CHAIR MESSAGE

A LIFETIME OF AG LEadership FRIENDSHIPS

BY JEFF ELDER (35), CALF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”
-Winston Churchill

As I visited with a few of my good friends it struck me that while we’d initially met in a professional capacity, we’ve developed true friendships. We have shared in our lives and continue to cross paths as we give back to Ag Leadership.

Earl Williams was the general manager of Buttonwillow Ginning Co. in 1979 when I began my career in the cotton business. At the end of my first season, Earl offered me a job as assistant general manager. Earl is a past director of CALF and has been a mentor and friend ever since.

Bill Van Skike (32) was working for a cotton brokerage firm when I managed a cotton warehouse and secured their business more than 25 years ago. A few years later, Bill moved to Bakersfield and I was one of the first contacts he made. We’ve spent many evenings, sometimes with a cigar and a cocktail or two, discussing careers, families and ambitions. Bill recently joined CALF’s board of directors as past chair of the Alumni Council. Speaking of CALF relationships, when Bill was in Fresno working for the brokerage firm, his CFO was Barry Bedwell (13), now Ag Leadership’s president.

Karen Caplan, a relatively new member of the board, stood in for me and wrote the spring Horizons message. We didn’t know each other well, but I appreciated her helping me out. She’s a new friend but has become a fast friend nonetheless. As I try to finish writing this message, I realize just how much I really appreciate her coming to my aid.

These friendships are important to me in a variety of ways. Each represents a friendship established at a different point in my life and career. Friendship is a part of Ag Leadership that is hard to put into words, but something that has always made the program special.

Leadership is about inspiring others, and by extension we surround ourselves with those friends who motivate us and give us confidence. Your Ag Leadership colleagues are some of the most inspirational people you’ll meet. The friendships I’ve developed while both going through the program and being on the board are too many to mention, but I cherish every one of them. Each of my friends gives me a brain to ‘pick,’ an ear to listen or a push in the right direction. I encourage all of you to take advantage of the gift of Ag Leadership and continue to reach out to classmates and future alumni friends.

Speaking of inspirational friendships—on behalf of the board, I extend our appreciation to termed out board members Eijnar Knudsen and Dean Helene Dillard for their friendship and support. Eijnar has been a tireless advocate for CALF. His generosity has provided the board with many opportunities to gather at different events, including our retreat to Avila Beach. Eijnar was the chair of our finance committee and helped me greatly as a member of the committee to find CALF’s new president. While only on the board for two years, which is the tenure for deans, Dean Dillard was a welcome addition to the board and I thank her for making time to be of service to Ag Leadership. Dean Andy Thulin will fill Dean Dillard’s spot on the board.

In addition to Bill Van Skike and Dean Thulin who recently joined the board, please help me in welcoming Emily Rooney (39), president of the Agricultural Council of California, who has agreed to join our board. Based on our recent meeting, I think she will quickly become one of my new friends.
The "dog days" of summer are on us and with the warning that "only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun," we should note that it is that time of year when dedicated alumni take to the road throughout the state to volunteer their time and talent to help choose the new class. Interviews took place throughout July on multiple days at Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Fresno State, UC Davis and Chico State.

We are pleased to report that there was a robust number, many more than can be accepted, of applicants eager to become a part of Class 49. These applicants diligently completed both phase 1 and 2 of the application process and were invited to face-to-face interviews. Many thanks to our program advisor, Dr. Charlie Crabb, and program coordinator, Ms. Judy Sparacino, for directing the applications from early January to this point of the process.

In addition, the selection of any new class would not be possible if not for the assistance of knowledgeable alumni, along with the guidance provided by our director of education, Dr. Michael Thomas, who together form a team to tackle the challenging task of finding the 24 individuals who make the best fit. While "best fit" cannot be exactly defined, it may contain components related to geography, commodities, demographics and numerous other intangibles.

For any alumni who have ever been involved with Ag Leadership interviews, the first thing they may say is that the selection procedure is more of an art than a science. Clearly there are guidelines for helping recruit candidates that, along with answers provided on the written application, help greatly in assuring that most interviewees are indeed qualified. However, many times the final selection may come down to an alum's own experience in Ag Leadership and what they personally learned in interacting with classmates. Without that "feeling" of what makes for an effective class, our well-established selection process would not be nearly so successful.

So, as we are often asked, what are the guidelines for a successful candidate? First, it has been witnessed that the well-prepared new fellow, that person ready to hit the ground running at the start and throughout the program, is many times someone who has been guided by thoughtful alumni to determine they are ready for the benefits of the leadership instruction. They are individuals with an open mind who look beyond themselves to serve others. They have that inner feeling that it is time to become more actively involved in a leadership role and they want that opportunity "to make a difference" for California agriculture.

There is also the need for the candidate to demonstrate leadership qualities and maturity both in their personal and professional experiences along with a level of self-awareness that allows the individual to honestly recognize their own strengths as well as weaknesses. And, of course, the individual must clearly recognize the commitment being made over the 17 months of instruction and travel and to fairly assess that they have the time, ability and inclination to fully participate in the program.

And even with all the aforementioned "boxes" properly checked off, many times candidates (not to mention alumni who encouraged them to apply) will find themselves disappointed when they are not selected. Their non-selection may be due to timing, best fit or maybe not quite being ready. In any event, many times our role becomes one of encouragement for the individual to apply again in the future as we have seen that some of the most distinguished graduates of the program applied multiple times. In the final analysis, the selection of a new class is not always easy, or pretty, but thanks to the alumni and what we have learned over the last almost 50 years, the process works pretty "doggone" well to help "grow leaders who make a difference." We are very grateful for that fact.
ALL CLASS REUNION

The 2019 All Class Reunion will be held May 3-5 at Booth Ranches in Minkler. The family friendly event will serve as a springboard to Ag Leadership’s 50th anniversary celebration and will be a great opportunity to catch up with friends and fellow alumni. Very special thanks to Loren Booth (27) and Booth Ranches for allowing us use of their beautiful property! More details to follow.

CALF BOARD MEMBER RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Program honored Central Valley nut grower, James (Jim) Maxwell of Agriland Farming Company with the organization’s Plate of Bounty Award at its annual conference on March 4. Maxwell serves as vice chair of CALF’s board of directors. Nominated by the Community Action Partnership of Madera County, the award recognized the company’s CEO for making a difference in the lives of seasonal farmworkers and their families.

The contributions the company makes to its migrant and seasonal workforce include a scholarship program for children of employees; responsive and affordable healthcare, including a worksite health clinic and a commitment to giving all employees a safe, secure and desirable workplace.

COMMON THREADS NORTH

Six Northern California women were honored at the 2018 Common Threads North Dinner at the Historic Hotel Woodland in May. The women were recognized for their extraordinary contributions to agriculture and their communities. The recipients all have deep roots in agriculture and each has demonstrated a history of service to agriculture and her community through volunteerism and philanthropy.

2018 Common Threads Recipients:
- Marit Arana, San Joaquin County
- Tacy Currey, Solano County
- Cynthia Daley, Butte County
- Kari Dodd, Tehama County
- Cathy Hemy, Sacramento County
- Donica O’Laughlin, Butte County

Common Threads is co-hosted by the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation, California county Farm Bureaus, the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, California State University Chico, California Women for Agriculture, Center for Land-Based Learning, Resource Conservation Districts and the University of California, Davis. Common Threads North is a program of the Butte Agriculture Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization.

CALF LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Ag Leadership recently launched its new website which includes easy access to the foundation’s latest news, upcoming events, alumni testimonials, information about current classes and ways to support the foundation.

The website is also home to resources for alumni, current fellows and their families, potential candidates and Ag Leadership supporters. Resources include a way to connect with fellow alumni, a CALF merchandise shop, online giving options and information about applying to the program.

“Our goal for the redeveloped website is to make it easier for alumni, fellows and supporters to efficiently access all the information they need about Ag Leadership in one place,” said CALF President Barry Bedwell (Class 13).

Additional features include alumni spotlights and national and international seminar travel journals. The foundation’s quarterly magazine, Horizons, and monthly eblast, InTouch, are also available for viewing on the website. The family portal makes important resources regarding Ag Leadership’s programs, staff and FAQs easily accessible.

“We’re excited to launch our new site and hope it will help us share all the good news and accomplishments of Ag Leadership alumni and fellows,” said Bedwell.
CALF ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EJNAR KNUDSEN

After serving on Ag Leadership’s board of directors from September 2011 to May 2018, Ejnar Knudsen is terming out of service. Knudsen was a member of the board and also served as chair for the finance and investment committee during a period of time that presented formidable challenges to the foundation. He played a vital role in strategic planning as the foundation restructured its curriculum while attaining financial stability.

“Ejnar demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in working with other board members and management in refocusing and redirecting the foundation to an unprecedented level of success,” said board chairman Jeff Elder (35). “We are very grateful for all of his efforts as well as his generosity to both the foundation and the program.”

Knudsen is founder and CEO of AGR Partners, a growth investor in food processors, manufacturers and agribusinesses. From 2009 to 2012 he was portfolio manager of Passport Capital’s Agriculture Fund. Prior to Passport Capital, he served as EVP of Western Milling and spent 10 years with Rabobank in its New York office. He has served as chair of the Dairy Club and as a director of Opal Foods, Icicle Seafoods, Ridley, Green Plains, Gowan and Materra Farming and is on the steering committee of the Farm Foundation. He received his B.S. from Cornell University and is a CFA charter holder. Ejnar and his wife, Beth (37), live in Davis with their four children.

EMILY ROONEY (39)

Emily Rooney was also added to the board of directors during their May meeting. Rooney joined the Agricultural Council of California in 2008 and became president in 2010. Ag Council represents approximately 15,000 farmers across California, ranging from small, farmer-owned businesses to some of the world’s best-known brands. Ag Council manages legislative and regulatory matters for its members in Sacramento.

A graduate of UC Davis, Rooney has been involved in public policy for 20 years, including time spent at the California Farm Bureau Federation and working in Washington, D.C. for two members of Congress.

Rooney’s family owns a livestock operation in San Joaquin County. She also serves on the statewide FFA Foundation Board and the Executive Council for National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. She and her husband, Pat, have one son.

BILL VAN SKIKE (32)

Bill Van Skike recently joined Ag Leadership’s board of directors after several years of service on the foundation’s Alumni Council. Most recently, Van Skike served as the Alumni Council’s chair and as a regional director. He served on the alignment and strategic alignment committees which worked to create a new vision and plan for the Alumni Council.

Van Skike has planned and hosted various recruitment events in his region. He has also served on the Washington, D.C. Educational Fellowship Program committee where he interviewed candidates and helped coordinate tours and other learning opportunities. Van Skike has also served on the screening committee for Ag Leadership Program candidates.

Van Skike serves as a senior management level consultant to both public and private entities. Prior to joining his current employer, A-C Electric Company, he served as COO at Precision Pharmacy, COO at Klassen Corporation, president of Mazzei Injector Company and president and chief executive officer of California Planting Cotton Seed Distributors. He is a charter member of the San Joaquin Chapter of Young President’s Organization, a graduate of Stagen Integral Leadership Program and is a Class 32 graduate of the Ag Leadership Program. Van Skike completed his MBA and undergraduate degrees at Fresno State where he was an active member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. His passions away from work include horseback riding, golf and spending time with his daughter, Jordan.

DEAN’S COUNCIL

It was also announced at the May board meeting that the Dean’s Council representative would transition from UC Davis Dean Helene Dillard to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Dean Andy Thulin. Members of the Dean’s Council rotate on and off Ag Leadership’s board every two years.

Dean Thulin began his role as dean of Cal Poly’s College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) in June 2014. Prior to his current position, Thulin concurrently directed strategic initiatives for the university and served as head of CAFES’ Animal Science Department. Before joining Cal Poly in 1998, Thulin managed technology deployment at Cargill, Inc., the nation’s largest private company. He was a professor at Michigan State University, where he held a three-year appointment in extension, teaching and research. Thulin graduated from Cal Poly with a bachelor’s degree in animal science and completed his master’s and doctorate degrees at Kansas State University.

Thank you to Dean Dillard for her service to the board of directors in support of Ag Leadership.
Members of Class 46 chose to refurbish Dunkle Baseball Field at Dunkle Park in Firebaugh for their class project. The project included repainting much of the facility and repairing the bleachers and roof.

“We chose this project due to the significance of our westside communities and the impacts the drought and shortage of water has created,” said Sal Parra Jr. (46).

The project was significant to the class because Dunkle Field was built in 1948 by local World War II veterans shortly after returning from the war. Veterans came up with all of the supplies needed and Dunkle Field became Firebaugh’s first baseball facility.

“As we learned about the history of the project, it impressed upon us how important it was to the community to maintain the look and feel of the covered seating that was built by the veterans,” said Randy Hopkins (46). “You don’t see this type of field any more, it is very special.”

The nearly 70-year-old bleachers were in desperate need of an upgrade and many of the materials had to be replaced. However, the class decided to keep as much of the design and structure intact as possible and even reused some of the original wood that had been placed there by the veterans. What could not be salvaged was replaced with new materials and the entire structure was painted and the roof and back paneling were upgraded to sheet metal.

“This field has been home to our local city Little League programs since as far back as I can remember,” said Shaun Ramirez (46). “I personally remember in 1986 starting to play baseball for Little League and played on the field until I was 16 years old. Now more than 30 years later, I have watched and coached my own children through their Little League careers and watched as Firebaugh has had the most successful Cal Ripken Program on the westside. As a resident and citizen who enjoys and utilizes Dunkle Field, words cannot express the amount of gratitude I have towards Class 46.”

In June, residents and community leaders joined Class 46 to celebrate the dedication of Dunkle Field. The ceremony was held during the Championship District Tournament.

“This event culminates several months of planning, fundraising and implementing this service project to the wonderful community of Firebaugh and its baseball enthusiasts,” said Sarah Hovinga (46). “This accomplishment showed the importance of tenacity, partnership and servant leadership.”

The project was made possible through the efforts of Class 46 and by donations made by individuals and businesses from throughout California’s agricultural community.
Class 47 helped upgrade the Little Hands for Ag exhibit at the Merced County Spring Fair in Los Banos. The exhibit provides a hands-on farming experience geared towards teaching third and fourth grade students about crop production.

“Little Hands includes garden beds where kids can simulate planting seeds, harvesting crops and taking those crops to market,” said Hunter Lindemann (47). “We wanted to show the kids that there’s a lot of technology and a lot of opportunities in agriculture—there’s some serious technology going on that’s changing the way that we farm.”

This year’s Merced County Spring Fair was held May 2-6 in Los Banos. A ribbon cutting was held on the fair’s opening day to showcase the exhibit’s upgrades and those who made the project possible.

Originally founded by the Indiana State Fair, the Little Hands exhibit made its California debut at the 2004 Merced County Spring Fair. Recently, the need to modernize the exhibit by introducing the latest technological advancements being implemented in California agriculture was realized.

“We learned that the Little Hands display needed to be upgraded with more technology, so Class 47 decided to take it on as our class project,” said Lindemann. “We chose this project because we knew we could make a difference through the ag education part.”

The upgrades included the addition of a Robovator which uses cameras to identify weeds and mechanically remove them; a plant tape machine used for mechanically transplanting and a robotic farming machine, called a FarmBot, which was purchased by the class for the exhibit. The class also created an educational video which teaches about cotton, nut and dairy production.

“We had the opportunity to educate the next generation of Californians by effecting the way the kids learn, what they learn and how they learn about agriculture,” said Kevin Antongiovanni (47). “Los Banos has 8,000 people who commute into the Bay Area every day and we hope that parents will also learn from the exhibit and pass on our positive message about ag to their peers.”

Class 47 is composed of 24 agricultural leaders from across California who recently graduated from CALP. The group worked together to raise $30,000 to make the project possible.
Reflection is a key component of the Ag Leadership experience. We make time for reflection at least once each seminar. We call this formal reflection time ‘synthesis.’ In the coaching process, the coaching workbook provides a space to consider the feedback being received and how the fellow might adjust behaviors to become more effective. Even the evaluation process for each seminar causes fellows to assess how various topics have influenced their learning. Reflective thinking, then, is an important part of the leadership journey.

As John Dewey, American philosopher and psychologist wrote, “We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.”

Philosopher and professor Donald A. Schön, building on Dewey’s work, termed “reflection-in-action” as an essential practice for leaders and for anyone wishing to extract maximum learning from their experiences. He wrote that the most successful professionals are able to improvise effective solutions to problems by consciously applying lessons learned from what they have done and observed. Reflective practice provides leaders with an opportunity to critically review what has been successful in the past and where improvements can be made.

More recently, Ronald Heifetz, founder of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School, and Marty Linksy, professor at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, made the case for “getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony.” This describes the mental process of stepping back in the midst of action and asking, “What’s really going on here?” We can so easily get swept up in the activity going on around us that we miss the deeper meaning or future implications.

Reflective thinking is a bit deeper than the normal learning process. It allows a learner to enter a deeper level about the topic, to consider her or his own thinking about the relevance of things just learned and how new concepts fit in with other experiences or learning. Reflective thinking also allows an individual to more carefully consider profound experiences from seminars or experiences in the Ag Leadership Program. Often this deeper thinking allows us to identify the intense experiences that have shaped our lives. It is in these moments of contemplation that we may realize the things we need to change or the things we need to do better.

If reflection does not come easily, one way to get into the reflective ‘mood’ is to take a few moments and write about the experience or rewrite the notes that were scribbled during a presentation or experience. For this reason, journaling has always been encouraged during the Ag Leadership Program.

We recently interviewed Dr. Allen Christensen, former campus coordinator and dean of the College of Agriculture at Cal Poly Pomona, who was
involved with Ag Leadership for its first 25 years. He pointed out some of the very basic but important concepts he learned during his involvement with Ag Leadership. A key impact of the program for him was learning the importance of journaling. He still pulls out some of his old journals from seminars or international travels and reminds himself of the things he learned. As he does this, he is reflecting and continuing to learn from seminar content and those who taught by word and by action.

Reflection, journaling and synthesis all require thinking—we could say thinking deeply. We could say it is all about thinking—thinking right.

The statement below by Hugh B. Brown, attorney, educator and author, relates to Ag Leadership in a number of ways and may help us identify what we do in seminars and Ag Leadership experiences.

“One of the most important things in the world is freedom of the mind; from this all other freedoms spring. Such freedom is necessarily dangerous, for one cannot think right without the risk of thinking wrong, but generally more thinking is the antidote for the evils that spring from wrong thinking. More thinking is required. Think through every proposition that is submitted to you and be unafraid to express your opinions, with proper respect for those to whom you talk and proper acknowledgment of your own shortcomings.”

The 17 months of the Ag Leadership fellowship flash by in an instant, it seems. But the experiences and learning—and the impact of that learning—has the potential for lifelong benefit. One of best ways to ensure the staying power of that impact is to practice reflection during the program and to return to the lessons learned periodically to refresh their meaning. As noted by John C. Maxwell, author, speaker and pastor, “Reflective thinking turns experience into insight.”
"TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO STAND AT THE DESKS WHERE SO MANY DECISIONS ABOUT CALIFORNIA HAVE BEEN MADE WAS UNBELIEVABLY POWERFUL. TRULY THE ESSENCE OF ‘IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK.’"

-NATIONAL SEMINAR BLOG BY ANDREW FISHER, PUNIT PARMAR AND MITCHELL YERXA
LESSONS LEARNED:
CLASS 48 NATIONAL SEMINAR

SACRAMENTO, WASHINGTON, D.C., GETTYSBURG AND PHILADELPHIA - MARCH 5 - 15, 2018

BY LIZA TEIXEIRA ROBERTSON

The 10-day national seminar allows fellows to meet with top-level government, business and community leaders while studying leadership through the history of our country. It also provides a valuable extension to the study of state and national issues during the first year.

Class 48's national seminar began on March 5 in Sacramento where the class learned about California's legislative and regulatory processes. They visited the Capitol and were given a tour of the Assembly floor.

“To have the chance to stand at the desks where so many decisions about California have been made was unbelievably powerful. Truly the essence of ‘if these walls could talk.’”
-Blog entry by Andrew Fisher, Punit Parmar and Mitchell Yerxa.

While in Sacramento, the fellows of Class 48 met with Sens. Steve Glazer, Ricardo Lara, Mike McGuire and Jim Nielsen (5) and with Assembly Members Catharine Baker, Jim Cooper, Brian Dahle, Heath Flora and Blanca Rubio. They also met with chief consultant to the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee, Catherine Freeman and cabinet secretary to Governor Brown, Keely Bosler.

“The messages were simple; build trust, build relationships, focus on the needs of the people, not the party. Participate, communicate, reach out and share your knowledge and wisdom. Stay humble, remember that each of us has different needs in our district, but we all have the same needs as people and a family. Learn to agree that we can have differences in opinions but that doesn’t mean that either is 100% wrong or right.”
-Blog entry by Andrew Fisher, Punit Parmar and Mitchell Yerxa.

On their first day in Philadelphia, the fellows visited the National Constitution Center where they learned about the development of the U.S. Constitution and discussed the 14th Amendment. They also participated in a walking tour of historic Philadelphia during which they visited the site of Ben Franklin’s home as well as his gravesite, Betsy Ross’ home and shop, Independence Hall and the original U.S. post office. The walking tour ended with a visit to the Museum of the American Revolution.

“The most compelling exhibit [at the museum] was the revealing of George Washington’s actual battlefield tent. We learned that for the eight years, four months and 15 days of the Revolutionary War, [Washington] only spent a handful of days at Mt. Vernon, preferring to live amongst his troops in a tent on the battlefield. This is an example of his personal investment in the cause and his unwavering character and principals.”
-Blog entry by John Ellis, Tim Fitzgerald, Melissa Lema and Alejandra Navarrete.

In Gettysburg the fellows of Class 48 were led by a licensed battlefield guide through landmark battles and stories of leadership.

“Throughout our walk/drive through the battlefield, the stories of leadership that emerged illustrated the importance of many of the lessons we as a group have been learning these past six months. [Our guide] has an unmatched knowledge of the battle and we were grateful to extend our stay at the site by a few hours to explore more in depth the decisions that were made on both sides of the must-win battle.”
-Blog entry by Melissa Lema and Mitchell Yerxa.

While in Washington, D.C. the fellows attended a service at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, visited Arlington National Cemetery and went on a night tour of Washington, D.C.’s national landmarks.

“The common thread that ran through [the day] is a simple phrase that we as a class have started to call ‘faith and fellowship’. A faith in humanity, a faith in this country, its leadership and a desire to raise each other up as we do ourselves. The sermon this morning broke down John 3:16 line by line, speaking about a love for all people not just a select few. A few hours later, we as a fellowship read the
Gettysburg Address inscribed in marble on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial.

-Blog entry by Mitchell Yerxa.

On their next day in Washington, D.C. the fellows arrived at the Department of State and met with staff of the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations. There they learned about the complexities of establishing and maintaining embassy and consulate properties across the world. One of the key themes of the day was relationship building.

“Growing leaders who make a difference’ starts and ends with growing relationships. This has been a common theme for our entire national trip.”
-Blog entry by Paul Crout, Jarrett Martin and Carissa Ryström.

At the Department of Agriculture, fellows met with Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Stephen Censky. There they discussed leadership and the state of agriculture on a regional and national level. At the Department of the Interior, the group met with Assistant Secretary of Water and Science Austin Ewell to discuss current water issues across California and the importance of investing in California’s water infrastructure.

“It was an honor to spend time with Mr. Nakamura and hear, first-hand, how Ag Leadership has made its mark on a truly inspiring individual.”
-Blog entry by Paul Crout, Jarrett Martin and Carissa Ryström.

The seminar continued in Washington, D.C. with visits to the United Fresh Produce Association (UFPA), the White House and the American Chemistry Council. At UFPA the group discussed workforce, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the farm bill with Tom Stenzel, the association’s president.

“One of the messages that came out of today was even in a ‘specialty’ industry such as theirs, they have a hard time coming together in agreement on issues. But even so, they have to provide a unified front when lobbying.”

At the White House the fellows of Class 48 met with special assistant to the president for agricultural trade and food assistance, Ray Starling. Among other topics, the group discussed H-2A, regulation and infrastructure spending for rural areas.

“He explained to us that President Trump was trying to solve two simple questions. One, what are the limits and two, what are the roadblocks to economic growth? How can he grow agriculture, health, energy, finance, etc. He also explained that 95% of our customers in ag are outside of the U.S., therefore we need to make trade agreements with all parties that are fair to both us and them.”
A meeting with Cal Dooley (13) took the fellows to the American Chemistry Council where they listened to an informative presentation. Dooley, the council’s president, discussed the challenges the industry faces.

“It’s interesting to note that agriculture isn’t the only industry facing an uphill battle both from a policy and public relations perspective. Cal’s messages for success as we go forth were simple: invest your political capital where there is the best chance for return, be creative but fact-based with your messaging and try to always be on the forefront of innovation in your industry.”


The fellows also visited the nation’s first community kitchen. D.C. Central Kitchen develops and operates social ventures targeting the cycle of hunger and poverty. They fight hunger by training jobless adults for culinary careers and then hire their own graduates to prepare 13,000 meals a day for homeless shelters, schools and nonprofit organizations.

“To truly help these people move from rags to an actual hope for the future, it takes more than a warm meal. D.C. Kitchen takes former convicts and those on parole and puts them in a 14 week food prep education program that gives them the tools needed to join the workforce. To wrap up the day, we’d like to share [D.C. Kitchen CEO’s] simple but powerful words: ‘Giving back should be less about the redemption of the giver and more about the liberation of the receiver.’ This simple but impactful phrase, as we saw today, is all too often forgotten when we are serving others and is a game changer for our society.”


In addition to these meetings, the fellows of Class 48 also met with many of our nation’s legislators, including Reps. Devin Nunes (29), Jimmy Panetta and David Valadao and Sens. Dianne Feinstein, Debbie Stabenow and Roger Wicker.

“Like our earliest leaders—those whom we revere the most—they are passionate, dedicated and determined. Most importantly, like those men and women, they are not superhuman, but human and filled with flaws like the rest of us. It was a great reminder that though we may disagree with some of their methods or philosophies, all of these men and women are completely dedicated to advancing and improving our shared democracy. And as we end our trip and think about how to apply what we learned to our own leadership journey, there is an important lesson to remember: we do not just lead because of our strengths and in spite of our weaknesses; both are essential in creating the humanity and empathy from which leadership ability flows.”

-Blog entry by Jess Thomas.
Hello alumni! We had our second Alumni Council meeting of 2018 on May 11 in beautiful San Luis Obispo. There was a great turn out of regional directors with a few phone conferencing in. A large portion of the meeting was spent going over recruiting for Class 49. I’m proud to report that all 11 of our regions were able to host a recruiting event this year and the results have been great. We received almost 70 great applicants for phase 1 this year! That number is right in line with last year’s numbers and we believe is the ‘sweet spot’ for application numbers since we only have 24 spots available in each class. I want to thank all the regional directors and everyone who helped them for all their hard work in recruiting for Class 49.

Other highlights of the meeting were discussion about the All Class Reunion coming up in May 2019 and the 50 year celebration that will take place in 2020. Both events are shaping up to be amazing and I encourage all of you to come and join the festivities!

The meeting ended with a lengthy afternoon session spent brainstorming some new and exciting ways to help keep alumni more informed and engaged with the foundation and one another. We were able to hammer out some changes to the L4 events that we believe will greatly benefit all alumni! A lot of these changes are brand new and still need to be approved, so stay tuned for more information. We have a great Alumni Council with some new blood that is introduced here. If you are interested in getting involved with Ag Leadership, reach out to your regional director and see how you can help.

NEW ALUMNI COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason Cole (42) - Chair
Cole Ranch
Jason is a third generation farmer and manager of a ranch that includes avocados, lemons and rangeland. He also helps run their 300-head cow calf operation.

Rachelle Antinetti (42) - Secretary/Treasurer
Antinetti Consulting
Rachelle is a licensed PCA and an independent ag consultant, specializing in helping growers with regulatory and environmental compliance.

Matt Toste (41) - Region 4 Director
Woolf Enterprises
Matt is a fourth generation farmer and ranch manager who farms primarily almonds in Stanislaus and Merced counties.

Rob Goff (45) - Region 8 Director
Wonderful Orchards
Rob manages farming operations on more than 21,000 acres of almonds, pistachios and pomegranates, the harvest of 30,000 acres of pistachios and the research and development department for Wonderful Orchards.

Ted Grether (47) - Region 9 Director
Grether Farming Company
Ted is a fifth generation farmer and the operations manager for his family’s avocado, lemon and specialty citrus farm.

Jason Schwartze (45) - Region 10 Director
Moonglade Brews and CDFa
Jason owns a small beverage business and brews traditional drinks made from local citrus and ginger. He also works for CDFa as a county grower liaison for the Asian Citrus Psyllid program.

ALUMNI COUNCIL LEADERSHIP
Chair: Jason Cole (42)
Secretary: Rachelle Antinetti (42)
Board Liaison: Bill Van Skike (32)
Region 1 Director: Christine Ivory (41)
Region 2 Director: Glenn Proctor (29)
Region 3 Director: Manpreet Bains (43)
Region 4 Director: Matt Toste (41)
Region 5 Director: Erik Jertberg (40)
Region 6 Director: Vernon Peterson (41)
Region 7 Director: Dan Sutton (40)
Region 8 Director: Rob Goff (45)
Region 9 Director: Ted Grether (47)
Region 10 Director: Jason Schwartz (45)
Region 11 Director: Ellen Way (28)

AT LARGE:
DC/CA Exchange Programs: Chase Hurley (35) and Darlene Din (35)
Regional Director Support: Mica Heilmann (40)
Education Team Liaisons: Correen Davis (45) and Domenick Buck (46)
**RECENT EVENTS**

**THANK YOU**

**Regions 3 & 4 Alumni Mixer**  
**March 24**  
Manpreet Bains (43)  
Randy (14) and Charlene Lange

**Region 8 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 2**  
Edwin Camp (15)  
Lucas Espericueta (45)  
Rob Goff (45)  
Jeff Milinovich (45)  
Brian Neufeld (45)  
Justin Spellman (45)  
Bill Van Skike (32)  
Devon Yurosek (45)

**Region 9 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 3**  
Jason Cole (42)  
Susan Josue (43)  
Denise Junqueiro (42)  
Helen McGrath (43)

**Region 2 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 9**  
John Azevedo (37)  
Andrea Card (38)  
Nicole Hayden (38)  
Cameron Mauritson (45)  
Glenn Proctor (29)  
Matt Stornetta (47)

**Region 4 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 12**  
Rachelle Antinetti (42)  
Maxwell Norton (12)  
Paul Parreira (44)  
Matt Toste (41)  
Roger Wood (7)

**Region 10 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 22**  
Jose Arriaga (44)  
Bob (17) and Anne Atkins

**Region 11 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**April 23**  
Jack Vessey (34)  
Heather Vessey-Garcia  
Cherie Wätre (25)

**Region 7 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event**  
**May 11**  
Lisa Bodrogi (39)  
Chris Darway (25)  
Tom Ikeda (26)  
Dan Sutton (40)  
Brian Talley (30)

**Common Threads North**  
**May 16**  
Manpreet Bains (43)  
Colleen Cecil  
Judy Culbertson  
Nicole Darracq (37)  
Sarah DeForest (39)  
Stephanie Etcheverria (43)  
Louise Ferguson (30)  
Sandy Fiack (29)  
Pam Giacomini (21)  
Heidi Harris (43)  
Jeana Hulquist (38)  
Mary Kimball (32)  
Lynn Martindale (31)  
Shelley MacDonald  
Kelly Mora (48)  
Nicole Van Vleck (26)
Classes 1-9
George Soares (4) co-authored a Fresno Bee opinion article in May titled “Two farmers weigh in on Fresno State controversy” to voice his thoughts about the recent comments of a Fresno State professor which are drawing national attention.

George Soares (4) was featured in a CaliforniaAgNet video addressing the legislative and regulatory burden faced by California farmers.

Classes 10-19
Sharan Lanini (16) was featured in an article titled “Leaf by leaf” in the May/June issue of California Bountiful. In the article, Lanini, a food-safety program director, talks about an integrated food-safety program that begins in the field and extends through the packaged product.

Paul Wenger (17) was named Agriculturalist of the Year by the California State Fair for his contributions and service to developing innovations to carry farming into the future.

Classes 20-29
A.G. Kawamura (20) was featured in an April Capital Press article titled “Would three Californias be better for ag?” about whether splitting California into three states would help or hurt agriculture.

Holly King (24) was elected to the Almond Board of California’s board of directors. As an independent grower, King will serve in “member position three”.

Glenda Humiston (25) spoke at the Common Threads North dinner and awards ceremony at the Historic Woodland Hotel.

Mark Grewal (28) was sworn in as a director of the Tri-County Water Authority in May after being named general manager of the Angiola Water District. He has also been named president of Reclamation District 761.

Cindy Jewell (30) was the honoree and featured speaker at the Reception Honoring Women in Produce in June at United Fresh 2018 in Chicago. Jewell is vice president of marketing at California Giant Berry Farms. Prior to joining California Giant, Cindy served as executive vice president of the California Strawberry Commission, where she worked for 19 years.

Jeff Bitter (32) spoke at the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium’s “State of the Industry” session.

Ann Thrupp (32) was featured in an article titled “High steaks: the environmentalist beef with impossible burger” in the spring issue of California Magazine. Thrupp is executive director of the Berkeley Food Institute.

Nathan Dorn’s (42) company, Food Origins, was selected as the 2018 winner of the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce’s Startups Ventura County competition. Dorn is CEO and founder of the company which provides precision harvest data for high value hand harvest fruits and produce. Food Origins was awarded $20,000 in cash and $5,000 in-kind awards consisting of professional services.

Paul Parreira (44) and his family hosted the 7th annual Debbie Parreira Memorial Blood drive in June at the Los Banos Fairgrounds. The blood drive benefited the Central California Blood Center which provides blood and services to patients who receive care at 30 hospitals and their network of facilities in Fresno, Tulare, Madera, Kings and Mariposa counties.

Shannon Douglass (46) was named by Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to serve on the Plant Variety Protection Board. Douglass will serve as a farm sector rep. The board advises the secretary on matters dealing with intellectual property rights for developers of new varieties of plants.

Christian Vellanoweth (46) was featured in a CBS Sacramento news story titled “Puente Futbol raising money with foot golf tournament” about a new nonprofit and its organizers who hope to enrich children’s lives with soccer.

Jenny Lester Moffitt (47) spoke at the annual American National Cattlewomen Region VI meeting in Monterey hosted by California CattleWomen. Members attended from Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Montana and Minnesota.

Multiple Classes
Nat DiBudo (6) retired as president and CEO of Allied Grape Growers (AGG) at the end of June after nearly two decades of leadership. The AGG board appointed vice president of operations, Jeff Bitter (32), as the next president of the 500-member statewide wine grape marketing association.

Holly King (24) and Mike Young (35) were interviewed about the effect of tariffs on California almond farmers. The story was featured on Fox News and Fox Business Report. King is chair of the Almond Board of California.

Mike Poindexter (40) and Matt Fisher (41) were featured in an April Los Angeles Times article titled “Raids and tariffs? We’ll take our lumps, say California farmers” about Chinese tariffs and raids by immigration officials.

Correen Davis (45) and Shannon Douglass (46) were recently appointed to serve on the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom’s (CFAITC) board of directors. Jane Roberti (45) has been a longtime member of the CFAITC board.
DONOR SUPPORT  APRIL 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2018

$20,000
Harden Foundation

$8,000
Rabobank, N.A.

$5,000
Woolf Farming & Processing

$3,500
Limoncera Foundation Fund

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Victor Packing, Inc.

$1,000
Allied Grape Growers
Bream Property Management, Inc.*
Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss Noland
Matt Toste

$500
Bob and Anne Atkins
Karen Buchinger
Cynthia Cory
Paul Crout*
Mark and Nickie Krebsbach*

$250
Tim Panziera
William Lewis

$235
Manpreet Bains

$150
John Ellis*
Stephanie Tillman

$100
Tom Barrios
Charlie Crabb
Jazmin Lopez*

$75
Jason and Jacqueline Pucheu

$26.79
Amazon Smile

In Memory of Jane Carter
Maureen "Ladybug" Doherty: $100
Tom and Rose Ann Ellis: $100
Laura Meier: $100

In Memory of Butch Dias (14)
Bob and Shirley Dempel: $100

In-Kind
TMD Creative: $6,000
Melissa Yerxa Ortiz: $468.75
Peggy Perry: $272.50
Linda Boehm: $80.00

*Class 48 Giving
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