CLASS 48 COMMENCEMENT

Strength Through Leadership

We grow leaders who make a difference.
A REVIEW AND THANKS TO AG LEADERSHIP’S SERVANT LEADERS

By Jeff Elder (35)

I was recently reviewing our foundation’s annual report for 2017 - 2018. While doing so, it struck me when looking at all of the events and activities—including recruiting candidates for the program, appraising applications, conducting face-to-face interviews, coordinating the D.C. and California Exchange Programs and organizing multiple fundraising and networking gatherings—just how fortunate we are to have dedicated alumni who truly are servant leaders. Our signature events such as the Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast, Colusa Farm Show Breakfast, Region 9 Golf Tournament, Dean Brown Golf Tournament, Common Threads, the Agricultural and Government Leaders Reception and the NorCal Clay Shoot would simply not exist if not for those many individuals who are living our mission statement of being leaders who make a difference. They most certainly have adopted the servant leadership model for our great benefit and we are deeply appreciative.

In that same regard, we have been blessed over the last five decades with people, both alumni and non-alumni, who have been enthusiastically willing to serve in the important oversight role on our board of directors. Serving on the board and in the role of chairman these last few years has given me a much greater sense of knowledge and appreciation for what they do and bring to achieving our very worthwhile vision of “being a catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community.”

Recently, and in accordance with our bylaws, two members of our board termed out their time guiding Ag Leadership after each serving six years. In 2018, Ejnar Knudsen of AGR Partners and husband of Class 37 member Beth Knudsen, completed his formal board service, but thankfully not his involvement with assisting Ag Leadership and the foundation. He continues to be a valuable advisor, particularly on financial issues, continually searching for ways to further our cause. Additionally, he is a key component, volunteering time and material, in our strategic planning processes moving forward.

Similarly, Class 15 member Edwin Camp of DM Camp & Sons in Bakersfield, just finished his position on the board in February. Edwin’s lifelong experience and involvement in agriculture, its challenges as well as organizations addressing those challenges, is virtually unmatched. And yet he maintains his support in multiple ways for Ag Leadership, including making road trips around the state to talk to his peers about support for the program. Pulled multiple ways by various business interests and demands, he nevertheless always finds time to promote the advantages of Ag Leadership.

These are just two examples of the caliber of folks who have, as another one of our distinguished past board members likes to distinctly point out, served not sat, on our governing body to help this foundation and all of California agriculture. To these two friends and the other 14 leaders currently serving on our board, as well as all of the steadfast and loyal alumni who work so hard for Ag Leadership, thank you so very much for your input, talent, support and for being servant leaders! We could not do it without you!

CHAIR MESSAGE

HORIZONS MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019
www.agleaders.org
As this edition of Horizons arrives in your mailbox, we have hopefully just come off a bountiful winter in terms of seasonal rainfall (we were at average at the beginning of February with a slightly above average snowpack when this was written) and are looking forward to a productive harvest that will provide encouraging markets, both domestically and internationally. The challenges of agricultural production, even in a state such as ours that provides fairly consistent weather, have certainly come into additional focus as trade, labor and regulatory issues become more impactful every day.

Here at the Ag Leadership Foundation office, we continue to hear from alumni about the clear need for effective leadership development to produce better influencers to deal with those issues. We are certainly conscious of that desire. The director of education and Core Faculty are constantly reviewing curriculum to ensure that the 17 months of active instruction, as well as continuing education instruction, are as relevant as possible.

Evaluations from participants confirm a favorable opinion of the instructional material and that it continues to have a very positive impact on their leadership capabilities. This valuable feedback authenticates to us the value of the curriculum and why we stay the course on leadership development to “grow leaders who make a difference.”

However, we, as the foundation, also understand that in order to maximize the impact of Ag Leadership and to fulfill our vision “to be a catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community,” we must provide a continual platform for alumni to connect, to interact, to learn and to grow with one another as leaders. In that regard, a great opportunity that is just around the corner is the All-Class Reunion which will be held May 3-5, 2019 at the picturesque setting of Booth Ranches along the Kings River in Minkler.

This event will not only allow for those previously stated components of connectivity, in addition to just a plain good old time with family and friends, it will also provide the chance for the specific focus on how we can maximize the impact of the upcoming 50th anniversary celebration that will be held Oct. 22-24, 2020 in Monterey. Thanks to the organizational efforts of co-chairs Gail Gray (22) and Deanna Van Klaveren (32), we are looking at a unique happening in a few short weeks. One that will involve some of our most active alumni to set the stage and planning for the biggest opportunity that most of us will have in this lifetime to create a precedent for Ag Leadership alumni connectivity that will live far into the future.

So, if you haven’t already made plans to be there and lounge in fantastic spring weather along the banks of the river in May, please consider doing so. And to be clear, accommodations are not just limited to tents, RVs or sleeping in the great out-of-doors at this beautiful, scenic location. There are very reasonable and comfortable hotel rooms within a very short distance. We on staff, particularly our alumni coordinator, Mandi Nack (mnack@agleaders.org), would be more than happy to assist you in making those accommodations or answer any questions you may have.

We are at an exciting time for Ag Leadership with great interest in the program from those in the agricultural industry, an energized faculty and curriculum and engaged and dedicated alumni leadership. The future does indeed look bright, but we always need you, as rank and file alumni, to be part of the journey moving forward. We look forward to seeing you next month! Thank you!
CLASS 50 APPLICATIONS

Applications are available on the CALF website. Phase one applications are due April 29. Phase two applications are due May 20. We will need your help identifying, recruiting and mentoring candidates for the program. Please start thinking about and talking with friends and colleagues who would be ideal candidates for Ag Leadership.

AG LEADERSHIP ALUMNI

WORLD AG EXPO BREAKFAST

The 25th annual Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast for the benefit of CALF was held on Feb. 14 in Tulare. Approximately 900 people, a record crowd, attended in support of Ag Leadership and to hear from John Stenderup, a mountain climber who conquered both Mount Everest and K2.

His inspirational address on leadership, accompanied by incredible and breathtaking photos, was well received. The master of ceremonies for the event was former CALF President and CEO Bob Gray.

At the conclusion of the breakfast, Cliff Dunbar, chairman of Buckman Mitchell Insurance (a division of Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.), presented a $125,000 check to Ag Leadership. The check was accepted on behalf of CALF by the breakfast committee’s chairman, Ray Van Beek (37) and CALF President Barry Bedwell (13). The record amount raised was due to the generosity of all those in attendance and sponsorships from insurance partners: The Zenith, Nationwide, State Fund, Allianz, RCIS, Travelers, Western Growers, Anthem, BHHHC, Chubb, ICW, Republic and York Risk.

COLUSA FARM SHOW

RABOBANK BREAKFAST

The 17th annual Colusa Farm Show Breakfast was held on Feb. 6. The popular fundraising event supports the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation and the CSU Chico College of Agriculture, for scholarships and other academic needs. This year, approximately 450 people attended and $29,000 was raised for Chico State.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea was the keynote speaker at the annual event. He delivered an inspirational leadership address. Sheriff Honea spoke to a sold-out crowd, almost exactly one year since when he explained the challenges he faced when dealing with the Oroville Dam spillway crisis. This year he described the leadership challenges connected to the Camp Fire which took 85 lives and destroyed the town of Paradise. At the conclusion of his speech, a legislative resolution was presented to the sheriff by California Sen. Jim Nielsen (5) and Assemblyman James Gallagher in appreciation of his leadership.

Hosted by alumni of the CSU Chico College of Agriculture, CALF and Alpha Gamma Rho, the event has raised nearly $400,000 for scholarships and leadership programs in its 17-year history.
CAMERON BOSWELL JOINS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chairman Jeff Elder (35) announced at the February board meeting that Cameron Boswell (42) was unanimously approved to become a member of CALF’s board of directors after first being recommended by the governance committee. Cameron fills the director slot previously held by Edwin Camp (15), who termed out after serving for six years.

“We are so pleased that Cameron has agreed to join this distinguished group of leaders directing the foundation,” said Elder. “He brings invaluable experience, not only as an alumnus of the program but as someone facing the challenges of production ag every day. We cannot begin to thank Edwin for all of his contributions to the success of Ag Leadership during these last six years. He donated his time, talent and treasure unselfishly and always served as one of the prime advocates for the program. We will always be grateful.”

Cameron is a fourth-generation member of J.G. Boswell Company, which farms and processes in the Central Valley and New South Wales, Australia. It is primarily known for Pima cotton, processing tomatoes, pistachios and safflower. Cameron is the grandson of James G. Boswell II, co-founder of the California Ag Leadership Foundation. Cameron currently serves as the vice president of administration for the J.G. Boswell Company.

Cameron earned his bachelor’s degree at Prescott College in 2004 with a double major in political economy and human development. Cameron and his wife, Cherilyn, met in college and were married in 2005. Originally from the Detroit/Ann Arbor area, Cherilyn has a master’s degree in counseling psychology and has worked as a child and family therapist. They live in Santa Clarita with their two sons.

BOARD MEMBER HONORED

Jim Maxwell, CALF board member, was chosen to receive the Central Valley Distinguished Citizen Award by the Sequoia Council, Boy Scouts of America. He was recognized at a special dinner on March 26 at Pardini’s in Fresno, where he was saluted for his outstanding record as a community and business leader and thanked for his years of community involvement, civic activities and service.

PASSING OF FORMER CAL POLY POMONA DEAN

Wayne Bidlack, who served as dean of the College of Agriculture during a period of great change from 1995 to 2007, died Nov. 2, 2018. He was 74. Dr. Bidlack was an enthusiastic supporter of Ag Leadership and served on the foundation’s Deans’ Council.

During Bidlack’s tenure as dean, the college established the AGRIscapes Center, which would serve as a place to demonstrate sustainable agriculture. AGRIscapes included the Farm Store at Kellogg Ranch, classrooms, educational exhibits, a theater, a recycling education center and office space. Greenhouses were added in 2007. Other programs were developed during Bidlack’s tenure, including the food science and technology baccalaureate in 1999; the animal health science baccalaureate in 2004 and the Culinary emphasis in 2006. The college also began leasing 1,000 acres around the California Institution for Men in Chino to farm and support instruction in 2003 and planted vineyards on campus for winemaking.

His passion for science and education were evident through his volunteer service and leadership in a number of organizations in addition to Ag Leadership, including the Institute of Food Technologists, American Society of Nutrition, the International Life Sciences Institute and the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.

In 2002, Bidlack was selected as one of five honorees from throughout the California State University system for the Wang Family Excellence Award, which recognizes faculty and administrators who have distinguished themselves in their academic disciplines.
On Feb. 9 the California Ag Leadership Foundation (CALF) celebrated the commencement of its 48th class. Along with family, friends and Ag Leadership supporters, the fellows of Class 48 marked the completion of their advanced leadership development experience at a commencement ceremony held at Fresno State.

Commencement is an opportunity for fellows to reflect on their time in the program and to share about their experience during the intensive 17-month program. As a class, the fellows studied leadership theory, effective communication, motivation, critical and strategic thinking, change management, emotional intelligence and complex social and cultural issues. Class 48’s seminars were delivered by four partner universities—Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Fresno State and UC Davis. To reach their commencement, the fellows participated in more than 50 seminar days, including an 8-day national travel seminar to Washington, D.C., Gettysburg and Philadelphia and a 15-day international travel seminar to Australia and Vanuatu.

“The graduation of a new class never fails to impress me,” said CALF board chairman Jeff Elder (35). “This was certainly the case with the graduation of Class 48, who really raised the bar on graduation ceremonies. All members of the class participated in some way during the graduation dinner and commencement, which went from some terrific comedic moments to heartfelt stories of leadership learned.”

The program began with the presentation of colors by a pair of Girl Scouts—daughters of Class 48 fellow Adam Lovgren. After an invocation by Joseph Vander Schaaf (48), Fresno State President Joseph Castro spoke about the importance of leadership programs for the continuation of a strong agricultural industry in California.

“I know there are many other things you could be doing with your time, but you chose the California Ag Leadership Program to benefit the greater good,” said Castro. “Your commitment is truly remarkable.”

Castro also spoke about inspiring people through strong leadership to serve and accomplish common goals.

“Leadership can be demonstrated by identifying bold ideas that can be embraced by people with different perspectives,” said Castro. “Seek to enhance connections with people who benefit from agriculture to serve the greater good.”

CALF President Barry Bedwell (13) also addressed the group and emphasized the value of emotional intelligence in leadership.

“The importance of self-awareness is to understand your own strengths and weaknesses through humility,” said Bedwell. “If we are humble and self-aware, we can understand how we are viewed by others. As leaders,
“STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN AG AND OTHERS IN OUR SOCIETY IS ONE OF THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP. THE ROAD AHEAD IS NOT SMOOTH OR STRAIGHT, BUT RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGE IS A KEY ATTRIBUTE OF LEADERSHIP. I KNOW THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT BECAUSE OF THIS PROGRAM AND LEADERS LIKE YOU.”

-Fresno State President Joseph Castro
we must also self-regulate, self-motivate and have empathy in order to understand what others are feeling.”

Bedwell ended his remarks with advice for the graduating class.

“Don’t go out there and take what you learned and put it on a shelf,” said Bedwell. “Use what you learned over the past 17 months to make a difference for California agriculture.

The program continued with a presentation about the projects Class 48 worked on during their time in the California Ag Leadership Program (CALP). Mark Krebsbach, Jazmin Lopez and Adam Lovgren described how their class helped children with disabilities at AbilityFirst, restored a playground for homeless children and built a bicycle cart for Sister Libby—a Sacramento area nun who delivers necessities to homeless individuals. Their projects also included a community garden initiative which provided $10,000 in grants for five organizations. The grants were given to groups to enhance their garden programs through the purchase of benches, raised beds, drip irrigation, fruit trees and other garden supplies and improvements.

“We will always benefit if we continue to nurture and inspire growth,” said Lopez of Class 48’s garden grant program.

Paul Crout followed by thanking the core faculty for their support and guidance throughout Class 48’s leadership journey.

“They were our guides and mentors and listened to our hurts, our hangups and they encouraged us,” said Crout. “I want to personally thank the core faculty for everything they have done for us as a class.”

Core faculty member Dr. Peggy Perry (9) talked about the coaching process and reflected on her time with the fellows.

“I see how you carry yourselves, how you interact with each other,” said Perry. “You have new stories to write and are thinking about what comes next for you. I wish you happiness, fulfillment and joy. You have all the tools you need for that joy and the challenges ahead.”

Perhaps the most moving part of every commencement are the personal stories shared by fellows of the graduating class. Fellows talk about how they were changed, inspired and strengthened through their experiences in the program.

Jarrett Martin talked about how being in the program changed his perspective on the important things in life. He spoke about how the 17-month experience opened his eyes and helped him to better himself.

“I was blind,” said Martin. “I’m eternally grateful for the opportunity I had to learn from 22 new friends and the core faculty. I stand here a better man and am thankful you encouraged me to do better and to be better.”

Grant Baglietto shared about the walls he had built that prevented him from talking about what he and his wife were facing as they learned about their son’s autism diagnosis. He spoke about the moment during the program when he realized that sharing about his son was a way to embrace the path he was on.

“As comfortable as the status quo is, fear must be overcome,” said Baglietto. “We must have courage to be ourselves, to expose our weaknesses and to be vulnerable.”

Melissa Lema spoke to the group about being accepted to the program in the face of a serious medical diagnosis. She shared about how the new people and challenges she experienced through the program helped her to see new solutions and perspectives that allowed her to think and live outside the box.

“My comfort zone was well established and very comfortable,” said Lema. “I had a plan and then one day, the rules changed. I learned I was sick and the rules and expectations of myself went out the window. During our 17 months together a lot of good things happened.”

Carissa Rystrom was the final fellow to speak about her personal leadership journey. She said the program helped her to think about the kind of life she was leading and how it was impacting her family and others around her.
“If we want to achieve our purpose, we have to be willing to destroy our ego,” said Rystrom. “I had to look at my selfishness, ego and pride and it was then that I realized there was a renewal. I got the joy of breaking down my fear as I broke down my ego.”

The program continued with a video presentation that featured highlights of Class 48’s leadership experience, presentation of faculty gifts and recognition of alumni, employers and family members.

The fellows of the class thanked all of those in their lives who helped make it possible for them to be fully committed to the program and for supporting them while they were away from family and work responsibilities in order to better themselves through the program.

“Class 48’s commencement ceremonies, at their dinner as well as the following day when they received their certificates, graphically demonstrated the power and effectiveness of the curriculum they experienced over 17 months of instruction,” said Bedwell. “They were changed individuals who were truly prepared to be leaders who will make a difference for agriculture. I believe we will hear much more from them in the future.”

“I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT GREAT THINGS COME FROM THIS CLASS IN THE FUTURE AS THEY’RE A VERY IMPRESSIVE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS.”

- Jeff Elder (35), CALF board chairman
As the newest member of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF) team, I have plunged headlong into a deep dive on-boarding experience with the gracious support of core faculty, board members, staff, alumni and many others in the ag leadership community. Through this process, I have had the opportunity to visit several of our university partner campuses, observe seminars in progress, network at regional alumni events and celebrate the recent commencement of Class 48. I continue to be impressed not only by the quality of the leadership development curriculum, but also with the caliber of people involved in this community. One of the deciding factors that resonated with me is the foundation’s mission: “We grow leaders who make a difference.” This is a mission that I personally stand behind and remain committed to uphold as we look to the future.

Growing Leaders
Effective leadership development begins with understanding who we are as human beings, how we behave in relationship to others and how we operate in the world. This insight informs the choices we make in creating compelling vision, influencing decisions of others and recruiting followers to join us in the journey. Sometimes leaders make new discoveries in this process, revealing unrealized potential or overexerted strengths. While our strengths can be a vast wealth of resource from which we draw, they can also be taken to extreme, which may show up as risk factors, resulting in negative consequences in our relationships.

One example that comes to mind is the visionary executive, who was usually the first one to recognize shifts in the market, identify business challenges faced by clients and anticipate necessary innovations that would advance his company. He was known for being visionary, creative and innovative. However, the risk factor appeared when he would make what his team described as “cognitive leaps of faith” in introducing his recommended solutions without connecting the proverbial dots for others in the room. He simply expected others to see the solution as plainly as he did and criticize the competence
and capability of others when they did not draw the same conclusions. This leadership approach cost him the opportunity to continue progressing in his career. Ultimately, he had achieved his plateau much sooner than he expected.

By contrast, a mid-level marketing director had a reputation for being results-oriented with a “get the job done” mentality. She described herself as a “pleaser,” which to her meant she would always take on additional responsibility and find a way to get it across the finish line, so as to please her superiors. Her executive team saw and rewarded her potential for being able to execute efficiently and effectively. The downside of this strength was realized when her team of direct reports may not have shared her ambitious drive and need for recognition. In fact, she drove her team excessively, by overcommitting them and accepting more responsibility than her team’s workload could reasonably support. In effect, she burned them out. As a result, a complaint was filed with human resources and she was put on a mandatory leave. Fortunately for her, this was a reality check. She began working with a coach to understand her leadership style and to make intentional corrective choices to rebuild relationships, have the crucial conversations when necessary and asked her team for their input on reasonable timelines and deliverables to ensure their health, wellbeing and success. In the end, she returned to work, re-established her credibility and built a new leadership brand for herself as a highly collaborative and execution-oriented leader who cared not only about the work product, but also her people.

Both of these examples illustrate the importance of understanding our strengths and recognizing the consequences when those same strengths are taken too far or over-applied. In both cases, it was how the leader responded to feedback from key stakeholders that determined the outcome. The first leader ignored the feedback, deflected the responsibility and chose not to adjust his behavior. This resulted in the end of his tenure with that company.

The second leader accepted the feedback as a wake-up call, reflected and evaluated how she wanted to proceed and then took corrective action. Ultimately, she has been recognized and promoted for her newly discovered leadership capability.

Making a Difference

Leadership is a choice—a series of choices, really. Every day we are faced with choices, trade-offs and decisions, all of which have consequences—good and bad. Further, the work of leadership is often considered to be dual-focused. Leaders must be ever mindful of two realities: the current state of daily affairs and the future vision for the organization. Whether we lead small teams or large corporations or nonprofit organizations, we must keep both realities in balance.

Keeping one eye on the current state, we rely on our teams to keep us apprised of the day-to-day details of what is happening inside our organizations, our markets and our communities. We may have analysts and advisors and we may become embroiled in the operational heavy lifting necessary to keep the organization moving forward. However, it is not unusual for leaders to become overly involved in the daily details. Leaders who spend too much energy on the day-to-day details may lose sight of the long view: where the organization is going. They may miss opportunities to partner or innovate or collaborate for a broader benefit. In short, they may lose focus on the mission.

On the other hand, it is essential for leaders to step back from the details and take another perspective. This allows the necessary time for reflecting on progress, anticipating course corrections, planning deliberately and proactively leading with purpose and intention in the desired direction. Although spending excessive time and energy in this space is necessary, when overextended, it may delay leaders from making critical real-time decisions to keep the organization productive and in some cases, solvent. This dual-focused work of leaders must remain in balance, so that the time and energy expended never strays too far in either direction, as dire consequences may result. The sum total of these everyday choices, in the end, determine the difference we make.

Leaving a Legacy

At the Region 6 alumni event in Kingsburg, I was invited for a “get-to-know-you” discussion, in which we covered quite a lot of territory: from welcoming Class 48 into the alumni community, to coaching, to the need for ongoing learning and development. I enjoyed the opportunity to share my personal mantra, which is: Learn. Lead. Leave a legacy.

This means we learn new skills, ideas and ways of working and being so that we may become more effective leaders who make a positive impact. Our everyday choices, expressed in our words and actions, including how we spend our time, talents and treasures, leave an indelible imprint on the people and the environment around us. These choices and actions leave an impact, whether positive or not. This impact is our legacy. In “A Leader’s Legacy,” authors Kouzes and Posner (2006) write:

“To realize that we make a difference is both a joyous opportunity and a potential burden. Because we most influence those who are the closest to us, we’re given a great gift. We’re presented with the chance to change a life. We’re granted the option of investing in the growth of others. We’re offered the opportunity to make the world a better place.”

Leadership truly is about recognizing the current state of our world, and making intentional choices to leave it a better place than we found it.

In closing, let me remind you that recruitment for Class 50 is well underway, and the All-Class Reunion in May will be here before we know it. Please join me in the coming months by attending our alumni and recruitment events. These events are an opportunity to reconnect with the community, as well as to shape the future. Together, let’s leave of legacy, make a positive difference and be a catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community and the world.

References


On March 5, the annual Agricultural and Government Leaders Reception was held at the Sutter Club in Sacramento. The important social and networking event brought together more than 170 California government leaders, agricultural industry leaders, Ag Leadership alumni and current program fellows. The reception connects CALF to influential decision makers to further the goal of a strong and viable future for California agriculture.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross, a former foundation board member, spoke to the group about the importance of leadership development and the California Ag Leadership Program. During her comments, Ross also recognized Jim Boswell, who was in attendance, for his family’s extraordinary commitment and support of Ag Leadership for five decades.

Jeff Elder (35), chairman of CALF’s board of directors, also addressed the group and thanked Jill Scofield (47) and all alumni who contributed to the success of the event. He also introduced board members Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Dean, Andy Thulin, Cameron Boswell (42), Mary-Ann Warmerdam (17), Pierre Tada (22) and Ejnar Knudsen.

As part of the event, several hundred pounds of California agricultural products were donated to a local food bank. The food was contributed by CALF alumni from across the state. The donated goods were displayed at the event along with educational information about the importance of California agriculture. After the event, the items were available for immediate distribution to individuals and families who do not have access to healthy food.

“We continued our great partnership with the River City Food Bank and donated 800 pounds of fresh commodities and a wide variety of agricultural products, ranging from cheese and honey to citrus and artichokes,” said Mica Heilmann (40). “The food bank has received more than 5,600 pounds of agricultural products from the foundation since we began our partnership with them as part of our annual reception.”

The event was also created out of a need identified by members of Class 32 for fellows to learn more about California’s government system before heading to Washington, D.C. for the national seminar.

“We class thought it made more sense for us to have a state legislative experience first to know how we could try to make a difference here, especially if some of us weren’t ready to go straight into D.C.,” said Susan DiTomaso (32).

The event continues as a valuable meeting place for agricultural and government leaders to connect.

“Most important is for the fellows to be exposed to state government officials as part of their learning experience,” said Dennis Albiani (32). “This event provides an introduction to Sacramento and state officials as well as other industry leaders. It exposes [Ag Leadership] and the current fellows to industry leaders and alumni and invites them to re-engage.”

Dennis Albiani, who was part of the original reception committee, urges alumni to attend the event as an important way to remain connected to Ag Leadership.

“Alumni should attend to visit with the future leaders of trade associations, farming enterprises and to see current state officials and leaders,” said Albiani. “It is important to re-engage with Ag Leadership to see how the program is evolving and to continue your own lifelong learning.”

Thank you to Farm Credit (American Ag Credit, CoBank and Farm Credit West) for sponsoring this year’s event and to Clint Rehermann and Manpreet Bains (43) for also contributing to the success of the reception.

“I BELIEVE STRONGLY IN THE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE EVENT PROVIDES—BOTH FOR CURRENT CLASS MEMBERS AND ALUMNI. THE RE-ENGAGEMENT PIECE IS CRITICAL AND CONNECTING CURRENT CLASS MEMBERS WITH ALUMNI IS ALSO A ROLE THE EVENT PLAYS.”

-Mary Kimball (32)

-Dennis Albiani (32)
Hello alumni! On behalf of the Alumni Council, I hope this message finds you all well and excited about spring being here! I thoroughly enjoyed the wet winter we had and I am sure most Californians are excited about 2019 starting with full reservoirs and the Sierras packed with snow! We still have a ways to go to solve our state’s complex water issues, but at least we can breathe a little easier for one or two more years.

Spring is a time for planting fields and watching our trees and vines come alive with the bloom that will be this year’s crop. In the same vein, it is also the time when Ag Leadership is actively recruiting prospects for Class 50. Many regions around the state have already hosted outstanding recruiting events and those that have not will be doing so soon. These events are a great way for alumni to reconnect and show what Ag Leadership is all about to people interested in applying for the program.

What really makes the events successful is when regional alumni pack them with top-tier recruits. I have had the opportunity to attend a few recruiting events this year and they have been outstanding. If you haven’t attended a recruitment event recently, I highly recommend you attend and check out all the great things going on. No recruitment event is complete without recruits, though. I highly encourage you all to be on the lookout for talented mid-career individuals who you believe could benefit from the program. If you are interested in getting involved with recruiting events, check out the CALF website where you can view the event calendar and also see contact information for your regional directors. Give them a call and get involved. If you have a recruit in mind, let them know that phase one applications for Class 50 are being accepted now through April 29. The application can be found on the foundation website.

Feb. 8 was our most recent Alumni Council meeting. It was well attended with all the regions present in person or via video conferencing. Most of the meeting was spent discussing plans for the upcoming All-Class Reunion, May 3-5 at Loren Booth’s (27) ranch in Minkler. I know many of the Alumni Council will be attending, myself included, and I hope all of you can make it! I have personally been to the ranch and can say that it is amazing—the perfect location for a fun-filled weekend the whole family will enjoy!

We also spent time discussing Ag Leadership’s 50th anniversary celebration taking place in October of 2020 in Monterey. This event has me extremely excited and has the potential to be the largest gathering of Ag Leadership alumni in history! The planning process is underway but an event of this size is a massive logistical undertaking and we need some assistance.

Currently, the Alumni Council and foundation are looking for alumni volunteers to join the various committees which will be coordinating the 50th anniversary celebration. This is yet another way to get involved with Ag Leadership and give back something to the foundation that has given us all so much. If you are interested in getting involved, contact the foundation office.

Our Clovis meeting concluded with the Alumni Council making a presentation to the fellows of Class 48 who were in town for their commencement. The Alumni Council, along with the education team liaisons, were able to make a quick presentation to Class 48. Christine Ivory (41) and Manpreet Bains (43) had CALF hats made for the fellows as gifts to welcome them into the ranks of alumni. Following introductions and gifts, we broke fellows of Class 48 into their regions and gave them the opportunity to sit down with their regional directors over lunch so they could answer any questions they may have and inform them of all the ways they can get involved with the foundation. I can say that after meeting and speaking with many of Class 48’s members, I was very impressed and am excited to get them involved with the foundation as alumni.

In summation, I hope to see you all in May at the All-Class Reunion and I hope that the rest of 2019 treats you and your families well. I also hope you take the time to visit the foundation website to see all the great things going on with Ag Leadership and how to get involved.
“I HIGHLY ENCOURAGE YOU ALL TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR TALENTED MID-CAREER INDIVIDUALS WHO YOU BELIEVE COULD BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH RECRUITING EVENTS, CHECK OUT THE CALF WEBSITE WHERE YOU CAN VIEW THE EVENT CALENDAR AND ALSO SEE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTORS.”

- Jason Cole (42), Alumni Council chair

AGLEADERS.ORG
RECENT EVENTS

THANK YOU

January 27
Region 3 Recruitment Event
Clarksburg
Mike Campbell (3)
Doug Hemly (15)
Steve Heringer (9)
Jeff Merwin (20)
Tom Merwin (44)
Steve Murrill (17)
Erik Vink (25)

January 31
Region 4 Recruitment Event
Turlock
Matt Toste (41)

February 6
Colusa Farm Show Breakfast
Lewis Bair (33)
Terry Bressler (30)
Christie Capik
Bill Carriere (27)
Colleen Cecil
Charlie Crabb
Jack Coots (27)
Holly Dawley (38)
Sarah DeForest (39)
Robin Flournoy (29)
Les Heringer (13)
Mark Kimmelshue (37)
Emily Lazzerini
Tom Martin
Sam Nevis (32)
Justin Nunes
John Weiler (22)

February 7
Region 6 Recruitment Event
Kingsburg
Jeff Boldt (40)
Hal Collin (14)
Gail Gray (22)
Gayle Holman (46)
Heather Jackson (46)
Nomie Kautz (30)
Heather Mulholland (44)

Salvador Parra (46)
Vernon (41) and Carol Peterson
Rick Stark (39)
Rod (29) and Carol Stark

February 13 & 14
Alumni Reception and Ag Leadership Alumni World Ag Expo Breakfast
Tulare
Bill Adams (32)
Julie Allen (27)
Melanie Almarez
Randy Asadoor (40)
Russ Basset (16)
Hugh Bello (31)
Fred Berry (20)
Tricia Stever Blattler (34)
Jeff Boldt (40)
Loren Booth (27)
Mike Chrisman (2)
Steve Chrisman (10)
Mandy Critchley (37)
Cliff Dunbar
Doug DeGroff (29)
Nick Hill (39)
Deborah Hurley (21)
Heather Jackson (46)
Nomie Kautz (30)
Beth Knudson (37)
Lynn Knudson (20)
Mark Krebsbach (48)
Ed Kuykendall (28)
Fred Lagomarsino (19)
Ian LeMay (48)
Darrin Monteiro (47)
Justin Morehead (45)
Soapy Mulholland (29)
Cindy Myers (22)
James Neeley (26)
Richard Nunes (37)
Doug Phillips (40)
John Schaap (39)
David Silva (39)
Herb Simmons (34)
Rick Stark (39)
Jim Sullins (19)

Erin Turner
Peter Vallis (39)
Ray Van Beek (37)
William VanBeek (43)

February 28
Region 1 Recruitment Event Yuba City
Christine Ivory (41)
Jon Munger (36)
Cherie Stephens
Nicole Van Vleck (26)
John Weiler (22)

March 5
Agricultural and Government Leaders Reception
Sacramento
Manpreet Bains (43)
Missy Gable (40)
Mica Heilmann (40)
Emily Lazzerini
Jenny Lester-Moffitt (47)
Denise Moore (46)
Garry Pearson (38)
Jill Scofield (47)
Deanna Van Klaveren (32)
Stephanie Ezcheverria Younger (43)

March 19
Region 9 Recruitment Event Camarillo
Jason Cole (42)
Ted Grether (47)
Susan Josue (43)

March 21
Region 11 Recruitment Event La Quinta
Ben Olson (3)
Ellen Way (28)

March 24
Region 10 Recruitment Event Fallbrook
Bob (17) and Anne Atkins
Jason Schwartz (45)

March 25
Region 11 Recruitment Event Holtville
Jack Vessey (34)

March 27
Common Threads Fresno Clovis
Gary Brunsvik
Carol Chandler
Georgene Diener
Shannon Fast
Alcida Freitas Gomes
Jackie Giacomazzi
Sadie Hemsath
Gayle Holman (46)
Emily Lazzerini
Soapy McCarthy Mulholland (25)
Mary Mello
Karen Musson
Cindy Myers (22)
Rebecca Quist
Debbie Raven
Kim Rogina (25)
Lorna Roush
Louise Silacci
Rod Stark (29)
Annie Stuhr
Helen Sullivan
Cristel Tufenkjian
Mai Vang
Marsha Vucovich
Betty Young

March 28
Region 8 Recruitment Event Delano
Darlene Din (35)
Lucas Espericueta (45)
Rob Goff (45)
Brian Neufeld (45)
Bill Van Skike (32)
Justin Spellman (45)
Devon Yurosek (45)
RECENT EVENTS

THANK YOU

Region 4 Recruitment Event
Region 3 Recruitment Event

ALUMNI EVENTS

SPRING 2019     HORIZONS MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019
**CLASSES 10-19**

Bill Lyons (12) has been appointed agriculture liaison in the Office of the Governor by Gov. Gavin Newsom. A third-generation farmer who served as secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture under Gov. Gray Davis from 1999 to 2004, Bill oversees his family’s 95-year-old farming and cattle ranching operation in Stanislaus County.

Ernest Conant (15) was named director of the Bureau of Reclamation Mid-Pacific Region. He will manage the Central Valley Project, as well as Oregon’s Klamath Project; Nevada’s Newlands, Humboldt, Washoe and Truckee Storage projects and California’s Cachuma, Orland, Santa Maria, Solano and Ventura River projects. Ernest has nearly 40 years of water law experience.

**CLASSES 20-29**

The National Cotton Ginters Association honored Kirk Gilkey (21) as the 2018 Horace Hayden National Cotton Ginner of the Year. The award is presented in recognition of able, efficient and faithful service to the ginning industry, and continuing those principles exemplified and practiced by Horace Hayden, a former NCGA executive secretary.

Adán Ortega (23) is a new member of the 38-member board of directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Adán owns a Fullerton-based public affairs firm and has worked in government relations for 30 years.

Meredith Rehrman Ritchie (28) was elected communications director of the Vista del Lago High School Athletic boosters board of directors, which promotes and helps with fundraising for the school’s athletic programs.

**CLASSES 30-39**

Stasi Seay (30) was appointed director of vineyards at Hope Family Wines in Paso Robles, where she will lead the company’s grower relations, control the company’s grape acquisitions and maintain quality for the entire Hope Family Wines portfolio.

Cara Crye (39) shared leadership advice as the keynote speaker at the San Luis Obispo Tribune’s Top 20 Under 40 luncheon on Feb. 7. Cara, who is the CEO of Farm Supply Co., was a 2015 honoree.

Lino Bozzano (38), of Laetitia Vineyard and Winery, was elected to the California Association of Winegrowers board of directors. He will serve a three-year term.

Donna France (38) was selected to the board of trustees for the Santa Barbara Foundation, a community foundation that enriches the lives of county residents through philanthropy.

**CLASSES 40-49**

Shannon Douglass (46) and her husband, Kelly, received the California Farm Bureau Federation Excellence in Agriculture Award, presented to young agricultural professionals who contribute through involvement in agriculture, leadership activities and Farm Bureau.

Casey Creamer (47) was named president and CEO of California Citrus Mutual (CCM) effective Feb. 1. He was previously CCM’s executive vice president. Casey started there in February 2018 after a national search process to eventually assume the role of president.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

Karen Ross was reappointed secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture by Gov. Gavin Newsom. She served in the position for eight years under Gov. Jerry Brown.
$126,500 World Ag Expo Breakfast
$100,000 The James G. Boswell Foundation
$55,000 HMC Farms
$25,000 Western Growers
$10,000 Anonymous
$8,500 The Zenith
$7,500 Union Bank

$5,000 D’Arrigo Bros. Co., of California
$3,112.50 Mary-Ann Warmerdam
$2,500 Woolf Enterprises
$1,000 California Fresh Fruit Association
Margaret Dutlock
Jeff and Lori Merwin (S.H. Merwin & Sons, Inc.)
Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss
William Phillimore

$875 Gene Peterson
$750 Steve and Kim McIntyre
$500 Clay Groefsema
Bill Lewis
John and Teresa Zonneveld

$400 Bob and Anne Atkins
$250 Donald and Sandy Norene
Midland Tractor (Don Nelson)
Steve Dennis
Suellen Witham
David Warter

$225 William Lewis
$147.51 Amazon Smile

$100 David Viviani
Michael Sencer

$50 Jason and Jacqueline Pucheu
Darrin Monteiro

Class 48 Project
Anonymous: $966.01

In-Kind
TMD Creative: $5,000
Bob and Anne Atkins: $248

In Memory of Ben Drake (12)
Michael Walsh: $200

In Memory of Joseph Russ (1)
Melissa Lema: $100
Franklin and Jane Barnes: $100

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