

# the vineline

January/February 2006

Official Magazine of the NATIONAL WATERMELON ASSOCIATION



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## NWA Executive Director's Report

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of our Public Affairs Director, Vern Highley, in his battle with cancer. Vern was a Gentleman's Gentleman, and looked after the affairs of the NWA in Washington very well for over twelve years.

One of the greatest accomplishments of his tenure with the NWA was the recent hiring and assignment of Dr. Chandresekar Kousik (Shaker) to the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston, South Carolina. Shaker's assignment as a dedicated watermelon researcher is a huge advancement for our industry, and one that Vern was very proud to have delivered to you.

We will continue his legacy in Public Affairs in Washington on your behalf, and together make a difference in our industry. There is a way that you can help:

Would you please fill out, detach and fax or mail the bottom portion of this page to the NWA Office soon? We need to know who your Congressman/Woman is in Washington in times of lobbying needs for the Association. This information will allow us to concentrate our efforts on those in Congress that represent you, and work with them to gain support in disease prevention, crop losses or any other initiatives that we pursue. Your reply will be very helpful to us, and very appreciated. Thank you!

-----  
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## Vernon Franklin Highley

Vernon F. Highley was born on July 18, 1933 in Cartersville, Missouri and passed away on January 17, 2006 in Fresno, California, due to complications from cancer.

Vern was president of Highley Associates, a federal relations firm founded in 1985, in Washington, D.C. The firm relocated to Fresno, CA in 2000. He represented various organizations including Cotton Growers Warehouse Association, National Watermelon Association, Imperial County California and the Imperial Valley Conservation Research Center. Vern began his career in agricultural marketing when he served on the executive staff of Calcot, a cotton marketing cooperative in Bakersfield, CA. Ten years later, he joined the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture where he became Special Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford Hardin and eventually served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Secretary Earl Butz. He later headed USDA operations in the Western states and Pacific Trust Territories. He returned to the private sector in 1975 joining Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, in Lubbock, TX.

In 1982, Vern was persuaded by Secretary of Agriculture, Jack Block, to return to Washington, D.C. to serve as Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service. He went on to become Executive Director of the Farmers and Ranchers for the Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle Presidential campaigns before forming Highley Associates. He lived in the Washington D.C. area off and on since 1970.

Vern attended high school in Holtville, CA and graduated in 1956 from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA with a B.S. in Liberal Arts Journalism. At Cal Poly, Vern was a member of the ROTC and later served as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Army at Fort Bliss, TX.

Vern was Cal Poly Alumnus of the Year in 1974. He received numerous awards for Federal Government service and many achievements in the Agriculture industry. He was a Master Mason of Andrew Jackson Lodge No. 120, Alexandria, VA, A.F. & A.M. He served as a deacon and choir director at Mt. Calvary Community Church in Alexandria, VA. He was a member of the Christian Businessmen's Association and the Ag Roundtable in Fresno, CA.

# NWPB Resources At Your Fingertips!



*food safety*

*industry news*

*research projects*

**Check Out the Industry Section of Your Web site, [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org).**

Tuning in to the latest industry news, tools and resources is just a click away when you visit the password-protected industry section of your NWPB Web site at [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org).

**» Gain Marketplace Muscle**

Your NWPB has developed a category management section in the industry area where all the latest consumer research and data-supported merchandising tips are housed. Visit today to get a leg up on the competition.

**» Access Voluntary Food Safety Guidelines for the Watermelon Industry**

These Guidelines serve to assure your buyers you are doing everything possible to ensure safe product. Did you know we have them in English and Spanish?

**» Research**

In the industry area, you may access research reports and information that contributes to the long-term success of the industry, ranging from research into watermelon disease control and prevention, pest control and prevention, to food safety and nutrition research.

**» American Heart Association Certification**

The NWPB has worked with the American Heart Association to create PLU labels for red seeded and red seedless watermelon that display the heart checkmark. According to the AHA, nearly 90 percent of consumers find the heart checkmark helpful when making purchasing decisions. The heart checkmark helps boost sales, which translates into moving more watermelons out of the growers' fields and into consumers' homes. From the main section, click on Resources to find out how you can use this tool in your own marketing materials.

*In the industry area you may also order free promotional materials, access shipping reports and provide feedback to the NWPB about your concerns, requests and questions.*

To log in to the industry section, simply go to [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org). Look for the industry box on the lower left-hand side of the page and type in your password. If you have any questions about logging in to the Web site just contact the NWPB staff, toll-free, at 1-877-599-9595.

*get connected at [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org)!*







Mark Amey  
Executive Director



## *News from the National Watermelon Promotion Board*

### **National Watermelon Promotion Board Marketing News**

The NPWB Director of Marketing, Gordon Hunt, is finishing up the accounting for this past season's in-store promotions. Retailers across the country have featured watermelon in their stores and advertisements. He is also busy writing the Country Progress Report (CPR) for Canada to submit to the USDA. This will help build a foundation for funding Canadian marketing programs in 2006.

Gordon just returned from Washington, DC, where he attended the United States of America Economic Development Council (USAEDC)/Market Access Program (MAP) conference. The USAEDC/MAP supplies the financial support for our Canadian marketing program and the United Kingdom export program. The full budget for MAP has been approved by the president.

### **New! Watermelon Reference Book**

The first edition the NWPB Watermelon Reference Book is approved and ready for distribution. The Watermelon Reference Book is a handbook that is a compilation of watermelon industry statistics such as price, world watermelon production, movement volume, consumption, and weights and measures. If you would like a copy of the handbook, please contact the NWPB Director of Research Steven Fore at [sfore@watermelon.org](mailto:sfore@watermelon.org).

### **National Watermelon Promotion Board: PMA Fresh Summit a Success**

The 2005 PMA Fresh Summit was a great success in boosting watermelon awareness in the produce industry. With our good booth location and the spunky, energetic Chef Joe Poon sampling watermelon slices, carvings and recipes, the NWPB booth was continually busy with directors meeting and networking with retailers, media and watermelon industry members. The PMA Fresh Summit Expo had over 800 exhibitors and over 15,000 attendees, making it the largest fresh produce trade show in the country.

We received tremendous feedback about the NWPB Watermelon Industry Reception held at Anthony's in Buckhead. The house was beautiful, the band was lively, and the new watermelon products and recipes were a hit! Milne Fruit Concentrate provided watermelon concentrate used to make the desserts and baked goods; it was also used in Graeter's watermelon sorbet. Sundia Corporation's watermelon juice was popular, used in making the fresh watermelon drink recipes from the NWPB website, [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org). Thanks again to our sponsors: Abbott & Cobb Inc., Tri-Wall, Temple-Inland, Syngenta Seeds, International Paper and Nunhems. We'll see you next year in San Diego!

# SEEDS!

## The beginning of great things to grow

The creation of anything starts with an idea, a thought, a dream or some type of a creative ideal that many times evolves into something nurtured, developed and bought by consumers. All of the products that we purchase today started some where with an idea in mind. Depending on who you are talking to, it may be the lightbulb, sliced bread or canned beer. Who would have ever thought that a very little seed could grow a Watermelon, a huge piece of delicious fruit.

Feedback from the grower community indicates that there is an emphasis by the seed industry to meet the needs of their customer - the growers - better than ever before. And, knowing that more change is coming (and needed) on the horizon.

You might compare this relationship between the seed industry and watermelon growers to the old fable, Humpty Dumpty. We all know that when Humpty fell off of the wall, all of the King's Men put Humpty back together again. They were there to help Humpty be as good as new, and back on his feet in times of trouble. The seed industry has done that with watermelon growers, and continues to strive to be even better.

Humpty  
Dumpty  
Art

Times are changing. Consolidation in the seed industry has been going on for ten years and is beginning to slow. Genetically modified seed is being developed, and in some cases has become a controversial issue. Some seed companies are taking a regional or market approach to customer service rather than a national, one-size-fits-all method. All in all, the seed industry is doing business differently today. The approach seems to be, if it ain't broke, then let's break it and determine a better way for the future.

### CURRENT TRENDS

As the seed industry has slowed its long run of consolidation, it has created numerous changes, advancements and trends as a result. Some of the higher ranking results are:

- Improved disease resistance in new commercial hybrids
- Increased demand for Seedless varieties.
- Grafting for improved disease resistance.
- Increase in demand of high quality seed that is disease free.
- More variety (sizes, shapes, colors) and higher quality.
- Consumer interest in nutrition (i.e. lycopene)

Let us take a look at what some seed industry companies have to share relative to the current trends that they see in the seed industry, especially as they relate to the Watermelon industry:

"The seed industry is just finishing the consolidation process that started 10 years ago. Now we see dedicated seed companies to the watermelon industry", said Meir Peretz, Harris Moran Seed Company.

Lisa Zaglin of Abbott & Cobb suggests, "Being able to supply on a twelve month basis has finally hit the produce (watermelon) industry full in the face. Because of this desire to supply for a long window, the grower / shipper groups need an array of seed varieties that allow for the highest quality fruit. The challenge is to provide varieties that meet growers' needs for yield while meeting consumers' need for quality."

"Plant Programs are a growing trend with several of our suppliers who offer plant programs designed to



eliminate guess work and shortages on the watermelon grower's part", suggests Arlen Wood of



Seedway, LLC. "With the new plant programs you get what you order".

A changing trend within the industry is how some companies go to business today. For many, many years it was a national seed catalog that attempted to be all things to all people. Now-a-days, some companies are changing with a different approach.

Siegers Seed Company has been using a regional marketing approach for eight years. Rick Siegers adds "Growers are more sophisticated than ever, and the competition they encounter demands that we offer products specifically tailored to their needs."

## CHALLENGES

There is an old saying that says 'nothing is easy'. The great golfer, Booby Jones, said, "If golf was easy, then everyone would do it". No matter whether you are talking about the game of golf, developing the next advancement in seed, or growing watermelons, a truer statement may not ever be said. It isn't easy, but the dedication is surely present and evident.



There are a great many challenges to the watermelon industry, and as a result, the seed industry. Amongst them are similarities to a list of challenges facing the grower community. Do you see any similarities below?:

- Disease solutions, prevention and resistance

- Cost of doing business (labor and land availability)
- Retailer emphasis on 'economy of scale' vs. consumer demand
- Disappearance of the small farmer
- Residential development of farm land

Lisa Zaglin of Abbott & Cobb states, "The single largest issue facing the watermelon industry today is the VINE DECLINE issue. This one problem is being attacked by academic and private sectors with no resources being spared." We have previously published a Vineline feature story about Vine Decline, and continue to move forward with our scientific research partners to find answers and solutions. "Identifying the causative agents for diseases such as Vine Decline" is the most important to the industry, says Paul Sawyer of Siegers Seed Co.

"Disease resistance is one of the major issues facing the seed industry with watermelon", suggests Rebecca Catlett from Nunhems.. "We must develop varieties that are resistant to fruit blotch, gummy stem and the new 'vice decline' diseases affecting our watermelon crops." "The main challenge is seed health to produce seed free of pathogens", said Meir Peretz of Harris Moran.

Susan Hadley of Syngenta Seeds adds, "The cost of doing business is a significant issue for most companies large or small. Strong financial oversight is a must as research and product development costs continue to increase."

## INDUSTRY CHANGES

As the consumer of watermelon changes, so must the Watermelon industry. That creates a rippling effect with every industry, including seed, that suppliers/partners with our industry must pursue. The consumer will continue to change; Change their preferences for size, flavor, firmness,



vitamin content, packaging (how they buy it (whole, sliced, fresh cut, etc.) Our industry also changes its needs from our partnering supply industry with disease resistance, new varieties, improved color, flavor and firmness, and so on. How does the seed industry help us to meet consumer changes and keep up with our needs?

During the past ten years, there has been more significant change in the seed industry than ever before. "Most of the varieties grown commercially today are less than 10 years old, adds Lisa Zaglin, Abbott & Cobb. "This trend shows the evolution of the industry as a whole. Along with these variety changes has come a defined marketing change. The industry has begun to embrace a promotion to the consumer and not just to the growers."





“The seed industry is becoming more aware of consumer demands and needs”, suggests Rebecca Catlett, Nunhems.. “We are becoming more involved with down stream marketing and working with producers, shippers, fresh cut operations and retailers to supply the consumer with new and better products”.

Susan Hadley, Syngenta Seeds, adds “Seedborne disease issues are more understood. Transplant producers and growers are more educated, and as a result, the risk for outbreaks has dramatically decreased.”

“The seed industry has many more new varieties that have been developed, tested and released in the last ten years than in the prior ten”, adds Tammie Nelson, Hollar Seeds.

## **POLLINIZERS**

As the demand for seedless watermelon by consumers increased across the years, the seed industry responded by creating new varieties and methods for growers to meet that

new, growing demand. Some growers continue the original method of planting a seeded variety alongside seedless varieties in the field, and create pollination effectively. Other growers utilize one of the numerous pollinators available today from some seed companies to create a higher yield of seedless watermelon.

There are different types of pollinators and planting styles today, but in the end, the industry responded to consumer demand and grower need to have the tools to be able to respond.

“By using a pollinizer this eliminates the use of seeded watermelons for pollination, thus having a larger percentage of seedless melons per acre and no seeded to have to deal with”, suggests Arlen Wood, Seedway.

Rebecca Catlett, Nunhems adds, “The pollen supply must come from a more economical and grower friendly source. New, improved pollinizers that supply pollen over

longer periods of time, with better disease resistance and less competition with the seedless plant are headed to the growers.”

With pollinators comes advice from seed companies which can help to maintain growing fields from year-to-year with minimized opportunities for weed or disease issues. “Growers need to practice good rotation, plow under production fields and destroy emerging volunteers in the next season. The practice could address any concern about developing a cucurbit seed/weed bank that may harbor disease and attract pests”, comments Tammie Nelson, Hollar Seed.

## **THE FUTURE**

Grower needs that will help them to respond to changing consumer choices will continue to evolve in the coming years. In the past they have by creating pollinizers, new varieties, disease resistance, improvements in exterior and interior qualities, higher yields and ease of production. The preference for size, shape and







kind patterns will change again and again. Tammie Nelson, Hollar, adds “All it takes is one new outstanding variety to send ripples through the marketplace.”

What could become the next generation of watermelon seed? The responses that one may get from seed companies might seem to be far-fetched, but in fact are things that are very good possibilities in the not too distant future. As research dollars are invested by the seed industry into technology and product advancements, these ideas begin to come to light, and eventually reality. It is almost a dreamer’s dream coming to life.

Arlen Wood, Seedway, suggests “Parthenocarpic varieties will not need traditional pollination from bees. It is standard practice in other cucurbit crops such as cucumbers.”

“In the not too distant future we may supply a seedless plant that does not require and outside male pollen source,” adds Rebecca Catlett, Nunhems.

## CONCLUSION

The seed industry invests tens of millions of dollars into research to develop a better seed for growers,

making those changes to help to meet the ever-changing demands of consumers. They are responding to their customer, the grower, as the grower would to their customer, the consumer. This type of an effort creates a three-legged stool effect of partnership and response.

The ultimate goals by the seed industry are postured to partner with the watermelon industry to grow varieties that consumers want with high quality, disease resistance, cost effectiveness and are grower-friendly. The future holds much promise. Just let your mind wander and quite possibly the idea may already be in the works.



*Our thanks to the contributors to the feature story from Abbott & Cobb, Harris Moran, Hollar Seed, Nunhems, Seedway, Siegers and Syngenta. Thank you for your input and pictures. They were very helpful in the effort to write a complete story and cover a lot of ground.*

*Special thanks go to Abbott & Cobb, Hollar Seed, Nunhems and Syngenta for placing Ads to accompany the feature story on the Seed Industry in this issue of The Vineline. As we continue to develop this series of articles about affiliate industries, your support will allow us to continue the effort and provide new information to our membership. Thank you from all of us at the NWA for your support.*

**SEEDS!**





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# National Report

I hope all your plans are made to be in Lake Tahoe for our annual convention! President Brent Jackson and Executive Director Bob Morrissey have an exciting convention planned. Stephanie and I look forward to seeing you there! Don't miss the Fun and Fellowship, and the exciting beginning of a New Year and Season!

## **Watermelon Rocks in Plymouth, Mass**

Thanks to McMelon, Inc for sponsoring us to New England for Stop & Shop! Stephanie enjoyed the Grand Re-opening celebration of the Plymouth, MA Stop & Shop. She sampled the delicious slices of McMelon Seedless, and assisted the Stop & Shop customers in their selection, offering tips, recipes, and health information on our delicious product. She loved beautiful, Scenic Cape Cod. Thanks Arnold, Chandler, and John Mack for sponsoring us to Stop & Shop!

## **Wiggins Watermelons and Temple-Inland Sponsor**

We enjoyed a very successful Kroger promotions in the Houston, Texas area. Stephanie was welcomed warmly by all the Kroger stores. Serving samples, smiles, and passing out recipes, she educated the Kroger shoppers on all the benefits of enjoying watermelon! We were even joined by one of our sponsors during our last store visit! Myron Harrison, with Temple-Inland stopped by the store, camera in hand. Thank You Myron, Temple-Inland, and the entire James Wiggins family and Wiggins Watermelons for your support!

## **Media Coverage, Good Times and Good Friends in Plains, Texas**

We were in Lubbock, Texas for media coverage prior to the Yoakum County Watermelon Roundup in Plains. Stephanie and Lacy were guests on two local TV shows promoting the Festival and explaining their jobs. We moved on to some excellent school promotions. The girls read stories, and served delicious slices of Anderson's What A Melon Watermelon. Thanks to Connie McWhirter for setting up our promotions. We enjoyed the festival, where Stephanie and Lacy worked their booth. The day ended with dinner and fellowship with friends and family at D Roy Anderson's shed. Guy Jones, Lacy's Dad, is good with the grill. We thank all those who helped sponsor us to Plains, they are; D. Roy Anderson; Macky McWhirter; Borders Melons; Javi Farms; and Texhoma Produce. Thank You!

## **National and International Coverage**

Stephanie was a guest on Sheryl Borden's "Creative Living" show in Portales, New Mexico. She taped two shows. The show is a production of KENW-TV for PBS, and is carried on PBS stations across the US and into Canada, Guam and Puerto Rico. What an awesome opportunity! Stephanie did a magnificent job!

NWPB Sponsors PMA

We were sponsored to the annual Produce Marketing Association's convention in Atlanta, Georgia by NWPB. It was a pleasure working with Mark Arney and his staff for the three day show. PMA is the world's largest International Produce show, with key people in produce filling the aisles. What a grand time to showcase our product. Thank you Mark and NWPB for sponsoring us to PMA!

Until next printing!

Eleanor Bullock

229.273.8638 or 229 322 9933 [eleanor@websign.net](mailto:eleanor@websign.net)







Stephanie enjoys Plymouth!



Yes, this one's perfect!



Welcomed royally by Plymouth's Stop & Shop!



Co-Sponsor Myron Harrison with Temple-Inland stops to visit in Houston



They all loved her at Stop & Shop!



on the Air in Lubbock



Welcomed by management at one of Kroger's Signature Stores in Houston



This group stayed busy serving watermelon at the Plains, Texas Elementary School





Jody Wiggins family visits us at the Plains Festival



Mark Arney, Executive Director NWPB and Stephanie at PMA



This Happy Group shows off D Roy Anderson's trophy from the Car Show



Stephanie got to see her parents, Darrell and Barbara Duda at PMA in Atlanta!



National & International coverage on PBS's "Creative Living with Sheryl Borden," in Portales, New Mexico



Stephanie loved working with NWPB at PMA



Dinner with Temple-Inland and this group, at Morton's in Atlanta



Thank You NWPB!



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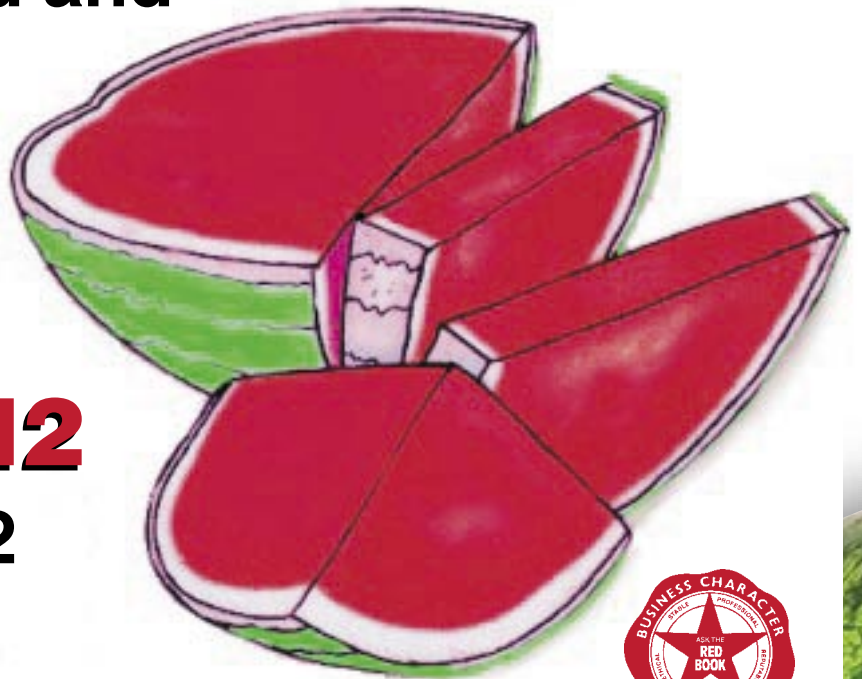


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# Alabama Report

Greetings everyone from our Alabama Watermelon Association and our Queen Candice,

As of this issue of the Vineline, our AWA Queen Candice will have successfully completed her 2005 reign. Candice has been an outstanding representative for our association. She has worked tirelessly, learning all aspects of the watermelon industry, beginning with the seedling and ending with in store promotions. Over the last year, Candice and I have met so many wonderful people and made many, many new friends that will last a lifetime. We wish Candice well at our NWA Convention in beautiful Lake Tahoe and most certainly in her future endeavors.

Let me take this time to personally thank everyone responsible for sponsoring our 2005 AWA Queen Candice during her reign. Thank you to Jim Mastropietro, Terry Jones, Rose Elliotte, Kelly Marinaro, Arnold Mack, Tommy Smith, David Coates, Eric Hammons, Doug Dickerson, Eugene Tolar, Ray Gilliland, Billy Smith, Cheryl Hicks, Ronda Elliotte, Doyle Bennett, Bill Johnson, Larry Bullock, Myron Harrison, Ken Mears and Harry Vaughn. Each of you mean so very much to Candice and have given her memories she will cherish forever.

On a personal note, I would like to share my feelings about Candice. Over the past year I have grown close to her. She is an outstanding young lady. She cares deeply about people and has always been willing to serve our association at a moment's notice. She has never said no to a request for her time, her word is her bond and her yes is always yes.

My favorite memory that I will treasure always, is the week we traveled together in Florida. Over 1700 miles and countless Superman-like changes in the bathroom later (remember CVS, Candice), I have watched a young woman broaden her horizons and educate herself in an industry that is vital to our country. I saw through the eyes of a novice as she learned about our love of the watermelon industry. She embraced wholeheartedly with great passion her job to communicate to consumers the importance of watermelon.

Candice, I want to publicly thank you for making my first year as coordinator a standard by which all others will be measured.

See everyone in Lake Tahoe!

Cindy Vaughn  
AWA Promotion Coordinator  
[www.alwatermelon.org](http://www.alwatermelon.org)  
352-314-5988





Candice and Miss Kayla Stephens spent an afternoon together getting to know each other. What a beautiful young lady.



Little babies love our Queen Candice...



Candice, Jane Tolar and I had a wonderful dinner at Ruth's Chris during the PMA in Atlanta.



as do kindergarten students. Especially when we serve delicious watermelon!



What cute faces!!!



Jon David Mack has a "crowning" moment with Candice!





Jason Yarborough of Red Star Farms gave Candice a thorough tour of their packing house facility.



Never without his hat, Mr. Chuck Stout, with AWA Queen Candice during our Florida tour.



We had a great time with The Texan named Wayne while touring Tommy's fields last summer. Check out the size of that watermelon!



All smiles from these pretty little girls and Candice, too!



It is always special for Candice to spend time with Tommy Smith.



All our watermelon queens had a great time in Washington, DC, especially our events at the baseball game.



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**Greetings from the West!**

**The California – Arizona Watermelon Association  
Is alive and  
“Kickin”**

**Our membership is made up of industry leaders from many of the western states including New Mexico and Oregon. We are in place to assist these members, and the industry, in circulating pertinent information and can be contacted at the addresses/numbers shown below if we may be of assistance to any of you.**

**Have a Wonderful Season!**

**Dana Abercrombie  
Director**

**California – Arizona Watermelon Association  
Phone: 661-269-0788  
Fax: 661-269-0812  
Email: [CAWAmelon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:CAWAmelon@sbcglobal.net)  
Website: [H2Omelon.com](http://H2Omelon.com)**

**2005-2006 President – Eric Champion**

**Annual Convention held the third weekend of January (dates may vary)  
Contact the CAWA office for exact dates  
2006 Convention location – Napa, California**

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# Florida Report

Greetings from The Sunshine State!

The highlight of promotions for the fall and winter season in Florida was the Produce Marketing Association Convention, held in Atlanta, Georgia. The 2005 Florida Watermelon Queen Kelly Addison began her journey to Atlanta with an enjoyable ride with Cheryl Hicks. After setting up our display, she was treated to a wonderful dinner with Ms. Hicks, Billy Smith and Tommy Smith. Sunday morning it was off to the Convention Center to start promoting Florida watermelons. After an exciting day, we were off to International Paper's party. The National Watermelon Promotion Board provided us with a dinner at Anthony's, a famous Atlanta restaurant. Thanks to Kristy Cardinal, Illiana Promotion Coordinator for the exciting and scenic ride back to the hotel.

Monday and Tuesday, we were at the Convention Center to make sure everyone was wearing a Florida watermelon sticker and knew about our product. The special driving talents of Alabama Promotion Coordinator Cindy Vaughn were also discovered while in Atlanta. A special thanks to Secretary/Treasurer Patty Swilley for chaperoning the promotion.

The Florida Watermelon Association grieves the loss of a longtime member of our watermelon family. Robert (Bob) Valentine passed away on November 20, 2005. Bob served on the Florida Watermelon Association Board of Directors and Executive Committee for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Ellen, Shawn, and Lindsey.

Mark your calendar for the Florida Watermelon Convention, March 31-April 2, 2006, at the Hyatt Sarasota. Check out the FWA website at [www.flfwa.com](http://www.flfwa.com) for details.

Sharon McCall  
FWA Promotion Coordinator  
1175 S.W. Brack-Abbott Road  
Mayo, FL 32066  
(386)294-2616  
Fax: (386)294-2646





FWA Queen Kelly Addison invites visitors to stop by the FWA display.



Jane Tolar, Paul Sawyer, and AL Coordinator Cindy Vaughn stop by for a photo with the FWA and AWA Queens.



Making memories at PMA.



Watermelon shopping at PMA.





Kelly admires the beautiful carvings at the NWPB booth.



Kelly meets country singer Billy Deen.



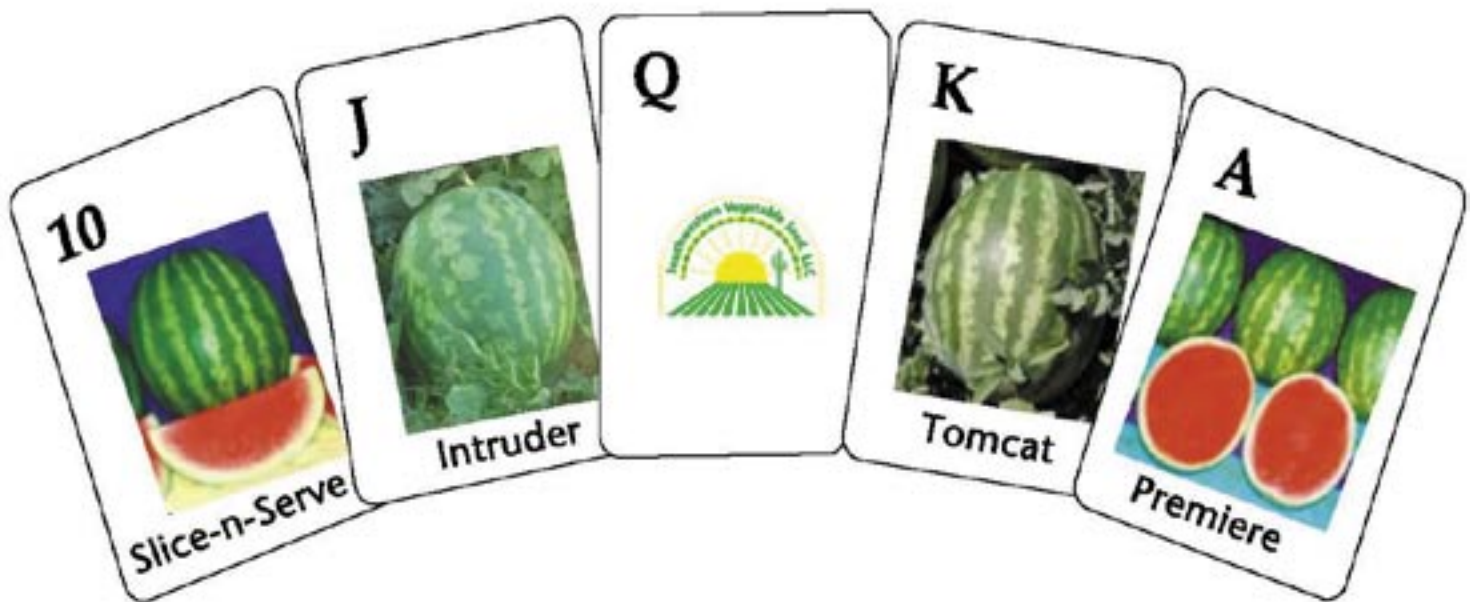
Our friends enjoyed the challenges of the FL Department of Agriculture coordination game.



A photo with their favorite product.



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520-287-9491



# Georgia Report

## HELLO FROM GEORGIA!

Since the last printing we have been anxiously awaiting our Annual Convention to be held January 27th-29th at The Retreat at Lake Blackshear in Cordele. Ice, rain or shine we are bound to have a good time!

Our tour has slowly come to an end for the year. Dec 4th-6th the Georgia Watermelon Association attended The Farm Bureau Convention held in Jekyll Island. The convention had a wonderful turn out and we enjoyed meeting many new people that visited our booth with interest. Thank you, Mr. Buddy and Margie Leger for the wonderful dinner in St. Simmons. The two of you are special people to be around.

January 6th-8th Samantha and I traveled to Savannah to attend The Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Show. A BIG thank you to Temple Inland for the invitation to join their exhibit during the show. Thank you Mitch Mitchell and the entire Temple Inland team for the excellent dinner and lunch while in Savannah. We always enjoy your company!

As Samantha's year is drawn to an end The Georgia Watermelon Family would like to thank you Sam for a job well done. You were a treat to be around and we appreciate your hard work throughout your 40 plus promotions through the year.

I would like to thank our Association for their support over the year. Our watermelon family members are strong supporters of our queen program and I appreciate all the love and support our Association gives us year after year.

As a new year begins we wish you all a successful and healthy watermelon year.

Good luck to Eleanor and all the girls at Nationals in Lake Tahoe. Look forward to seeing you there!

By the next printing Georgia will have crowned a new GA Watermelon Queen. If anyone is interested in booking her for promotions please contact me at the information listed below.

Hope to see you in Georgia during our Convention!

Julie Akins  
Sec. Treas./Promo Coord.  
P. O. Box 2278  
Dalton, GA 30722  
770.842.3309  
akinsjulie1@alltel.net





Samantha had a memorable chat with Saxby Chambliss while in Washington D.C. over the summer.



Sam, Buddy and Margie Leger snuggle close together in the freezing weather while enjoying the ferry in Savannah.



A quick visit with Butch Brady during the Georgia Fruit & Veg. show in Savannah.



Greg Peacock, Sam and Howard McGlamory catch up on Sam's year.



Borders melons East – Mark and Sam enjoyed time together in Savannah.



Mitch Mitchell, Sam and Ricky Jackson visit at Temple Inland booth while in Savannah. We love our GA guys!



Bob Rawlins and Ken Lewis visited the Temple Inland booth while Samantha charmed them with watermelon stickers.

Darren Deal w/ Siegers Seed Co. and Sam cherishing a moment at GA. Fruit & Veg.







Mike Thompson & Sam say cheese while together at P M A.



What a wonderful watermelon family we have. Craig Mathis, Greg Leger, Barry Plotnick, Susan & Brent Harrison w/ Samantha.



Thanks Alabama-Candice, Nationals-Stephanie, S. C. Anita, and Jr. Miss Watermelon Queen for joining us in GA during our July watermelon week festival.

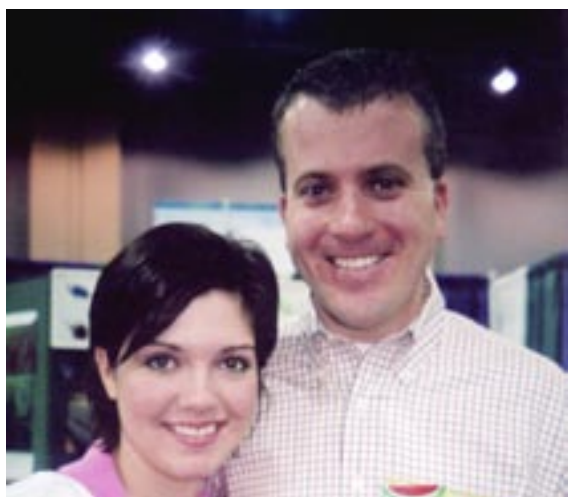
David Coates & Sam in Atlanta.



The GA kiss all of us GA gals love! Larry Collins & Buddy Leger kiss our 2005 GA Watermelon Queen.



Jim Mastrolepeiro visits the GA booth at P M A.



Jamey Adams/ S W Seed & Sam always enjoy a moment to visit.



Thanks for a wonderful watermelon year!!



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# Illiana Report

The Illiana Watermelon Association is picking up the pace working towards the 2006 National Watermelon Convention in Lake Tahoe, NV. Elizabeth is busy preparing for the competition and working around the area promoting the upcoming 2006 watermelon season. Summer may be over, but the fall and winter months have been just as successful for watermelon promotions.

The month of September was filled with parades, fall festivals and speaking engagements. September 5, 2005- Elizabeth participated in the Palestine, Illinois Labor Day Parade. She rode in a John Deere gator provided by Vincennes Tractor. The parade was one of the largest in Illinois. September 8, 2005- Elizabeth spoke at the St. Vincent's Ladies Club meeting. Elizabeth served fruit salad and watermelon cake. She spoke to the ladies about the importance of watermelon in your daily diet. She discussed the many vitamins and nutrients that make up the watermelon. The women were interested in the anti-cancer fighting agent lycopene and the abundance of the agent in watermelon. September 11, 2005- Elizabeth participated in the Monroe City, Indiana Fall Festival Parade. She rode on a bin of melons in the back of a pick-up. The crowd loved it and Elizabeth got a lot of applause. September 14, 2005- Elizabeth traveled to Sullivan, Indiana to the Corn Festival. It was a nice festival and a different area for us to promote watermelon. People were interested in watermelon brochures and talking to the queen. September 17, 2005- Elizabeth visited Princeton, Indiana for the popular Heritage Days Fall Festival. There were a variety of booths at the festival. Elizabeth visited each booth and passed out watermelon brochures. She got a lot of attention from the Toyota booth. Several people from Japan were in Indiana visiting and Elizabeth got to talk to them about the watermelon production. September 24, 2005- Somerville, Indiana invited Elizabeth to participate in their Fall Festival parade. The small town had a great turn out with several different entries. Elizabeth visited with the people throughout the parade route passing out "I Love Watermelon" stickers. September 28, 2005- Willow Manor Nursing home had Elizabeth be a guest speaker at the monthly Breakfast Bandwagon. The Knox County Chamber of Commerce holds a Breakfast Bandwagon each month. There are different businesses throughout the county that sponsor a breakfast every month. Elizabeth was honored to be a guest speaker.

The month of October brought scary and spooky creatures out to play. No, Elizabeth came out to play for Halloween. The Illiana Watermelon Association had a campsite at Quabache Trails. October 29, 2005- Elizabeth dressed up for Halloween at Quabache Trails in Vincennes, Indiana. The trails were packed with people

camping for the festive weekend. Quabache Trails holds a costume contest for people at the campsite. Elizabeth wore a watermelon costume. She also passed out A LOT of watermelon candy to all the trick-or-treaters. This was a different and successful way for us to keep promoting watermelon!

In November, Elizabeth participated in several different activities. November 4-8, 2005- Elizabeth traveled out of state to PMA held in Atlanta, Ga. We drove to PMA this year and enjoyed the drive from Indiana. Elizabeth couldn't believe all the remarkable booths at PMA. Every booth had their own unique display of produce, flowers or candy. Thank you to the Promotion Board and all the sponsors of the party held on Sunday night. It was a great time enjoyed with our watermelon friends. November 18, 2005- Elizabeth had a tribe of Indians with her for the annual Vincennes Christmas Parade of Lights held downtown Vincennes, In. This year's theme for the parade was a "French Christmas" in Vincennes. The Illiana Watermelon Association decorated their float with a tepee, canoe and lots of Indians. Thank you to all the individuals that helped construct the float and participated in the parade. We truly appreciate all the long hours of work and riding on the float!

We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and a great start to the New Year! We will tell everyone about the December events in the next issue. Please mark your calendar for the Illiana Watermelon Convention. The convention will be held the weekend of March 10-11, 2006 at the Vincennes Quality Inn. For more information contact: Stephanie Nowaskie, secretary/treasurer, 812-886-1051 or [sjn@vincennes.net](mailto:sjn@vincennes.net).

Happy New Year,  
Kristy Cardinal  
Promotion's Coordinator  
Illiana Watermelon Association  
2408 E. Henry Rd.  
Vincennes, In. 47591  
812-882-3570  
[melons@vincennes.net](mailto:melons@vincennes.net)







Father Dave Fleck welcomes Elizabeth to the St. Vincent's Catholic Church Ladies group.



Elizabeth enjoys her ride on a bin of watermelons!



Elizabeth and William Cardinal dressed up like a watermelon for the costume contest.



Elizabeth is ready for the Vincennes Christmas parade dressed up for the "French Christmas" theme.



Elizabeth and her brother William.



Thank you for the Corn Festival t-shirt!



Thank you to Leah Snider and Adam Delisle for driving me in the Monroe City Fall Festival parade.



The tribe is ready for the parade.





Elizabeth talks to the new Miss Northwest Territory Claire Hendrix.



It was great meeting Mr. & Mrs. Duda and their booth.



Eleanor and Stephanie welcome Elizabeth to the Promotion Board booth at PMA.



Queen Allison takes time for a photo with Elizabeth at her Maryland/Delaware booth.



Elizabeth gets to talk with Frey Farms of Indiana.



Queen Lacey shows Elizabeth the Texas/Oklahoma booth.



Nowell Borders welcomes Elizabeth to Borders Melons booth.



Elizabeth ran into her good friends from South Carolina and



# Mar-Del Report

Dear Vineline Readers,

Happy New Year to all of you! It is hard to believe another year has come and gone so quickly.

First I would like to thank 2005 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Allison Castellana. She has done a fantastic job. I was attempting to handle a full time job at the Department of Agriculture, maintain my help at the family farm operation, serve as my church's interim organist, and handle the promotion coordinator responsibilities for the watermelon association. This meant several promotions were planned at the last minute or Allison had to take the ball and run. I am very proud to say that she handled everything with grace, style, and confidence. I strongly feel that no matter what Allison puts her mind to, she will be able to not only reach those goals but shoot for the stars. Allison, the Mar-Del Watermelon Association wishes you all the best in the world.

Second, I would like to thank the Mar-Del Watermelon Association for allowing me the opportunity to serve as the promotions coordinator/ queen team leader. I hold all of our friendships and relationships close to my heart. Even though the year wasn't perfect, I feel as though we had several excellent promotions and that the Mar-Del Watermelon Association was represented well over the year.

Last, I hope everyone has made plans to attend the 41st Annual Watermelon Association Convention February 3&4, 2006 in Ocean City Maryland. Please call either myself or Dawn Collins (302-875-2819) to make reservations. Jay Rider, Travis Hastings, Will Hales, myself and many others have been working extremely hard to make this years convention better than ever.

Best wishes on a successful 2006!

Warm Watermelon Wishes,  
Amanda Brown

410-310-7966  
Akbbrown03@hotmail.com







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# North Carolina Report

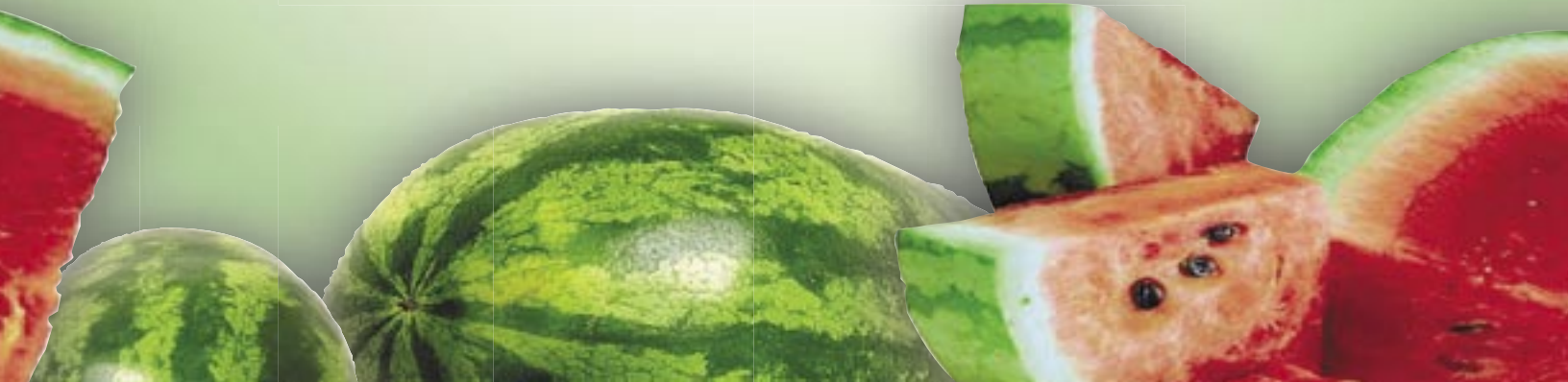
## Greetings from North Carolina

Watermelon wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year. NC Queen Amanda had a successful fall season with a variety of opportunities to promote watermelons. PMA in Atlanta, November 5-7 was an exciting trip and Amanda had the pleasure to promote watermelons with stickers, brochures, autographs and pictures at the NC Department of Agriculture exhibit booth. We enjoyed working along with others representing NC agriculture. Amanda enjoyed visiting other booths as well as getting to see most of the Watermelon Queens and their chaperones. The Beach Party gave Amanda the opportunity to meet with producers and suppliers from North Carolina. A special thank you to the National Watermelon Promotion Board and other supporters who hosted an Evening to Remember at Anthony's in Buckhead. PMA was a huge success. We appreciate the opportunity to join NCDA to promote watermelons at PMA.

Queen Amanda is currently preparing for the National pageant in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Preparations are also being made for the NCWA Convention in Wilmington, March 3-4, 2006.

Amanda Wilson, 2005 North Carolina Watermelon Queen, is completing a very successful year of promoting watermelons. Amanda and I would like to thank all supporters and sponsors that have helped to make this years Queen Tour a successful one. We look forward to 2006.

Sandra Woodard  
NCWA Promotions Coordinator  
PO Box 145  
Pendleton, NC 27862  
Woodard145@vol.com







Queen Amanda enjoys the Food Lion Family Day Picnic in Salisbury with SeLana Scism and Darrell Johnson, VP Human Resources.



Tony the Tiger just could not resist meeting Queen Amanda at the Food Lion Family Day Picnic.



A once in a lifetime opportunity to meet a real Queen - Amanda at the Food Lion Family Day Picnic.



Queen Amanda takes time to test her tire changing skills - One of the fun activities at the Food Lion Family Day Picnic.



Queen Amanda at the NC State Fair with one of the winning watermelons.



Amanda and Gloria Richardson, NCWA President promoting melons and selling NC Watermelon license plates at NC State Fair exhibit.



There's always time for watermelon, even if it is at the NCWA exhibit at the State Fair.



Queen Amanda and Queen Coordinator, Sandra Woodard team up to promote watermelons at the NC State Fair.





Ross Williams, NCDA and Queen Amanda greet Brent Jackson, National Watermelon President and Rodney Jackson at PMA in Atlanta.



Queen Amanda visits Queen Allison at the Delaware booth at PMA.



NC promotes its agricultural products at PMA. Thanks NCDA for the opportunity for Queen Amanda to promote watermelons.



PMA presents a chance to renew acquaintances. Pictured with former National Queen Susan Harrison are SC Queen Anita, Queen Amanda and SC Queen Coordinator, Mary Beth Hiers.



Amanda stops for a visit with Mark Arney at the NWPB booth at PMA.



Queen Amanda, Florida Queen Kelly, National Queen Stephanie, Texas-Oklahoma Queen Lacy and SC Queen Anita meet and chat at the NWPB booth at PMA



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# South Carolina Report

Happy 2006 from South Carolina! I hope that all of you had a safe holiday and are looking forward to a wonderful and prosperous 2006. Anita is getting real excited about Nationals. We look forward to seeing all of you in Lake Tahoe.

I am going to finish off our 2005 tour. In August, Anita was an honored guest at Sandy Run Elementary School. We served watermelon at Open House and it was a big hit. The parents, teachers and students loved it. Anita also handed out coloring books and signed autographs. It is real neat to walk through my school and see Anita's picture posted in almost every classroom!

Anita had two in-store promotions in August. She worked a Bi-Lo in Simpsonville, SC and she also participated in a grand opening event for Ingles. Anita loved meeting all of the customers and enjoyed sharing her watermelon knowledge with them. Thanks Bi-Lo and Ingles!

In October, Anita was featured at the South Carolina State Fair in Columbia, SC. She prepared the fire and ice salsa at a booth in the Cantey Building. Needless to say it was a big hit! The people kept coming back for more. During each session Anita would tell the audience all about watermelon and the best part is they would stop, look, eat and listen!

In November, Anita and I traveled to Atlanta, GA for PMA. Anita enjoyed viewing the spectacular booths at PMA. She could not get over the creativity and products provided for all to see. A big thank you to the Promotion Board and all sponsors for the wonderful party. What a fun and enjoyable evening! Anita enjoyed visiting with the queens, queen coordinators and meeting all of the

people in the watermelon industry. She was overwhelmed by such kind and loving people! Anita and I would like to also thank SCWA President, Stevie Still and Freddie Ellis for the wonderful dinner while in Atlanta.

In December, Anita rode in the Gaffney Christmas Parade and she also visited her younger brother's school. She enjoyed sharing watermelon facts and information with the students. Anita even played Santa Claus trivia with the students!

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Anita for a wonderful, wonderful year. She went well beyond the call of duty. Anita was always willing to go the extra mile to make each promotion a true success. Most importantly she did not miss a single promotion. The SCWA thanks Anita for a great year and wishes her luck at Nationals!

Until next time...

Watermelon smiles,

Mary Beth Hiers  
404 N. Trenholm Road  
Columbia, SC 29206  
803-331-3362  
mbh615@earthlink.net





Anita Holly—  
2005 SCWA  
Queen



Anita visits her brother's school in Gaffney, SC.



Mr. Ingles himself stopped by to chat with Anita during one of her in-store promotions at the Ingles in Boiling Springs, SC.



Anita speaks of all the wonderful things about watermelon at the State Fair.



Anita prepares for the Sandy Run Elementary Open House.



Anita enjoyed her visit with all of the queens at PMA.



Anita prepares watermelon salsa at the SC State Fair.



Martin, Brad and Anita at PMA.





Anita meets Nancy and Lee Harber at the watermelon party.



Anita gave away many autograph cards at the Sandy Run Elementary Open House.



A Sandy Run Elementary watermelon lover!



Thanks Promotion Board for a wonderful party in Atlanta, Ga.



Anita speaks to the students at Limestone Central Elementary School.



Anita spends time with the O'Neal's at PMA.



What a wonderful Chef and Queen!



Anita, thanks for a wonderful year! I love ya!



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*Andy*

*Chris*

*Bob*

*Gerry*



# Texas / Oklahoma Report

Hello Everyone,

We are all off to a new start i. 2006 and we wish everyone a great year in watermelons or whatever your needs may be. We wish to express our appreciation to all the watermelon associations for all your kindness and help throughout the past year. Lacy and I have enjoyed so much each trip that we took being able to be with the other queens, coordinators and watermelon families.

To all that traveled to Atlanta, Georgia for the PMA show, I am sure that you all felt the trip was successful. Lacy enjoyed working at the booth and she especially enjoyed all the queens dropping by to say hello and of course taking a quick picture.

By the time you read this we will have had our 40th annual convention and will have a brand new 2006 watermelon year to look forward too. Lacy has been a wonderful Texas & Oklahoma Queen, how could it be otherwise, she has been raised in the watermelon business all her life. Her mom and dad, Guy and Teretha Anderson Jones, have worked in the business with Teretha's dad and mom, Deroy and Jerry Anderson and of course Uncle Tony Anderson and Aunt Chery. Lacy is looking forward to the day when she can do even more for her watermelon family after she graduates in 2007.

The Texas & Oklahoma Watermelon Association appreciates you Lacy for all that you have done for the Association. You always worked with such pride and a lot of knowledge about watermelons. You have taken your position in a very responsible manner. Lacy, Thank you so much for being you.....

We want to encourage everyone to attend the National Watermelon Convention in Lake Tahoe. I am sure it will

be a very informative and fun convention for all. Until next time.

Wanda Letson

Sec.Treas.,Promotion Coordinator

P. O. Box 903

Weatherford, TX 76086

817-596-0927

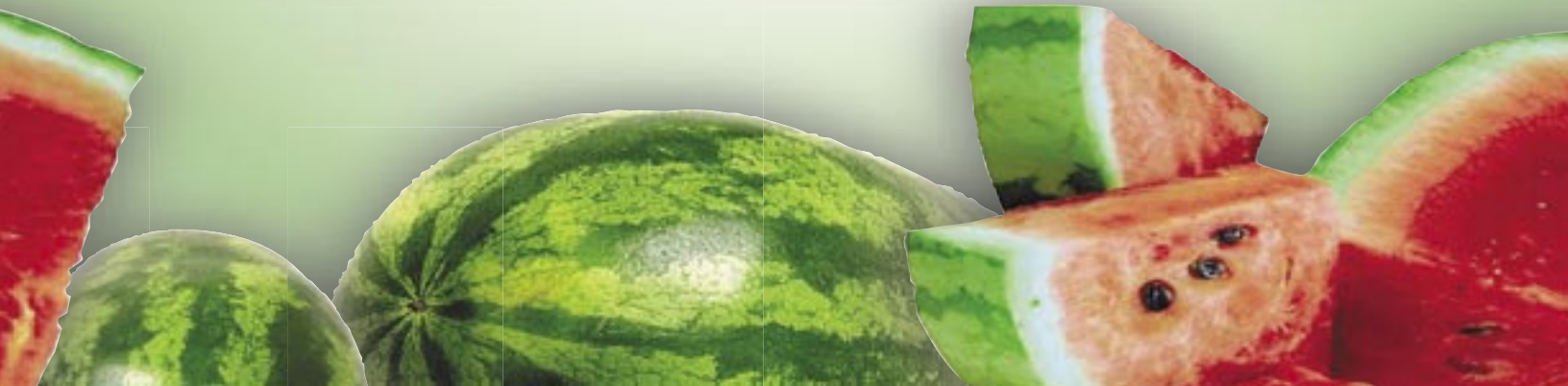
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Condolence to the family of C.E. (Coyle) Mahan. Coyle passed Away December 26, 2005. Coyle was a Charter member of the Texas & Oklahoma Watermelon Association, a past president, Board member and a member of the Executive Council. He was a true to heart Watermelon farmer, in his last years in his home garden he would save his watermelon seeds from year to year with the correct markings on the jars...





Texas Group at the Georgia-Pacific Party.



Queen Lacy and NWA Queen Stephanie say thanks to Myron and all the Inland guys at the Temple Inland Dinner.



That is Jim Henderson showing his best side he says.

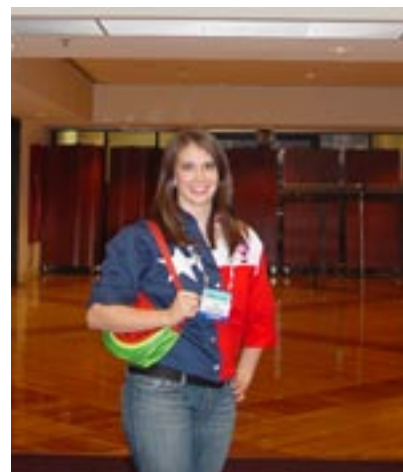


Lacy enjoys visiting with the Texas folks at PMA.



The Fasano's and Karen Henderson enjoy the Temple Inland Party.

A pretty Texas & Oklahoma Watermelon Queen.....



Lacy and Stephanie made us a beautiful rose bouquet for the booth at PMA, (note the vase).



Texas says thanks to Greg McNeil with Georgia Pacific, very nice part at Turner Field.





Lacy takes a peek into the locker room.



Lacy visits with Jeff, Paul, Nowell, and Tony at the booth.



Yes, we are enjoying our visit to Turner Field.



Thanks to International Paper Company for the great dinner,oops where is Jason Dains, Oh he must be taking the picture, Thanks Jason.



Jeff and Ward having a great time at Turner Field.



Just a quick watermelon photo.



Lacy, Cheryl, Tony, Ward and Jeff visit the Atlanta braves dugout.



Lacy, Stephanie and D. Duda visit the National Watermelon Promotion Board Booth at PMA.



# Project Vine Decline 2006



The NWA has determined that Vine Decline is a major priority in scientific research for our Association to pursue with our collaborative team of USDA, University, State and County Agricultural Researchers.

How can you help? Your state chapter, seed supplier and chemical supplier can help by supporting the NWA's efforts to understand how this disease is doing its damage, and eventually finding a solution. Our goal is to end the spread of this disease before it goes any further. The more help that we can get (with your encouragement) the better we will all be. Thank you!

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