What Should I Consider Before Becoming More Active in PSTA?

Members of the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association are committed to science education for their students, and understand the importance of maintaining a dialog with other science educators. Membership in PSTA affords you the opportunity to discuss ideas and issues with other members across the state. Active participation in professional organizations, such as PSTA, can make a very positive difference for both you and your students in the classroom.

PSTA provides its members with a variety of ways to become involved. A majority of our members keep current with PSTA activities by reading the Exchange and attending the annual conference. Other members take a more active role by presenting an idea, an activity, or current research in a session at the annual conference. This step can be a big one if you have never presented at a conference before, but those who have done it, more often than not are hooked and begin presenting regularly. It is a lot of fun and a great way to meet your colleagues from around the state. Many people ease into this role by presenting as part of a team for the first time. If you are interested in presenting, you might consider completing a proposal form for this year's conference.

The most important role you could take in PSTA is to become a part of its leadership. The leadership of PSTA consists of a Board of Directors. Each board member is elected by the membership typically for a three-year term. Officers of the organization are either elected or appointed and report directly to the Board of Directors. Together this group makes decisions on the agenda for PSTA. These people are responsible for all of the organization's activities and meetings. These folks are also regular classroom teachers in the state who, maybe like you, have decided that they want to become more involved in PSTA.

Making a commitment to run for office in PSTA is an important decision and, as such, should be an informed one. By running for office, you are making a commitment of time and energy to PSTA. Your responsibility to the organization in terms of time will vary by office, but generally consists of attending four board meetings annually which are held within the state. These meetings are held on a Saturday morning or afternoon. The organization will pay for your travel and lodging expenses to attend these meetings. During these meetings, issues and concerns are discussed and decisions are made which shape the future direction of PSTA as an organization. While the idea of sitting in a four-hour meeting may sound onerous, the leadership of PSTA is made up of some really great people who are K-college science educators, just like you.

If this sounds interesting to you, I urge you to fill out and submit a nomination form today. Or, if you would like to find out more about any of the PSTA activities or positions mentioned above, call me at 814 833 7192 or email me at ruth.ruud@yahoo.com You may also contact any of the other individuals listed inside the front cover of this issue of the Exchange.

If you are interested in running for a PSTA office, complete the nomination form on the following pages. Please note: All nomination forms must be postmarked by June 30, 2011.