

Duane Laffrenzen to receive Club’s Service to Ag award

Duane Laffrenzen was expecting friend and fellow Hub Club member Michele Schroeder to stop by to talk about a print that she wanted framed.

While Michele did arrive at the scheduled time November 21, she was not alone—but accompanied by six members of the Farm City Hub Club. They brought a bouquet of balloons, a symbol of something entirely different—and the framing project was forgotten.

The group arranged the visit to announce that Duane is the Hub Club’s 2024 Service to Agriculture Award recipient. He will be honored at the club’s January 22 banquet at the Courtland Community Center.

The Service to Agriculture Award recognizes a person who goes above and beyond to serve the club and agriculture in general.

Duane and his wife Toni have been members of the Hub Club since 1986 when they moved to New Ulm.

“We joined with the strong encouragement of New Ulm



Duane Laffrenzen, was surprised when Hub Club members came to his home to tell him that he’ll receive the club’s Service to Agriculture Award. Making the announcement were former award recipients Joe Maidl, Don Sanderson, Michele Schroeder, Randy Schroeder, Linda and Pete Neigebauer, and Ruth Klossner (not pictured).

veterinarian Gary Neubauer,” Duane recalled.

It didn’t take Duane long to take a major role in club activities, serving as club treasurer from 1991 to 1994. As he com-

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Hub Club annual meeting, banquet and Service to Ag recognition January 22

The date, time, and place have been set for the Hub Club’s annual banquet—Monday, January 22 at the Courtland Community Center. Swany’s of Courtland will cater, as well as provide the bar.

Complete details—and a request for RSVPs—will be

in the January newsletter. In the meantime, please note the date and mark it on your 2024 calendar!

The evening will include the annual meeting, recognition of Duane Laffrenzen as the new Service to Ag winner, the 2023 slide show, and time to visit.

50th anniversary celebration plans developing nicely

The Hub Club’s 50th anniversary celebration is set for Friday, September 13, 2024 at the Royal Oaks Center in New Ulm. The 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. event will include a silent auction, food appetizers, a cash bar, and live music (5:00-7:00 p.m.); a short pre-recorded history program (7:15 p.m.); and a live auction of a few select high value items (7:30 p.m.).

The committee is now focusing on auction details. Here’s where club members are being asked to help. The committee hopes members will share unique items for both auctions—



20 to 25 items for the silent auction and four or five for the live auction. Possible items could be services, hand-made items, vacation packages, and/or ????. Please contact Michele Schroeder at moocheleschroeder@yahoo.com or 507-276-4810 if you have something special to contribute.

The auctions, along with a possible raffle, will be fund raising events for the club, with raffle proceeds earmarked for scholarships.

Please consider ways that you can help make this a success. Contact event chair Brian Fischer (507-276-6322).

A message from our president, Marie Guggisberg

Greetings as we near the end of 2023! May our hearts remain grateful for all that we have been given as we prepare for Christmas.

I am thankful for all the Hub Club board members, as well as all our other club members who have put in countless hours preparing for the many events of the Hub Club.

Some events require many hours of planning and preparation. The next couple of big events are the Farm Show and the 50th anniversary celebration.

We would love to see you at both events!

Prior to those events, we will have our annual meeting, banquet and Service to Ag recognition in January. Duane Laffrenzen has been chosen as this year's Service to Agriculture recipient.

Please join us at the annual meeting for a great meal, awesome camaraderie, and to honor Duane for all he has done in support of agriculture.

As Christmas approaches, take time to enjoy family and friends and truly cherish the wonders of the season!

Marie

Meeting Minutes — Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023; Design Home Center

President Marie Guggisberg called the November Hub Club meeting to order at Design Home Center on Tuesday, November 7 at 5:15 p.m. Also attending were Justin Gode, Jason Schroeder, Kelsey Brandt, Randy Schroeder, Randy Reinarts, Ken Reckard, Ruth Klossner, and Brian Fischer.

The meeting agenda was approved on a motion by R. Schroeder and second by Brandt. The minutes of the September meeting were approved as published and reviewed, on a motion by Reckard, seconded by J. Schroeder; motion carried.

There was no treasurer's report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership. No report.

Public Relations. No report.

Events. Some discussion on annual meeting. Reservations have been made with the venue and caterer.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Lamberton Field Day. The board added the email vote on busing to the minutes. It reads: "In early October, club president Marie Guggisberg and treasurer Shannon Hillesheim received an email from Karen Schulte, elementary principal of NUACS. The school bussed its fourth grade students to Lamberton Field Day and requested funding of \$240 for one bus. With the club not having a meeting until November 7, the matter was handled by email. Randy Schroeder motioned and Kelsey Brandt seconded to approve the funding for the bus, as already agreed in principle at previous meetings. Voting in favor were Garrett Freeman, Jason Schroeder, Randy Reinarts, Brandt, R.

Schroeder, and Ruth Klossner. There were no votes against. Motion carried."

Nicollet Co. Hist. Society Social. Participation was low at the event, perhaps because some members did not get the September newsletter even though the newsletter was emailed as usual. The event was well received by those attending.

Farm Show. Show chair Fischer reported that planning is going well, with some new things planned.

Hub Club's 50th Anniversary, Friday, September 13 at Royal Oaks. Fischer reported that the committee has the major items in place. Brandt motioned and R. Schroeder seconded to allow the 50th Anniversary Committee a \$5,000 budget to work with, with events recouping some of that; motion carried.

Service to Ag Nominations. Several new nominations have been received. The committee will meet soon.

2024 Elections. Garrett Freeman's at-large director position is up for election; he has indicated a willingness to be a candidate for re-election. A second vice president candidate is needed; the position will be posted in the newsletter.

4-H & FFA Donations for 2023. After discussion of what's been done in the past, Klossner motioned and Reckard seconded donating \$3,000 to New Ulm FFA and \$1,000 each to the Nicollet and Brown County 4-H Federations for leadership purposes; motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m. on a motion by R. Schroeder and second by Brandt.

The next meeting is Tuesday, December 5.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Klossner, Secretary

Hub Club scholarships

The Hub Club will award five or six scholarships—with a total value of about \$5,000—to current seniors at NUHS, NUC, or MVL, or the son or daughter of a Hub Club member (attending any school)—and planning to study ag, ag business, or natural resources at the post-secondary level. Students must have a 2.0 GPA.

Applications are available from school counselors and ag teachers or can be requested from Duane Laffrenzen at Citizens Bank (dlaffrenzen@citizensmn.com) or from hubclub@newulmtel.net. Application deadline is March 1.

Please share this information with any student who might meet the qualifications.

2024 Elections

Club officers will be elected and/or re-elected at the January 22 annual meeting.

Any club member interested in running for the second vice president or membership director positions is asked to contact president Marie Guggisberg.

Contact information for 2023 Hub Club Officers & Directors

President	Marie Guggisberg—Phone: 507-276-8615; Email: marieg@nutelecom.net
1st Vice President	Jason Schroeder—Phone: 507-766-3263; Email: schroederholsteins@yahoo.com
2nd Vice President	Ken Reckard—Phone: 507-301-1570; Email: kreckard@comcast.net
Secretary	Ruth Klossner—Phone: 507-240-0048; Email: cowladyruth@gmail.com or hubclub@newulmtel.net
Treasurer	Shannon Hillesheim— Phone: 507-276-0716; Email: shillesheim@bankmidwest.com
Membership Director	Garrett Freeman—Phone: 507-276-0648; Email: garrett_freeman@hotmail.com
Events Director	Justin Gode—Phone: 507-228-8283 (W) or 507-276-6597 (Cell); Email: jgode@citizensmn.com
Pub. Rel. Director	Don Sanderson—Phone: 507-354-8524; Email: don.sanderson.b5k0@statefarm.com
Director-at-Large	Kelsey Brandt—Phone: 507-995-7084; Email: kbrandt@newulm.k12.mn.us
Director-at-Large	Randy Reinarts—Phone: 507-238-3854 or 507-766-5336; Email: rreinarts@bankmidwest.com
Director-at-Large	Randy Schroeder—Phone: 507-353-7437 (W); Email: rschroeder@frandsenbank.com

Farm Show 2024

Show chairman Brian Fischer reports:

The Farm Show Committee met Tuesday, November 14. The committee was reminded of underlining issues in 2023—decrease in Farm Show profit, low vendor turnout, and issues working with city officials. This isn't just a committee issue, but as a club we all can assist in turning the three issues to a positive.

A reminder for the club that the 2024 Farm Show was on the fence of happening because of those reasons. It's important for us all to get on the bus and make it a success. If you think we should be inviting a vendor or have other ideas that you want to share, reach out to me. We will make the contacts.

This year's March 8-9 show will have the opportunity to bring a few more exhibitors to the arena. The city has agreed to remove all hockey boards, allowing more wall space on the south wall.

Jenny has already mailed over 230 show brochures. Don has and is working on vendor contacts. We still have on the table a few point of interest booths, that we might incorporate into the show—a club history booth, Ruth's cow display, and an old tool corner. All are still in the infant stage; as we get closer, we will access size and space.

Michele has again taken the role of lining up seminars. Our goal is to have about five seminars Friday afternoon into Saturday morning. She is working on suggestions, with topics to be announced later.

A new feature this year is a Friday evening Farm Show social in connection with our club's 50th year of connecting farm and city. It will be the "pre-game warmup" for our club's big 50th anniversary celebration September 13. The 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. event will be held on the upper level of the South Arena of the Civic Center. We will have catered appetizers and a cash bar.

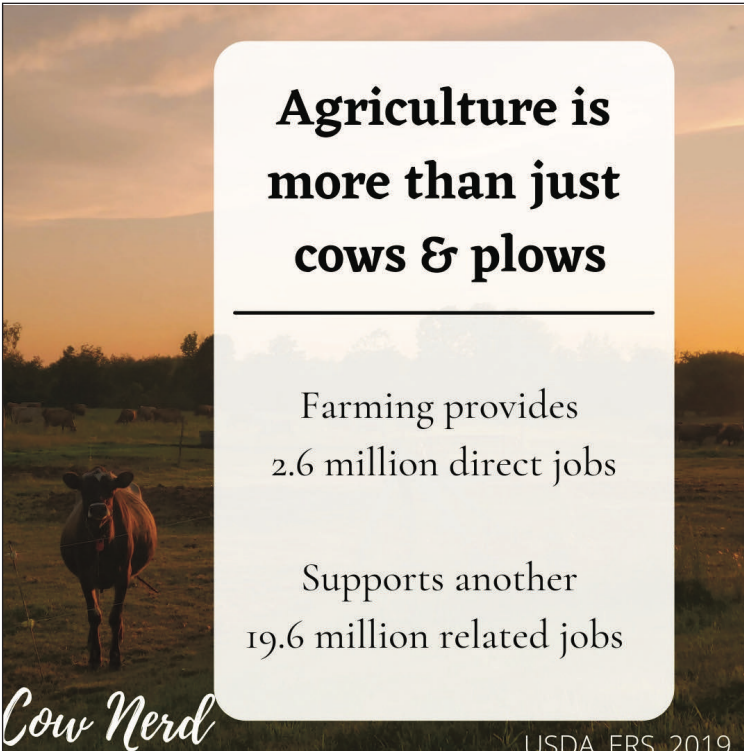
Mark your calendars to join fellow club members and vendors to celebrate this connection.

If you have ideas or would like to help with the show, please contact me at 507-276-6322.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Upcoming Hub Club Events

- Board Meeting—Tues., Dec. 5, 5:15 p.m., Don Sanderson's office
- Board Meeting—Tues., Jan. 2, 5:15 p.m., Don Sanderson's office
- Farm Show Meeting—Mon., Jan. 8, 12:00 p.m., Bank Midwest
- Annual Meeting & Banquet—Mon., Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m., Courtland Community Center



Agriculture is more than just cows & plows

Farming provides
2.6 million direct jobs

Supports another
19.6 million related jobs

Cow Nerd

USDA, ERS, 2019

Service to Ag award recipient...continued

pleted that term, Laffrenzen became involved with the club's agricultural scholarship program—and continues to head that committee to this day.

During those 29 years, the Hub Club has awarded scholarships to 136 students, for a total value of \$84,300. Working with Laffrenzen on the committee the last number of years have been Ann Wendinger, Justin Gode, and Bill Swan.

In those years, the dollar amount of the awards increased from \$250 to \$1,000—but the number of applicants has decreased in recent years, something that puzzles the committee.

"It seems it's a culture change. We don't have an answer. It's not difficult to qualify and we award scholarships for any post-secondary education, including technical," Laffrenzen said. "About 80 percent of our applicants and recipients are now going into non-production areas of agriculture. Those roles are needed to support the production side of agriculture."

Duane noted that the short essay part of the applications have been submitted "across the board in terms of presentation."

He explained, "It's of significant value when I can tell that the essays are truly written by the scholarship applicants. They don't have to be typed. I can live with hand-written when I know they're from the heart."

When the March 1998 tornado devastated the area, Duane helped organize the Hub Club's effort to clean up area farms that suffered heavy damage from the storm. As branch manager for Farm Credit in New Ulm at the time, he undoubtedly knew many of the farmers hit hard by the tornado.

Laffrenzen has been involved in a variety of club activities over the years. He's helped at some pancake breakfasts and he and Toni have attended almost all the club's annual meetings. He even remembers that Ivan Finstad was the Service to Agriculture recipient when they attended their first meeting in January 1987.

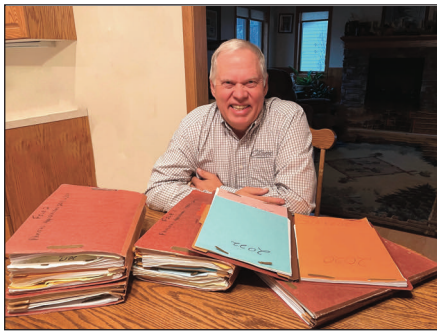
The Laffrenzens have seen a lot of hard working individuals receive the award. Finstad was the club's ninth recipient—now Laffrenzen will be the 46th.

Outside of the Hub Club, Duane is involved in a number of community organizations. He's been a Narren since about 1988—and jokes that he's "the good looking one." He was a Cub Scout master and assistant master for many years—with both of his sons becoming Eagle Scouts. Duane is now vice president of the council at Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Laffrenzen grew up on a small dairy farm near Worthington. His dad was a tenant farmer and Duane lived on four different farms by the time he was 18. Luckily, all were in the same school district, but each required changes in neighbors, bus routes, and more.

"With that background, I want to help people have a stable base," Duane said of a principle that's guided his lifetime work in ag lending.

After graduating from Worthington High School in 1976, Laffrenzen attended Worthington Community College for



Duane Laffrenzen has kept all the applications and records for the 29 years that he's been on the Hub Club's scholarship committee.

nearly three years, but stayed home a quarter to help run the farm when his dad was injured. He transferred to the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, in March 1979 and joined Farmhouse Fraternity. He met Toni Sampson of Windom that spring, then graduated from the U with a degree in ag business administration in spring 1980.

From July of that year until August 1999, the Laffrenzens were on the move—three-and-a-half years with Production Credit Association of Faribault in the Le Center office; then almost 16 years with Federal Land

Bank/Farm Credit Services in Windom, Mankato, and New Ulm.

He joined Citizens Bank, Minnesota as branch manager of the LaSalle office in August 1999 and is now vice president and ag, commercial, and consumer lender. He continues to work with a wide range of farmers—corn, soybean, hogs, dairy, and some beef.

"I like it at LaSalle. We have good clients and the bank treats me well," he said. "The interesting thing I found about the lending business is it's a people business, rather than a numbers business," he said.

The Laffrenzens made four moves in six years, landing in New Ulm in 1986.

Duane recalls that as they came into New Ulm on Highway 68, by the Starlight Theater, to look for housing, Toni said, "This looks like a nice town. If you move again, you're doing it as a bachelor!"

Duane and Toni have two sons—Gregory, a technical writer for Boston Scientific, who lives in Crystal; and David, a pharmacist at the Wabasha Hospital. David and his wife Emily have two children, Zachary, seven, and Lily, two.

Although Duane is not looking to retire—that's a "three to five-year moving target"—he won't be at a loss for something to do when he does. His hobbies include fishing and hunting deer, pheasants, rabbits, and squirrels. He loves to fish and the couple has a lake place near Brainerd.

For more than a decade, Duane has dabbled in home wine making. Not only does he give wine as gifts for weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries, but he has entered wine at the Minnesota State Fair—winning the amateur wine making sweepstakes in 2017. He earned six first place ribbons on 19 entries that year.

Duane also does custom framing and computerized mat cutting as a home-based business known as Hollywood Haus Framing—hence Schroeder's appointment. Laffrenzen has several hundred frame samples on hand and also does repair jobs. That side gig started in 1982 when Duane took a class and has moved with the Laffrenzens wherever they've lived since.

"New Ulm is a great community to live in. We didn't find it hard to be a part of the community—we were accepted by the church, organizations, school system—and the Hub Club was a big part of that."