

USLGA

Newsletter

April 2022
Vol. 11 Issue 2

USLGA NEEDS YOU!
Volunteer with our organization!



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Reflections of a Harvest
- Meet Regional Coordinators
- Member Spotlight
- Vendor Spotlights
- Show us Your Classes
- Committee News
- Meet the Executive Director

SOCIAL MEDIA

USLGA is on Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram. Follow us!



WEB

www.uslavender.org

If you would like to contribute stories, comments, or other content please email editor@uslavender.org

USLGA NEWSLETTER

Past and current newsletters are accessible on www.uslavender.org

COVER IMAGE

Lavender Lady
painting by Karen Whitworth
Location: Wayward Winds Lavender
Newberg, Oregon

WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS:

Please submit your lavender and farm photos to be considered in future newsletters and USLGA's social media at: editor@uslavender.org

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication. The newsletter is distributed bi-monthly.

MISSION OF USLGA

To support and promote the United States lavender industry through research, education, networking and marketing.

VISION OF USLGA

As a collective voice for members, the United States Lavender Growers Association will advocate for, promote, and support and United States lavender industry. The USLGA will offer opportunities for members to participate in and benefit from networking, education and research. It will seek marketing opportunities to raise awareness of the lavender industry, connect buyers to sellers, and enhance member farms and businesses. The USLGA will support growers in producing a quality sustainable lavender crop and end products to satisfy U.S. demand and will be a partner in the global lavender community.





From the Executive Director

Dear USLGA Members,

Like many associations, volunteerism is the lifeblood of the USLGA. In my short time as Executive Director with USLGA, one thing that stands out above and beyond is a passion for the organization. Each person I have met genuinely cares. With over 30 years of working with nonprofits, I have developed a deep appreciation for dedicated volunteers and staff. I am honored to be part of such a committed community. If you have yet to volunteer or haven't in a while, please consider volunteering:

Participate on a Committee

Become a Regional Leader

Write an article for the USLGA Newsletter

Join the USLGA and your regional FaceBook page and contribute

Submit a recipe for the Website or newsletter in the future Life with Lavender piece

Propose a topic to present during USLC 2023, or a Front Porch event

Are you an English Geek? Proofreading and editing skills are supreme!

Run for the Board of Directors

Speaking of volunteering, elections for the Board of Directors were recently held. One of the greatest benefits of USLGA membership is the ability to network with experts in your field. You cannot put a price on the knowledge you receive when you actively participate. The USLGA leaders, members of committees, regional leaders, and FaceBook administrators volunteer to excite networking and collaboration, but it doesn't end there. Your leadership brought in staff to primarily ensure members are valued and supported. Maximize your membership by participating in various USLGA events, gatherings, and on FaceBook. It also gives me a chance to get to know the members and to better understand members' needs.

Regional meetings are not only informative, but they are a great way to network with others in your region and they are fun, too! Don't pass up the opportunity to participate in your region's meetings when you receive the invitation via email or on FaceBook.

Mark your calendar! The Event Committee has convened to plan the USLC 2023, which will be held January 26-28, 2023 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Portland, Oregon! A pre-conference survey was sent to gauge interest in the conference. We were pleasantly surprised to hear so many of you are looking forward to attending USLC 2023! Be on the lookout as developments are announced. Joseph Downs and Sally Miller co-chair this committee—their excitement is a sure sign USLC will truly be special.

The Education and Research Committee, with Mike Sullivan, Chair, planned and held a successful Front Porch Event, which featured Dr. Cindy Jones and Hydrosols. This event was recorded and is available to USLGA members on the USLGA website (see link in the Latest News www.uslavender.org).

Member shoutout! I took a road trip and stopped in to visit Cindy Schooler at her Windy Hills Lavender Boutique in Heber, Arizona. The Schooler's actual farm is about 10 miles north of Heber and is not an easy trek, so they started a smaller farm around the boutique. Of course, the lavender wasn't in bloom, and the snow had just melted. I look forward to visiting again when the lavender is in bloom! By the way, I highly recommend her chamomile lavender tea! Thank you for your hospitality, Cindy! <https://windyhillslavender.com/>

I look forward to working with USLGA in supporting and promoting the lavender industry! Feel free to connect with me, execdir@uslavender.org.

With gratitude,
Michele Hyson

BOARD MEMBERS

President - Sherri Wood
Vice President - Julie Haushalter
Secretary - Patricia Uptain
Treasurer - Sarah Richards
Mike Neustrom
Joseph Downs
Sally J Miller
Marilyn Kosel
Rebecca Ralston

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy - OPEN
Education & Research - Mike Sullivan
Event - Sherri Wood
Finance - Sarah Richards
Internet - Jessica Mortvedt
Membership - Joseph Downs
Newsletter - Marilyn Kosel
Nominating - Jim Morford
PR & Communications - Mary Althoff
Publications - Mike Neustrom

Admin Support - Sally Miller
Webmaster - Mary Bergstrom
Executive Director - Michele Hyson

Letter from the Editor

Much has been happening in USLGA! We have a new Executive Director and a new President. You'll find an introduction to our new Director, Michele Hyson, in this issue and more about our new President, Sherri Wood, in the next edition.

There is also much excitement about our upcoming and in-person US Lavender Conference. The first in-person USLC since 2019. Conferences are vital to our organization and offer members valuable educational and networking opportunities. Please make plans to attend USLC 2023. You will come away with a wealth of information. You'll have the opportunity to see old friends and make new ones.

I hope you find this edition both entertaining and educational. If you have ideas for articles or wish to submit articles, photos, and other content to be considered for the newsletter please do so.

- Marilyn



Why Portland?

If you are coming for the conference, consider staying awhile. It's no secret that Portland has taken some hits lately but it's still the quirky and unique city it has always been. If the city isn't for you try the mountains, Columbia gorge scenic area, or the Pacific coast, all only an hour or so away. The northwest is also home to a multitude of lavender farms you may want to visit.

Here are some resources to help you plan your trip:

<https://traveloregon.com/>

<https://www.travelportland.com/>

<https://localadventurer.com/things-to-do-in-portland-oregon-bucket-list/>

<https://www.travelportland.com/plan/maps/>

<https://willamettevalley.org/>

INTRODUCING: The Becker Family Becker Estate Winery & Vineyards Fredericksburg, TX



by Lisa Anthony, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee|
co-written by Nichole Bendele, Becker Marketing Director

A heartfelt love of gardening is the foundation of the success of the Becker family businesses. The vineyard was the first step. Dr. Richard Becker and his late wife Bunny planted their vineyard in 1992 with the first grape harvest in 1995 and opened it to the public in 1996. While developing the vineyard, the Beckers traveled the Rhone and Provence regions of France, visiting the wineries and touring the countryside.

During these European journeys, they noticed field upon field of luscious lavender and saw the vision for their business back in Texas – especially after realizing the French climate was similar to their Texas Hill Country environment. As a result of their travels, Dr. and Mrs. Becker decided to plant three acres (10,000 lavender plants) at the winery in 1998 with the help of their daughter Clementine Becker, Chris Perrenoud, and friends. The chosen varieties were a diverse selection of *Lavandula angustifolia* cultivars and *Lavandula x-intermedia* “Grosso” and “Provence”.

As with many other lavender farmers, they faced many challenges:

- In 2000, the Beckers added 700 new plants but lost 85% of them to heat waves and drought.
- In 2002, they had thirty inches of rain in one week. Not normal for the typically semi-arid Texas Hill Country. The excessive rain killed about 60% of the lavender plants
- Around 2007, the farm experienced Cotton Root Rot. Recommended treatments did not resolve the issue and reduced good microorganisms in the soil. Local high school biology teacher Melinda Burg Greg was instrumental in helping to bringing healthy microorganisms and nutrients back to the soil.
- The Beckers have since determined that the *Lavandula Stoechas* species does best in the hot Texas Hill country (Zone 7) summer extremes.

After their many years in the business, the Beckers noticed that the lavender is not as prolific after reaching seven years of age. The Beckers now replace their plants approximately every seven years. Beginning after the 2020 bloom, older plants were removed and soil was prepared for new plants. They planed to rotate plantings on this replacement schedule going forward. New plants were ordered but were not delivered until fall 2021. First there were delays due to the pandemic. Then during the February 2021 winter storm in Texas the nursery where the plants were being grown lost power. The new plants died before reaching the vineyard. Plants were started again and 900 new plants finally arrived in October 2021.

The annual two-day Becker Vineyards Lavender Festival began in 1998. Going forward, Becker Estate Vineyards wants to expand its offerings to include smaller educational workshops throughout the year. They are also working to increase lavender production and developing more lavender products for sale in the Tasting Room. Becker Vineyard's lavender items include bath and body products, sachets, candles, and potpourri. All are available for purchase online, in the Winery Tasting Room, and at the Main Street Tasting Room in Fredericksburg, Texas.

The Becker Estate Winery & Vineyard is east of Fredericksburg, TX. There you will find the lavender field, vineyard, winery, tasting room, sales room, and reception hall. The outdoor open-air pavilion can be enjoyed by guests. Becker Vineyards offers wine tastings, elevated wine tastings, and private and public events. On the weekends, there is a good possibility visitors will find Dr. Becker wandering around the grounds, sharing his love and talents for gardening with his grandchildren.

www.beckervineyards.com

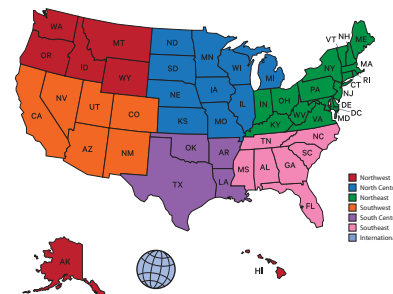


Meet the Regional Leaders: A Sister Act

Sally Miller of Willow Springs Lavender, Bedford, PA

Stacy Sater of Wildcat Hollow Lavender, Rockbridge, OH

by Claudia Tsas, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee



Northeast Regional Leader: Sally Miller

Q 1: What brought you into the lavender industry?

After 31 years in my professional career in the health care industry, I was getting close to retirement. I always wanted to transition to a farm lifestyle as part of a new life stage. I took a long walk and talked with my sister Stacy. I realized that being a lavender farmer was the passion I wanted to follow. Here I am, finally, officially retired and ready to enjoy the adventure.

Q 2: Tell us about your farm and business model.

My family owns 50 acres of land where we are raising beef cattle. I have claimed 2.5 acres of this land for our lavender farm. We have about 400 plants in the ground with 18 cultivars. When thinking of a name for the lavender farm, "Willow Tree" made complete sense, since it is a reflection of strength, flexibility, and new beginnings. In 2021 we put extra energy into research and development. This year I am confident we will have high-quality products to offer our customers.

Q 3: Reason to be a regional leader

I am a forever learner. I love new opportunities and challenges that force me to go out of my comfort zone. I want to use my leadership experience for the benefit of the USLGA. Becoming a regional leader opens up the opportunity to new experiences, connections, and success by working and staying together.

Contact Sally Miller: 301-873-7098, willowspringlavender@gmail.com



Sisters Stacy Sater & Sally Miller
Northeast Region Co-leaders

Northeast Regional Leader: Stacy Sater

Q 1: What brought you into the lavender industry?

During the pandemic shutdown in the Spring of 2020, life slowed way down for us. This allowed me time to think about what was important to me. My sister Sally came to visit me and we went for a long walk, contemplating what we would do if we could do anything. Somehow growing lavender came up and we said, "Let's go for it!" We jumped in and have not looked back. Sally lives in PA and I live in OH. We both started researching and visiting farms that were close to us. The next thing we knew, we had taken the Michigan State course and were signed up to take the Lavender 101 course Ellen Reynolds offers. As we did our research, we both found that the lavender community is amazing and so willing to share their knowledge! What a cool group of people!

Q 2: Tell us a bit about your farm and business model.

My husband and I moved back to his family's farm in 1999. His parents needed help with running and management of the farm. We are a Century Farm that has primarily focused on beef cattle, hay & some row crops. As Bruce and I started looking to our future, we knew we wanted to branch out and focus on some other aspects of farming. When I first mentioned lavender, I think both Bruce and my father-in-law thought I was crazy. After reviewing my research, Bruce was all in and has been the most amazing support and help along the way.

We've transformed his best hayfield into my lavender vision and it's been so great to spend time working with him on the farm. We put our first plants in the ground in the Fall of 2020. Wildcat Hollow was born! The name is derived from the road on which our farm is located. I've been asked if we see any wildcats on our farm and the answer is, YES! There are several bobcats that we see and hear regularly. One of them loves to prowl through our lavender at night.

Currently we have about 350 plants and will be planting about another 150 plants this Spring. My main goal is to take advantage of the tourist traffic that we have here in the Hocking Hills. Focusing on agritourism and u-pick events. I also attend Farmers Markets to get the word out, and to promote our farm and the products that we make.

We have 4 children. Our son is getting married this year and his bride is looking forward to incorporating lavender from our farm into the wedding. We also have three daughters that live at home and help with whatever needs doing. So far, it's been a great family experience!

Q 3: What is the primary reason for wanting to be a regional leader?

My sister Sally told me to! HA! Actually, Sally signed up and then discovered what a large region it was and asked me if I would help. I agreed because we love to share ideas and get to know people. We were raised with the idea that if you can help in some way, you should. If you know something that may help others, share it. If you need help, ask for it. I think a lot of times it's easy to get caught up in taking care of yourself and not look beyond that. SallyBed and I both feel that if we all have a common place to share our ideas and help one another, we will all be better for it.

We look forward to meeting people in our region and visiting their farms. We are looking forward to making 2022 the best year yet!

Contact Stacy Sater: 740-331-2774, wildcathollowlavender@gmail.com

Reflections on a Morning Harvest at Lavender Lane Farm

by K. Byrnes

In the beginning, we do not speak. We each take a different position in the lavender patch. We select our row and get to work. The day is radiant. The air is cool but the sun is hot. There are a few pretty puffy clouds up high. For me, the morning silence is bliss. There are one or two birds tweeting nearby, but most are in the trees across the adjacent wheat field, and so we do not hear them. Nobody is around for about a half a mile or more. There is pleasure in harvesting the lavender. The work is not difficult and the familiar perfume filling the air slowly seeps into my senses, lulling me into a state of relaxed being.

After awhile, we 3 move nearer one another. Working side by side, we quietly chat about our families, children, and current news. We cut the stems, marveling at the longest ones. We lay the cut lavender in a cart. We use rubber bands to form bundles, like baby haystacks. It is peaceful in the patch with bees buzzing, caterpillars and butterflies coming and going. At noon we break and hang the new bundles in a shed full of previously cut lavender bundles. Some bundles are taken home and sold fresh to customers at markets or shops. The lavender is hung to dry for use in many lavender products.

Lunch is another fun treat. We each have packed something to eat. We spread a blanket and have a picnic in the shade of some trees on the property. Today, we laughingly conclude that if politicians would spend time in a lavender field, soaking up the atmosphere, they would relax and make calmer more rational decisions. In reflection, I think we have also decided this at previous lunchtime picnics. Having thus solved at least some of the world's problems, its time for me to head home. I treat myself to an ice cream cone on the return trip.

The next morning I have the luxury of having my breakfast and coffee out on the patio of my home. Today, there is constant noise. Cars zoom by, the crows are raucous, the dogs are barking, I hear a pump running non-stop, planes fly to and from, and lawn mowers and leaf blowers are going. I think of the tranquility of Lavender Lane Farm. Ah, well . . . at least the cicadas have gone.



USLGA Member Wholesale Vendor Directory Update

Our members who sell wholesale to lavender farms and shops.

- 42 USLGA members who sell wholesale to other members
- 9 product categories with 74 individual listings
- supplier listings by State, find suppliers near you

For suppliers, we hope you'll peruse the USLGA Member Wholesale Vendor Directory. The directory is a valuable resource to find new suppliers with products to support or expand your business. A directory created exclusively for USLGA members and which supports fellow USLGA members.

We would like your feedback:

- Do you like and utilize the vendor directory?
- Do you have suggestions to improve the directory?
- If you are a vendor, have you had responses to your listings?
- Do you use non USLGA vendors that would benefit from being included?

If you want to be a part of the Wholesale Vendor Directory, contact us!

Contact: Mary Althoff – pr@uslavender.org

Joseph Downs – membership@uslavender.org

USLGA Vendor Spotlight: Raider West Lavender Farm, Texas



by Mary Althoff, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee

Raider West Farms was established in 2020 in Lubbock, TX, and has expanded yearly since it's beginning. In 2021, the company explored creative ways to incorporate culinary lavender into recipes, beverages, and cocktails.

Today they offer specialty crafted lavender simple syrups in several flavors: Lavender, Lavender Lemon, Lavender Peach, and Lavender Cranberry, with two new flavors being added this spring: Lavender Vanilla and Lavender Blueberry. Their Lavender Lemonade Mix (made with real lemon powder) is such a big hit that they are adding a Lavender Limeade Mix.

Raider West has educational sessions called "Lavenderology 101" (or "Purple Power Hour") to experiment with new beverage and cocktail recipes that incorporate the flavor of lavender.

Visit their website to see the full line of culinary products and recipes. Coming soon: "Lavenderology 101 videos!"

www.raiderwestfarms.com
tina@raiderwest.com
806-778-5608
Minimum Order: \$150
<https://www.facebook.com/raiderwestfarms>



USLGA Vendor Spotlight: Mierco Fine European Linens, Minnesota

by Mary Althoff, USLGA Public Relations/Communications Committee

Mierco designs jacquard woven tea towels and has them produced at top-quality European manufacturers. You will find the best prices on jacquard tea towels in a myriad of designs. Many with lavender, bees, sunflowers, roosters, and other designs that are perfect for lavender farm shops. In addition, Mierco offers lavender-themed totes, aprons, embroidered sachets, shawls, and Provence tablecloths and napkins in several lavender designs.

Mierco also carries a French line of Luxe-woven jacquard runners, placemats, and table squares in an exquisite lavender and olive design (ivory or yellow). At the other end of the spectrum, Mierco has acquired a new printed line of lavender tea towels, aprons, runners, placemats, and napkins.

Call Mary for advice on putting together an order. Her 26 years of wholesale experience and expertise will help you make the right selection for your business. Tea towels are sold in six packs per design.

www.mierco.com
info@mierco.com
888-277-8838
Minimum Order: \$250 to open; \$150 re-order.



turquoise jacquard tea towels



lavender jacquard tea towels

Michele with husband Shane and their two children



Meet Michele Hyson

USLGA Executive Director

USLGA enrollment numbers kept ticking higher and higher, and the job of managing, coordinating, and executing the myriad of jobs – among the many players – became too great for a volunteer board. After much discussion in 2021, the board decided to hire an Executive Director.

And now, with great excitement, we welcome Michele Hyson as the first Executive Director of the USLGA, who started her job in January 2022!

Michele comes to us with a wide variety of relevant experiences:

- Executive Director at Sterling Strategic Management, doing all the kinds of things we need at USLGA
- Conference Director and Marketing/Public Relations for the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, which included coordinating education programs, exhibit sales, strategic planning, and marketing efforts to benefit the organization
- Professional degrees and memberships in related professional associations, in addition to her degree in Business Administration

Past employers praised her skills as a true team player. She is a person "who can foster positive discussion and creative solutions, and bring out the best in those around her." High praise, indeed, and perfect to help the needs of a growing USLGA.

She is excited about working with USLGA because, like all of us, she loves lavender! She loves to visit Lavender farms, some of which introduced her to using culinary lavender. Wherever she travels in the future, she intends to seek out USLGA lavender farms along the way. Michele tells us she is thrilled to be a part of an organization where she feels a connection and feels she could make a difference.

Her priorities for her first months include focusing on ways to:

- Execute the directives from the Board of Directors
- Deliver great member service
- Carry out and help define (in the future) the mission of the organization

The specifics of these priorities are becoming clearer as each week goes by! Our committees and Board have identified the following priorities:

- The PR Team: Michele will develop a PR schedule and help us develop and execute a PR program to promote the USLGA to the outside world.
- The Internet Committee: Michele is already familiar with our membership software and is already getting on board with the rest of the system.
- The Finance Committee: Welcomes her attention to detail and her willingness to work with the Finance Committee, helping to shoulder the responsibilities of managing the finances of the organization.
- The Board of Directors: Is pleased to have a capable person like Michele to help lead the organization in a positive and capable way.

On a personal note, Michele and her husband Shane are originally from Alaska, attended college and raised their two now-adult children in California, and now reside in Cave Creek, Arizona. When not working, Michele loves to read, hike, cook, travel, and spend time with family and friends.

Contact Michele at:
execdir@uslavender.org
858-336-6110

Michele receives a lot of correspondence, so try email first!

We also have a new USLGA President!
More about Sherri Wood next issue.



Show Us Your Favorite Classes

We asked, you answered! Look at these submissions from USLGA members of their favorite classes offered at their farms.

Look for surveys and submit your pictures on the USLGA members-only FB page.





What have USLGA Committees been up to? Here is a summary of recent activities:

Advocacy Committee: Currently inactive. Are you interested? Contact us at advocacy@uslavender.org.

Event Committee: Planning for the 2023 US Lavender Conference has begun. The 2023 USLC will be held January 26-28 at the Hyatt Regency in Portland, Oregon. Sally Miller and Joseph Downs are co-chairs of the event committee.

Education & Research Committee: Held a very well attended Front Porch session was held in March. Hydrosol was the subject, lead by Cindy Jones. You can find the recording on the USLGA website. More educational opportunities to come.

Finance Committee: Financials are in good shape.

Internet Committee: Continuing to make key updates to our website. Has facilitated the transition from Yammer to Teams for in house USLGA communications. And has been developing instructions and training to assist members in utilizing the website and other USLGA platforms.

Membership Committee: Is working on ways to increase new memberships as well as maintain existing memberships. Also works with regional leaders.

Newsletter Committee: The newsletter will continue to be produced bi-monthly. It will contain its regular features, plus articles that are relevant and educational for our members.

Nominating Committee: Has completed tasks relevant to the January 2022 Board elections. Currently vacant.

Public Relations and Communications: Has developed the Wholesale Member Vendor Directory in cooperation with the membership committee. Held a zoom meeting with vendors in February. And is considering a new feature on our website - "Life With Lavender", featuring recipes, crafts, gardening tips, and more.

Publications Committee: This committee reviews and edits all written content created for USLGA including the website and the newsletter.

