



The Cultivator

December 2023

2023/2024 Planning & Advisory Committee

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Greetings and Merry Christmas!

As I put pen to paper to write you this letter, my hope is that through all the chaos of planning family gatherings, attending children's Christmas programs, baking cookies, keeping "Elf on the Shelf" out of too much trouble, and trimming the tree, you take time to reflect on the real meaning of the Christmas holiday which is love. Over 2,000 years ago on Christmas day the greatest GIFT was given to each and every one of us. As a new year approaches, I pray it's a year with new peace, new happiness, and the abundance of cultivated relationships with the ones you love.

Over the past year the Farm Women's Symposium Planning Committee has devoted their time and energy to bring you a safe, fun filled, educational 3-day event where individuals of all agricultural backgrounds come together to celebrate agriculture. It's not an easy task but it's one we're all extremely passionate about. This fall we took the opportunity to meet in St. John's. It truly warmed my heart to gather, commune, and fellowship with this group of ladies who have become more like family to me over the years. We left energized and excited for what's to come in 2024 for FWS.

FWS cannot happen without the selfless, passionate, and talented individuals who pour into organizing this event, as well as our generous sponsors. If you have a desire to support FWS in any way, big or small, I urge you to reach out to myself, or someone on the planning committee. We need volunteers like you to ensure this symposium continues to thrive for years to come.

We look forward to hosting the 32nd Annual Farm Women's Symposium at the Delamar in Traverse City, Michigan, **Tuesday, March 5th through Thursday, March 7th, 2024**. Be sure to look inside this edition of The Cultivator for all the details.

This is going to be an experience you won't want to miss, so invite a friend, a colleague or a family member and sign up today.

Can't wait to see you in March!

Blessings,
Wanda Skinner
Farm Women's Symposium Chairperson



Welcome Reception

By: Emelee Rajzer

The 32nd Farm Women’s Symposium will kick off on Tuesday evening, March 5th with a Welcome Reception and keynote speaker, Kerry Winkler at the Delamar in Traverse City, Michigan.



We are very excited to be in the Lower Lounge of the Delamar.

Bus Tour

By: Ginger Newman

The bus tour subcommittee is very busy planning our 2024 bus tour, in and around the greater Traverse City area.

One stop will be the Historic Barns Park in Traverse City. This stop will encompass 56 acres of the Grand Traverse Commons. It was originally a working farm that helped feed the patients and employees of the former Traverse City State Hospital. Once slated for demolition, its two most

iconic barns are now event venues. Historic Barns Park also features walking trails, community vegetable gardens, and the Botanic Garden.

Cherry Republic campus in Glen

Arbor is another planned stop. It includes the Great Hall retail store, Cherry Public House cafe, and the Winery. They offer more than 200 cherry based products, and since their founding in 1989 have expanded to retail locations in six Michigan cities and towns. They are also supportive of local agriculture and are dedicated to caring for the world around them. They have donated \$2 million over the years to non-profit organizations that offer positive impacts on the environment.



Connecting @ FWS 2024

By: Diane Loewe

How do we connect Great Gatsby of 1925 and Farm Women’s Symposium of 2024?

Wednesday evening, we are having a banquet with a live auction. And, since we’re doing that why not make it a fun, unique evening by pulling in Great Gatsby?

A delicious banquet will be served followed by a professional Auction company – Wayne Bancroft Auction Service – coming in to do the auction.

You can help bring in the goods! You can either donate or hit up the businesses your farm supports for a donation. \$50.00 minimum value and new items are requested.

We will have lots of great gifts such as gift cards, baskets, tickets, perhaps a get-away.

You’ll just have to come and see.

The food will be fantastic and there will be lots of fun with all the flappers and Gatsby's flitting about.

Bonus – supporting FWS in a fun way.



Live Auction



By: Keri Bancroft

What: Great Gatsby Banquet and Auction with Wayne Bancroft Auction Service

When: Wednesday, March 6, 5:30 PM

Where: Delmar Traverse City

Why: Food, Fun and Flashing our Bidding Cards!

Want: Donations – we are asking everyone to help bring in donations. We have a minimum of a \$50.00 value – new items. (Please consider contacting the businesses you support with your farm dollars for donations of gifts or money. Some suggestions: gift cards for restaurants, theaters, shopping, ballpark tickets, etc.)

Who: Ya’ll come and bring your Gatsby best. Prize will be awarded for best get up!

Thursday Program

By: Jill Miller

Thursday we kick things off with keynote speaker, Meredith Bernard-This Farm Wife. Meredith will be covering the topic of “From Sowing to Growing: at a time when change is constant and uncertainty is high.” Meredith can be found at

www.thisfarmwife.com

Diane Loew-A Farm Wife and blogger will chat with us about “Switching Gears: Behind the Scenes”-Diane’s take on what is happening behind the scenes on farms when transitioning to the next generation.



Jerry Achenbach will be sharing the history of the Great Lakes Maritime Academy.

Carmen Beemer, the 2023-2024 National Cherry Queen, will share with us the life of being Cherry Queen of the National Cherry Festival.

After lunch we look forward to:

- ◆ A short yoga session
- ◆ A panel discussion of local winery owners sharing how they started and grew their business in Traverse City and surrounding areas

Our final keynote speaker, Zoe Kent, from Farm with Zoe presents “Sharing your story to the world.” Check out farmwithzoe on Facebook, Instagram or TikTok.



FWS Mission: The purpose of Farm Women’s Symposium (FWS) is to strengthen agriculture, addressing the ever-changing needs of people involved in farming by focusing on women. It provides opportunities for leadership and professional development; strives to enhance communication and management skills, to build an effective family team, and to develop a network of supportive friendships. The Farm Women’s Symposium encourages participation from everyone involved with agriculture.

“After-Hours” Event

By: Wanda Skinner

There is no better way to experience the area’s famous vineyards than from a bus with your fellow FWS friends! Plan to stay to participate in the optional Thursday night after-hours event. This will be an educational, guided four-hour bus tour on Old Mission Peninsula. Don’t miss out on this exciting offering as space is limited to the first 30 participants. The cost is \$75 (*dinner is not included) and is to be paid separately than the registration fee. Sorry, no scholarships are to be used for this optional event.



Sponsorship Opportunity

Without the generous support of many organizations and businesses, FWS would not be possible!

We have the following sponsorship levels available:

Diamond—\$10,000

Platinum—\$5,000

Gold—\$1,000

Silver—\$500

Bronze—\$250

If you know of any individuals, organizations or businesses that FWS should partner with, please reach out to Wanda Skinner at 989-450-7467 or email at farmwomenssymposium@gmail.com

Farm Women's Symposium
c/o Wanda Skinner
749 S. Van Dyke Rd.
Bad Axe, MI 48413

32nd Symposium—Traverse City

March 5-7th, 2024 *

***New Format -TUESDAY-THURSDAY!**

LOOK INSIDE FOR:

- ◆ ***Letter From Chair, Wanda Skinner***
- ◆ ***2024 Event Details***
- ◆ ***Sponsorship Opportunities for 2024***
- ◆ ***2024 FWS Registration Brochure***