



Dwindling Urban Forests and Dwindling Membership

by Peter Kelly, Director

The membership of the Ontario Urban Forest Council is declining. This problem has seen your Board of Directors working overtime to come up with solutions. There are two aspects of membership. One is what we offer the membership. The other is what the membership offers us.

So, what are the benefits to the membership? Is it the reduced rate for our seminars or perhaps the newsletter? With everyone wanting to dip into our bank accounts these days, I for one am becoming very selective with my affiliations with various organizations. As a business owner, many of the organizations that I join have a direct payback to the company. Some contribute in the form of safety; some contribute to productivity and others to effective business management. So I asked myself, what are the advantages of my membership in the OUFC? Well, it most definitely is not monetary. The newsletter has been sporadically published and the discount on the two annual seminars does not offset my \$75.00 membership fee.

The answer I believe is in the educational seminars. That is the one place where the OUFC has always done an excellent job. With our new name and face, we are shifting our focus back to what it is we do best. This year will see our usual two annual seminars, but in addition, we will be conducting a number of informal educational evenings. This will be held in conjunction with, or in lieu of, our monthly Directors meetings. We are open to any suggestions you may have for topics and speakers at these sessions. We are currently working on upgrading our web site to be a source of arboricultural information, by archiving old newsletters and articles.

And, this is our first electronic newsletter. Not only is there a significant saving using this media, we are hopeful that it will also become an easier method of obtaining feedback from our membership.

Having said all that, the primary purpose of the OUFC is to preserve and enhance the essential natural resources within our urban areas. To achieve this mandate, we need a larger membership. People need to be encouraged to join this dedicated group. You are invited by the Urban Forest and its Council to help in the education of yourself and others, to declare the benefits of the Urban Forest to people who need the information and lobby the people with power to protect the Urban Forest.

Yes, we offer you specific benefits, but, the bottom line is: Ask not what the Ontario Urban Forest Council can do for you, but what you can do for the Urban Forest.