

## Message from the President

This coming autumn, we all have a fabulous rendezvous in the city of Puebla, Mexico for the 6th International Oak Society Conference. Home to more indigenous species of oak than any other country or region of the world, Mexico is an oak-lovers destination if ever there was one. Working closely with the conference organisers, I am already convinced that this will be an unforgettable experience.

Along with the pleasures afforded every three years by our conferences comes, of course, a little responsibility for the membership. Soon you will all be receiving the Board elections package - in preparation, once again, by Diana Gardener, our indefatigable volunteer.

Several of our long-standing Board Officers who have held various positions over the years - some since the very beginnings of the Oak Society - will be retiring. Richard Jensen, Eike Jablonski, Doug McCreary, and Ron Lance will all be stepping down, and this inevitably represents great change. Perhaps the most important question that the Oak Society must answer for its future is, who will take on these responsibilities? At the very latest, the 2009 elections must provide us the answers to this question. There are many activities that an organisation like the Oak Society can and should develop - and then there are some without which we cannot function.

I am pleased to note already that several "new" faces have come forth as candidates for these elections. To those, and to others who are perhaps still considering being a candidate or volunteering for a committee, I would like to say that this is an exciting period of change for the Oak Society and that, in a very real sense, the future is in your hands!

Being a member of the Board of Directors is one way to contribute some of your time to the Oak Society. But it is not the only way. Volunteers who come forth for specific tasks - people like Diana Gardener, Rudy Light, Ed Holm, and David Richardson - as well as those who develop activities on their own initiative. Matt Strong, Anke Mattern, and all of those who have organized Oak Open Days, for example, are invaluable assets to the Oak Society. Volunteers bring a special spirit to any organisation. There are many directions for development of the organisation for which the active involvement of the membership is needed.

These are some of the many things we all need to discuss in Puebla. I look forward to seeing you there!

Allen Coombes, President