

## In this Issue...

Director's Dialogue

Mt. Dora Recap

Coordinator's Corner



Wedgworth Leadership Institute  
for Agriculture & Natural Resources



Class  
IX

# Reflect

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

"The love of life is, in general, the effect not of our enjoyments, but of our passions." William Hazlitt

Our time with Class IX and their spouses in Mt. Dora was spent reflecting on love, life, enjoyment and passions (among other things!) It was wonderful to have the whole group together again to reconnect, build on friendships and spend some time thinking and learning about the truly important things in life.

We moved this seminar location to beautiful Mt. Dora and the Lakeside Inn (Florida's oldest continuously run hotel). The other change in this seminar was that Class IX and their spouses had a "typically" WLI seminar day—which means up and on the bus right after breakfast and a fairly full day of Wedgworth—on and off a bus, keeping tour groups together, presenting tokens of appreciation and staying on time! I think the spouses got a good "feel" for what the

program is all about and all were great sports!

What did not change was that on Friday night, the Tangerine Improvement Society Hall, turned into "Square Dancing 101"—and while there was much dread prior to forming the first square, I think by the end of the night, people were actually disappointed that it was over! It's amazing to think that over 20+ years of this program now, that many people will still count square dancing as one of their highlights!

This seminar would not have been possible without David and Nancy McDonald—from helping to set up our tours, to organizing and hosting dinner, to square dancing with the group—we owe a debt of gratitude to the McDonald's!! We are also grateful for the wonderful stop at Cherry Lake Tree Farms and the hospitality of Chloe Gentry and Timothee Sallin. And you

know that people love square dancing so much, they'll help sponsor dinner to come back and do-see-do—thank you to Billy Butterfield for doing both!

This seminar would not have been the success it was without Dr. David Jones—his enthusiasm and passion for people and leadership is contagious and I am glad the group got to spend some time with him and learn about his philosophies about life—he challenged the group in many ways and I'm thankful for his willingness to travel and be a part of this seminar.

With the start of 2015 we are quickly approaching the final three seminars for this class—it is hard to believe that they are on the downhill slide! With that, please mark your calendars for Thursday, August 6th as this will be their graduation and we would love to have a great group of alumni there to share in their accomplishments and welcome them into the alumni association!



## Mt. Dora, Florida *Jennifer Hodges & Josh Culpepper*



Class IX of the WLIANR came together again for Seminar VII at the picturesque Lakeside Inn in Mt. Dora, FL. Unique to this seminar was the shorter agenda from December 4th through the 6th. And, for the first time since Seminar I, the spouses and significant others of the class joined us in the programming. On deck for Seminar VII included interpersonal sessions with Dr. David Jones of North Carolina State University and a day of typical ‘in the field’ WLI programming. Throw in a little Friday night square dancing, and it was a recipe for an educational, inspiring, and fun seminar!

### ***Thursday, December 4 Who Are You?***

Class IX members and their spouses arrived in beautiful Mt. Dora and enjoyed lunch and reuniting with each other before the beginning of programming with Dr. David Jones. This seminar would be used to take some time, slow down, look deeper, and see things we may have been missing in the hurried pace of life and in the Wedgworth program. Dr. Jones presentations were educational, entertaining, thought provoking, inspirational, and challenging. His goal was to get us thinking...about our lives, and to hopefully help make them fuller.

Many insights and lessons were learned in our time with Dr. Jones. In essence, knowing yourself, your values, and your priorities are keys to good leadership; and good leadership is all about relationships. Starting with simple questions such as “My favorite movie is...?” and “My next relaxing trip is going to be...?” Dr. Jones began, step by step, on illustrating ways to know ourselves even better.

Perspective has been a recurring theme in WLI programming (remember the horse/frog picture from the Miami seminar?) and it popped up again in Mt. Dora. How many squares do you see, how many legs does the elephant have, do you see a face or the word “liar”. These examples and many others were used to illustrate that we each have different perspectives on things and that it’s important to acknowledge differing perspectives, while being comfortable with yours. Dr. Jones also made sure to point out that you not minimize your own perspective while acknowledging others...“I’m not strange, I’m just not you”.

Other activities included additional personality profile techniques (who knew you can tell a lot about a person by how they draw a pig on a piece of paper?), activities on different learning styles, and the importance of trust in relationships

(illustrated by a rigged game of Jenga). Perhaps the most interesting was the DISC method of determining behavioral types. The letters of DISC stand for different behavioral types, such as:

- D – doers, drivers, direct
- I – influencing, impulsive, interactive
- S – steady, stable, supportive
- C – cautious, confident, calculated

The class filled out their DISC forms and were directed into the four corners of the room based on each person’s most prominent letter; D, I, S, or C. Then, the four groups were challenged to plan the perfect vacation (with a limit of \$10,000). It was almost spooky how each of the four groups’ responses mirrored the descriptions of their dominant DISC letter!

The goal of all these exercises was to help us understand people better (including ourselves), and to value and respect the strengths of others so that we can communicate differently and more effectively with each other. Dr. Jones summed it up very well by challenging the convention of using the Golden Rule...“Treat others the way you would like to be treated.” But rather, use the Platinum Rule...“Treat others the way THEY want to be treated.”





After a break and time for reflection, we reconvened at the hotel for dinner and an evening session with Dr. Jones on personal values. The session included an exercise where each person received several cards with value words on them such as wisdom, fame, family, wealth, recognition. Through the course of the exercise we passed cards we didn't value to others at the table and eventually began to discard values we didn't prioritize in our lives. By the end of the exercise, Dr. Jones posed the question of what three cards/values would be most important in 30 years. Across the room values like fame, wealth, and recognition at work all found their way to the discard pile. Values such as happiness, family, and health remained. It was a powerful exercise to illustrate core values shared among us all and what is truly important in life.

### *Friday, December 5 Deroose Plants*



We boarded the bus at 8 a.m. to start our day touring greenhouses, tree farms and a water treatment plant. Our first stop was Deroose Plants. Pieter Mertens and Mark Berner were our tour guides for the morning and did an excellent job telling us the history of Deroose, as well as describing their operations. Deroose Plants propagates and distributes a variety of plants all over the world. I found it interesting that they produce more than 1,000 different varieties of bromeliads and are one of the top three distributors of bromeliads in the world. We learned that most plants are distributed in Florida and California, and their largest operation is located in Shanghai, China. Our group enjoyed walking through Deroose Plant's beautifully designed glass greenhouse where we were able to take a look at the different varieties they offer.

## ***Agristarts***



Next on the agenda was a tour of AgriStarts, located in Apopka. The class split into two groups, and Randy Strode and his son Ty showed us their beautiful greenhouses and tissue culture labs. AgriStarts' tissue culture labs have the ability to produce millions of contaminate-free plants for all types of markets, and are office space to five lab managers who each control 100-150 crops. They have 30,000 square feet of greenhouse space, which holds approximately one million plants. Randy also mentioned they are building a new state-of-the-art facility within the next two years. One very neat fact about AgriStarts, is that they partner with Orange County Public Schools, and work with mentally- and physically-disabled students to give them a place to work. With AgriStarts' help, these students are learning the job skills they will need for future successful employment.



## ***Cherry Lake Tree Farm***

Our third stop was Cherry Lake Tree Farm where our class met several members of the Sallin family who own and manage this operation. Cherry Lake Tree Farm was created in 1985, and has grown to be 1,725 acres of ornamental tree, shrub and palm production. It was fascinating to drive through the farm and see the many different varieties offered by Cherry Lake. Our group also had the opportunity to walk through their greenhouses, which house one million trees.



Some of the trees at Cherry Lake Tree Farm grow onsite for 14 years before they are sold. I was impressed by the safety initiative by which Cherry Lake Tree Farm abides. They have a large safety pole that is visible to all workers. This pole has the company logo at the top of the pole, and each time there is an accident, the logo goes to the bottom of the pole. One of our tour guides mentioned that this initiative has reduced accidents by 45% since it was started.



## ***St. Johns Water Treatment Plant***

We wrapped up our afternoon by meeting with Mr. Jim Peterson, the field program supervisor at the Lake Apopka Field Station for the St. Johns Water Management District. Mr. Peterson took us to the Apopka Field Station and spoke

to the group about the history of Lake Apopka. We learned it is the 3rd largest lake in Florida, encompasses over 48 square miles and has an average depth of five feet. A couple interesting facts that Mr. Peterson shared with us is that early Florida maps state Lake Apopka was known as Anapopka and that the Creek Indian language (a dialect of which the Seminole Indians speak) has the term ah-apopka which roughly means potato-eating place. Also, for quite a while, there has been a big focus on reducing the discharges of excessive nutrients into the lake. There is a restoration plan in place for the north shore of Lake Apopka that focuses on infrastructure improvements, soil inversion and soil amendment work which is needed to prepare for wetland restoration.



## ***Square Dancing – A WLI Tradition***

That evening we gathered at the Tangerine Improvement Society in Mount Dora, where our reception and evening meal were hosted by David and Nancy McDonald, NGM Productions, Farm Credit of Central Florida and Ameriscapes. After enjoying a delicious dinner, we were instructed by Mr. Chesnut, our square dance caller for the evening, to gather into groups of eight to form a square with one couple on each side. Mr. Chesnut began calling square dance moves as each of us clumsily bumped in to one another, and stepped on each other's toes. As he continued to cue us through a sequence of steps, we started to get the hang of it. By the end of the night, I think most of us learned the technique of square dancing and thoroughly enjoyed the activity!



## ***Saturday, December 6***

Following our day of “normal” WLI programming and square dancing, the final day of Seminar VII was with Dr. Jones again for what would be a morning of motivational and life lessons.

The day started out reviewing the Five Love Languages questionnaire we had each completed from the previous session. The Five Love Languages are; Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service, and Physical Touch. Based on the answers we provided in the questionnaire, we added up the points to come up with our Primary and Secondary Love Languages. My wife’s and my Primary Love Language was Quality Time, but our Secondary Love Language was Words of Affirmation for my wife and Acts of Service for me. The point of the exercise was not to see if we are a good match, but to better understand each other so that we can communicate and relate to each other more effectively. Going forward, I will be more aware of my

wife’s preference for Words of Affirmation and vice versa. I think we all took away from the session a higher appreciation of how to relate to each other and to help communicate with each other better.

Next up was Dr. Jones’ impactful presentation on Balancing Life and Work. He provided nine tips for prioritizing and organizing your life to find more balance and happiness.

1. Written Goals Based on Your Values – For family, your career, and personally
2. Have a Mission Statement – both a Personal Mission Statement and a Couple Mission Statement and live by it
3. Planning & Prioritizing – Be in charge of the day, don’t let it be in charge of you
4. Time with Family – Start family traditions, family love notes, quality time
5. Organize Your Work (and Home) Space – Fight clutter...if in doubt, throw it out
6. Exercise – Today, not someday. Do not make the common mistake of putting yourself last on your “To Do” list.

7. Delegate – Should be and can be viewed as a positive activity

8. Learn to Say No – Who or what do you need to say “No” to? Overcommitting erodes your ability to reach your goals.

9. Live Like You Were Dying – Wake up excited and cherish each day. Love like you have never loved before.

By the end of Seminar VII, Class IX left Mt. Dora with excellent resources to help understand ourselves better and to enhance our relationships. Two quotes from the seminar really stood out;

“When your values and priorities align, the possibilities are endless.”

“Relationships are the foundation of life and communication is the foundation of relationships.”

Leadership is not limited to only the professional arena; we need to embrace the characteristics of good leadership personally and with our families to live a fuller, richer life. Dr. Jones summarized it best that at the end of the day, achieving balance in your life does not happen by chance, you have to work at it.



Wedgworth Leadership Institute

# Class IX

Seminar 8 - Haines City

## Coordinator's Corner *Kevan Lamm*



This past Monday I was fortunate enough to be in Atlanta to present research at the Southern Regional meeting of the American Association for Agricultural Education. In particular I was very proud to present the results from the large program evaluation that we have been conducting with programs like Wedgworth over the past two years. Specifically our research looked at leadership development programs from the southern United States and the impact that alumni have had in their organizations and communities. The response and feedback from the session was amazing! There is a great deal of enthusiasm for being able to articulate objective measures of performance for leadership development programs, and the insights that the Wedgworth program provided in helping to achieve this goal have been priceless. There was even a lengthy discussion with Dr. David Jones about how we can share some of our best practices with NC State! My hope is that we can continue to work towards an integrated network of leadership development programs across the United States, and the world! Programs like Wedgworth have a unique opportunity to help establish a robust agricultural and natural resources industry, and I could not be more proud or grateful to be part of this organization!