

"Blue Ribbon" Professional Improvement

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"Blue Ribbon" Professional Improvement

Abstract

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"Blue Ribbon" Professional Improvement

Glen W. Goss

AWARDS are always comforting, especially the blue ribbons that indicate someone feels we're equal to our peers. Our Critique and Awards Program in AAACE has maintained equal emphasis on the critique aspects. But, in 1973 facelifting of the program was geared toward broadening the professional improvement base for rank-and-file membership.

Constructive criticisms, opinions, and suggestions on the program were sought and received from every corner of AAACEdom in 1972. Bob Fowler of Arizona and his Critique and Awards Committee (Mel Brennan, Maryland; Don Esslinger, Missouri; Dick Howard, Ohio; and Norm Newcomer, New Mexico) became evaluation coordinators. We worked with technical committee members, class chairmen, judges, and the AAACE Board to review the multitude of varied and sometimes conflicting recommendations. Thoughts reflected from members in previous years, especially at the time of "Odyssey" and "Ideas for AAACE" were weighed with the latest reactions in an effort to make the program more meaningful.

Complexities involved in making this ambitious transition after final refinements with the AAACE Board in December ruptured some deadlines. For the first time, National Headquarters took the job of preparing and distributing the many materials. This chore faced the good folks in Morgantown at a time when they were just getting started with the Headquarters assignment.

In attempting to cover our communication channels while grouping classes to facilitate judging, the program was expanded from 27 to 34 classes. Only half of the classes will be judged each

year starting in 1974—even-numbered classes in even-numbered years and odd-numbered classes in odd-numbered years.

To evaluate the current changes, this year's program is being conducted in all classes. Thus, Joe Marks of Michigan, Brad Schneller of Ontario, Vice-President Ed Ferringer of Purdue, and the Critique and Awards Committee (Hank Corrow, New Hampshire; Cordell Hatch, Pennsylvania; Bonnie Kreidler, USDA; Jon Smith, Purdue; and Vic Stephen, Cornell) will be working with more class chairmen and judges than ever before.

Increased stress is being placed on content, audience, and the achievement of stated goals in our refinement of the procedures and class entry forms. Requests have been made to further maximize professional improvement for members by encouraging judges to elaborate on strong and weak points of each entry.

It is intended that benefits to members from the critique phase of the program will be enhanced by more detailed comments on each class form and by the digest of all comments into a more comprehensive C & A program summary book. Distribution of this summary will be made to each AAACE member and not just at the annual meeting. However, those attending the meeting will further benefit because exceptional entries will be in the spotlight on the program and blue ribbon winners will be available for display and playback there. It is hoped that significant entries might be available at regional meetings or on request for local examination.

Each of you is urged to read the Rulebook and the class forms that are of specific interest to you. Many complaints and suggestions received in the evaluation showed lack of understanding of the existing program. Particular attention should be paid to eligibility. Refinements are designed to assure that AAACE members have an equal chance to compete.

Taking into consideration the time and dollar limitations in conducting what is essentially a volunteer program, our evaluation committee attempted to come forward with the most useful and practical ideas. Of course, there is no premise that the program now being offered will solve all problems or completely satisfy any AAACE member (including those involved in the evaluation).

Goss: "Blue Ribbon" Professional Improvement

We hope members will be getting more than ever out of the program at a time when dues have gone up; those of us involved in the evaluation want your suggestions for future improvements. So that final recommendations will be ready for the AAACE Board this fall, please send comments before October 15 to Glen Goss, 437 Agricultural Administration Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. 16802.