



THE BRAMBLE

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN RASPBERRY & BLACKBERRY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Introducing Our New Executive Council Members

Most of the candidates elected to the Executive Council are incumbents returning for a second term. Here are introductions for the two new Council members:

Nathan Milburn, our new at-large Council member, is a fourth-generation farmer in Elkton, Maryland (about half way between Baltimore and Philadelphia). The 400-acre farm is mostly in tree fruit – apples, peaches, and cherries, but they started adding berries in 2000. They now have five acres of red raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, and grapes. The sell wholesale, retail, and PYO. Milburn Farm is a major agritourism destination with hayrides, pumpkins, a bakery, festivals, and more, and often hosts 4000-5,000 visitors on a fall weekend. Their berry plantings emphasize fall-bearing primocane raspberries, since fall is their main marketing season. He and his wife, Melissa, have two children, ages 4 and 14. He is involved in numerous state and regional horticultural organizations.

As an Executive Council member of NARBA, Nathan would like to make sure that the growth we experienced with our Hershey conference continues, through choice of meeting sites and on-going efforts to make more growers aware of the organization.

Cal Blake, representing Region 7 (VA, NC, SC, TN, KY, and DC), began farming in Lexington, Kentucky after retiring from the Army in 1992. He and his wife, Judi, are in their twelfth year as farmers, raising about five acres of produce. A bit more than half is in mall fruit, blueberries blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries – and the rest is used to raise an assortment of vegetables, melons, and sweet corn. They sell at the Bluegrass Farmer's Markets, a local growers-only market and at their own roadside market. Their farm is on the south side of Lexington, diagonally across from a Walmart Superstore and directly across the street from the University of Kentucky South Farm. It's a good location, but traffic has become a problem, making it difficult, if not sometimes dangerous, for customers to access their stand.

Cal is also on the board of the Kentucky Horticultural Association and the Bluegrass Farmers Market and is a member of the NC Strawberry Association. Judi is on the board of the Kentucky Vegetable Growers' Association and is a member of Kentucky Women in Agriculture. They have been involved with the "Kentucky Proud" program since its start.

Both believe that organizations such as NARBA provide the means to meet annually, and periodically through newsletters and e-mail, to discuss and evaluate the latest developments in marketing, technology and plant varieties. The past seven years they have attended four or five applicable conferences annually which are within 8-10 hours driving time. In virtually every instance the cost of attending reaped benefits which were recouped the next growing season as part of their efforts to "work smarter, not harder."✿

Get in touch with your regional rep or any EC member if you have ideas or concerns for NARBA. Contact info for all EC members is on the back of the newsletter.

