Wow, has it been a year already?! The truth of the colloquialism, “Time flies when you’re having fun,” has never been as apparent to me as it has during the last year as your Florida Section chair. I’ve decided to be brief with this column, and instead of rehashing the copious and impressive events and accomplishments already discussed in previous months, I’d like to share some of my more general thoughts from this year.

First, this past year just reaffirms for me the dedication and overall excellent quality of the people who work in our industry. Yes, we do this for a living, but it’s so apparent that everyone realizes the importance of reliably supplying safe drinking water to entire communities of people who depend on us. It makes me proud to be part of that!

Second, FSAWWA plays a significant role in helping our industry achieve its mission. I’ve been a member for over 30 years and spent quite a bit of time as region chair, but I really had no idea of the breadth of services and resources that are available from the section until this past year. I’m more convinced than ever that it’s well worth the cost of membership. Just one excellent example is the Water Utility Council (WUC). It’s extremely impressive to see how much influence the WUC has in matters of interest to utilities, particularly with regulatory issues, and how much effort goes into working with state and federal legislators. I strongly encourage each utility to be involved with, and become a member of, the WUC.

Third, our volunteers are awesome! The amount of time and effort that you folks put into your roles with the section is truly amazing. And to think that most of you are doing this while maintaining your day job is a testament to your dedication to our industry and the section. Thank you so much for that!

Fourth (but really first), is the exceptional professional staff that makes the whole thing work. I really had no idea of everything that Peggy Guingona, our executive director, and her team do to keep this organization running as well as it does (herding cats is even harder than it sounds!). They are the envy of the other AWWA sections and we are so fortunate to have them. Peggy, Donna, Casey, and Jenny—thank you so much for everything you do!

Finally, I want to thank the members of FSAWWA for giving me the opportunity to give back to an organization that has meant so much to me. I also want to thank the members of the section’s Executive Committee for its support and fellowship, and particularly Bill Young, the section’s past chair, whose calm and thoughtful demeanor was a model for me.

I consider this last year to be a very special time in my career, but now it’s time to hand over the gavel to 2020 section chair Kim Kowalski! Thank you, Kim, for your support this year and I know you will excel in your new role.

Michael F. Bailey, P.E.
Chair, FSAWWA