

leading off



Learning a Lot

I attended a seminar given by Garth Denison, CMS that had the opening statement on his first slide: “Education ... it’s just the beginning.” This started me thinking and I slowly started putting a few pieces of my learning history together.

It appears that the more education I participate in, the more I realize that it truly is just the beginning of several processes that move all of us forward. One important factor is that no matter how much you learn, no matter where you learn it, no matter who you learn it from, no matter if you use it or not—you will never forget how that slice of education made you feel about learning. Let me explain.

In 1915, a great uncle of mine (my grandmother’s brother) came to the U.S. via Ellis Island. In 1917, he found himself on a ship headed back to Europe as an American soldier and as an interpreter for an American colonel. After the war, he returned to America and settled in Rochester, NY. Whenever we visited him when we were kids, he would tell us of the hardships that everyone experienced during that time. Yet he never had a harsh word about any of it. Why? Because of all the sacrifices that so many have given so that we can all have the privilege to enjoy the opportunities that we have become accustomed to. I learned a lot from him.

His younger brother (another great uncle) served in the Italian army from the mid-1920s until the end of WWII. He was an army combat support driver who provided supplies to the military scattered across Africa. Because he had no children, I became his adopted son and he would spend hours sharing his stories of the places he visited and the people he met, always full of adventure, excitement and intrigue. I learned a lot.

Fast forward to this century. As I became more and more involved with RSES—whether it was part of the E&E Board or as a director or sitting in the car crisscrossing the American/Canadian border to attend seminars, conferences and training events, or meeting new people—I always listened to the stories from members who were enthralled with technical and personal involvement. I learned a lot!

Most recently, I had the opportunity to sit down and discuss the changes RSES is going through with a number of HQ staff members, and I could see their passion, their motivation, their commitments, their strength, their diversity and their dedication in making RSES better than it has ever been. This is their top priority. I started to see the favorable picture they are looking at. I learned a lot.

Finally, back to reality and today’s events. Am I excited to attend the international conference in Albuquerque, NM? Need you ask? I am headed to a conference where the available knowledge delivered by some of the industries’ leading experts will be head-over-heels better than most other events.

I am going to the conference for the education, but will be staying for the knowledge. I will keep coming back so that I can be continually reminded about how good I feel at the end of the conference. Because I (and we) will all learn a lot! After all, the sky is truly the limit. ☺

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