

The Importance of Commentary and October *JOE* Highlights

Abstract

In the first section of this Editor's Page, "The Importance of Commentary," I encourage all who feel strong emotion about their work in Extension to consider submitting a manuscript for possible publication as a Commentary in *JOE*. In "October *JOE* Highlights," I emphasize the relevance of Extension in contemporary society by identifying articles in this issue on subjects that permeate the news every day.

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The Importance of Commentary

That you're reading *JOE* signifies your dedication to Extension. You're sensitive to the needs of the clientele the organization serves. You contemplate societal issues and ways Extension can address them. You're invested in Extension programming and the research underlying that programming. You have formulated clear ideas about aspects of the organization and directions it should take. Now, how can you share all that critical and creative thinking in a way that will benefit your clients, your colleagues, and Extension as a whole? Write a *JOE* Commentary! *JOE* receives too few Commentary submissions and welcomes them from any and all who, as the [JOE Submission Guidelines](#) indicate, wish to "offer challenges or present thought-provoking opinions on issues of concern to U.S. Extension."

The impetus for writing a Commentary can come from feelings of accomplishment, enthusiasm, concern, or a multitude of other emotions. For example, the authors of this issue's Commentary, "[Emphasizing Extension's Unbiased, Research-Based Recommendations Is Critical](#)," were caught off guard by the amount of effort they and others had put forth investigating and providing recommendations for managing a crop disease. They recognized that the surprise they felt likely was nothing compared to the astonishment funders and other stakeholders might have on hearing about the machinations that led to the project's outcomes. They were compelled to communicate the experience, and their associated opinions, to the larger Extension community to inspire actions that will bolster the strength of the organization. Surely, a realization such as this has happened to you, too. The next time you're overcome by emotion related to some aspect of your work in Extension, put pen to paper—or, more likely, fingertips to keys—and share! The idea of revealing to colleagues your passions and perspectives may be intimidating, but crafting a *JOE* Commentary also is one of the more rewarding types of writing you can do. You will be contributing to a wide-ranging and ongoing conversation on some of the most important issues affecting Extension and Extension professionals.

October *JOE* Highlights

To say that certain articles in this issue are "ripped from the headlines" seems melodramatic. Yet it's true. And although there is continual concern about Extension's relevance, such a description spotlights the critical role of Extension in contemporary society. Prime examples of articles addressing matters of the day are in the issue's collection of Features. In "[Supporting the 'Archstone of Democracy': Cooperative Extension's Experiment with Deliberative Group Discussion](#)," the author focuses on Extension's relationship with civil discourse during times of challenge and the importance of such to the very core of American democracy. Complexities of urban culture, health care policy, and climate change—news cycle regulars—are the subjects of the Features "[A National Framework for Urban Extension](#)," "[The Farming Population and Health Insurance: Educational Needs and Approaches of Extension Professionals](#)," and "[Usefulness of Delivery Methods for Climate Change Programming: Perspectives of Extension and Research Faculty](#)." Additionally, the Research in Brief offering "[Ready or Not? UConn Extension Disaster and Emergency Preparedness](#)" tackles a topic crucial to a nation recently shaken by an overly active hurricane season and a horrific random act of violence.

Other articles might not make a newsfeed, but they describe findings and innovations that keep Extension at the forefront of research-based education and engagement. For example, several Ideas at Work and Tools of the Trade articles focus on inventive techniques—"[Repurposing Video Documentaries as Features of a Flipped-Classroom Approach to Community-Centered Development](#)," "[Living Shoreline Design Charette: A New Twist on the Charette Technique](#)," and "[Drawing Together: Using Sketchbooks to Gain Insight on a Program's Effectiveness](#)"—and newer technologies—"[Using Gamification to Teach Livestock Management Skills](#)," "[Getting Your Message Across: Mobile Phone Text Messaging](#)," and "[Using Videoconferencing to Create Authentic Online Learning for Volunteers](#)."

To be in the know, peruse all the articles in this issue of *JOE*. It's likely you'll learn not just something new, but something newsworthy.

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