AAW awards 100th LEAVEN Award

Oregon Women for Agriculture member Liz VanLeeuw was honored at the 30th annual AAW meeting in Monterey as the 100th recipient of American Agri-Women’s LEAVEN award.

LEAVEN is an acronym for “Loyalty, Enthusiasm, Anticipatory, Valiant, Effectiveness, and Nurturing” and Liz exhibits these qualities in many ways:

Liz shows her LOYALTY by continuing to be a dynamic charter member of Oregon Women for Agriculture (OWA). She was one of the first to serve as president and secretary of OWA thirty years ago and remains a perfect example of OWA’s goal to educate, promote and support agriculture. She will not miss an opportunity to reach others and consistently brings new faces to OWA.

Her ENTHUSIASM for providing the latest information on politics, books, articles and/or media information keeps OWA updated regarding agriculture. Liz speaks openly and directly about the need for OWA members to be involved in issues of mutual interest and concerned.

Liz ANTICIPATES and addresses issues that affect agriculture. She chose to step into the political arena because she foresaw the problems that agriculture would have to face. She is still active as chairman of the Linn County Soil and Water District to protect agricultural rights.

Liz is a VALIANT role model for OWA and AAW. She will not hesitate to express her opinion and debate issues and her up-front openness has had a positive effect on many people, young and old. She gets things done by arranging meetings with leaders in the state, including legislators and college deans, then making sure we get there.

Liz is EFFECTIVE because she is pro-active, serving on committees and boards in the ag community, including currently serving on the Summer Ag Institute board. As a State Representative, she was on the Western State Forestry Task Force and as an OWA member, helped organize AAW. She has a knack for selecting knowledgeable people for help in researching material to argue an issue, such as the spotted owl.

Liz is NURTURING by mentoring students and younger members by encouraging them to get involved because she knows we all make a difference. Liz’s “what can I teach you” attitude continues to influence and educate our organization, community, and state.

Liz was born in Lakeview, Oregon and graduated from Oregon State University and married George VanLeeuw in the same year. They

Next stop—the Sunshine State!

By Katie A. Edwards, 2006 Convention Chairwoman

“Fresh Ideas. Fresh Outlook. Fresh from Florida.”

Hosted and planned by the American Agri-Women Executive Committee, the 2006 convention will bring the women of American agriculture together to develop fresh ideas to strengthen their affiliates and organizations. Hear from an array of acclaimed guest speakers and develop a fresh outlook on the future of American agriculture. Discover the “fresh” role that Florida plays in American agriculture.

Tantalize your taste buds with a taste of the tropics. You’ll experience the best of the South Florida harvest as you sample delicious wines and delicacies made from the finest tropical fruits. Discover winter vegetables in a whole new way as you meet the Florida growers who supply the nation with fresh vegetables in the winter months. Surround yourself in the beauty and diversity of the burgeoning ornamental industry.

There’s something for everybody in Miami. American Agri-Men will

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AAW elects new officers

Minnesota Agri-Women member Yvonne Erickson moved up to be President of American Agri-Women at the annual convention in Monterey, California, in November. She had been First Vice President of Vital Issues and Resolutions the last two years, which put her in the position to be the next president.

The following members were elected as new officers for 2006: 1st Vice President of Vital Issues and Resolutions, Marcie Williams (Ohio); Vice President of Communications, Chris Wilson (Kansas); and Treasurer, Kathy Rhoads (Ohio). Remaining in office for the second half of their terms are: Vice President of Education Doris Mold and Secretary Katie Edwards.

AAW elected three new members to the Resource Center’s board of directors as well: Peggy Clark (Ohio), Jean Pettibone (Kansas) and Donna Ulseth (Minnesota).

Secretary Katie Edwards reported that the deadline for updates to the 2006 Directory is February 20, 2006. She will also be working on revising the Policy and Procedure Manual, as it is a current project of the Resource Board to get more information in it about scholarships available.

The Resource Center said that money donated at the convention totalled $2502 and they thank everyone for that! They will be providing $1000 toward next year’s convention for leadership training.

New officers for the Resource Center are Mary Ann Graff (CA), Audrey Sickinger (WI), Jean Pettibone (KS), and Trenna Grabowski (IL).

At the convention, Erickson recognized the top affiliates for having the highest net gain in members: California Women for Agriculture, Oregon Women for Agriculture, Illinois Agri-Women, Florida Agri-Women and Kansas Agri-Women.

Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

Greetings From the great white north! As snowdrifts fill the farmstead, I think back to Monterey, California Women for Agriculture, especially co-chairs Sharan Lamini and Joann Wall, are commended for their compelling “Waves of Change” convention. We attendees thank you for your waves of strength, inspiration and hospitality.

Hopefully these waves will carry you to “The Fresh Ideas, Fresh Outlook, Fresh from Florida” convention next November 9-11, 2006 in Miami.

Marcie Williams and I recently attended the Tenth Annual Farm Journal Forum “Promoting Farmer-Consumer Connections” in Washington, D.C. Key government and corporate leaders collaborated with farmers to enhance how farmer-consumer connections can strengthen during a time of farm policy transitions. These connections were listed in the Focus session comments, Mid-Year 2005 that showed AAW members want to strengthen and address this issue.

The 2006 Mid-Year Meeting (March 31-April 2) will be in my home state of Minnesota. In Minneapolis we’ll update the positions statements to deliver at the Washington, D.C. Fly-in held in June. There will also be a time for strategic planning of goals and agendas as well as celebrating our past goal accomplishments.

As this holiday season reminds me of blessings, I am honored to be working with and for you through AAW. How great to be involved with individuals as unique as the snowflakes. May your new year be filled with love, peace and prosperity.

Yvonne Erickson

President

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Resolution passed as amended at the AAW convention in November

The resolution presented in the last newsletter was amended and passed at American Agri-Women’s annual meeting in Monterey. The resulting resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS, members of American Agri-Women, express our firm opposition to the 5-4 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Kelo v. City of New London, Connecticut, which justifies the taking of a person’s private property through eminent domain for the benefit of another private person or entity; and

WHEREAS, the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides “... nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation”; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the Court’s use of the term “public benefit” is contrary to the constitutional meaning of term “public use,” and

WHEREAS, nowhere in the U.S. Constitution is there authorization for any government to take private property to transfer ownership of that property to another private individual or organization, and

WHEREAS, the Fourteenth Amendment extended the application of the Fifth Amendment to each state and local government; and,

WHEREAS, the Court’s dissenting opinions uphold the historical interpretation of the takings clause and contend that “the government now has license to transfer property from those with fewer resources to those with more;” and

WHEREAS, all levels of government have a constitutional responsibility and a moral obligation to defend the property rights of individuals and to only execute its power of eminent domain for public use and with just compensation to property owners; and

WHEREAS, AAW advocates that the appraised value of the property may not be just compensation, due to the vested interest of the person who owns the private property being taken under the Fifth Amendment for public use, and so which should be appraised at a higher value; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that AAW hereby strongly urges and implores the U.S. Congress to remedy this terrible injustice by limiting the power of government condemnation exclusively to essential public services.

Audrey Sickinger honored for perfect attendance

By Eunice Guell

Audrey Sickinger, a member of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture, was honored with a perfect attendance certificate, for attending all 30 AAW conventions, during the convention in Monterey, California. Audrey also took part in the 1974 coalition meeting and the 1975 chartering meeting.

Over the years Audrey has served as secretary of the executive committee, ten years on the board of directors, and as chairman of the dairy, LEAVEN Award, Veritas Award, and nominating committees. Audrey has served the last five years on the AAW Resource Board and is presently vice-president.

Florence Rachwal, also of Wisconsin, was mentioned as missing her first convention, due to her husband’s illness. She was the AAW historian for many years.

Our Legal Affairs Committee Chairman Martha Rittinger of Ohio also missed this year’s meeting when she fell and broke a bone at the San Jose Airport—so close, so close!

NOTE: AAW Activity Books are still available for free by contacting Treasurer Kathy Rhoads, 740-474-4649, and paying the minimal “media rate” shipping.

LEAVEN Award, continued from p. 1. raised four children on their row crop and grass seed farm bordering the Willamette River near Halsey, Oregon.

Liz was volunteer coordinator for OSU host families for foreign students and provided these students the opportunity to learn about farming by hosting several of them. Her family has been strong supporters of the OSU College of Agriculture and the Extension Service and has cooperated in on-farm research projects.

Liz served in the Oregon Legislature for 18 years to support agriculture, forestry and related OSU programs. She moved into serving on committees to develop a water quality plan that led to a landmark approach to watershed restoration that provided farmers and ranchers the opportunity to develop their local water quality needs. She also had an active role in identifying practical conservation practices for the Willamette Valley.

Liz’s mission is to consistently speak up for families who work hard to grow food for American tables, grow timber for our houses and who, in return, only request respect and the opportunity to pass this heritage on to their children, as well as to educate the public to the benefits of agriculture to our nation.

Her number one supporter and partner is her husband, George. They are a remarkable team, as farmers, parents and community participants.

Liz has established a family tradition of service to the agricultural community.

2006 Convention, continued.

enjoy a day of fishing on the Biscayne Bay. Gentlemen, start your engines as you unlock the thrill of NASCAR with the Richard Petty Driving Experience at the Homestead-Miami Speedway.

The convention will be held at the Sheraton Miami-Mart Hotel in Miami, Florida on November 8-11, 2006. To book your accommodations, call (305) 261-3800. Special AAW rates are:

$185 per night for Junior Suite
$155 per night for Club Level Suite
$125 per night for single/double occupancy

Stay tuned for more convention details. American Agri-Women looks forward to meeting you in Miami!
Waves of Change hit the beach in Monterey

After over two years of organizing and planning, statewide California Women for Agriculture (CWA) members came together in Monterey on historic Cannery Row, November 10-13, to welcome their counterparts from all of American Agri-Women’s 54 affiliates to California for their 30th annual convention.

CWA provided a literal “Showcase of California’s Agricultural Bounty” at every meal event which featured the five CWA Districts presenting their agricultural products and services. New tastes, flavors and experiences were featured at the event where participants saw artichokes in the field and tasted a new strawberry juice drink, as well as broccolini, veggie snacks and a new baby spring mix salad with dressing.

The party started on Thursday night with the Coastal District’s Veggie Rock Café and dancing veggies such as Britney Spear (asparagus), Artie Artichoke, and Lady B (lady bug). Subsequent meals then featured California’s amazing crops with a video of Northern District’s products at one, and showcasing North Central District’s Bounty from the Heart of California Agriculture at another. Southern District’s aerobic and refreshing Wake Up Southern California Style breakfast featured mimosas, poetry and unique exercises, then a luncheon finale concluded with Central District’s Dirt Made My Lunch program. The warm California welcome provided by CWA was augmented by a largely edible welcome gifts and daily California wine tasting.

The program proved to be both informative and entertaining with speakers that embraced our theme of Waves of Change, by pointing out agricultural trends such as:

• Consumers are driving the marketplace like never before;
• Innovation has swept the food sector where the package is now the brand;
• Innovative people focus on opportunity not threat—according to Jim Carroll, futurist, who also noted that innovators sit back and look at globalization and think—“man, what an opportunity.”
• The US retail landscape is undergoing fundamental change, moving from “the bigger I am, the faster I grow” to “the faster I am, the bigger I grow,” e.g., Trader Joe’s, HED, and Whole Foods.
• Consumers search for VALUE: 62% say they are “willing to spend more time and money for better quality”;
• There is increased individualization

Convention Wrap-up

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• The US retail landscape is undergoing fundamental change, moving from “the bigger I am, the faster I grow” to “the faster I am, the bigger I grow,” e.g., Trader Joe’s, HED, and Whole Foods.
• Consumers search for VALUE: 62% say they are “willing to spend more time and money for better quality”;
• There is increased individualization
of culinary preferences (especially among pre-teens);

• The “family dinner” is increasingly defined as making sure each person gets fed in a way that doesn’t disrupt their schedule.

• Dietary preferences will soon be linked to our individual genotypes (DNA) that will dictate our healthy diet in the future;

• There will be a new focus on interesting flavors, spices, and unexpected combinations—signaling the end of the comfort food craze;

• According to industry estimate, one in seven food dollars in U.S.

• According to Jack Welch, “You must be on top of change or change will be on top of you”;

• Everyone is focusing on how to add value to their products/services. Agricultural firms are attempting to move away from being commodity-oriented wherever possible;

• Ag’s privileges’ wane with urban sprawl and stakeholders portraying agriculture as big business;

• A barrage of food safety, pests, animal disease outbreaks and increasing global supplier complexities breed more potential for consumer distrust and regulatory pressure...the added wrinkle of insecurity is redefining ‘routine’ agricultural practices;

• Concerns about public health—real and perceived—are making unprecedented demands on us;

• New personalized nutrition research offers opportunities for adding consumer value. Will agriculture watch from the sidelines or be a player?

• Consumers: ‘My cup runneth over with choices, but I’m still looking for more’;

• Genetics takes the guesswork out of food, health and well-being.

The ten great change words to adopt are:

Observe  Try
Think    Empower
Change   Question
Dare     Grow
Banish   Do

To take advantage of change: forget everything you know, trap creativity, get young, appreciate wisdom, forget permanence, get excited, be happy, change your focus, and think “clear and present opportunities.”

The Gala at the Monterey Bay Aquarium provided a fitting finale to the convention as participants strolled to the melodies of classic guitar music, drank champagne topped with a strawberry and sought out the elusive giant octopus in the Ocean’s Edge exhibits.

The Monterey Aquarium was definitely a highlight of the convention. Doris Mold (MN), Yvonne Erickson’s husband Chuck (MN), and Gail Dettwyler (OR) touch the fish in a special pool.

Jean Pettibone (KS), Pat Yeagle (WI), and Doris Mold (MN) check out a mid-morning snack of snow peas, carrots, and celery.

The Honorable Leon Panetta closed the session with a keynote address tracing the current loss of values in our society to the increase of paradoxes in our daily lives, all of which being evidence to the need to deal with the pervasive change that surrounds us.

Mark Hylden gallantly presented a bouquet to wife Esther (ND) when he got back from a tour to a greenhouse. Esther was last year’s Red River Valley Farm Woman of the Year. They grow and market flax.
For 23 years Minnesota Agri-Women and North Dakota Agri-Women have hosted the Harvest of Knowledge Agri-Women’s Conference in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The basis of the conference is to bring in speakers, most of whom are agriculturally oriented, as the background of the conference is to educate about agriculture. This year’s speakers included Mike Hergert, a farm broadcaster and an owner of Red River Farm Network based in Grand Forks. Hergert is a recent Veritas award given by AAW. The topic of his presentation was “Brazil – Is it Competition?”

Also speaking this year was Jon Hovde, Fertile, Minn., who had a great message to deliver interspersed with much humor about his experiences in Vietnam and his two declarations of death by the medical personnel. He survived, less two limbs, and has become a motivational speaker. He has authored a book entitled “Left for Dead; A Second Life After Vietnam.”

Entertainment, much of which was on the humorous side, was provided. Also, an ag fair is held.

To add to the occasion door prizes were given. The conference is not limited to members of the two organizations and men are invited.

At the conclusion of the day long event, a Red River Valley Farm Woman of the Year was announced. She was selected from counties bordering the Red River Valley. The winner is given an expense paid trip for two to the American Agri-Women convention. Sara Hinkle, this year’s winner, (pictured above) and her husband Jason will attend the 2006 convention in Miami. The two runners-up will receive trips for one to the convention.

This year Mark and Esther Hylden, last year’s winner and husband, attended the convention in Monterey. They grow and market flax near Park River, North Dakota. Check their website out: www.flaxhealth.com.

Animal Welfare: The introduction of “guardian” laws, pet trusts, pet custody disputes, and lawsuits alleging veterinary malpractice, loss of companionship, and infliction of emotional distress in cases involving animals all contribute to a new and expanding body of law relating to animals. Thus, there is an increase of specialized law courses and lawyers dealing with animal rights issues.

Eleanor Kiner (WA)

Biotechnology/Ag Research: One of the more interesting developments dealing with biotech products has been the question of how the use of feeds from enhanced crops affects the final meat product. Many of our research facilities have said there is no effect on the final meat product when animals have been fed these feeds. This has now been confirmed by research from the Canadians.

Jean Pettibone (KS)

Ag Labor: There are numerous reports that Congress will take up immigration reform yet this year. Strong concerns over homeland security continue to pressure the White House into securing the borders. Because agriculture is unique in its need for seasonal and temporary labor, we could be without a workforce if the new legislation falls short of allowing temporary workers to enter the country.

The framework of the AgJOBS bill S.359 and H. R. 884 still holds the best approach to solving the ag labor crisis. Bill S.1033 needs some improvement, but has a future market-based guest worker program with an opportunity for eventual legal status. Other alternatives are still being introduced and some are targeting the employers for workplace enforcement. Whatever legislation is adopted, agriculture needs a viable temporary worker program to recruit legal workers. It is important that we stay fully engaged in the process and make our voices heard.

Kathy Rhoads (OH)

Fruits & Vegetables: There needs to be more development of foreign markets for our produce. China is a huge example in their takeover of the Asian markets. . . We need to support and encourage the marketing in other countries of our own products before other countries get the upper hand and continue to grow and promote “United States” products. . . This is something that needs to be on the front burner in the year ahead.

Celeste Settrini (CA)
Grains: Grains have had a really strange year. With severe droughts in parts of our country, especially in corn, wheat, soybeans, milo, oats, sesame, rye and barley, crops didn’t fare so well. But for those of us who have irrigated crops, things were better, and that is always an added plus.

Then along came CAFTA. In parts of our country, this really hurt. In other parts, things fared really well. With Brazil breathing down our necks, some of us didn’t stand a chance.

Then along came Katrina. She left in her wake more devastation than Camille ever thought to do... None of us knows what the future holds, but if we all stand together, we can move mountains.

Pat Magee (TX)

Tax Issues: While the House approved permanent repeal of the estate tax by a margin of 272 to 162, the Senate has yet to vote on the issue. Even though proponents of full repeal have a majority in the Senate, they do not have the 60 votes (or “super majority”) it will take to get the measure reported out of the Senate. There has been talk of a compromise, with an exemption as high as $10 million and a maximum tax rate of 15% or 25%. Several bills with variations on this theme have been introduced.

Trenna Grabowski (IL)

Trade: 2005 was the year of alphabet soup when it came to trade agreements. Among the most controversial was the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). This agreement was particularly divisive because there were argued benefits and problems for a number of commodities. While AAW did not take a position on DR-CAFTA, members worked to educate others on how commodities like sugar beets would be negatively impacted.

Katie Edwards (FL)

Global Issues: This year has been extremely enlightening for me, regarding the role of the United Nations and the United States in what is becoming more apparent—the fight for global dominance. Through last year’s contacts I have read and am reading a lot of material on this issue. We heard from Floy Lilley that the United Nations is a major concern. She told us that there are many layers of activities that are going on that directly put us in harm’s way for global governance.

One person I visited with is Joan Veon, who found herself in the position to take on the tracking of activities of the United States and the United Nations. She has traveled extensively to over 71 UN and UN-related conferences since 1995, has written extensively about her findings, and warns us to do all we can to protect our freedoms and Constitutional rights. Read some of her well-documented material, as well as other information on the topic to stay informed on the subject.

Dolly Lillis (ID)

ESA: Write your Senators about the importance of updating & reforming the ESA!

Arlene Kovash (OR)

Committee Reports

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Kathy Reavis
Pam Shaw
Audrey Sickinger
Texas Agri-Women
Laura Tower
Donna Ulseth
JoAnn Wall
Deb Whalen
Chris Wilson
Imogene Woodside

In Memory Of...
Ardath DeWall’s father
Audrey Sickinger
Janet Sickinger Dvorack and Evelyn & Stephan Simon
Chris Wilson
Marilyn Matasovich
Yvonne Erickson
Clarence Simmons
Jeraldine Mulkey
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Audrey Sickinger
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Barbara Steidinger
Timothy & Carrie Sutherland
Roger & Donna Ulseth
Wynn
Imogene Woodside

In Honor Of...
Henry and Eunice Guell’s 50th Anniversary
Yvonne Erickson

The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman 7
The Helen Whitmore Scholarship winners for this year were Kari Campbell-Bohard, California; Melissa Joiner, Florida; Kate Carlgren, Kansas; and Jennifer Novak, Minnesota. Each woman received a $400 scholarship to attend the convention for the first time. The purpose of the scholarship is to create an awareness of AAW in young women, increase active involvement in AAW, and to challenge them to have an influence on their peers. Many of our Helen Whitmore Scholarship winners are now active in AAW and have even been national officers in subsequent years.

The deadline to apply for a scholarship is August 15 of each year, so encourage a young woman in your affiliate to apply.

8 The VOICE of the American Woman