



## President's Report

Interim President/Nate Bremer

6/10/2020

I do hope everyone has had or is having a good peony bloom season. Like many people across the northern tier of the United States weather conditions have been erratic and not particularly forgiving to our plants. However, after a long winter the peonies did provide a fairly good bloom and we are now in the midst of our *P. lactiflora* cultivar season (this makes Kim happy-I'm busy weeding).

As to APS business...The situation we find ourselves in is not optimum and I certainly did not see the resignation of Lore as president coming, but I do take responsibility for the hurt she must feel. Unfortunately, there was no other apparent path for me to take in response to some of the problems APS has chronically experienced. Fortunately the Society is in relatively good health with membership up, participation in programming at an all-time high, large numbers of social media followers, mentor-mentee relationships on the rise, high contact rates with the corresponding secretary, heavy seed sales and a high volume of traffic on the website. There are many other examples in which APS is making an impact with the gardening world and you as Directors are responsible-thank you.

Unfortunately, there are some things we as BOD members and officers need to address and I believe solving a few problems will allow for a much more enjoyable experience. As I work through these things, keep in mind that **I'm imperfect** and ask you to be straight forward with me and speak your mind (I'll do the same). I don't mean to sound 'preachy' and I know you probably know what follows, but it is meant to serve as a foundation moving forward.

### Foundational Recommendations

- 1) Communication (in non-meeting situations).
  - a. Email is best, then we have a record
  - b. Clear and short and to the point. Information is great, but if you have questions or a statement to make, make it short!
  - c. Reply within 2 days whenever possible and acknowledge that message has been received if you are too busy for a thoughtful reply.
  - d. Who should receive the reply in my mind has always been difficult. Reply All often clutters people's inboxes with items they have no reason address, but sometimes it is necessary. Use your best discretion for recipients. If anyone has ideas with this we should discuss.
  - e. Best to say what is on your mind than to let it fester (I'm guilty of not always sharing my thoughts)
- 2) Completion/Meeting Date Accountability

- a. Getting things done on time is important and doesn't put other members in a bad position. I see this as a respect issue as well and we often feel disrespected when dates important to us are not acknowledged.
  - b. Set hard completion dates. Bumping completion down the road will certainly cause someone else problems.
  - c. Hold others accountable for due dates. Always try to remind people of coming due dates (I much appreciate this).
  - d. Mark your calendars for APS meetings. If you are not able to attend or participate, let someone know ahead of time. We all depend on one another and missing input is counterproductive.
- 3) Life and Work
- a. We all have busy lives and sometimes it becomes overwhelming – Ask for assistance, there is no harm and usually people are willing to jump in and help.
  - b. Consider including another member into your APS work/planning to train them in case something happens to you. Share as much as you can with others so they are able to learn and may broaden their skills and knowledge of APS. I guess this is known as a succession plan.
- 4) Documentation
- a. Store documents in the website 'Administrative Storage' whenever possible. Its an extra step, but will allow future leaders to access important information and not recreate 'the wheel'.
  - b. Documentation also helps keep everyone accountable through a record.
  - c. Produce written reports whenever possible for meetings. These are great references for others to use and of course they keep all of us accountable.
- 5) Take Action
- a. Let's make decisions with dates and details in writing – helps accountability.
  - b. Don't allow others to delay the inevitable
  - c. \*Offer help (teamwork) to get laborious tasks completed. Many hands make short work.
  - d. Ask hard questions if they are needed to get things moving
  - e. Try not to compartmentalize yourself and your tasks. Be inclusive, sometimes its more work to bring someone else on board, but its so important for the success of the Society. Admittedly, I do this sometimes and often feel isolated – my own fault!
  - f. Avoid involving yourself in other's responsibilities unless asked. If you see deficiencies/problems talk to them and ask if they need help.
  - g. Try not turn down an offer of help.

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Other Items:

- 1) BOD Meetings – Let keep discussions short by supplying reports for BOD members to read before the meeting (sent via email). This way we don't need to explain background info.**

- 2) Meeting Agendas should be emailed a week before the meeting to allow time for all to digest information and properly prepare. All meeting agendas should be stored on the APS' Admin Document Storage.
- 3) Meeting Reports should be emailed a week before the meeting to allow time for all to digest information and properly prepare. All meeting reports should be stored on the APS' Admin Document Storage.
- 4) Meeting Minutes should be emailed to BOD members in a week or less time from the end of the meeting. Minutes should be read by Directors and Officers at that time and corrections should be immediately be sent to the Recording Secretary. All meeting minutes should be stored on the APS' Admin Document Storage.
- 5) Convention planning. This is out of my area of expertise, but I do know more help is needed and some systems need to come into use.
- 6) The Bulletin is in good shape at this time, but Lore's further involvement is uncertain. I'll contact her via email before July 1 to inquire. We should discuss alternative plans for design and layout resources. We can use Covington Press' services in the short term, but putting out some bids may be in our best interest. Kim Bremer will do complete oversight of all aspects of the Bulletin, but is requesting a finishing editor (someone who proofs, has greater peony knowledge than herself and is able/willing to work with her). We do have a good working model, which includes Lore Sampson at this time, but as noted earlier, I don't know Lore's status at this time. The Editor Model can be seen in another attached document and is now dated, however, it's a good start and has been partially implemented.
- 7) Future discussion should focus on printing costs and profitability of the Bulletin and Cultivar Directory. We are spending more on publications at this time than we are taking in. Membership rates may need to be increased or we may want to implement alternative memberships (online). I'd recommend a small committee work on possibilities.
- 8) Please read the Nominations, Elections, Roberts Rules of Order and Bylaws document. Feedback would be appreciated. Being new to planning role has me a bit nervous and I prefer to not make any huge mistakes. Help.

I look forward to working with you as long as I'm in this capacity and believe APS has a bright future!

Nate Bremer  
Interim President