

Gary B. Garey

Serving on a national board or committee can be a very educational experience. These assignments usually require two or three meetings a year with other board members who have a variety of educational backgrounds and experiences. Usually they live in many different parts of the country.

In the fall of 1974, I was asked to fill the unexpired term as National Association of Extension 4-H Agents' representative to the *Journal of Extension's* Board of Directors. One year later, I was reappointed as the association's representative for a three-year term.

In serving as this representative, I actually serve on two national boards of directors. The first is the *Journal* board. Secondly, as the *Journal* representative, I also serve as a nonvoting member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAEA).

Journal Board

The *Journal* board has 15 members. Most of them are Extension administrators from various states. Other organizations with representatives include Epsilon Sigma Phi and the 1890 institutions. The only field staff members on the board are the representatives of the three agent associations.

Since the primary audience for the *Journal* is field staff, the agent association representatives have the responsibility of helping the board keep the *Journal* issues relevant to field staff needs. As a matter of fact, the representatives of the agent associations helped the current editor establish a reader evaluation panel that reviews each issue.

When I began serving on the *Journal* board, the publication had just finished a third consecutive year of operating in the red. Subscriptions had been declining for several years. A new *Journal* format was started in January, 1975, which was much more readable for field staff. With the new format and much hard work by the board, subscriptions have increased the last two years and the publication has operated in the black. The board continues to work hard in three major areas—content, financial, and promotion—to encourage the field staff to use the publication.

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A special book about Extension, *Heritage/Horizons: Extension's Commitment to People*, was published in 1976 as a special project. It's an excellent review of Extension's past accomplishments and present programs, and includes a look into Extension of the future.

Theme issues, like this one, have helped to make the publication relevant to field staff. Evaluation (1975) and Time Management (1976) were two very successful theme issues.

Being a part of the *Journal* board during a period that has seen the publication gain new life has been a rewarding experience. During this time, the *Journal* has become a more useful publication for field staff. The board has also tried new ideas and projects that have added to the usefulness of the publication.

NAEA Board

The NAEA Board of Directors is made up of 20 Extension professionals from all parts of the country. Board members vary in experience and backgrounds. All have a common purpose . . . to see that NAEA continues to deal with the real issues that face the professional youth agent in the 70s.

Benefits

It's hard to put into words the benefits I've had and the many new friends I've made through my appointment. Representing the association on the *Journal* board and keeping the association's membership informed of *Journal* activities are major responsibilities of this appointment. Both require time, travel, and additional expense. Both, however, have been excellent educational experiences that have contributed to my professional improvement.