

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Davy Sheets, MLA President



Never in my life... did I imagine that penning a bi-monthly column for the Montana Logger—or any other publication—would become my responsibility.

Alas, previous MLA presidents have assured me that I will get plenty of assistance from MLA staff, so here we go.

First things first: Many thanks—on behalf of the entire MLA membership—to Dyrk Krueger for his service as MLA President these past two years. He has served us well... and I applaud him for leaving us with a long-range plan for guidance in the years ahead.

I am also comforted by my executive committee, which includes:

- Vice-President Floyd Quiram (Kalispell)
- Secretary-Treasurer Mike Newton (Kalispell)
- Northwest regional director, James Stupack (Kalispell)
- Southwest regional director, Karl Kanduch (Philipsburg)
- Headwaters regional director, Scott Norquist (Livingston) and
- Immediate past-president, Dyrk Krueger (Corvallis)

I know they will prove to be an excellent counsel over the next two years.

The MLA's 2017 convention in Bozeman was well attended—and the picture pages provide a nice recap of that event.

Special thanks to all of the speakers, which included

- U.S. Senator Steve Daines
- Montana Congressman-elect, Greg Gianforte
- Byron Bonney, Community Forester for Bitterroot RC&D
- Christine Dawe, Director of Renewable Resource Management, Region One, USFS
- Patrick Holmes, Natural Resources Policy Advisor to Montana Governor Steve Bullock, and
- Rich Aarstad, Archivist and Oral Historian, Montana Historical Society.

At the Tall Timber Awards Banquet, the Northwestern Montana Hoo Hoo Club—as they have for the past 37 years—announced their recipient of this year's Woodpecker and Lumberman awards.

MLA executive assistant Coleen Michael was the recipient of the Woodpecker Award... presented annually to an individual that has gone the extra mile to promote and enhance Montana's timber industry.

This year's Lumberman of the Year Award was Brad Osler. Brad grew up in a logging family in Lincoln County moving his operation to Bozeman in the early '90's and running a successful operation to this day. Congratulations to both Coleen and Brad for the recognition by their peers... and for their contributions to this profession we call logging.

I also want to give a shout-out to this year's convention sponsors... and I encourage you to visit page 15 to review the list. During the coming year, when you patronize any of these sponsors, be sure to thank them for their support... as they committed time, personnel and financial support to make this year's convention a success. Furthermore, a complete list of MLA associate members is posted on page 17 of all newsletters. These businesses proudly support this profession we call logging and, therefore, are deserving of our support in return.

As noted above, Congressman-elect Greg Gianforte won election to Montana's lone—and vacant—seat in the U.S. House of Representatives... and we wish him well as he seeks to fill the void left by Ryan Zinke, who resigned his seat to accept the position of Secretary of the Interior in the Trump administration.

As this newsletter was going to press, the newly confirmed Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, will be touring Montana, including an address at the Montana Ag Summit in Great Falls. The MLA's executive director, Keith Olson, will be in attendance and we are hoping to hear who Secretary Perdue will nominate to the position of Undersecretary of Natural Resources and the Environment, a post that oversees the operation of the U.S. Forest Service.

Lastly, the MLA will also be represented at the Western Governors' Association annual meeting in Whitefish the end of June. Governor Bullock is the current Chairmen of the WGA and he welcomes 11 fellow western Governors to the meeting. Governor Bullock's primary focus as Chair of WGA was his Forest and Rangeland Initiative that will hopefully address the millions of acres of overstocked, dying and infested forestland throughout the western U.S. He will pass the gavel to his successor at the Whitefish meeting, but his initiative will continue to seek solutions.

Until the next edition... be safe and prosperous. Davy