Volume 6, Number 4
December 2003

Women, Food & Agriculture Network

Fall Harvest Women's Gathering: Healing the Soil, Healing the Soul

Left to right: Laura Caballero from Greenfield, California, Sara Thomsen from Barnum, Minnesota, and Jeannie Zanetti from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

by Sue Abromaitis

On November 7, 2003, the women of Minnesota welcomed me to their state. I arrived at Good Earth Village close to 7:30 pm and entered an amazingly beautiful timber lodge that had a roaring fire in a great stone fireplace in the center of the room. I registered, was assigned a room and went downstairs to find my bed—a bunk bed made of timber with hand-made quilts—to unpack. I then went back up stairs and was greeted by many familiar and new faces.

I've been to three WFAN functions now so I'm beginning to get to know the women in the network. The evening started with everyone sitting in a circle and introducing ourselves. I told them why I was in Iowa and about my singing with Bread & Roses, a feminist women's choir in Washington, DC. Then Sara Thomsen, an amazing folk singer from near Duluth, Minnesota stood up and started singing. Her voice and guitar playing blew me away. After introductions, we did a smaller group-sing and Sara asked me and Carol Smith to sing the song 'Bread & Roses' for the group. Intensive music therapy....

I then stayed up well into the night talking to Leah Carlson who used to sing with Calliope (in the Sister Singers network) about the war and our president and issues that concern her. Leah is a willow worker and spent the weekend weaving willow baskets. She doesn't own a car and is intentionally childless out of concern for global overpopulation. I didn't sleep at all that night - my brain was whirring out of control!

The next day after breakfast, I attended a workshop on global trade and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and met Cassi Johnson who is going to

(Fall Harvest, continued on page 4)

Mission

The **Women, Food, and Agriculture Network** links and amplifies women's voices on issues of food systems, sustainable communities and environmental integrity.

Calendar

January 3, 2004: Care4Iowa Congress 2004. Sponsored by the Humane Society of the U.S., 10am-4pm, Temple for the Performing Arts, 10th & Locust St., Des Moines. For information call 515-283-0777; email <cbedford@hsus.org>.

January 9-10, 2004: Sustainable Farms, Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Lifestyles. Annual conference of the Practical Farmers of Iowa. Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines.

February 6-7, 2004: INCA Conference, Our Food: Safe, Sustaining, and Soulful. Grinnell, IA (see article below).

February 26-28, 2004: Fifteenth Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC). La Crosse Center, on the Mississippi River in downtown La Crosse, Wisconsin, <www.mosesorganic .org> or call 715-772-3153 for more information. (see article at right).

Events

INCA Conference

The Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA), a grassroots organization dedicated to making connections between consumers and producers in growing and eating local foods, announces its annual conference "Our Food: Safe, Sustaining, and Soulful." This year's conference will be held in Grinnell, Iowa, February 6-7, and is hosted in partnership with the Grinnell Area Local Food Alliance. The conference has a history of offering plenty of time for networking.

Workshops: During the day, conference workshop tracks have been carefully designed for consumers, producers, and community developers interested in local foods.

Saturday Sessions: Saturday's sessions feature information for consumers, community local food developers, and producers. The session begins at 9 am with a welcome and some light-hearted drama that has become a hallmark of the conference.

Keynote Speakers: Saturday keynote speakers include Iowa author Robert Wolf, executive director of the Free River Press, a nationally known non-profit educational corporation that gives everyday Americans a public voice.

The afternoon keynote will feature Midwest~Harvest founder Tom Lacina.

Registration: To receive a conference brochure, please e-mail <incaconference@yahoo.com> or call the Grinnell Chamber of Commerce at 641-236-6555. Walk-up registrations the day of the conference are accepted. The Friday session will be held at the Grinnell United Church of Christ, 4th and Broad Street, beginning at 1:30 p.m. and Saturday's session will be held at the Grinnell High School, 1333 Sunset Street, starting at 9:00 am.

The 15th Annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) will host the fifteenth annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC) at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, February 26-28, 2004. This year's theme is "Fifteen Years of Growing Our Roots."

The UMOFC presents a unique, farmer-centered conference. Over its history, the conference has become renowned as the premier educational and networking event for farmers and others in the organic and sustainable farming community. There will be more than 45 workshops and an expanded exhibit hall for over 130 exhibitors representing every aspect of sustainable and organic agriculture. All of the food and drink at the conference is organic, and locally produced whenever possible. Registration is $150 for Thursday evening, all day Friday and Saturday.

On Thursday, February 26, 2004 the conference will again host the Organic University. The cost, including lunch and a 3-ring notebook, is $135 per course.

To receive a flyer, with complete information on the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference and the Organic University, email: <info@mosesorganic.org>, call 715-772-3153 or write UMOFC, P.O. Box 339, Spring Valley, WI 54767. Visit our website at: <www.mosesorganic.org>.

Women, Food and Agriculture Network

This newsletter is published by the **Women, Food and Agriculture Network**, a Tides Center Project, with the help of Iowa State University Extension, Ames, Iowa. We welcome suggestions, stories, and news from your part of the world. Our emphasis is on women's lives, their relationships, communities and families. We welcome first person articles, analyses, book or video reviews, original poetry and art, and letters to editor. Deadlines for upcoming issues:

March 2004 issue: February 15, 2004
June 2004 issue: May 17, 2004

Address: 59624 Chicago Road
Atlantic, IA 50022-9619
712-243-3264

Newsletter Production:
Denise O'Brien (CoWfan@metc.net)
Katy Hansen (kwhansen@ia.net)
Betty Wells (bwells@iastate.edu)

A First-Person Experience of the FTAA Meeting in Miami

by Cassi Johnson

The week before Thanksgiving, Denise O'Brien and I had the privilege to travel to Miami, Florida to represent Women, Food, and Agriculture at the workshops, teach-ins and peaceful demonstration surrounding the official Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Ministerial. I use the word privilege because I feel that we were truly fortunate to be taking part in such an awesome assembly of global citizens—trade unionists, environmentalists, farm workers, rural advocates, teachers, independent media, students, animal welfare activists, human rights advocates-in short, people who believe that a better world is possible.

Workshops on the Issues

Denise and I attended numerous workshops to learn more about the FTAA, to learn about others' experiences of globalization, and to strengthen the hemisphere-wide movement against the FTAA. We also enjoyed performances by musicians Billy Bragg and Steve Earl at a rally on Wednesday night. On Thursday, anywhere from 10,000- 20,000 activists gathered in downtown Miami for a peaceful march through one of Miami's poorest neighborhoods. We received waves and other gestures of encouragement from the residents who packed their sidewalks and balconies as we marched.

Although much of what we learned about the FTAA during the week revealed just how insidious and powerful the corporate hold on world politics really is, I still felt a strong sense of empowerment and solidarity throughout the week. As Denise remarked continually during our stay, what we were taking part in truly was "Democracy in Action."

Unfortunately, this is not the full picture of the week's events in Miami. When Denise and I entered Miami in the middle of the night on Monday, we knew we had entered a police state. Several police cars were parked on every corner, and barricades surrounded every building. Throughout the week, the police presence was constant and unnerving: police in full riot gear lined the streets through much of the week; mounted and bicycle police patrolled the streets; police helicopters hovered close above the ground; police watched from above on the tops of every building; and, as we learned later in the week, we were also being watched from closed-circuit cameras mounted on the corners of most downtown buildings. Throughout the week, police randomly blocked off whole sections of central streets so we were often sent 15-20 minutes out of our way (if we were allowed into the area at all) to attend our workshops and events.

The Peaceful March

On Thursday, November 20th, 10,000-20,000 activists gathered downtown for a peaceful march. After the march ended, Denise and I went into a nearby amphitheater to listen to more musical performances and speakers. Shortly thereafter, there was commotion inside the amphitheater and it was clear that something was happening on the streets outside. Through the fence, I could see lines of police pushing protesters westward, and there was a fire in the street and teargas in the air. At first, the police gave orders to have us locked inside the amphitheater. Then, the police gave orders to push us outside. Those of us left outside the amphitheater tried to piece together what had happened.

Although accounts differed at the time (as they still do), there were apparently a few young people who threw objects at police and set a fire. These actions instigated a brutal retaliation in which the police closed in on all of the remaining protesters and bystanders, and used tear gas and shot rubber bullets indiscriminately.

And the Violent Police

As Denise and I walked back to the hotel, we saw protesters and media walking away from the violence, covered in blood or holding their heads. We were fortunate to escape violence and arrest, especially as we learned later that many protesters (and Miamians just walking home from work) were arrested as they tried to get back to their hotels and cars. We watched the Miami news that night, which of course focused on the violence of a few angry youth, and not the violence perpetrated on the unarmed by thousands of police in full riot gear.

According to a reporter from the Miami New Times, police then pushed the protesters westward into Miami's Overtown neighborhood, detained those they didn't arrest (about 150 were arrested), and forced them to dump their belongings. They then told protesters that they were in "Miami's worst neighborhood" and that they were "on their own." What those police didn't realize, however, was that just hours before, the poor, black residents of the Overtown neighborhood had been out on the sidewalks smiling, waving, and speaking with the marchers.

Democracy in Action?

The Miami police, who received $8.5 million from the $87 billion spending bill for Iraq, attempted to stop citizens from around the world from coming together and peacefully working toward a more equitable and just world. The U.S. uses the rhetoric of spreading democracy through Iraq and the rest of the world based on our own fine example, and yet, what all of us in Miami were a part of was true democracy in action. I hope that as people heal from their experiences in Miami, and those who weren't in Miami learn of the anti-democratic actions of the federally-backed Miami police, the movements against the FTAA and corporate-sponsored globalization will grown even stronger.

(Cassi Johnson is currently enrolled in the Graduate Program for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University.)

Program Coordinator
Sustainable Rural Livelihoods
Iowa State University

The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Program seeks a full time program coordinator to develop, implement, and manage a community-based program in one or more developing countries, starting in Africa.

For more information see: <www.hrs.iastate\edu/jobs/jobs.html>

Fall Harvest Women's Gathering

(Fall Harvest, continued from page 1)

Miami on November 17 to participate in workshops and a peaceful march against the FTAA. I wish I could go!!

I then went on to workshops on self-nurturance and soap-making. Then came the coolest part of the day! The women at the gathering all piled into cars and went down the road a couple of miles to see the Good Earth Ecovillage - an intentional community of people living in a sustainable farm 'off the grid' (without hook up to conventional utilities). We met this amazing woman, Eva Barr, who showed us her farm. The farm is all solar-powered and they use rainwater collection/gravity systems for their water supply. Eva and her husband use oxen to plow their fields - they also run a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in the summer with several interns. They had a barn where they showed progressive films for free to the community every week in the summer using a solar-powered film projector. They also had a community dance space where they did arts workshops for children. We then toured her home and met her two little boys - little Nordic cherubs - and husband, and we saw how they lived - very simply - no TV, no computer, outhouse. They heated water on their wood stove for hot showers in the bitter winters. They all seemed quite happy and proud of the home they had built by hand.

The Ecovillage is a cooperative with a couple other families who were in the process of building homesteads on the land. There is no formal covenant, but they share common values of community, sustainability and simple living.

Next door to Eva and her family we met an artist in her late twenties who had built her studio/home out of straw bales. She is amazing and an example of a person who has no background in construction, but wanted to live according to her principles of living gently on the land.

That evening, I had another interesting conversation with a Bonnie Haugen, a dairy farmer who is a firm believer in pasture - grazing her cows. She drew immense peace just by sitting up on her hilltop and watching her animals graze. She offered to host me on her farm if I ever pass through southeast Minnesota on my travels and even offered to find me free housing through her dairy grazing network in the Midwest if I follow through with my road trip plans for the spring.

That night as the full moon went

Healing dolls made during the weekend.

through a total eclipse, Sara and the rest of us sang again. So appropriate for a women's gathering! We sewed 'healing dolls' and as I filled mine with lavender, I listened to Pam Kingfisher tell us of her people's creation story of the mother of corn who used to feed her people by leaning over her cooking pot and scratching her sides until the pot was full. When her twin sons, who were spying on her, saw her do this, she told them she had to die the next day because they now knew her secret. But she told them that when she died, they should drag her body over the fields 7 times until all of her blood was in the ground, and they would always have enough corn to eat.

I went to bed that night and slept soundly. I awoke at 6:30 the next morning to do yoga, but decided to go on a hike instead. In the early morning light, I saw six hawks on a bluff by a bend in the river. I saw a bald eagle and thought about magical encounters with animals as spirit guides. I returned to the main building, packed my stuff and said my good byes. I left that place in Minnesota filled with such peace and contentment.

(Sue Abromaitis works at the Humane Society of the United States in the Farm Animals and Sustainable Agriculture Division. Sue was on loan from HSUS to work with WFAN for six weeks this fall.)

A Personal Story About Women's Land Ownership

by Beth Myers

In my family the women outnumber the men. My dad and brother are outnumbered 3-2 by my mom, my sister and me. On my mom's side of the family, which is the center of this article, my grandfather is the only man of the house. Women are not only outnumbering men in my family, but women in Iowa are starting to own more of the land.

I always knew that my family farm was special, at least to me, but I didn't know it was part of a growing trend in Iowa farmland. Men no longer dominate Iowa farmland ownership. Apparently there are many farms owned by women. The first thing that comes to my mind when I hear that is of a widow who has inherited the land from her husband and has not seen the inside of a tractor in 20 years. But even though the farm I grew up on was passed down by the women in my family, I have never thought of the farm as belonging to my mother or even my grandmother. My female relatives, as is typical of a lot of women, have put their own pride aside and put the importance of family first.

The history for my family farm, as gleaned from my questions over the years with no actual study, was that my great aunt Elvira lived on the farm with her husband Albert until they sold it to her niece, my grandmother. Elvira and Albert never had any children. I believe the farm was in Aunt Elvira's family because her parents lived there with her and Albert for many years. My grandmother and grandfather bought the farm in the mid 1950s, probably on contract. Then in the mid 1970s my parents moved to the farm and bought some of the land from my grandparents. The remaining part of the land that was in the original farm is in a trust for my mom and her sister, my grandparents' only children. My grandfather is the trustee. Eventually the farm will be my mom's and aunt's.

I think my mother and grandmother never really saw the farm as belonging to them. It belongs to the "family," in which my father and grandfather are the center. The land, the farm, defines our family as

(continued on next page)

it does with any farm family. The women in my family were not the farmers, the men were. My female relatives would most likely first define themselves as wives and mothers, but farmers would be in the list somewhere. My mom would not continue to run the farm if my dad died. She would probably let my brother or brother-in-law run it, and she would be a silent partner. The land will continue to be passed to her children, to be divided somehow later.

Many farm wives have helped on the farm. The degree of help depends partly on the aptitude of the woman and partly on the time in which she is living. I have many memories from childhood of my mother helping my dad sort hogs or drive the baler while my dad threw the bales, but apparently my great aunt Elvira took a much more active role. She was an equal to her husband, my uncle Albert, when it came to work on the farm.

Even though my mom and grandma grew up on farms they didn't take an active role in the day-to-day operations. My mom was the older of two daughters, yet she didn't have to milk the cows everyday. She rarely drove a tractor, and I don't think she ever scooped manure. My grandmother did care for and manage her own chickens, but that was about the extent of her farm management. My Aunt Elvira, on the other hand, helped plan the crops and was as much the manager of the farm as Uncle Albert. My mom follows in her mother's footsteps and doesn't consider herself the farm manager. But, she is a farmer.

After my grandmother died more than fourteen years ago, the land did not immediately go to my mother and her sister. Part of the land had already been bought by my parents and the rest was put in a trust for my grandmother's children with my grandfather as trustee. The land is traceable through the women in my family, but that is where the matriarchy ends. I think the land ownership in my family has not been so much matriarchal as it has been opportunistic. The women just happened to have available farmland in their family, so they could farm with their husbands.

(Beth Meyers is currently a second year law student at Drake University with an emphasis in agriculture and environmental policy.)

Renewing the Countryside—Iowa

Renewing the Countryside—Iowa

review by Amy Miller

The recently released book "Renewing the Countryside - Iowa" walks the reader through the story of Iowa's many successes in sustainable agriculture and rural renewal. It is a journey filled with beautiful photographs, well written stories, and thoughtful essays that inspire the reader at every turn. For those embedded in the sustainable agriculture movement in Iowa, reading the book is a visit with good friends and familiar places. The Women, Food and Agriculture Network and our coordinator Densie O'Brien are featured in the last of the book's eight chapters. Many of the stories are either written by or about WFAN members. There is an article about LaVon Griffieon and 1000 Friends of Iowa and one about Penny Brown and her program called Growing Your Small Market Farm. A nice piece about Janette Ryan-Busch is found in the chapter on farming, and a story about Liz Garst is in the chapter that covers tourism. An essay by Mary Swalla Holmes follows the chapter on marketing, and the tale of the "goat moms" and their company Northern Prairie Chevre is in the chapter on product innovations. Many more tales of extraordinary women and men are found throughout the pages of this book.

Sponsored by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Rural Development Council, and Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy, this book is an excellent tool for educating our urban counterparts and others about the sustainable developments in rural Iowa. It would make a wonderful gift for friends, family members, your local library, or yourself and is widely available at bookstores, on the web at <http://store.rtcmarket.org>, or by e-mail at <rtc@iatp.org>. Renewing the Countryside—Iowa is the second in a series of books, following the 2002 Minnesota edition. Other state editions will be available in the future. Visit <www.renewingthecountryside.org> for more information.

(Amy Miller is an organic farmer in northeast Iowa who serves on the WFAN coordinating council.)

Sustainable Ag Report from DC

(from the Midwest Sustainable Ag Working Group (MSAWG))

Value-Added Producer Grants

The Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) program lost substantial funding for 2004 as a result of behind-closed-doors negotiating on the omnibus appropriations bill. The 2002 farm bill provides mandatory funding for the VAPG program at $40 million a year. Despite strong professed support for the program on both sides of the aisle, the program emerged from conference committee with just $15 million for 2004.

The VAPG program is a matching grant programdesigned to boost farm income and bring much needed capital to regional and local business enterprises.

More Organic Wins

Funding for the National Organic Program (NOP) is increased in the final agreement to $1.5 million. This marks the first time the NOP funding is actually specified in the appropriations bill, a helpful step forward.

The omnibus also contains funding for the Organic Data Initiative, a provision of the farm bill to collect segregated production and marketing data on organics.

Conservation Security Program Fully Restored

The $3.77 billion cap on Conservation Security Program (CSP) spending was lifted, restoring the CSP to its full entitlement program status.

For Fiscal Year 2004, the conference report limits the CSP to $41.4 million. This was a compromise between the Senate bill that allowed for full funding, and the House that prohibited any spending at all on the CSP.

Results from Survey of Women's Land Ownership

by Denise O'Brien

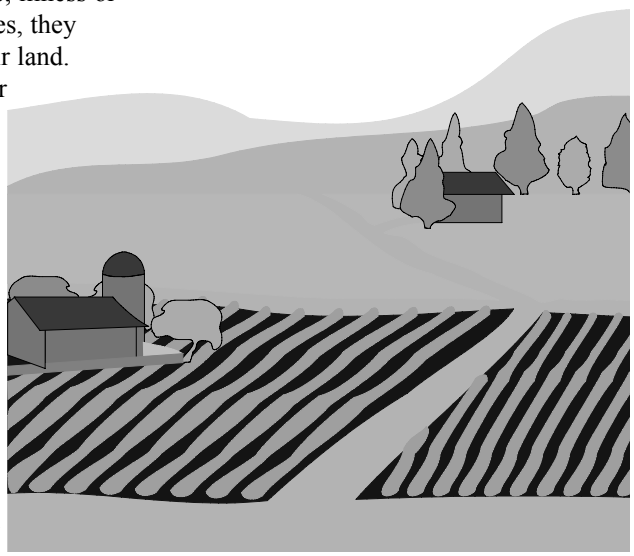
Three years ago WFAN launched a participatory research project in Cass County, Iowa, with women farmland owners (see the March 2002 newsletter). With grants from the Ben and Jerry's Foundation and The Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, we gathered together an advisory committee of eleven women landowners to discuss issues surrounding farmland ownership. Other agencies participating in this project were the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, Iowa State University and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

These agencies and the advisory committee worked together to develop survey questions with the assistance of Betty Wells, WFAN member and Iowa State University sociologist. In the fall of 2002 a nine page survey was sent out to 675 women farmland owners in Cass County identified by the Farm Service Agency. Two hundred seventy six surveys were completed and returned making a 40% return. The high return rate was due to the active participation of the advisory committee. They signed the cover letter and participated in radio and newspaper interviews to publicize the survey.

In a recent publication "Women and the Land" by Betty Wells, an overview of the survey results were reported. It was found that the average number of acres owned by these women is 256 with purchases and inheritance the primary means of land acquisition.

The average age of the owners is 64 with age ranging from 25 to 96 years. One quarter of the women are over 74 years of age. What will happen to their land in the coming years? A large majority indicated that they plan to transfer their land to family by will. Other answers include that the land will transfer to family by selling or giving or by putting it into a trust. Twenty three per cent of the respondents do not know how they would transfer their land.

In the category of managing their farmland, few respondents act as the primary manager. Many women indicate that their tenants carry the most influence in key production decisions, oftentimes they are relatives. When asked if they would be able to manage their land if a crisis arose such as a death, divorce, illness or injury, 70% responded that yes, they would be able to manage their land. Family members play a major role as a source for information and for assisting in decision-making.



These women prefer to receive information through direct mailing and one-to-one consultation. Large public meetings, often the preferred method of government agencies to deliver information, are the least preferred.

Women appear to be somewhat vulnerable when it comes to leasing arrangements. Fifty six percent use a written agreement whereas 44% use a verbal agreement. Their land is most often farmed by a local farmer, a neighbor or by a family member. Only 7% of the women farmland owners in Cass County use a farm manager.

The land that they own is strongly tied to home and family. Fifty five percent said it is their home and their connection to their family. In the open ended questions most of the women indicate that their land was a legacy. When asked what information they needed as landowners, the women indicated they needed to know more about economic issues, federal farm programs, land rental pricing and estate planning.

Through this survey we are hoping to understand how women make decisions about their land and how they use information. A long term goal is to one day match beginning farm women with women who own land and are willing to mentor new farmers. There is yet much to learn. Cass County is the beginning. WFAN hopes to take this project to other counties to learn what other women are doing in their position as landowners.

For more information please contact Denise O'Brien at 712-243-3264 or at <cowfan@metc.net>.

Where Do We Go From Here

On November 13th WFAN invited the women of Cass County to a meeting where the analysis of the survey and the needs of women landowners was discussed. Two sessions were offered to the women, a late morning, early afternoon session and an evening session.

Approximately 45 women attended the sessions that were facilitated by Mary Swalla-Holmes of the Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa. A local meal was served.

The outcome of the two sessions was that women had the desire to meet during the year to discuss issues about land ownership. Many women were concerned about fair rental rates and timely decision-making. It was suggested that meetings should occur about four times per year at times when major farm decisions needed to be made. It was the desire of several women to come together to form a support network to help women through times of crisis such as death, divorce, illness or injury.

WFAN will continue to work with the women in Cass County as the women decide how to move forward with the knowledge gained from the survey.

The Iowa Caucuses

by Katy Hansen

Iowa has a unique place in our political processes with its first-in-the-nation caucuses.

What are the caucuses all about?

A political caucus is a meeting of the members of the same political party to discuss and vote on their party platform and their choice of presidential candidates. It is the first step of a long process that leads to the national convention and the party's choice for presidential candidate. It is also a time for party members to discuss where they stand on the issues and develop platforms for their party.

The Business of a Precinct Caucus

Each caucus attendee will have the opportunity to sign nomination papers for various local, state and federal candidates.

Platform issues representing a range of topics from agricultural subsidies to education issues are discussed in a neighbor-to-neighbor environment at the caucus level.

Attending the caucus will give each person a chance to discuss and support statements on the issues that will become the platform for the party. Even though a candidate may not agree with every issue statement that ends up on the platform, the platform represents what members of the party generally believe and what the party stands for.

How to Participate in an Iowa Precinct Caucus

A Democratic and Republican caucus will be held for each of Iowa's precincts. These caucuses will all be held on January 19, 2004. Places will be announced in local newspapers.

Caucus attendees will register upon arriving at the caucus. Any person may take part if they: are a resident of that particular precinct; are eligible to vote in the precinct; will be at least 18 years old on election day; and support the purposes of the party. Formal voter registration in the party may be done at the meeting.

It behooves each of us to take part in this very important part of our democracy. It is part of the process of picking our president and determining the policies of our government.

Coordinator's Corner

by Denise O'Brien, Coordinator for WFAN

Dear All,

The end of the year is fast approaching, and for many it is a time for reflection. WFAN has had a busy and fulfilling year, and I am pleased with the growth our organization has had. The following is a brief overview of some of the activities in which WFAN has participated. If any of you are interested in representing WFAN at conferences, workshops or events, please let us know. We encourage our members to actively take part and promote the network.

The weekend of November 7-9 found us once again at Good Earth Village in Spring Valley, Minnesota for our 4th annual Women's Fall Harvest Gathering. This year's theme, "Healing the Soil, Healing the Soul" was highlighted by the keynote address given by Pamela Kingfisher of Austin, Texas. Pamela, a Cherokee, told a moving story that connected women with themselves and healing. Tucked away in a corner of the log lodge was an area where women used their skills to create healing dolls. The weekend passed all too quickly with music, laughter, local foods and to top it off, a total eclipse of the moon.

Since our last issue, member Betty Wells reported some results of the Cass County Women Landowners Survey. Betty, with the help of Diane Phillips, Emily Neuman, Pernell Plath and Kristen Garrett put together a great overview of the survey. On November 13th, with help from the Humane Society of the United States, WFAN held two meetings for women of Cass County to discuss the results and figure out where to go from here. With forty-five women landowners present, it was decided to meet four times per year on dates that coincided with a farm decision-making calendar. This project of WFAN was funded by the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and Ben and Jerry's Foundation.

In early November I attended the Community Food Security Coalition's annual meeting in Boston. The youth of the Food Project took us on a neighborhood tour of Roxbury, a low-income racially diverse section of Boston. They showed us community and private gardens that have been planted on soil remediated of its lead content. There were many houses in Roxbury that were burned down in the 1970's and 1980's and as a result were highly contaminated with lead from the paint of the old buildings. For more information on The Food Project go to http://www.thefoodproject.org/.

And lastly, member Cassi Johnson and I attended the Free Trade Area of the Americas gathering in Miami, Florida. We participated in a workshop on how free trade effects women. Other organizations participating were the Gender and Trade Network, the Latin American Gender and Trade Network and the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras. There were dozens of workshops, a great concert and a peaceful march with 20,000 union folks, farmers, and environmentalists. And, there were thousands of police.

At the end of the march the police and some youth got into a tussle whereupon the tear gas and rubber bullets were brought out. The media of course, concentrated on the negative aspects and totally overlooked the workshops and panels that were held to discuss possibilities other than the current trade negotiations. To find out more about trade and the Miami ministerial you can refer to our September issue or visit http://www.citizen.org/trade/

My New Year's wish to you is that there will be peace in the world and joy in your hearts.

Peace and Health, Denise

Women, Food & Agriculture Network

A Tides Center Project
59624 Chicago Road
Atlantic, IA 50022-9619

Women, Food, & Agriculture Network
links and amplifies women's voices
on issues of food systems,
sustainable communities
and environmental integrity.

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #218
Atlantic, IA 50022

Address Service Requested

IOWA SHARES

Let's keep connected:
Women, Food and Agriculture Network

Membership is either $30 or $10 (your choice). Fill out this form and make your check payable to Tides-WFAN. This newsletter is a benefit of membership. We are a network of women with food, agricultural, environmental and economic concerns. Please share your thoughts, ideas, successes, interests, and solutions with us.

☐ Enclosed is $30 for my yearly membership.

☐ Enclosed is $10 for my yearly membership.

Name _____

Organization _____
(if you are joining as a representative of a group)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email (print clearly): _____

☐ I would like to subscribe to the WFAN listserv

☐ Enclosed is $30 as a gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please mail this form to:

Women, Food & Agriculture
c/o Linda Warren
PO Box 1611
Madison, WI 53701-1611