



American Peony Society

President's Report

02/11/2021 | 6:30 p.m. CDT (summer) CST (winter)

APS has continued to hold its own and expand in all areas through the pandemic of 2020 – 2021, but not without some difficulties. I'd like to thank the BOD for their continued efforts in making APS a worthwhile and important part of our members lives during this period of uncertainty. Many members have reached out to me confirming their appreciation for the work we do. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

As 2021 has arrived we have a number of housekeeping duties to deal with and some new initiatives (or renewal initiatives). My hope for 2021 is refinement of what we already have for a better APS. The following is a list are items I see for healthy and happy 2021 – a diverse list of thoughts and processes.

- 1) APS Leadership function health (we've made great strides on these-thanks to all):
 - a. Communicate with each other through email or phone as needed.
 - b. ***Answer inquires as quickly as possible to keep respectful relationships within leadership and membership.
 - c. Meet deadlines and plan ahead. This shows respect for our fellow Directors.
 - d. Ask questions, ask for help, be proactive!
 - e. Actively participate in BOD meetings – diverse perspectives are important, all ideas are welcome!
- 2) Board of Director Elections. Kris Jurik, Linette Sorrentino and Nate Bremer's Directorship terms expire this year and it is my hope that all three will again offer their service to APS for another term. Cory Tischman, the Nominations Committee Chair, will be contacting these directors and moving the process along as was done last year. Directors are elected by the general membership at the Annual meeting.
- 3) Conventions. Decisions will need to be made by the BOD to determine if a convention can be held this year, due to pandemic issues. If not, alternative plans will need to be developed and I am asking that **all Directors** take part in performing duties to make any plans come to fruition. David and Linette Sorrentino will have more information concerning the Minnesota Convention. Obviously this convention has been planned and has been unfortunately impacted by the pandemic. Since Minnesota is rich in peony history and growers, it is important for APS to give our members an experience, whether a live or virtual convention is held.

David Michener is spearheading the Michigan Convention (2022) and has much work completed already. As the year progresses, you will hear more about the varied offerings and unique venues which are part of this convention.

Craig Aiken continues work developing the New York Convention (2023). This convention is unique for its possible travel options to one of the 'cradles' peony hybridizing. Feel free to reach out to Craig to assist!

- 4) Awards. The Awards committee has been at work to rejuvenate our Personal Awards and bring back a more prominent and consistent system to recognize worthy candidates. Steve Smith Chairs this committee and will be seeking nominees for 2021 awards. You'll hear more about this from Steve.
Gold Medal Peony nominations will also begin shortly. Solicitations for these will be found in the Bulletin or on the APS Website's Member Portal:
(<https://americanpeonysociety.org/member-portal/pages/contribute/polls-and-surveys/#gold-medal-nominations>). I encourage all BOD members to supply their recommendations.
- 5) Our treasurer continues to do excellent work keeping APS fiscally solvent – thanks Kris. APS will be in need of a CPA to supply tax preparation and advice to Kris. Sandra Loos was our past CPA and provided these services free of charge – we may need to pay someone for these services if no one steps forward as a volunteer.
- 6) Membership remains to be relatively stable. Linette can provide more details on this. Linette and Kris have done an outstanding job this past January dealing with renewals. Automatic renewals/renewals were problematic this year due to a website malfunction caused by updates. David Sorrentino will be looking more closely at the automated system to see if there is a fix we can move forward with. Additionally, the question has been asked: "DO WE WANT TO USE THE AUTOMATED RENEWAL SYSTEM?" While the auto-renewal system does help retention, it also causes problems for members who do not monitor their memberships (they complain about be charged automatically, even though they initiated the charge). More discussion of this may be required in the future.
- 7) Award of Landscape Merit. This important peony award continues to be dormant. From my perspective a lack of new cultivar nominations may be due to the complexity and a degree of ambiguity found within the evaluation process. Additionally, a more active oversight may be necessary to move judges to submit evaluations. I'd recommend a review and further work be done to create a more streamlined process for the committee to work with. If you have interest in assisting, please contact me and Adriana Feng.
- 8) A plea from our Editor (Kim)... As peony bloom season arrives, please consider taking some images. The Bulletin is always in need of images (especially whole garden or plant group images). You can email Kim images or download them on the website in the Contribution area.
- 9) APS has other active committees and programs and it's my hope these continue their good work.