Five women nominated for American Agri-Women positions

This year American Agri-Women has five positions to fill, two officers and three directors for the Resource Center board.

**Pat Yeagle**, Illinois Agri-Women member from Winslow, Illinois, and chair of the Rural Health/Insurance Committee, has been nominated for Vice President of Education. She is interested in furthering education for youth and adults across the nation and learning more and adding enthusiasm for agriculture education in the future.

Pat has been a member of AAW since 1993 and is a past president of Illinois Agri-Women and currently chair of the Illinois Science Fair Project. She attended the Syngenta Leadership Conference in 1999. She’s a very dynamic 4-H leader, leading the Snappy Snazzers 4-H club for 28 years. Other interests include her church where she is a trustee and on the pastor/parish committee, and singing with the Monroe Swiss Singers.

Pat has been secretary of the Jo Davies County Fair since 1998 and on the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs Board since 2002. Her hobbies are gardening, antiques, and reading.

Pat is an independent insurance agent and owns a stateline farm (did dairy for 25 years), which she now farms with her two sons, Chris & Rob.

**Lynn Figone-Gallagher**, California Women for Agriculture member from Middletown, California, and president of the Lake County Chapter, has been nominated for AAW Secretary.

Lynn’s interest in agriculture began very early on when at four years old, she announced to family she was going to marry a farmer or live on a farm! It was time spent on her Cousin Ken Mazzetta’s dairy farm in Petaluma, California, also where she was born and raised, that she developed her interest in local agriculture. Lynn credits her deep interest in agriculture to her high school Ag teacher and FFA advisor, John DeJong, and one of her early mentors and employers, Sondra Wallace the owner of Barn Tours for which Lynn worked as an Ag Ed Specialist/Tour Guide for many years.

Lynn is the daughter of John and Terry Figone and the mother of two small children, Baillie who is 6 years old and Brady who is 5. They too, share their mothers love for agriculture. Lynn jokes that her children knew their breeds of cattle before their ABCs!

A member of AAW for only a few years, she was first introduced to the organization many years ago while working at the Oregon State Fair and came across the AAW booth.

Currently, Lynn, along with fellow CWA member Pam Shaw, is working on the “Helping Hand Farm and Ranch Relief Fund.” This fund will help those who have suffered loss due to natural disasters.

**Ina Pluid** has been nominated to be a director on the Resource Center. She is a member of Idaho Women in Timber from Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and has been a member of AAW since 1991.

She grew up on a small rural family farm and has been married 50 years to a self-employed logging contractor.

Ina is currently serving her fourth term as the Timber Commodity chair and is also on the ESA and Water committees. She has also been president and vice president of her local IWIT chapter and has been state president, 1st vice president, and 2nd vice president and has been on the IWIT board of directors for 18 years.

She’s attended Washington, DC, with Federated Women in Timber six times. **Continued on page 3.**
President’s Column

By Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain... The lyrics played through my mind many times as I was operating the combine in previous years. How could I not feel the majesty with a bright blue sky, fields of golden grain, and trees and lakes in the background?

By now many of you have reaped all or part of your harvest for this year in production agriculture or agri-business. Hopefully it has been a productive year for all entities. If earlier goals weren’t reached, the progressive thinker in us already started to tweak next year’s plans.

Does the general public realize the abundant agricultural products are produced by a minute amount of farmers? We are the one percent of the population who chose to work in ag, allowing the other 99% to enjoy our bounty. There are some days, however, I wish they would put the face of the farmer responsible for the product on the label. These things just don’t appear on the shelves by magic. Our AAW goal of communicating and educating can “put the face” on these foods and fibers.

Commercials tote the benefits of sales, bargains and great deals. The best buy in our country is often taken for granted – FOOD. Americans (excluding the low-income levels) spend about 9% of their disposable income on food. This allows them to attend the afternoon issues workshops, and then move into the annual meeting, agricultural tours and end with the Saturday evening Awards Banquet. A Key Largo (beginning of the Florida Keys) Day of Fun is a Sunday option.

Let’s celebrate the bounty of AAW: shared passion for agriculture, friendships and enjoyment of our hard work. See you in Miami!

Yvonne

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER DEADLINE 10/15

Unknown to most AAW affiliates, the Voice has a schedule of when your group is supposed to have a report in to the editor for printing. Here are the organizations scheduled for the next issue. Please send your articles to Arlene Kovash at akovash@earthlink.net.

Affiliates:
- American Angus Auxiliary
- Am. Sheep Industry Women
- Salers Belles
- Georgia Cotton Women
- Illinois Agri-Women
- Nebraska Agri-Women
- Montana Agri-Women
- Maine Agri-Women
- Ohio Agri-Women
- Texas Agri-Women

Committees:
- Public Understanding & Awareness
- Ag Chemicals/Food Safety
- Ag Research/Biotechnology
- Agricultural Labor
- Religion

The VOICE is published in February, April, June, August, October, and December by American Agri-Women as a service to members. Deadline is the 15th of the month before each issue is published. Articles and suggestions are always welcomed by the editor:
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Nominees, continued from page 1.

Ina has also been a 4-H leader ten years, is active in her church, and has participated in rewriting their County Land Plan. She attends most AAW meetings, including the convention, mid-year, and fly-in, and is an expert resource for timber issues.

Mary Ann Graff is a current member of the Resource Center and has served as president, scholarship chair, secretary, and in public relations. She is a member of California Women for Agriculture and lives in Visalia.

Mary Ann has attended almost all conventions, mid-year meetings, and fly-ins since she joined AAW in 2000, plus has attended the Syngenta Leadership Conference. In addition she is currently president of CWA, past 1st, 2nd, and 3rd vice president, and has held several offices in her local chapter. She is also on the Buy California Marketing Agreement Board and is a member of the California Farm Bureau.

Mary Ann grew up on the family farm but is no longer involved in production agriculture. She states, “I guess you can take the girl off the farm but can’t farming out of the girl!”

Julie Tesch has been nominated to be a director on the Resource Center. She is from St. Paul, Minnesota and is AAW’s National College Project co-chair.

Julie is executive director of Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC), past 2nd vice president of Minnesota Agri-Women, a Helen Whitmore scholarship recipient, attended Syngenta training in 2002, and is co-chair of the’ 2007 AAW national convention.

A native of Waldorf, MN she received both her master’s degree in agricultural education and her bachelor of science degree in applied economics from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and also just completed her tenure of being a Hubert H. Humphrey Policy Fellow.

As a volunteer, she devotes much of her time to FFA and 4-H activities across the state

Letter to the Editor:

**Logo needs updating to make it relevant**

Oregon Women for Agriculture would like to thank the convention delegates for considering our resolution to update the AAW logo. As members of AAW, we are proud of our achievements and the difference our commitment has made to agriculture these past 30 plus years.

Times have changed, years have passed. Members have come and gone. It is time to update the AAW logo. Please consider the following questions when making your decision:

1. Is it relevant to the times?
2. Is it recognizable to the public?
3. Is it representative of our purpose?

We believe the above questions cannot all be answered with a “yes” using the existing logo. We are in a new century with evolving issues that need to be symbolized in our logo. By updating the logo, we have an opportunity to create an image that is truly in line with the current times, recognizable by both urban and rural communities, and accurately reflecting our mission statement.

We understand the many concerns that our organization is addressing at this time. Nevertheless, our logo needs to be clearly defined and without misrepresentation. An updated AAW logo is a proactive move to symbolize our mission statement in a fresh way.

Please consider our resolution:

**AAW Logo Resolution**

WHEREAS, we, members of Oregon Women for Agriculture, are recommending an update to the American Agri-Women logo; and

WHEREAS, we are in a new century with evolving issues that need to be symbolized in our logo; and

WHEREAS, the logo of American Agri-Women should be relevant to the times, recognizable to the public and representative of our purpose; and,

WHEREAS, our logo needs to be clearly defined and without misrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, American Agri-Women are active participants in agriculture as individuals, business partners, wives, mothers and friends; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that we are proactive in creating an image that is truly in line with the current times, recognizable by both urban and rural communities, and accurately reflecting our mission statement.

Respectfully Submitted,
Oregon Women for Agriculture

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Please Print – This membership application form will be used for direct computer input to produce your newsletter mailing labels. Dues may be paid through your commodity/state affiliate or mailed to: American Agri-Women, PO Box 111, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Please check one:  ❑ New  ❑ Renew

Last Name _______________________
First Name _______________________
Spouse _________________________
Address _________________________
City _____________________________
State/Zip_________________________
Phone ( ) ________________________
Fax ( ) __________________________
E-Mail ___________________________

AAW Business

AAW Business

AAW National Dues ($20 for both affiliate and at-large or single member), or $10 if a collegiate member) is enclosed:

❑ Yes  ❑ No

YES! We take Visa or Mastercard!

Card # _________________________
Expiration Date _________________
Signature _______________________

The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman 3
Convention Registration

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS
A block of rooms has been reserved under American Agri-Women at the Sheraton Miami-Mart Hotel. Reservations must be made prior to October 8, 2006. Call the hotel directly at (305) 261-3800 to book your room.

Room Rates:
$125 per night for single/double occupancy
$155 per night for Club Level Suite
$185 per night for Junior Suite
Room tax is 13% per night. Self-parking is $4.00 overnight, $3.00 daily

SILENT AUCTION DONOR FORM
Donor: ____________________________
Contact(s): _______________________
Address: _________________________
City: _____________________________
State: ____________________________
Zip Code: _________________________
Telephone: ________________________
Fax: ______________________________

Please specify how you wish to be recognized on the bid sheet:

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Please give a brief description of the item(s) you are donating:

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Estimated or known value(s) of item(s) donated:

______________________________

Fax your completed form to Dorris Mold at (715) 822-6351. For shipping of your item, please ship to American Agri-Women, 1850 Old Dixie Hwy, Homestead, FL 33033. Please keep a copy of this form for your tax records.
American Agri-Women is a 501 c (5) organization; contributions are not deductible as a charitable expense, but may be deducted as a business expense.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 31ST ANNUAL MEETING
Registration form also available at www.americanagriwomen.org

Registration Fees
Registration fee is $300. Collegiate members’ registration fee is $200. Registration fee includes meals, breaks, sessions with speakers, Friday tours and all conference materials. Meal functions must be registered for in advance using the registration form below. Kindly let us know which meal function you will be attending so that we may have an accurate count.

Cancellation Policy
Cancellations made in writing before September 10, 2006 will receive a full refund. No refund will be given to cancellations made after September 10.

Optional Tours
Registration and payment for tours can be included with your registration.

Name: ____________________________________ Affiliate: ____________________
Guest: ____________________________________ Phone: ________________
Address:  _______________________________________________________________
E-Mail: ____________________________________ Voting member of AAW? ______

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Please check which events you plan to attend:

Thursday, Nov. 9
RC Board Breakfast
Board of Directors Lunch
Dinner

Friday, Nov. 10
Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 11
Affiliate Presidents Breakfast
Breakfast
Collegiate Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Optional Tour Registration
Friday, November 10, 2006
“Discovering Diversity: Miami-Dade Ag” Included
Saturday, November 11, 2006
“Everglades Ag Area Farm Tours” – spouse/guests only
Sunday, November 12, 2006
“A Day in Key Largo” $ 50

Total Enclosed

Payment – Make checks payable to AAW 2006 Convention and mail with registration form to: Debbie Brady, 1850 Old Dixie Highway, Homestead, FL 33033. You can also register and pay online by credit card at www.americanagriwomen.org.
Inquiries – Contact Katie Edwards at (305) 246-5514, ext. 226, or secretary@americanagriwomen.org.

4 The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman
The Continuing Saga of Estate Tax (“Death Tax”) Repeal
Trenna R Grabowski, CPA, Tax Chair

On June 22 the House passed H.R. 5638, the “Permanent Estate Tax Relief Act of 2006” with a 269 to 156 margin. The legislation was then sent on to the Senate where it was to consider the “compromise” legislation sometime after the Independence Day break.

This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to:

(1) increase the estate and gift tax exemption to $5 million beginning in 2010;

(2) lower to 15% the estate tax rate for estates up to $25 million and 30% for estates of $25 million or more; This ties the estate tax rate to the capital gains rate for the lower tier and to twice the capital gains rate for the upper tier.

(3) repeal after 2009 the estate tax deduction for estate, inheritance, legacy, or succession taxes paid to states;

(4) allow a surviving spouse to claim any unused portion of a deceased spouse’s estate or gift tax unified credit, which means that if a couple has made no estate planning provisions and just passes all of the estate of the first spouse to die to the surviving spouse (remember, no transfer tax on assets passing from one spouse to another), that surviving spouse will have available $10 million in exemptions (the surviving spouse’s own $5 million exemption plus the unused portion of the deceased spouse’s $5 million exemption).

(5) allow a taxpayer election to deduct from gross income the lesser of 60% of qualified timber gain or net capital gain.

It also repeals the provision in the 2001 legislation that related to carryover basis of estate property to allow recipients of such property after 2009 to use date-of-death fair market values. That means that any property you inherit will automatically have a “basis” (what you use as your cost if you should sell it) of “date of death value.” When or if you sell inherited property, your gain will be the difference between what it was worth when your benefactor died and what you sell it for.

This version would relieve most farmers of estate tax and keep the stepped up basis in effect (the loss of full stepped up basis was a major problem with the original repeal). Under this compromise, a married couple would have $10 million in exemptions ($5 million each) and whatever portion the first to die did not use would be added on to the surviving spouse’s exemption.

The provision dealing with the timber was a surprise to me when they put it in—obviously it is not related to the estate tax issue. My interpretation of this provision is that if you sell timber, not only will it be taxed at a lower tax rate if it is eligible for long term capital gains treatment (a maximum of 15%), but only 40% of the gain will be subject to tax at all.

When the Congress came back after the Independence Day break, the House considered a different bill (H.R. 5970) with most of the same provisions, but with a 40% minimum wage increase (from $5.15 to $7.25 over three years). The House passed the measure on July 29 with a 230 to 180 vote and sent it on to the Senate.

The Senate failed to pass the combined estate tax cut and minimum wage increase before recessing until September 5. With a scheduled adjournment target of October 6, that leaves precious little time for Senate approval and reconciliation should the Senate-passed version not match the House-passed version.

I have quit trying to second-guess Congress on the Estate Tax issue. I had thought there would be a compromise long before this. Don’t be confused—“estate tax” is the same as “death tax.” The use of the term “death tax” was a masterful marketing move designed to garner popular opinion for repeal of the tax—and it worked. Most Americans, if asked, favor repeal, even though the tax actually applies to a small percentage of estates. As the law currently stands with full repeal in 2010 and a restoration to pre-2001 law in 2011, estate planning, retirement planning and general transition planning is very difficult.

Federal land sales on hold

From Ina Pluid, Timber Chair

Mark Rey, Agriculture Undersecretary has agreed to support a one-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools & Communities Self-determination Act (Craig-Wyden Bill) which was scheduled to expire the end of September. The SRSCS Act has provided $2 billion to 700 rural counties in 41 states over the past six years.

The proposed selling of 300,000 acres of national forest land parcels around the country to raise money for the continued payments has met strong opposition from both parties and is now on hold.

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) said the deal came after he agreed to stop blocking five Bush appointments to the departments of Agriculture and Interior. Wyden is searching for a long-term solution that would maintain help for rural counties that are unlikely to see a resumption of extensive logging on national forests.

Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) considers the payments a transition until national forests produce more timber. Smith was quoted as saying, “I wish our forest industries were healthy enough that we never needed a county payment program. But the fact is that we do need one, and while I’d prefer a long-term solution, we have to make sure our communities get by in the here and now.”

The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman 5
Wisconsin Women for Agriculture loses two voices for agriculture this year

By Rosemary Eckardt, President, Wisconsin Women for Agriculture

We have had the loss of two outstanding members this year, most recently, Audrey Sickinger of Reedsville, Wisconsin.

Audrey was a true pioneer woman who dedicated her life to agriculture in the modern world. Her energy and work focused on involvement in policy-making, not in serving coffee and doughnuts to the men in the organizations she and her husband Jerome belonged to.

Audrey was recognized as a national leader in the dairy industry. She was first appointed to the USDA Agriculture Trade Advisory Committee and later served on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board. She was recognized as Wisconsin’s Farm Wife of the Year by the Colby Chamber of Commerce, National Dairy Woman of the Year, and was presented the President’s Volunteer Action Award by President Ronald Reagan.

Audrey was the current president of Bay Lakes Chapter of WWA and has served as vice president of AAW. She has also served as AAW’s secretary, Dairy Committee chairperson and co-chair, and received the prestigious Leaven Award in 1979, as well as the President’s Award in 2006.

Audrey inspired many by her accomplishments on the farm, in her community, the state of Wisconsin, nationally and internationally. She was a dynamic woman who will be greatly missed by Wisconsin Women for Agriculture and American Agri-Women.

Sally Tadda of Owen, Wisconsin, passed away April 12th. She was involved in the Aquaculture industry with her family’s fish farm and the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association. She and her husband Terry were awarded the Winton Aquaculture Hall of Fame for distinguished service to the industry. She learned of this honor shortly before her death.

Both women died of cancer.

Michigan Agri-Women gain visibility

By Sharon Schmuhl, President

Michigan Agri-Women has lost two whose passions were to speak for agriculture. WWA members have been responding to legislators on vital issues in Wisconsin and nationally affecting agriculture and in some instances issues directly related to members’ businesses.

Two issues are the immigration guest worker program for a Christmas tree grower and rules for manure handling and spreading for some of our small and large dairy farmers that would create further financial difficulties.

We held a luncheon at our state capitol for legislators and their staff in March where we presented our major concerns about our being in favor of the discontinuation of the Wisconsin Farm Land Preservation Program, the study of a Wisconsin Health Plan, extending senior care, support of the Taxpayer Protection Amendment, limits on Eminent Domain, ethanol legislation, nuisance lawsuit protection and updating the Endangered Species Act.

Pesticides reduce reliance on oil & labor

Pesticide use significantly reduces U.S. agriculture’s reliance on foreign oil and use of migrant labor, according to an updated CropLife Foundation (CFL) study.

For weed control in 2005, herbicides saved farmers 337 million gallons of diesel fuel that would have been needed for mechanical tillage. An additional 7 million migrant workers would also have been needed to pull weeds, the study says.

Other positives about herbicide use included 356 billion pounds of soil saved from erosion as the result of less soil planting preparation and reduced mechanical weed control, as well as, an estimated 20-percent increase in crop yield (296 billion pounds of additional food and fiber for the year) from reduced weed competition.

“If farmers relied on tillage rather than herbicides, they would have to make twice as many trips through each field, and every tillage trip requires four times the fuel of a herbicide application,” said Nathan Reigner, co-author of the CLF study.

AAW members attend listening sessions

By Carol Marx, AAW Immediate Past President

The first of 24 listening sessions have been held across the country to solicit and exchange ideas on “cooperative conservation” and environmental partnerships, and have provided an opportunity speak to ways to improve the Endangered Species Act. (Not sure they were expecting that!)

In addition to Interior and EPA, the Agriculture Department, the Commerce Department and the White House... Continued on next page.
When government policy pits environment against agriculture

By Katie A. Edwards, Florida

The opening scene of Francis Ford Coppola’s film Apocalypse Now shows a field of palm trees basking in the hot sun. The sight, a familiar one, is characteristic of the hundreds of tree farms in southern Miami-Dade County. I wondered if anyone else watching the film for the first time would think of it as a tree farm or a wetland.

Strangely enough, there seems to be some confusion about agriculture and wetlands. Tree farms, primarily located in the region known as the East Glade of Miami-Dade, have been targeted by the county’s Department of Environmental Resources Management, better known as DERM. Scores of tree farmers have received notices of violation for not applying for a permit. The farmers must now retroactively apply for permit to farm on what DERM claims are wetlands. But, the farmers must also pay hefty mitigation fees for impacting the wetland by tree farming.

The very notion of these lands being wetlands has many long-time residents and growers scratching their heads. Miami-Dade County boasts itself as the nation’s most subtropical farming region. The unusually high water table, exacerbated by Everglades Restoration projects and fluctuating seasonal water flows in and out of Everglades National Park, has led to increased subterranean flooding.

“That area has been farmed for as long as I can remember, first in potatoes and corn, then later in trees,” recounted an elder grower at a Farm Bureau meeting in July.

Tree farm owners like Frances Salazar and Mercedes Cantillo, who own Two Sisters Nursery with their Cuban-born parents, were stunned to receive a “cease and desist” letter from DERM on their 10-acre nursery. Since 2003, the family has been trying to reach an amicable agreement that would allow them to continue farming.

Unfortunately, for these small farmers, the mitigation is as much as $60,000 per credit which means that the family would end up paying up to $168,000.

“In trying to resolve the situation, we realized that DERM is pitting agriculture against the environment. One DERM officer told me that my tree farm has the same impact on the environment as a condo,” said Frances Salazar. “On one hand, the county wants to keep agriculture, but on the other their actions are driving us off our farms.”

It is becoming alarmingly apparent that all of the growers bought land without knowing it was a wetland since it was currently in agricultural production; the previous owners had also farmed it without knowing it was a wetland.

Many farmers are convinced that DERM’s actions are based not so much on science but on an agenda to devalue private property by classifying them as wetlands so the county can purchase more “environmentally endangered lands.” The Salazar’s neighbor, who was also cited for failure to operate on science but on an agenda to devalue private property by classifying them as wetlands so the county can purchase more “environmentally endangered lands.” The Salazar’s neighbor, who was also cited for failure to operate without a wetlands impact permit, opted to sell her land to the county at a devalued rate rather than pay costly mitigation and attorney’s fees.

Miami-Dade County implemented the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program using tax revenues. The EEL Program has acquired more than 21,000 acres of Environmentally Endangered Lands since 1990. According to DERM, “The purchase and conservation of these lands ensure that they are shielded from development and will continue to thrive as natural habitats.”

Of the 21,000 acres of private lands taken off the tax rolls and placed in government ownership are over 15,000 acres of lands deemed freshwater wetlands.

Farmers will remember that actions speak louder than words when deciding whether or not to continue farming in Miami-Dade County.
See AAW’s web site or look inside for the 2006 Convention registration form.

There’s still time to register for the convention and go on these tours!

**Friday, November 10, 2006**
Farm Tours in the Afternoon

**Saturday, November 11, 2006**
Tour of the Everglades Agricultural Area
Roth Farms (Sugar, Sod, Horticulture)
R.C. Hatton Farms (Vegetable Row Crops, Sugar)
Airboat Ride
Lunch at Hacienda Okeelanta

**Sunday, November 12, 2006**
Day of Fun in Key Largo
Boat Tour and Shark-Feeding Show
at Capt. Slate’s Atlantic Dive Center
Sightseeing at Pennekamp State Park
Sunset Prayer Service on the Beach
Dinner at Sundowners’ Restaurant