

Great Food, Exciting Speakers, Beautiful Wine Country

Great food, exciting speakers, beautiful wine country - all this and more is in store for the 2012 Annual Convention being hosted by Yamhill County Women for Agriculture this year from Thursday evening, March 1, to a full day on March 2, to the half day on Saturday, March 3.

The underlying theme of our program is "educating ourselves about issues important to agriculture."

Luncheon speaker is Amos Meron, Israeli Shaliach (emissary).

(<http://www.facebook.com/amos.shaliach>). When his Israeli Army service ended, he looked for another way to help bring understanding in the world. In September, 2011, he arrived in Portland on his next assignment: Shaliach. (<http://www.jewishreview.org/special/Shaliach-seeks-to-open-minds-to-many-facets-of-Israel>). "I see myself as an emissary," Meron said at an interview with the Portland Jewish Review during his first week in town. He hopes to influence people and open their minds to different aspects of Israel. "You can learn about Israeli music, geography, history and politics. The first thing is to get to know the community, and see where I can have an impact. I'm here to learn. I'm getting to know my surrounding—even literally. I just found out about Target." At his talk in McMinnville for OWA, he will discuss the development of agriculture in Israel, with emphasis on water and irrigation.

Caroline Lobdell will be the banquet speaker. OWA board members have already met Caroline, who is the executive director at the Western Resources Legal Center, (<http://www.wrlegal.org/who/>) an organization sponsored by natural resource industries, including farmers, ranchers, miners, foresters and resource developers.

Caroline will also drop in Thursday evening at the cellar bar for our snack and chat session. No-host bar is right there, and snacks will include meatballs in Terminator stout sauce, warm black bean dip, and a hummus platter.

Caroline oversees the Center's program which trains legal advocates to represent natural resource users. One case the group has taken on involves representing ranchers who hold a permit to graze cattle on national forest land. The land owners were not allowed, then limited from doing that in 2008 because of an environmentalist lawsuit claiming overgrazing.

After much legal wrangling, the WRLC won the case, in what was a "unique hands-on educational experience for students" who prepared critical legal pleadings in the case, according to the WRLC newsletter.

The legal foundation of property rights is the basis on which the WRLC wins its cases. Speaker Chana Cox, professor emerita Lewis & Clark, will discuss how respect for property rights, rule of law and the free market affect agriculture.

Prof. Cox has taught courses in political science, intellectual history, classics, and economics. She has also written several plays, novels and books on philosophy.

Always a highlight at meetings is George Taylor, from the Oregon chapter of the American Meteorological Society. The famous former state climatologist will give us an update on climate news.

Another defender of natural resource users who will be introduced is Scott Dahlman, the new executive director at Oregonians for Food and Shelter, which has just brought him on to take over from retired ED Terry Witt.

A series of speakers (both OSU professors and a local grower and brewer) on all aspects of barley: growing, cooking, marketing and brewing, will also address our members. A beer tasting just before the banquet will be conducted by the Lincoln City McMenemy's brewer.

On the menu for Friday is breakfast breads, including Danish and scones; soups and salads for lunch; and pepper-crust round of beef with all the trimmings plus dessert for dinner.

On Saturday, we'll all journey out to the beautiful Red Ridge Farms Olive Mill, which is a beautiful event space plus a working olive mill for making olive oil. We'll have breakfast snacks available during the business meeting. <http://redridgefarms.com/visit-us>