

Market Connection



Bi-monthly Newsletter of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association • Vol. 10 No. 2 March 2005

Bishop's Pumpkin Farm—Farm Market of the Year

Bishop's Pumpkin Farm, Wheatland, Calif., was named NAFDMA's Farm Market of the Year at the annual conference held in February 2005 in Boston, Mass.

"Being recognized from among so many outstanding farms from all of North America is really an honor," says Wayne Bishop. Wayne and his wife, Ann, own the farm together with Wayne's parents, Bill and Sandy Bishop. "We have always let our customers be the barometer for how we are doing. To be selected by our peers for this award is humbling."

Bishop's Pumpkin Farm began in 1971, when Bill and Sandy Bishop purchased a somewhat run-down little farm. That little farm finished its 32nd fall season in 2004. In addition to a busy fall season that features a corn maze and Coyote Mountain, the Bishops have a three-week spring season for Hamburger Farm school tours and a two-day Strawberry Festival in May. During the summer months,

they cater dinners for groups of 100 or more.

Back in 1971, Bill was struggling to make it farming on rented land, and Sandy was a former teacher with three small kids. She knew how valuable a farm experience could be for students. In 1973, Sandy talked Bill into letting her plant a few pumpkins with the idea of offering field trips to local school. A few field trips came out that year, and the Bishops were on their way. The next year, they offered free hayrides and opened up on weekends. By the third or fourth season, they often had four or five families visiting at the same time! For the first 12 years or so, sales doubled every year.

The farm has evolved during the past few decades. Throughout the 70s and early 80s, Bill provided for the family through custom farming, a small commercial hog operation, and by installing irrigation systems for nearby farmers. By the mid 80s, he was devoting all of his attention to the pumpkin farm.

In the late 80s, the Bishops added a second foodservice facility and gift shop. In 1991, they built and installed a 24' gage train. Now more than 50,000 ride the train annually. Wayne re-

turned to the farm in 1995 after his brother left to pursue other interests. In 2001, after attending their first NAFDMA conference, Ann and Wayne built the slide mountain and the corn maze. In 2002, they opened the Hamburger Farm and held the first Strawberry Jubilee.

"We have benefited tremendously from NAFDMA," says Wayne. "There is no other organization like it where farmers come together to help each other. Our business embarked on a new journey of growth when we joined this fantastic association."

Each year, NAFDMA members nominate their peers for Outstanding Farm Market of the Year. Judging criteria include:

1. Success as a result of farm direct marketing based on customer count/growth per year, average sales per customer and growth in annual income.
2. Willingness to share business-related ideas and information based on presentations at conferences,



Ann, Lee and Wayne Bishop, Bishop's Pumpkin Farm, attended the NAFDMA convention. On Feb. 11, they accepted the award for Outstanding Farm Market of the Year on behalf of their family farm.

member networking and newsworthy articles.

3. Creative merchandising techniques, such as indoor and outdoor signage and displays, and news articles, press releases, newsletters, and brochures.

4. Creative and successful marketing ideas, their best or most unique product lines/value added tie-ins and new product uses.

5. Their farm identity, which sets them apart from competition.

6. Involvement with NAFDMA and other farm-related organizations.

Congratulations to Farm Market of the Year finalists Seaquist Orchards, Sister Bay, Wis., and White House Fruit Farm, Canfield, Ohio.

They will be featured in the May issue of the newsletter.



2005 Board of Directors

Kay Hollabaugh, President - PA / Northeast
717-677-9494 (w)
kay@hollabaughbros.com

Mary Vollmer, Vice President - NC / Southeast
919-496-3076 (w), 919-496-3518 (h)
mary@vollmerfarm.com

Rob Leeds, Vice President - OH
740-666-2020 (h), 740-833-2030 (w)
leeds2@agvax2.ag.ohio-state.edu

Brent Warner, Secretary - BC
250-356-1704 (w), 250-356-2949 (f)
brent.warner@gems8.gov.bc.ca

Debbie Pifer, Treasurer - OH / Midwest
330-533-4161 (w), 330-533-3937 (h)
dpifer3290@aol.com

Stuart Beare - UK / At-Large
011-44-1342-718472 (w)
stuart@tulleyfarm.com

Dede Beck - MI / Midwest
989-224-3686 (w)
cider@ujcidermill.com

Wayne Bishop - CA / Southwest
530-633-2568 (w), 530-633-0625 (h)
wabishop@comcast.net

Kerry Engel - AB / Canada West
780-349-4466 ext. 2 (w)
kerry.engel@gov.ab.ca

Randii MacNear - CA / Southwest
530-756-1695 (w)
rmacnear@wheel.dcn.davis.ca.us

Chalmers Mikell - SC / Southeast
803-936-4288 (w), 803-936-4496 (f)
cmikell@safb.com

Vickie J. Parker-Clark - ID / Northwest
208-292-2522 (w), vickiepc@uidaho.edu

Bonnie Remlinger - WA / Northwest
425-333-4135 (w), 425-333-4539 (h)
bmr@remlingerfarms.com

Al Rose - MA / Northeast
978-249-6763 (w)
al@redapplefarm.com

Mark Saunders - ON / Canada East
613-838-5440 (w)
mark@saundersfarm.com

Charlie Touchette, Executive Director
62 White Loaf Road
Southampton, MA 01073
413-529-0386 (w), 413-529-2471 fax
888-884-9270 (toll free)
nafdma@map.com

NAFDMA Office Staff 413-529-0386 (w)
Virginia Schwarzenbach, Membership Director, whiteloaf@map.com

Kelly Fuerstenberg, Communications Director and Newsletter Editor, Kelly@WhiteLoafRidge.com

Nora Owens & Ed Maltby, FMC Coordinators, FMC@nafdma.com

Carl Schwarzenbach, Technology and Project Assistant, Carl@WhiteLoafRidge.com

The Great Debate

By Mary Vollmer
Bunn, NC



As a mother, I sit in my kitchen, managing homework, and thinking about dinner and wonder if my 8 year old daughter can return to school tomorrow after being at home all week with the flu. I want everyone to know that I really hated leaving the conference early, but with me, as with a lot of other women in our business, motherhood always wins out over business. So, even though it was a painful decision to return home to a sick child, it was really an easy decision to make. One of the best things about this business we've all chosen is it allows us to put family first. Although I know you'd all love to hear how dinner turned out, when Margaret made it back to school and more of the exciting details of life in Bunn, I'll save those exciting tidbits for later.

At the Vollmer Farm, we are trying to determine what's next. Part of our inability to move forward is being in the middle of family/farm transition. It seems like we should settle that this summer and hopefully head in a positive direction, and after the Boston bus tour, we're motivated to get going. This was the first year my husband, Russ, has attended the bus tour since Ohio, so it was great to see his enthusiasm for the future of our farm. So the business debate is senior tours, new food service, learning centers and more. Some days I think a gallon of gasoline and a match would be the best place to start! But enough about me, me, me.

As a business woman, I realize I need to be at the office, hammering out the plan of how we're going to implement all our new ideas from the

Boston tour and conference, putting all our ideas into "pros vs. cons," determining what is right for our business now. As a board member of this awesome association, I am already wondering how we continue to improve our organization,

provide value to our members and inspire all our members to feel passionate about the growth of NAFDMA as we look to Texas and then Alberta.

I am thankful that Charlie and his team at White Loaf Ridge keep us looking forward to how we can not only improve our own businesses, but how we can improve our industry. What people told me at the conference that they wanted to hear more about were things like best management practices, lobbying government agencies, etc. Just kidding, although those are definitely a part of what happens around the meeting table. What is always at the forefront of most conversations at conference time is "How was the tour?" "How were the workshops?" "How was your season?" "What gem of information are you going to implement next year?" and more! So in answer to your questions, my tour was great, the workshop I attended what very informational, our season was better than the year before, and I'm going to "dress a bee" this year for our school tours! Oh sorry, me, me, me.

I was delighted to be a tour guide on one of the "A" tours (yes, that's right, the "A" tour), that's "A" for Agritourism. We had a great tour into northern Vermont, saw some awesome operations, had great information sharing and even some impressive karaoke (with the exception of

Continued on page 3

Folding picnic tables?

Who was featured on Jeopardy?

Visit the Front Porch and
join in the conversation.

www.nafdma.com

The Great Debate, continued

Continued from page 2

yours truly). After several years of 8 to 10 buses on the road, the conference planners saw an opportunity to try something different in Boston. If we split the tours into different interests of our membership—agritourism, retail, farm direct marketing and farmer's markets—would we create a more intimate tour that allowed more flexibility for stops, better discussion on buses for members with same interests and not overwhelm new tour goers?

For me, (yes, me) the goals were met, it was a very successful tour. I would imagine anyone who attended our bus tour for the first time, it was a successful tour. However, as our industry grows, as our membership grows, as our businesses will undoubtedly grow, how do we continue to provide successful educational opportunities to all our

members? Some will appreciate the network opportunities within the Web site and Back Forty. Some will recognize the opportunity for education by the fellowship of other members over dinner, in the bar, on the bus. Some will enjoy the tour, but the thing they take home was from a workshop or a featured speaker. Some are gracious enough to continue sharing ideas and inspiring others, but may find their gem comes from a personal visit to a farm at another time during the year.

So my debate as a board member is: are we continuing to meet the needs of our membership? We've spent lots of time working on new ideas, new products if you will. The Boston tour was a good example.

What about a PhD product? An opportunity at an alternative time of year in a venue that focuses on a more specific idea: Employee training workshop at Disney, customer service workshop from Neiman Marcus, who knows?

If we offer this, do we take away from our annual winter conference? Do we risk our newest members access to our veterans if they're off on another tour?

If we were still on the bus, I'd take one viewpoint and Wayne Bishop would take the other—we both enjoy a good debate. But since we're not on the bus, what do you think? I'd

love to know.

Rob, our conference chairperson, is doing a survey for a PhD program. He is asking:

- What type of topics would most interest you?

- What would be a good location for the program?

- In what format should the educational program be conducted?

Any input you have is greatly appreciated.

The next board meeting will be in Austin at the end of March. Please e-mail me your thoughts; I'll be sure to include them in any debate around the table. We've got four exciting new members, and it's an exciting time in our organization. I heard some-

one once say, "it's easier to criticize than create," probably one of our featured speakers at an annual conference. So send me your creative ideas. Any criticism, feel free to e-mail Rob!

For those of you holding your breath waiting to hear about life in Bunn, supper was delicious, A+ on the homework, Margaret is excited to be back in school and life is good in Bunn.

Once again, thanks for a great conference and thanks for the opportunity to serve such an amazing group of people.

Talk to you soon,

Mary

mary@vollmerfarm.com

And the winners are...

The Members' Choice Publications Contest is an important learning opportunity. Conference attendees have a chance to see a variety of brochure styles and get inspiration for their own publications.

NAFDMA had two new contest categories this year. The Specialty Brochure category was added to showcase brochures that focus on a targeted area of the farm, such as school tours, picnics, corporate parties, birthday parties or other special events.

The Web site contest began in December, when NAFDMA members submitted their Web sites for the contest. This group was narrowed down by a consumer panel, which was asked to choose their Top 10 by asking these questions:

1. Does the Web site work properly?
2. Is it engaging and appealing to you?
3. Would you go to their farm or farmers' markets?

The Top 10 was narrowed down to the Top 5 based on some more technical criteria, and NAFDMA members were then invited to vote for their favorite Web site.

You voted, and here are your winners...

Outstanding Newsletter: Apple Annie's Orchard, Willcox, Ariz.

Outstanding Brochure: Fly Creek Cider Mill & Orchard, Fly Creek, N.Y.

Outstanding Specialty Brochure: Harbes Family Farm, Mattituck, N.Y. (View Harbes' Fall Educational Packages School Brochure online at www.harbesfamilyfarm.com.)

Outstanding Web Site: Saunders Farm, Munster, Ont.

Special thanks to Country Folks Grower, the brochure contest sponsor, and Harris Seeds, the newsletter contest sponsor.

Veldsma & Sons, Inc.
christmas • garden • halloween

Year Round Products for
Year Round Profits!

1-800-458-7919
Call today for a FREE catalog

www.nafdma.com

Gail Hayden is Farmers' Market Manager of the Year

Gail Hayden, director of the California Farmers' Markets Association (CFMA), has been named NAFDMA's Farmers' Market Manager of the Year. Hayden received the award at NAFDMA's annual conference held in February 2005 in Boston, Mass.

A leader in the growing farmers' market industry, Gail Hayden and her husband, Doug Hayden, president, founded CFMA in 1994. They oversee 12 certified San Francisco Bay-area farmers' markets that gross more than \$10 million annually for local family farms. A "certified" farmers' market is a location approved by the County Agricultural Commissioner where farmers offer for sale only those fruits and vegetables they grow themselves. The markets are located in San Francisco, Mountain View, Saratoga, San Leandro, Morgan Hill, Daly City, Rossmoor in Walnut Creek, Blossom Hill and the Villages, both in San Jose.

Gail was a member of the State of California Depart-

ment of Food & Agriculture's original management team that developed the Certified Farmers' Market system in California. During her 8-year tenure, the system grew from 12 to 170 markets.

During the 25 years that Gail ran the certified farmers' market system, she successfully developed and operated more than 30 certified farmers' markets in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1988, she founded the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association and developed certified farmers' markets in Pleasanton, Danville, Jack London Square in Oakland, Alameda, Concord and two sites in San Jose.

In 1998, she joined Marin County Farmers' Market Association (MCFMA) as executive director, developed the successful market in Oakland at Grand Lake, and restored the award-winning Marin County Farmers' Market held Thursday and Sundays at the Civic Center. Under 6 years of leadership, Gail

doubled sales at the MCFMA farmers' markets to more than \$11 million. Gail served on the state of California's Secretary of Agriculture's Certified Farmers' Market Advisory Committee from 1997 to 2004.

Gail is a farmers' market developer who focuses attention on the farmers' success. She has analyzed producer costs and benefits to more fully ensure that markets are

servicing farmers' interests. Gail has combined this work with her collaborative market experience and her own entrepreneurial expertise to develop presentations that help farmers' capitalize on their participation in farmers' markets. Her workshops on merchandising and sales techniques have helped growers significantly increase their sales at farmers' markets.



Gail Hayden, left, is NAFDMA's Farmers' Market Manager of the Year. Jane Eckert, right, was honored with the Outstanding Leadership award. Both were honored at the awards banquet at the NAFDMA convention in February in Boston, Mass.

Jane Eckert receives Outstanding Leadership Award

Jane Eckert, a marketing expert in the farm direct marketing industry, has been honored with the Outstanding Leadership Award by the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA). Eckert, Eckert AgriMarketing, St. Louis, Mo., received the award at NAFDMA's annual conference held in February 2005 in Boston, Mass.

"It was such a surprise and an honor to be recognized for this award by my peers," says Eckert. "I learned so much by marketing our family farms and feel privileged to now be sharing these experiences with so many farms and tourism groups throughout North America."

Eckert was raised on her family's apple orchard outside of St. Louis. After graduating from college with a business degree, she went on to work in executive marketing positions for 18 years. Then she returned to Eckert's Country Store and Farms in Belleville, Ill.

In 2001, Eckert's Country Store and Farms was honored as NAFDMA's Farm Market of the Year. During the time that Eckert served as the farm's vice president of marketing, she helped develop it into one of the most successful retail and entertainment farms in America. Today, it is a top tourist attraction that draws more than half a million guests annually.

In 2001, she formed Eckert AgriMarketing, which allows her to combine her passion for family farms and ranches with her professional approach to promotion, advertising, public relations and merchandising.

Through Eckert AgriMarketing, Eckert provides consulting services and gives speeches and workshops to help farms across North America prosper. Visit www.eckertagrimarketing.com to learn more.

It's time to nominate!

In this newsletter, we've included two nomination forms.

First, please nominate one person per region for the NAFDMA board of directors.

The term will begin in 2006.

Second, please nominate your peers for Farm Market of the Year, Farmers' Market Manager of the Year and Outstanding Leadership. Past nominees (including Farm Market finalists) are eligible for another nomination.

WLR welcomes Ed and Nora to its staff

White Loaf Ridge Management Company (WLR), Southamptton, Mass., has hired a two-person team to coordinate the newly formed Farmers' Market Coalition (FMC) of NAFDMA.

Nora Owens and Ed Maltby, of Deerfield, Mass., have been hired as the new FMC coordinators. Owned by Charlie Touchette, executive director of NAFDMA, WLR carries out all of the association's day-to-day business.

"Nora and Ed will be a great addition to our dedicated staff and will help take the coalition to the next stage," says Randii MacNear, FMC chairperson and manager of the Davis Farmers' Market in Davis, Calif. "Farmers' markets are definitely here to stay, and they continue to expand and are an important direct marketing strategy for farmers."

Nora and Ed are uniquely qualified for this position, which entails working with

farmers, market managers, and federal and state agencies. They gained insight into the challenges that farmers face in getting their products to market during the 12 years that they raised and then direct-marketed their own meat, produce and prepared foods. Their experience in marketing products directly to commercial buyers, plus their experience with Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture's Buy Local program in Western Massachusetts, has given them an appreciation and understanding for the pressures of the market place and the needs of 21st century farmers' markets.

Ed brings to the coalition 20 years of experience in working extensively with foundations and state and federal agencies to help bring millions of dollars of grant money to their own projects and community organizations. As financial consultants and project coordinators



to the Farm Viability Enhancement Program, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Nora and Ed will apply their experience working with many different farmers and growers, and will assist coalition members in understanding regulations, liability insurance and financial planning.

"Ed and Nora's passion for this work is evident in everything they do," says Touchette. "We are looking forward to working together."

The FMC is a Cooperative Agreement between NAFDMA and USDA/AMS. Its mission is to strengthen farmers' markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and the community.

You can contact Ed Maltby and Nora Owens by e-mailing fmc@nafdma.com or calling (413) 772-0444. You can also learn more about FMC by visiting www.nafdma.com/FMC.

NAFDMA inducts James Bell into its Hall of Fame

James Bell, a founding member of NAFDMA, was honored for his years of work and dedication by being inducted into the association's Hall of Fame at NAFDMA's annual confer-



ence held in February 2005 in Boston, Mass.

Bell, of Blacksburg, Va., retired in 1990 from his job as an agricultural marketing Extension specialist at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. He was one of a small group of people who founded the association 20 years ago. At the time, the association was called the National Farmers' Direct Marketing Association. Bell was one of the association's 12 founding board members, and he was the association's first treasurer. He served in that role for from 1989 to 1996. As an executive committee member, he

helped guide the association's development in its early years.

"The early years were fun and exciting," recalls Bell.

He and his colleagues had experience organizing state and regional conferences. "Then we started to get the idea of having this national conference," he says. "At first, it started where we had a state conference or regional conference, then we designated it a national conference and invited other people in. We got our charter at a national meeting and invited a lot of people from around the country. It tripled the attendance. A lot of people from various parts of the country were getting together, meeting each other, and talking

about what you could do on a national basis. It was fun getting that together."

NAFDMA has grown tremendously since its early years. It soon went from a national to a North American association. People travel from throughout the United States, every province in Canada and even from the United Kingdom to attend the convention and exchange ideas with their farm direct marketing peers.

Bell hasn't attended a convention in the past few years, but he still occasionally visits the association's Web site to see how it's doing. "I can hardly believe how much it's grown," he says.

Teamsmanship

New England. February 2005. It goes down in my book as an historic period. It's the month when one football team and one farm convention epitomized the value of teamsmanship.

If you watched the Super Bowl this year, you saw just another group of football players carry out their objective of winning another game. It was the big game.

If you participated in the NAFDMA Convention this year, you witnessed just another group of conference and tour planners, guides, presenters and delegates carry out their goal of delivering another annual convention. It was a revolution.

What is the ingredient that gave both of them their winning success? And is it the same thing that, if missing next year, will relegate them to average or even worse? Let's face it—every pro football team is made up of superb players. Every convention team has great talent and participants, too. Something among these winners made them better than normal this year. Do you have it on your farm, in your office, at your farmers' market?

It's teamsmanship! It doesn't come easy. It doesn't come by accident. It can't be coerced, bought, traded, or sold. It is inhibited anytime someone has a need to be a superstar. It's impossible to find among prima donnas. And, it's not the same thing as teamwork.

Salesclerks don't necessarily exhort salesmanship. Manufacturers don't always care about craftsmanship. Gifted players and talented professionals do not inherently provide teamsmanship.

On the gridiron, the offensive team works together as a unit. They need to display teamwork. The defense must do the same. And special teams need to perform special duties separately from offense or defense. The coaching team had

better be able to communicate with each other, too. In the case of every football team, these are minimum standards. Each unit of the overall team must be able to operate within itself. Teamwork is required, or you'll be fired. Teamsmanship spills over from unit to unit. And soon it even brings the fans into the game? When it's working on all cylinders, it creates new fans. The game isn't played on the field. It's played throughout the stadium, and even through the television airwaves. It's not much different in any business that requires a number of people to work together in different departments for the success of the overall company.

The 2004 New England Patriots go beyond teamwork. They have elevated their play, and their consciousness, to another level. It's teamsmanship. Injury? First, support the guy that's hurt, he'll be back. Next, bring on a replacement that was never offended he was on the sideline in the first place. Poor play by the offense today? First have the defense give 'em a little pep talk, then take the field and make an interception for a touchdown. Hell, someone's gotta score for the company. The rules never said it has to be the offensive team. Who cares whether it's offense, defense, or special teams? It's a football team. The "reason to be" is simply entertainment. The measure of success is simply the win.

For eight days following that Super Bowl Sunday, the NAFDMA Convention team took the field. So many of the same rules apply. And this was a group of champions.

Who is the convention team? It's the board of directors, the speakers, the moderators, the management company, the added volunteers,



the service providers, the tour guides, the tour hosts, the registrants, the security guard, and the mailman.

Hats off to our tour guide unit! You all worked together and

cemented the likelihood for success before you ever hit the road. We have never seen such a respectful and effective merging of "NAFDMA" and "local" guides as was generated this year. Clearly that camaraderie carried over to the drivers as well. Some of you had to work a little harder than others in your first 30 minutes of rapport building with your drivers. You all did a great job in this area, and clearly that made a difference. Sure, there were two early fumbles. The buses went off course. But instead of cussing and scowling, the team pulled together, got back on track and set the stage for three full days of teamsmanship.

How about that workshops unit! For whatever reason, workshop day always kicks off with a very stressful start. Even some veteran NAFDMA members still don't have a full appreciation for the need to pre-register for workshops if they want to be certain to get their choices. But we got through those two hours of Thursday morning startup once again. This year there was even an unexpectedly late arrival by one of our key presenters. But who knew that?! It was handled without panic. A backup play was being assembled and low and behold, 8 minutes before the start time, there's the speaker, ready to go. All six workshops were off and running. The playing field was good, even if it did have a couple of little condition flaws. The hotel's lunch offerings left a little to be desired. So our team called a trick play. There was added risk in taking 340 people outside of the hotel for lunch. The moderator team did

a splendid job of moving traffic along. And thanks to perfect execution, the team even scored two extra points.

Wow! ...That sums up the play by our FMC unit. There is no question that FMC galvanized its place on the team and has forged its way out of the label of being the rookie player. With the newly elected council and new personnel, it was pretty certain FMC would excel this year. But nobody could have been sure there would be such remarkable energy and enthusiasm by every person who participated in FMC activities. That translates to credibility. There was a genuine sense of support throughout NAFDMA, rooting for a scoring drive by this special team, and it delivered. When teamsmanship evolves to this level throughout NAFDMA, it's a clear sign our association has the ability to satisfy oncoming challenges of exponential growth.

Teamsmanship is like the spices in a great dish. It's not a main ingredient. It's hard to see. You can never be certain exactly when, where, and how much to sprinkle. When it's just right, the dinner guests can spend hours trying to figure out what it really is. But if it's missing, they'll know it. And if you tried to use it to cover flaws in the main ingredients, they'll know that, too.

Does your company recognize teamsmanship? Do you make your customers, service providers, and passers by, a part of your game? Or, are you satisfied to do what you're paid to do and encourage them to watch from the bleachers?

Football, conventions, and farm direct marketing do not have to be spectator sports. If everyone the game touches isn't participating, your teamsmanship is missing.

You got game!?

To sell, sell, sell...Tell, tell, tell (the story, that is)!

I'm just back home from an awesome conference in Boston! If you were there, I'm sure you agree. If you missed it, be sure to mark your calendars for next year's conference in Texas!

I attended a "standing room only" session delivered by Bruce Baker while in Beantown. Mr. Baker spoke about accomplishing Dynamic Sales. 'Till he was done with his session, I was ready to come home and sell, sell, sell. While he had many excellent suggestions and anecdotes, he hit on one topic, which I plan to work harder at this year.

He told us to "Tell the

Story." Our customers don't want fake, plastic "pleasantries." They want to be treated like human beings, and they want to hear about our products. They want to hear about our stories.

I'm very grateful that my "story" doesn't involve a DVD or a cell phone or a pain medication! It won't be very difficult for me to talk about my farm, and family and market. This year we will celebrate 50 years in business. I've got a story to tell!



While on the pre-conference tour, folks came up to the front of the bus to introduce themselves and to talk a bit about their operations back home. One couple just opened a scratch bakery. Another young woman had begun advertising on the screen at movie theatres. Another couple had a landing strip on their farm and had begun giving some flying lessons!

Some folks were a bit timid, but something tells me they have a story back home somewhere. It might be as

simple as telling what Gramma's favorite pie apple is or some new uses for asparagus!

The bottom line is that the public is craving human contact. We're tired of automated answering systems, and voice prompts. Customer service and communication is pretty hard to come by in many large grocery and retail stores. They just want our money and to move us on out the door. They don't have a story like we do.

So this year, as you're gearing up for a busy spring and summer, don't forget to tell your story. I think your customer will be happy to listen.

Meet Kay Hollabaugh—your new NAFDMA president

A new president is now at the helm of NAFDMA. At the awards banquet on Feb. 11, 2005, outgoing president Richard Tanner, Tanners Orchard, Speer, Ill., passed the gavel to Kay Hollabaugh, Hollabaugh Brothers Inc., Biglerville, Pa.

The Hollabaugh family has raised fruit—mostly tree fruit, including apples, peaches, plums, apricots and pears—since 1955. They also grow strawberries, blueberries and asparagus. Hollabaugh Bros. currently has a retail, wholesale and production entity. Kay's responsibilities include general office management, retail farm market management and public relations.

Kay is a typical NAFDMA overachiever who is deeply involved with her local community. She's a member of the Adams County Arts Council. In 2003, she was honored by the United Way of Adams County with a Callie Award as an Exceptional Woman in Agriculture.



Kay Hollabaugh, NAFDMA's new president, is an accomplished pianist. Oh—and she also plays the violin.

Her love of agriculture drives her to educate the public about the industry. She's a former board member of the Gettysburg-Adams County Chamber of Commerce and chair of the chamber's agriculture committee. She's also currently chairperson of the Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program.

"I am honored – and yes,

awed – by the opportunity to act as president of NAFDMA," says Kay Hollabaugh. "I am fortunate to have a wonderful board with which to work that comes from all over North America and now, representation from the United

Kingdom. The folks on the board are diverse and energized and committed. My job is also made easier by speaking on behalf of such an outstanding group of people – farm direct marketers."

Hollabaugh first joined the NAFDMA board of directors back in 2000, when she was elected to represent the Northeast region of NAFDMA. She was re-

elected to her second term in 2003.

"My responsibilities as president of NAFDMA are truly made easier because of the fine group of agriculturalists and entrepreneurs that I have been elected to represent," she says. "During the course of my term as president, I hope to constantly strive for the respect that this industry deserves. I will also endeavor to do my part in keeping the family farm strong and viable – through diversification as necessary."

NAFDMA's other officers are: Mary Vollmer, Vollmer Farm, Bunn, N.C., vice president; Rob Leeds, Ohio State University Extension, Delaware, Ohio, vice president; Brent Warner, British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Victoria, B.C., secretary; and Debbie Pifer, White House Fruit Farm Inc., Canfield, Ohio, treasurer.



Watch for the countdown to the Texas early registration deadline!



**NORTH AMERICAN FARMERS' DIRECT
MARKETING ASSOCIATION**
62 White Loaf Rd.
Southampton, MA 01073

WWW.NAFDMA.COM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 29-30, Kansas

Regional Food Systems and Marketing Opportunities, Old Mill Museum and Swedish Pavilion, Lindsborg Kans.

Contact: Emil Mushrush at 620/241-6630, visit www.kansasruralcenter.org or e-mail kfum@nfuic.kscoxmail.com.

April 1-2, Washington

The New Food Entrepreneur: Value-Added Processing Conference, Green River Community College, Auburn, Wash.

Contact: Curtis Beus, 360-417-2280.

April 5-6, Minnesota

Dynamic Farmers' Market Conferences, Staples and

Waseca, Minn. Topics will include displaying products, regulation compliance, and market organization.

Contact: Terry Nennich or Mary Gieske from the University of Minnesota Extension Regional Center at 888/241-0781.

April 20-24, Texas

HAuNTcon 2005, Adam's Mark Dallas Hotel, Dallas, Texas. Pre-show bus tour is April 20 and 21. Convention and tradeshow include: 2 Days of Actor Training Classes and Workshops. The Haunted Garage Sale, and Hearse/Parade Car Rally.

Registration is \$50. Mail a check or money order to: HAuNTcon, PO Box

220286, Charlotte, NC 28222, or pay by PayPal to Info@HauNTcon.com.

Contact: Haunted Attraction Magazine, 704-366-0875 or www.HAuNTcon.com.

April 30-May 3, Illinois

United Produce Expo and Conference, McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.

For details, visit www.produceshow.com or contact Mark Overbay at 202/303-3400.

May 19-20, New York

How to Create Successful Markets Training Course, New York, N.Y.

Visit www.pps.org or contact Chris Heitmann,

cheitmann@pps.org or 212/620-5660.

June 16-18, Ohio

Putting Local Food on the Table: Farms and Food Service in Partnership, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio. The second national farm to cafeteria conference features workshop tracks, plenary speakers and sessions for food service management.

For details, visit www.foodsecurity.org.

June 26-28, New Jersey

International Dwarf Fruit Tree Association Summer Orchard Tour, New Jersey.

Contact Susan Pheasant, susan@pheasantprojects.net.