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Wedgworth Leadership Institute  
for Agriculture & Natural Resources

Class  
IX

# Reflect

## Director's Dialogue *Dr. Hannah Carter*

### *What is your legacy?*

This question became an integral part of this seminar—both intentionally and unintentionally. Seminar VIII began at Circle Bar B Preserve in Polk County—a legacy which represents both the private and public sectors working together to preserve and protect an incredible piece of Florida. Much like all the seminars of Class IX, many WLI alumni played key roles in making this seminar the truly incredible success that it was—from Danny Kushmer (Class II) who organized presenters and air boats, to Michael Babb (Class VIII) for making the time to greet us from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, to Reggie Holt (Class VI) and his Farm Credit of Central Florida crew who cooked all afternoon for us—thank you to David McDonald (Class VI), Shane Platt (Class II) and Carl Bauman (Class VIII).

Then we turned to one of the key pieces of this seminar—media training. We are grateful to Ray Gilmer (Class IV) who

left the snowy confines of Virginia to come down and spend a great deal of time with the class to ensure that their legacy would not be to end up on the blooper reel of the local news! And much like past classes, this included time in front of the camera and a group critique afterward—I am quite confident that the group learned a great deal and will be polished and effective spokespeople for their organizations, industries and this program!

Also during this seminar we learned about the past, present and future of the Florida citrus industry by an amazing panel of experts that was put together by Dave Crumbly (Class V) of Florida's Natural Growers. The citrus industry certainly has a legacy in this state and despite the challenges that are facing it, the class left feeling like the future may not be as bleak as some have thought. We then were able to spend some time in the strawberry fields thanks to Mark Greeff (Class VI) and Richard Fiorelli (Class VII) and Mark challenged the group to think about Florida agriculture,

the future and maybe a different way of thinking about our legacy—much food for thought!

And speaking of food for thought—who knew that the feed industry in Florida was so large? The class learned a tremendous amount about the number of companion animals and livestock that are within this state and the impacts that they have thanks to Kevin Huesman (Class I).

The seminar culminated at Bok Tower Gardens. If you have not visited this incredible facility, you should go. The class was in awe as we were escorted to the top of the carillon tower and received a private concert by the carillonneur. This whole facility and the inspiration behind it was due to one man's legacy that has certainly lived on past his lifetime. Which brings us back to the question—what is your legacy? Will Class IX leave a mark or legacy? Thanks to their hard work, dedication and efforts, I truly believe they will and that they, the program and Florida agriculture and natural resources will greatly benefit from it! Stay tuned!!



# Central Florida - First half of trip: beginning Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>

*Leigh Ann Wynn*



By now, the reality has set in with the members of Class IX that our 22-month journey together is well over half way through. We join back together at the beginning of each seminar with a bit tighter hug than the one before, and this Seminar VIII was no different. Classmates began arriving at the Circle B Bar Reserve in Lakeland on Monday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> and trickling into the Nature Discovery Center, greeting each other as the family members that we have become. About half of the group had met for lunch at Gators Dockside in Highlands City prior to our 1pm start time, and had already reacquainted there over cheese sticks and wings. We were missing Danny Johns this seminar; the group What's App was abuzz with his well wishes.



Announcements began with Erin Archey's proclamation of her and Clay's "permanent souvenir" from Mount Dora; further keeping the tradition of babies being born out of Wedgworth love. Lauren Trad shared with us that Colorado is the new home for her, Chris and their family and they will soon be accepting visitors. Emma and Josh Craft both celebrated their one-year wedding anniversaries (not together) and I announced my new position with Warner University and the excitement of our new Ag Studies program. The only other announcement came from Hood, as he succinctly stated that Hannah has us "zig-zagging all across the county". The only answer: at least we don't have to walk it, Hood.



John Evans started the day by introducing Class II alumni and friend Danny Kushmer, SWFWMD Government Affairs Manager, who proceeded to give us the origination of Circle B Bar as the partnership between the Polk County Environmental Lands Program and SWFWMD. We learned about the ecology of Lake Hancock and for years how it has accepted effluent from the cities of Lakeland and Auburndale, but now works to reduce nitrogen and produce cleaner water into the Peace River headwaters. Danny likened the 'peasoup' color of the water in Lake Hancock to "be uglier than your green shirt" as he pointed to Tavis' attire, which was due to the organic 'ooze' at the bottom of the lake. We also heard a quick word from Robert Beltran, Executive Director of SWFWMD and Michael Babb, their Board Chair and WLI graduate. Babb was appointed by

Gov. Rick Scott to the Board while still participating in Class VIII.



We quickly broke up into two groups, with one following Jeff Spence, Director of Polk County Parks and Natural Resources to the tram rides. The tram toured around the reserve, showing off their impressive bird sanctuary, which we were glad to hear included a few limpkins. We learned that the 1,267 acre property was purchased in 2000 from the Bellotto family and involved transitioning some improved pastures into marsh and wetlands. Spence said "when you get the water right, the animals will come; when the animals come, then people will come", which was proven by the record attendance in one week of almost 5,000 visitors.





The other group followed Danny to the airboats for a brisk ride around Lake Hancock. What a beautiful day! We enjoyed gator sightings (I'm sure a few guys wished they had a tag in hand), many different types of birds (I thought they all were limpkins) and a description of the restoration projects that restore the hydrologic function to the land.



We broke up into three groups and took turns rotating through three different courses. One included mock interviews with Ray, where we were given the chance first hand to mess things up quickly, I mean handle the tough questions regarding our crisis. All I remember from our group was that Emma knew without the shadow of a doubt, that the picture of the boots in lettuce was taken in "A" kitchen, just not her kitchen. Another group was taught, or was given a refresher course, on CPR and the Heimlich maneuver with Eric Helms, a paramedic and seller of AED equipment. *For the low price of \$875 and the cost of annual replacement of battery and pads, you too can save a life.* From our group, we learned that if you are choking, please do not look to me for help, as I can barely get a marble out of a dummy's mouth.



(photo credit Ron O'Connor Farm Credit of Central Florida)

Farm Credit of Central Florida then generously served us a delicious dinner of steaks and homemade ice cream, once again adding to what we affectionately call the 'Wedgworth 15'. As a group, we headed to our digs for the week at the FFA Training Center in Haines City, where a lobby party continued with healthy fruits including mangoes and guavas.

Tuesday morning we gathered at breakfast where Ben Butler and Duane Mathis finally decided to join us. Ray Gilmer, who we recognized from DC, flew in from his new job at Montgomery College specially to speak with our group. With his background in news media, we knew we had a professional for the day to learn from as much as we could and no one took this for granted. We spent the morning going through media training, where he taught us the importance of owning the interview, getting your own message across and delivering your best stuff first, as evidenced by multiple videos of how to do it and how not to.



The third group attended a BHAG focus group led by Kevan and Dr. Joyce, which we jokingly said brought the demon back out of the closet, or should I say guinea pig back out of the closet. Seriously, we enjoyed meaningful conversation that helped us to look back to the Miami seminar when the BHAG all began. We've come so far.... And it seemed to help bring us to a final decision regarding the BHAG.



# Central Florida – Second Half February 25th and 26th

*Daniel Scott*



After another night spent at the FFA Leadership Training Center we departed at 7:15 am and headed for Florida's Natural Grove house. Some of us were raring to go, some were dragging, and some were under the weather, but we headed out in the usual cannon ball run fashion and made it there on time. Breakfast was sponsored by Florida's Natural and after some great food and NFC juice we headed into their theater to watch an informative video on the cooperative and how the company operates.

After the video Rod Hollingsworth introduced four industry leaders, Dr. Bob Behr (COO of Florida's Natural Growers), Lindsay Raley (WLI Class I, Chairman of the Board of Dundee Citrus Growers Association), Marty McKenna (Chairman of the Florida Citrus Commission), and Mike Sparks (Executive Vice President/CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual) that would be participating in the our panel discussion on issues impacting the Florida Citrus Industry.



Dr. Behr started with a brief history of the Florida orange juice industry and how it shaped the center part of the state. He then talked about the start of Florida's Natural, how it is the 3rd largest brand of NFC and a new Fit and Delicious product that will be launching soon. He ended up by discussing how Demand for the product (OJ) has been falling, and concerns about having enough product to support the brand.

Lindsay Raley explained how Dundee Citrus Growers Association is a 240 grower member cooperative started in 1924 that collectively accounted for about 10,000 acres. He spoke from a fresh fruit prospective and gave some concerning statistics regarding where the industry was 10 to 15 years ago and where it is today. He said that fresh fruit production is down by 50% and the numbers of shippers has gone from 100 (15 years ago) to 34 today. This is largely due to the effect HLB (Greening) has had on the industry.

Marty McKenna spoke about the Florida Department of Citrus, how it functions and what its responsibilities are. He explained that it has taxing authority and that it uses those funds for promotion of the product and more recently for research focused on HLB. He stated that production has come down from 240 million boxes to 103 million. This reduction has caused an increase in prices, but with an even higher increase in production cost, the margins have gotten smaller. He ended by talking about the need to connect with the new generation of consumers and increase demand.



Mike Sparks talked about the economic impact that the citrus industry has on the state. The citrus industry has a 10 billion dollar impact on the state of Florida and currently supports 64,000 jobs throughout the state. His job, through Florida Citrus Mutual, is to lobby for funding on behalf of the industry that will be used to support sustainability and research efforts. Funds acquired from the latest Farm Bill and the creation of the TAP (Tree Assistance Program) are just a couple of their most recent accomplishments.

After a Q&A session with the entire panel, it was off to Driscoll's Strawberry operation. Justin Hood introduced Mr. Mark Greeff (WLI class VI, VP & General Manager of the Eastern Region for Driscoll Strawberry Association) who gave us a field tour and readied us for our strawberry picking contest. We were separated into teams of three and the action was fast and furious, for some teams at least. This was a timed event. By the end, some of the female members of the group that had started with white shoes left with a slightly different shade of footwear, but we all ended up with several containers of strawberries and a greater appreciation for the folks that harvest them. We then headed back to Driscoll's cooler where Mark gave us a tour of the facility and an opportunity to do some taste testing and evaluation of some new varieties. Lunch was sponsored by Driscoll's and was followed up by an insightful reflection on Mark's Leadership philosophies in agriculture. He had some great thoughts on the difference between leadership and management, the need to embrace change, the importance of adaptation in business, and the benefits of being able to move between strategic, conceptual, and tactical thinking. Finally we ended with the award ceremony for the winners of the strawberry picking contest. The group that came in first was made up of April Porter, Duane Mathis, and Rod Hollingsworth. We all feel as though they missed their calling.



especially for all of us that had never been. What a beautiful place created by a man with such a big vision. The tour of the tower was even more amazing and ended with a climb to the top to see the carillonneur play. Dinner was exceptional and was followed by David Price discussing the future of Bok Tower.

class I, Dealer Specialist for Land O Lakes Purina Feed) who gave us the history of the Purina Feed Company. It employs over 10,000 people and is the largest supplier of feed. After a Q&A session, we toured the feed mill and learned a little more about how feed is made.



To conclude the session, David Register and April Porter led the reflection period. We received the report that Danny Johns was doing better with his recovery. We really missed him this trip. I think we are all starting to realize how close our group has become and that our time together is down to just two more seminars. We all shared what part of the seminar that seemed to stand out the most for each of us and then dove back into our BHAG discussion. We then said our goodbyes and headed for home looking forward to the next time we would see each other again.



From there we headed off to see Bok Tower. David Lively introduced Mr. David Price (President of Bok Tower Gardens) who gave us a tour of Bok Tower Gardens. This was a real treat

After another night of corn hole tournaments, fellowship, and some really weird card game, we celebrated Leigh Ann Wynn and Brittany Lee's Birthday, then hit the trail to the Land O Lakes Purina Feed Mill. Once there, Jennifer Parish introduced Kevin Huesman (WLI



Wedgworth Leadership Institute  
**Class IX**  
*Seminar 9 - Gainesville*

## Coordinator's Corner *Kevan Lamm*



Prior to visiting Bok Tower I had never heard the word carillonneur, let alone did I know that this was a profession. However, during our seminar to central Florida I learned that this is the individual who plays the carillon bells that are located in towers. What are carillon bells? According to the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, "A carillon consists of a series of at least 23 tuned bells, played from a keyboard that allows expressiveness through variation in touch, and on which the player, or carillonneur, can play a broad range of music." What I took away from this discovery, aside from a deep respect for the time and dedication necessary to develop this craft, is that there is always more to learn and discover. When we confine ourselves to only do that which we have already done we are missing out on a universe of potential opportunities. At a minimum we gain perspective and an appreciation for our own contexts when viewing something new. For me, I thought about how within the carillonneur community there is probably a pretty good understanding about what someone does day in and out, what the challenges are, and what the future for the profession may hold. As an outsider, I have absolutely no idea how to answer any of these questions. I then applied this logic to the agricultural and natural resources industry. Those of us who have grown up with an ANR background or make our living in the industry probably have a pretty good idea what a typical day looks like, what some of the major challenges facing the industry are, and what the future may look like. However, to those outside of ANR do we do a sufficient job telling our story? When an outsider stumbles across an ANR industry website are they just as surprised as I was to learn that there is a Guild of Carillonneurs in North America? As leaders I think it is critical to push ourselves to take opportunities to learn, and then apply those insights to our lives and industry, you never know what you might discover!