

From the OAS President.....It's not lonely at the top!

Craig Clifford, OAS President

I wanted to start with an attention-getter. We are all busy so attention-getters are necessary to do just that. I wanted to grab you and sucker you into reading this short missive on the value that I place on each one of you. The presidency of OAS is not a lonely office where one's sits and tries to get things done all alone. Trust me; I know what lonely presidencies are. Those who know me more personally can attest that I tend to volunteer a tad too much. But this is not the case in OAS. Sure we can be slow in getting information out and in getting projects off the ground and then take them to completion. We are not always in control. We are all busy.

Still, I am indebted to David Bass who bears the lion's share of the credit when it comes to holding this loose band of professionals, graduate students, and students together. As Executive Director, David does just about everything that needs to get done on a day to day basis including most recently representing the Academy at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Association of Academies of Science, and American Junior Academy of Science meetings in Boston last week. In case you were unaware, we are an active participant in the national organization of state junior and senior academies. We can be proud of the likes of David, Ed Nelson, and Kathy Donovan who all served leadership roles and represented us in this national organization.

Valerie O'Brien is my right hand person. Not only do I call Valerie a former student, but now a valued friend and colleague, Valerie is our current recording secretary who came into the office after our good friend and colleague Connie Murray served her term. Of course I am focusing on the most recent individuals in these roles volunteering to keep the Academy in business. There are many from the years past that served admirably in these roles as well.

As many of you are already aware and will be from an announcement elsewhere in this newsletter, the Academy is migrating its website to the Oklahoma Biological Survey server (biosurvey.ou.edu/oas). Dan Hough at the Survey has been working the last few weeks to help us transition. But who held the role of webmaster for many years before? Dallas New at UCO served in that role. This is a special thanks to Dallas for all of his effort and hard work. We are looking for great things in the future as we strive to make our website an even more valuable resource for all. Thanks to Ken Hobson for shepherding this process from discussion to implementation. I got to know Dallas from his participation in the Oklahoma Junior Academy of Science. Dallas and I regularly got to visit down in Ada every spring at the OJAS competition.

Mentioning OJAS brings up two very important individuals who make the junior and collegiate academies operate. Rahmona Thompson and Nick Cheper are the center of these two of our branches. Rahmona has the daunting task of running these state programs on a shoestring budget and makes it all work. Nick every year manages to coerce or corral us into judging paper presentations at the technical meeting so that we can recognize the future members of OAS. Other names that surely fit into this paragraph are Clark Ovrebo, Ken Andrews and Terry Conley. These individuals along with many colleagues and administrators at UCO, ECU and CU have or will figure prominently in making it all happen when it comes to technical meetings of OAS and OJAS.

So far I have not said anything about the Field meetings. They are the component that first turned me on to the Academy a mere 27 years ago. Everett Grigsby took me along on my first OAS field meeting at Boiling Springs State Park. It rained and was really dark out there. It was a great introduction to a group that has made me aware of what a great community of science we have in Oklahoma. Adam Ryburn and Erik Terdal are just the next in a long line of field meeting coordinators currently planning our next spring and fall gatherings. This is my special recognition of the Applied Biology and Conservation and Biological Sciences Sections who make these events happen for the rest of the Academy to enjoy.

The *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science* is a very important arm of the Academy that allows us to have a face and a presence beyond the borders of Oklahoma. Much appreciation to the many editors of the journal and most recently, Mostafa Elshahed, who is serving to not only guide the editing process, but complete the introduction of the *Proceedings* into the digital age.

This article may look like my last newsletter submission. It is not as I still have another to go before I turn over the reins of the organization to Stan Rice. Thanks to the many others that I did not specifically mention who make this all work. I believe that it is always a good time to express thanks to all involved in helping promote science in Oklahoma.