

January 2023

ORPS Newsletter

Welcome 2023

Greeting ORPS Members,

I hope this finds you well and in good spirits. Welcome to 2023! We ended 2022 with a successful conference in November in Broken Arrow. There are so many little "nuggets" of truth that were learned along the way in 2022. You might be scratching your head and saying, "Nuggets?! There were complete veins of gold everywhere, if we looked and listened." I could not agree with you more in that statement; yet the reality is I have to think about what are the nuggets I will use day to day. Here we are in a new year: with new resolutions, goals, and predicted outcomes staring at us as we tumble forward into 2023. What nuggets of truth and practice will you put forth this year to obtain your goals - personal or professional?

It has been interesting over the last year to watch our colleagues, friends, and family in our profession work through challenges and changes. We have seen some leave the profession, change positions, start back up in the profession, and some have passed on. The truth of the matter is that change is inevitable; how are we changing with it? Change is constant, but how are we adapting to it? I found one of my little nuggets of truth earlier this month. My first thought is we need to mentor the "next generation" for adaptation and change; then it hit me, sometimes we are looking in the wrong direction. How are we mentoring our current workforce as well?

**"The mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting."
- Mestrius Plutarchus**

There may colleagues around us who may be struggling with how to keep finding excitement in the day to day service to our community. How do we support those around us and bolster them as they work to serve? How do we ignite the fire of service and commitment to each other and to our communities? How does that look in your work group, agency, community, region, and/or state? It is my belief that we can be those who generate a spark and fan the flames. What we do is critical: We are providers of joy and happiness.

**Those who decide to use leisure as a means of mental development, who love good music, good books, good pictures, good plays, good company, good conversation - what are they?
They are the happiest people in the world.
- William Lyon Phelps**

I say this daily: I am beyond proud of the people within our profession who consistently serve the populace with a smile and a servant's heart. We are a tough crowd with hearts of gold who share our nuggets of truth to the general populace through our service every day.

I appreciate you all!

Kind regards,
Jerel Cowan
ORPS Executive Director



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2023 Board of Directors ORPS

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Bryan Kelley (Yukon) Vice President

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OPEN — Trustee 2023

Eric Newell (Ponca City) Trustee 2024

Open — Secretary



Question for the Membership:

Does anyone with our membership have knowledge of and experience with "natural" stone staircases in parks in OK? If you do please drop Jeff Edwards a message at:

jedwards@riverparks.org

What is Trending for 2023?

What is the projected trend in parks and recreation for 2023? We all know and understand that what is trending in one part of the country many not be trending here currently but could be coming our way sooner than later.

-Electrification of Parks and Recreation: essentially moving towards electric based tools rather than fossil fuel-based tools and equipment.

-ATV Wheelchairs or track-chairs are become more visible and viable option for people with disabilities

- Creating anchor institutions within the Parks and Recreation field. This is meaning that all parks and recreation facilities are anchor points of wellness for our citizenry. Changing how we are viewed and how we are valued.

- Pickleball: not in the context of growth in the context of noise complaints

- Marijuana and Alcohol in Parks: with twenty-one states that allow recreational cannabis and ten states that allow medicinal use. State Question 820 (legalization of marijuana for people over the age of 21) will be put to a vote of the OK citizenry in March of 2023. How will this play out in our parks and recreation areas? Milwaukee County (Wisconsin) Parks and Recreation has established five permanent and two traveling beer gardens in its parks, which produced an eye-popping \$2.6 million in revenue in 2021 alone. Will recreational use of pot in parks be far behind? (DEC 2022 NRPA magazine)

In Memoriam

December 12, 2022

Lionel Bentley

Lionel Bentley was loved by everyone who knew him, and he loved everyone he ever met. He created a special vibe with people and always made them laugh, even up-tight senior ladies when he crashed their luncheon table at an ORPS conference. We are lucky in life if we meet just one person like Lionel. Who can forget the conference socials where he almost always wore a costume or funny hat. The grass skirt he wore in the exhibit hall at his sod booth will live in infamy. Lionel loved to make people laugh!

He was a member of numerous organizations and served as president of most of them. Lionel always won some type of award for his great service in whatever group he joined. Lionel served ORPS as president from 1980 – 1981.

Friends purchased a personalized memorial park bench which was dedicated this past summer honoring the longtime ORPS member at Norman's Westwood Golf Course. The bench was placed just outside the clubhouse for any and all visitors to enjoy.

Lionel started at Norman P&R in 1972 as assistant park superintendent. He was an active member and great supporter of ORPS for 50 years. He supported the society throughout his career as he moved from the professional side to a commercial member after opening his own sod business. Lionel left the Norman department as parks and recreation director to open Bentley Turf in 1983.

He departed this life way too soon on March 12th, 2022, leaving us with a huge hole in our hearts. We will never have another friend as special and unique as Lionel Bentley. Consider yourself lucky if you had the opportunity to meet him.

Written by Jan Scott



The Golden Group:

Sue Wood, Rick Davis , and Jan Scott in front of the bench honoring Lionel Bentley.

