

A Message From Our President

Summer is here and off to a HOT start! However, I hope we aren't in for too long of a hot summer. Like the heat, GSFA is not letting up this Summer! GSFA is on the move sharing education and providing support to the floral industry across the state. We have a lot of exciting things happening within the state and have several new announcements.

Over the past two weeks I have had the opportunity to visit several district meetings and I have been very excited by the enthusiasm from across the state. I have been spreading the message that now more than ever we need to band together for support and the survival of our industry. We all share the same concerns of today's market. It was great seeing everyone.

District I 's DOY, Kathy Deitz, presented a great program on Summer Party designs and thanks to Vandi for hosting the meeting at her shop, Bella Flora.

District VII had an awesome turn out for their last meeting at EKI Wholesale. I believe they had around 80 in attendance. Thanks District VII.

District V had a great turn out at the Art Center in Valdosta with a great motivational speaker Mr. Tarpley, Lynn Vallotton's Dad. Mr Tarpley spoke about surviving the economy and staying positive.

Thanks to Horst Wholesale for hosting a District VI meeting in Savannah. We had a nice meeting. It was a "roundtable" discussion of issues and concerns that effect our industry. It was VERY informative and I do plan on sharing the similar forum with the other Districts, issues that need to be brought to light and shared.

I wasn't able to make District III 's meeting however Angelyn stated that they had a great meeting at Georgia Greenhouses.

We do appreciate all our partners who support GSFA and our industry. As you can see, the districts are on the move and fired up! Great job!

Along with summer comes Summer Symposium which is just around the corner, July 26th. Summer Symposium is coming together as a day full of education, networking and fellowship. You don't want to miss out! It will be in Macon at the Anderson Conference Center just off of I-475. For details go to Symposium 2009 Information.

Teleflora is sponsoring Gerald Toh, AIFD, with a program entitled "Pricing for Profit". This program is needed now more than ever. GSFA's DOY and Burton Cup Winners will be presenting as well. Lynn Vallotton, GMF, and Sherry Moon, AIFD and GMF.

We have a great offer for Summer Symposium. If a member brings a Non-member, the member will get their registration at half price. We also have a separate offer. The first person from a shop is \$35 and each additional person from the same shop is only \$25 each. This is a great opportunity to save some money and to introduce a non-member to GSFA.

On GSFA's quest to promote education and support to the Industry, we are announcing three regional design programs. One each in the northern, central and southern regions of the state. The first will be in Douglas at South Georgia College on Sept 13th. There will be 3 educational programs in each location. More details will be available in the coming weeks. Stay tuned and as always keep you eyes on the web site. Convention is coming together nicely and we hope to have complete details by Summer Symposium. We do know that is will be held in Macon on March 11th -14th.

Speaking of the web site....we are trying really hard to keep communications rolling. We are working to keep the web site current and we have been developing a news letter. We have had three issues so far and if anyone has any suggestions or items that they would like to contribute to the news letter, please do so.

Richard Lauter has been awesome about taking care of our web site for GSFA at no charge and I would like to thank him and his wife for their support of GSFA. If anyone should need any web site work please give him the opportunity. I spoke with Richard last week and he has an amazing

vision for the site that will incorporate some awesome features. Thanks again Richard!

As you can see, GSFA is definably on the move! I feel now more than ever we as association need to be aggressive about the survival of our industry. I just read last week in an article from SAF that the population of retail florist is down 14%, numbers that date back to 1977. I do believe that education and being a part of an organization such as GSFA is the key to our survival. We can't just set back and wait for things to change, We have to make things happen and be proactive! I know this may sound like a sales pitch, but the fact is that we as florist need all the support and help we can get. Also its a proven fact we are stronger in numbers! I don't want this to be taken as a "gloom and doom" segment because its not. We will survive but it requires change. The first step in my opinion is to be educated and to stay on top of our changing industry. There are several outlets that are available and I just want to let everyone know that GSFA is one of those outlets and that we are here for you!

I look forward to seeing everyone at Summer Symposium and if I can be of any assists, don't hesitate to contact me. As always, Thanks for all you do for GSFA and our Industry!

Randy Wooten AIFD, GMF
GSFA President