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Quarterly Newsletter 1st Quarter - 2021

IAW is an organization of farm and agri-businesswomen promoting a better understanding of agriculture and the family farm system.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring has finally arrived!

I am sure you have been looking forward to spring as much as I have. The IAW board is working on some new and exciting ideas for our current membership as well as opportunities for new members. Please check out our website regularly and follow us on social media so you do not miss a thing!

In this newsletter we are each going to share a little bit about ourselves so that we might all get to know each other a little better.

This June my hubby Kevin and I will be celebrating 37 years of marriage. My hubby always shares with family and friends that "We have had a few good days!" Kevin and I have two kids, Andrew and Britni. Andrew and Kate have blessed us with our precious grandson, Griffin. Britni and Tom have blessed us with our grand puppy, Rumble, so far! We love spending time with our kids, grandson and Rumble! I am an Ag Lender at North Central Bank in Ladd, IL. I couldn't ask for a better career for sure! Kevin and I love to do projects in our yard. We always say this will be the last thing and then we come up with a new idea! You can't miss our house if you are ever traveling through Northern IL. We have grain bins stacked on top of each other in the front side yard (my She Shed and Kevin's He Shed) and wire corn cribs transformed into an outdoor living space. We also have a grain bin turned into Griffin's playhouse featuring an indoor swing set and fireman's pole to get from the loft to the main floor. Pop Pop, the Sublette Fire Chief, couldn't have a playhouse without a fireman's pole! I love to decorate all of this outdoor space and Kevin loves to create it! We also love to do landscaping with plants and yard décor. This year we are working on our final phase, of big projects, in our side and backyard. This will involve an above ground pool, a patio with a pergola created from the drying floor of the bins we have in our yard and a large fire pit. Then we should be done, or will we be?????

Deb Schultz
President

VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION UPDATE

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Hello, Illinois Agri-Women!

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My name is Kelsey Neville, formerly Kelsey Vance, and I am the Illinois Agri-Women Vice President of Education. On April 3rd I married my best friend, Jared, amongst our family and close friends. If I had to pick one word to describe our wedding it would be perfect! The weather was perfect, all my plans came together perfectly and due to a last minute covid change by the bishop, I was able to invite my aunts, uncles and cousins; it was perfect! Jared and I live in Tremont with our dog, Gabi. She is a beagle mixed with a greyhound. She was born in Kentucky, need I say more?! 😊 I am a crop protection sales rep for Syngenta. I have a strong passion for helping farmers increase their return on investment by utilizing the best products on the market. My role is unique in that I not only work with ag retailers but I also have the privilege of covering the aerial applicators in Central Illinois. They play such an essential role in our industry and I truly enjoy being a part of their operations! My family farms in Tazewell and Mason counties. We grow corn, popcorn, soybeans, seed beans, green beans and pumpkins. I spend as much time as I possibly can with my Dad on the farm! My role on the farm consists of parts runner to combine operator and nearly everything in between. Agriculture always has and always will be a part of my life! I feel so blessed to be a part of such an amazing industry! As the Illinois Agri-Women Vice President of Education, my primary role is to plan our meetings and events. While covid has made that a little difficult over the past year, I am hopeful that we will be able to start getting together again soon whether we meet outdoors or utilize zoom. I feel so honored to be a part of this group and am thankful for the friendships I have in all of you! I look forward to seeing you all again soon! I hope you and your families have a blessed planting season!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

HAPPY SPRING Illinois Agri-Women!

This is a final reminder to submit your dues to continue your membership for 2021. Thank you to those who have already submitted their membership renewal!

Why not complete that task right now?? Here is the link to help you get started!

A little about me! I am a resident of LaSalle County, in Ottawa, IL. We operate a 2,000 acre, 5th generation grain farm. Joe and I are parents to two lovely young women, Anna, our 6th generation farmer, and Caroline, married and a nurse in Rochester, MN, and mom to our 1st grandchild, Henry. He will get his first tractor ride this spring! We are excited for that! I love gardening, needle arts, cooking, being outdoors, and being part of a Christian faith community. Also love traveling, so many places yet to see here in the USA and after recent travel there we also have established a farming project to help 2 communities in rural Uganda, Africa.

**Best Wishes,
Nathalie Schmidt
IAW Membership Chair
(815)433-0175**

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Farming was an accident for me. I grew up in the City of Chicago and then the suburbs. My dad would go to his uncle's farm to work in the summers when he was in high school and college. He took me once a year when I was a child. We both loved it. I moved to Springfield for work. I was surrounded by corn and beans. Dad's college roommates had farms in Central Illinois so Dad started talking about investing in one. In the meantime, I started learning by osmosis. In 2001, Dad and Mom invested in a farm and I signed up for Annie's Project. The rest is history. I had to take the first class twice but that didn't deter me. Eventually, I ended up on the first Board of Directors for Annie's Project and took Masters classes at U of I. I currently manage the families acreage which we cash rent. In my other life, I am married with boys ages 16 and 20 still living in Springfield. I worked in various levels of government and private sector as program and project planner and administrator. I also owned a consulting firm assisting not-for-profits in planning. Currently, my husband and I operate our family business which is brokering sand and gravel for use in foundries and water filtration. We are currently working on bunker sand for golf courses.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon!

*Karen Loeb Westbrook
217-741-3320 (cell)*

Diana Ropp Introduction Rock On 2021!

2020: The year that took me back to my childhood and the bad black and white science fiction movies. You know the ones – the ones with the talking robot with his arms flailing about...‘Danger Danger Will Robinson’ or something to that affect. Anyway, the hits just keep on coming and we are not quite on the other side of the Covid-19 yet, but each day forward we pray it won't be long until life gets back to a ‘new normal’ for us all!

Zoom meetings have become more of a comfortable ‘go to’ option, wearing a mask is almost second (almost) nature. And 2020 will forever be known as the year my brother Darren and I became ‘adult orphans.’

My involvement with Illinois Agri Women began as a presenter for the inaugural Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference. Growing up on a dairy grain farm and finding a path in the grain industry, I was employed in agribusiness at the time as a commodity broker with Bates Commodities. I couldn't wait to share my varied background with high school girls looking to break into what had predominantly been a male dominated career path. We ate lunch on the floor of what was then called the Interstate Center. Penny Lauritzen and I quickly became friends, and I was delighted to become part of the WCFA planning team.

Presently, I serve as Immediate Past President of Illinois Agri Women, Award Chair and Region Director. Over the past several years, I also held various offices on the Illinois Agricultural Resource Council (IARC) Board and WCFA planning committee.

While I am currently employed at a local automobile body shop 40 hours a week, Naturas Verdes LLC continues to evolve and take shape as a living farming entity. In addition to growing traditional row crops, Naturas is branching out into Aronia berries and Industrial Hemp/Cannabis for CBD products.

One of my fondest IAW memories was the fabulous American Agri-Women National Conference we hosted in Springfield a few years back. Despite the political issues in our state, the Land of Lincoln is a great place to show case.

Stay safe my IAW friends...continue to wear your face masks when necessary and wash your hands as your life depends upon it – because it does! Hope to see you soon.

WOMEN CHANGING THE FACE OF AGRICULTURE (WCFA)

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The Women Changing the Face of Agriculture will continue to be hosted on the WCFA website until registration opens for WCFA 2022. It will remain on the Illinois Agri-Women YouTube platform. We have had over 50 students access our online worksheet. Our keynote videos have been viewed over 100 times each. This has been a neat experience and one we will continue to promote into the next school year. Thanks to all of our professionals that submitted videos. The 2022 Women Changing the Face of Agriculture will be held at Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, IL on March 4th, 2022



IAW Newsletter Scholarship Report

Lynn Curry, Scholarship Chair

Thirty-two scholarship applications were received for the 4 scholarships being offered by IAW and WCFA this year. There will be awarded a \$1500 IAW Helen Henert Agriculture Education Scholarship plus three \$1000 WCFA Agent of Change Scholarships. The WCFA scholarships are one each for a high school student, a current college student, and a graduate student.

Thank you to the 2021 volunteer scholarship judges, E.B. Mitsdarffer, Karen Schieler, Nathalie Schmidt, and Jennifer Waters. Scores will be tabulated and the winners notified by June.

The applications include interesting input and comments about their WCFA experiences. The information will be compiled for use by future WCFA committees. The applicants show great potential to be productive in meeting their future career goals in agriculture. Thank you to all who have encouraged the gals and to those who have helped to make these scholarships possible.

Save the Date

John Rauber, the Director of Federal Affairs at John Deere, will be joining us virtually on **May 13th** from **12:00 – 1:00 PM.**

Potential topics of discussion will include priorities of the new administration, the EPA, the USDA, infrastructure, broadband connectivity, climate change, renewable fuels, taxes, key focus areas for John Deere, etc.

Time will be allotted for Q & A. The meeting link will be provided closer to the event.

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IALD as described by the Illinois Department of Ag website:

"The Illinois Agricultural Legislative Day, known as IALD, brings together farm, agricultural commodity organizations and other diverse agriculture interest groups to the state Capitol to speak to state lawmakers in Springfield. Jointly, they provide baskets filled with agricultural products and specialty lunches for the legislators. This package simply serves to remind lawmakers about the multiple facets agriculture has in the lives of their constituents and the impacts their choices make on the world of Agriculture."

IALD has been moved to April 21, 2021.

If you are interested in participating, please email MartinKelliL@JohnDeere.com by **April 16, 2021**. For those interested, we will be dividing up into groups and setting up virtual meetings with legislators to highlight key issues that IAW supports or opposes.

More information will be provided to those interested.

IAW Southern Region Director - Jill Biehl

The Southern Region recently had their Spring Meeting on March 19th, 2021 in collaboration with SIU College of Agricultural, Life and Physical Sciences.

The panel included: Future student – Lexi Mueller, IL FFA President and SIU Chancellor Scholar, Current student – Taylor Hartke, a current student in Ag Communications, former FFA state officer, and current Sigma Alpha President (collegiate branch of Women in Ag), Alum – Kacee Bohle, 2012 ABE Ag Alum, worked in industry. She started the Cornbelt Cadence Facebook group and produces podcasts supporting networking and mentoring for women in agriculture. Current faculty – Dr. Karla Gage, Assistant Professor in Crop, Soil, and Environmental Management. Dr. Gage will discuss Weed Science Research at SIU.

IAW is working with SIUC to establish the first Collegiate IAW. We are excited to be working on this new collaboration.

IAW Logo Wear

Interested in showing your Illinois Agri Women support?
Have a favorite shirt where you would love to add our IAW logo?
Click the link below to begin shopping and or reach out to Kaleel's to answer any of your logo wear questions.

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