honor those who have given a lifetime of invaluable service to the industry with an **Honorary Life Membership**.

Former executive director Clayton Hannon is a legend and a friend. When someone has done something extraordinary and a notable service to the industry, it is only suitable that they are given the **Clayton W. Hannon Distinguished Service Award**.

Retailer of the Year is given to a retailer who has demonstrated exceptional merit promoting the retail nursery industry and who consistently promotes the association to the public.



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

An impactful leader at the right time

It cannot be easy to take on a leadership role as a son of a past president, but that is what Josh Zielinski did. His father, Doug, was president in 1999.

No presidency is easy and Josh hit issues head-on. The association pushed toward innovation of the Farwest Show — Josh urged everyone to be bold.

The Chapter Revitalization Task Force recommended tours as a way to engage more members — Josh was first in line.

After the board configuration changed and was up for its first ballot process, Josh appointed a balanced and smart Nominating Committee. When we faced tough dilemmas in D.C. on immigration and issues that hit the bottom line, our quiet leader became a forceful advocate.

Thank you, Josh, for all you have done for the association and for your leadership

The days and months ahead

Leaders and boards have a way of being the right mix at the right time. The OAN is very lucky to have committed volunteers to lead the association in 2019.

This board will be sworn in during the convention. It inherits fiscal stability, member-focused programs and services and a respected political reputation. These are not easy to come by and I want to thank the board members who are concluding their service. I am looking forward to Mike Hiller taking over the reins. We are in good hands.

Please extend your thanks to our volunteer leaders when you come to convention, attend a chapter tour or come to the events throughout the year. ☺