Who’s Organization is it Anyway, Charlie Brown?

While visiting the Arch in St. Louis, I noted that my fellow Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, commissioned Lewis and Clark to leave from St. Louis and to open the new frontier for our young country. We have the opportunity to open the new biosafety frontier for our relatively young organization. Our role in the past has been to control and contain agents such as HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus). At the Annual Meeting in St. Louis, I suggested that this year we, as ABSA members, need to spread HIVV, that is:

1. **H** help—your help in volunteering your time, talents and ideas to the organization;

2. **I** information—We will streamline our organizational communications in order, not only to disseminate information, but also to allow member input. In addition, we have combined the Newsletter, Journal, and Publications into one committee in order to more effectively and efficiently provide ABSA members, and others, current useable information; and finally,

3. **VV** visibility and vision—Our mission is to become the organization world wide that people will respect with regard to all biosafety issues. With your vision we will do just that.

It is time for ABSA to move forward and to expand our sphere of influence. The council will be exploring methods and mechanisms for doing this. We will, in this year, be concentrating not only on the immediate requirements of operating ABSA, but also on developing methods for continuation of the work that has been done and will be initiated. Our mission is to make ABSA the preeminent biosafety organization in the world. The committee chairs and their committees are being challenged to move forward with their own ideas for continued improvement of the organization. In the newsletter we published the list of current committees with a short explanation of the responsibilities of each, along with a willingness to serve form to make it easy for you, the membership, to get involved with the operation of the organization. Committee Chairs need active people, committed to the best interests of the organization as a whole, to staff the various committees. We often hear complaints about the lack of responsiveness of professional organizations to the needs of their members. It is easy to criticize when we are on the outside looking in, but constructive criticism requires a commitment to work within the organization to provide the solutions which best meet the needs of the membership. **This is your organization and we cannot meet our goals without you.** Don’t be part of the problem. Be committed to be part of the solution.

Ladies and gentleman, your organization will move forward with your assistance and only with your assistance. I enlist your help and look forward to an exciting and prosperous year.

John H. Keene, RBP, CBSP
Biohaztec Associates
Midlothian, Virginia