



## NATIONAL IFYE CONFERENCE Waterbury, CT June 26-29, 2011

*Co-Chairs: Jim Morgan and Ellen Paine*

**Please view 2011 National Conference Photo Gallery under “Conference Photo Galleries”**

On June 26, 2011, the U.S. IFYE world gathered at the CoCo Key Resort and Conference Center in Waterbury, Connecticut to celebrate the National IFYE Conference. The New England IFYE Association, the conference host, welcomed attendees with a promise of warm, sunny weather and many opportunities to explore Connecticut’s **Locally Grown, Globally Sown** historical, agricultural, and literary traditions.

Program delegates, host families, IFYE friends, and future IFYE’s came from 37 states with participation dates spanning from 1949 to 2011. A very visible international component was provided by In-bounds Kullike Altenberg, Secretary General for the Estonian National 4-H program, and Kadri Toomingas, National Board member for Estonian 4-H. Special notice was taken of the 50 year celebrants: Betty Bruce-CT-Denmark, Jane Moody-MA-Luxembourg, William Svendsgaard-MN-Switzerland, and Evangelena Barber-NC-Scotland ... as well as the 25 year celebrants: Janell George-KS-Portugal and Ken Jones-GA-Italy.

Connecticut’s own Samuel Clements, better known to all as Mark Twain, opened the conference with a “Mix and Mingle” get-together followed by a truly gourmet dinner. As he capped evening’s events with his insights on both local and international topics, Mr. Twain proved to be as verbally adept as he is with a pen.

Technology married with tradition made the Sunday evening **Opening Ceremonies** unique as **Locally Grown** Andrew King (2<sup>nd</sup> generation IFYE-son of Bill King-MA-U.K), addressed the group via Skype from his **Globally Sown** Host Country of Finland. IFYE DJ Jim George (NH-Portugal) manned the first night of the After Hours gathering spot, providing music for dancing and as a background for continued catch-up conversations.

There were no **Monday Morning Blues** once Gina Barreca engaged everyone to consider life from both sides of the “Hers/His” mirror. Energy gained during this presentation carried through into a lively discussion on “Which Way IFYE- thoughts for the future”. Something for everyone was the premise for Monday afternoon workshops. Given the well traveled audience, all took it in stride when one of the workshops was a last minute cancellation because the presenter was stuck in Singapore. Offerings ranged from a wide variety of Agricultural eco/resource renewable innovations and practices to an infinite variety of ways to make the most of travel Memories. If one became too stressed trying to decide which option to choose, the perfect pick was one of the Mind/Body sessions IFYE’s youngest attendees were offered special children’s’ programming that included a treasure hunt throughout the hotel.

Each conference’s carefully chosen **Service Project** and fund-raising event is always a program highlight. This year’s event was no less so. ECOLINK was the designated recipient of the event proceeds. Once again, it was all about **Locally Grown** connections providing the means to **Globally Sow** the seeds for a better future. CT IFYE Amy Sullivan (CT-Finland), currently living and working in South Africa, provided the direct link with a program working with sustainable agriculture and youth development. ECOLINK participants hand-crafted African-themed conference folders and provided a first- hand report of the program’s function and benefits. Fund raising was truly international incorporating a Swedish-style Tombola raffle, the very effective sales techniques of our Estonian sales staff, and a variety of local and international offerings for New England style auctions-a traditional one called by Don Clark (CT-New Zealand) and “Heads/Tails”, a more “active” version called by Jim Morgan (IA-Switzerland). Receipts totally \$2700.00 from all versions has been forwarded to ECOLINK. Please see their website to see how your efforts are being **Globally Sown** (<http://www.ecolink.co.za/>).

**Tuesday** dawned perfect for Tour Day. Box lunches in hand, all went off on their choice of adventures: to explore New England’s Whaling and Seafaring heritage at Mystic Village, to wend their way through the Litchfield Hills visiting several of the premier farms, or to take Mark Twain up on his invitation to visit his home, as well as that of Harriet Beecher Stowe, in Historic Hartford. At the close of the day, all gathered dockside to board the Lady

Katherine for an evening's cruise on the Connecticut River. Picture perfect weather provided the backdrop for a relaxing dinner and conversation. Informational highlights offered by the ship's captain added to the appreciation of the venue.

IFYE's National Board shared the fruits of its week-long labors during the **Wednesday morning** Board Meeting. The lively discussion initiated during Monday's meeting was continued. A full report will be in the official minutes of the meeting.

Following the meeting, free time provided a time for personal explorations or preparation for the night's **International Banquet**. Mid afternoon had all boarding the buses off to the Jones Farm in Shelton, CT. This 150-year-old, 400-acre farm is managed by the 6<sup>th</sup> generation of the Jones Family. In addition to the many crops, fruits, vegetables, it has an award-winning vineyard and has become known as the place to host "Farm to Family" events. Its spectacular vineyard provided the setting for the conference photo and the grounds offered many spots for sitting, walking, and talking with IFYE friends while enjoying local wines and cheeses. The University of Connecticut Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Gregory Weidemann, added his welcome to that of the Jones' Family. A "you had to see and eat" to believe how amazing dinner was set up to take full advantage of the wonderful weather and setting. Converted 1946,'47,'48,'49 International Harvester KB-5 trucks refitted as brick oven pizza trucks complete with cappuccino machines had everyone going 'how did they do that"! From these marvels of restoration engineering were served some of the most amazing handcrafted gourmet pizzas and salads. These were paired with Jones' Farm Wines and followed by Jones' Farm Strawberries for ice cream or gelato sundaes. Every effort was made to take full advantage of all things **Locally Grown**. There was even a shopping opportunity for those who wished to **Globally Sow** some of the local wines they had sampled earlier in the evening.

All good things must come to an end and so the conference officially ended with the **Candlelight Closing Ceremony** that evening. Special recognition was given to the attendees celebrating 50 and 25-year anniversaries. Conference co-chairs, Jim Morgan (IA-Switzerland) and Ellen Paine (CT-Costa Rica) accepted tokens of appreciation from the conference committee. They acknowledged and applauded the dedication and diligence of the entire New England Conference Planning Committee. Live guitar music added to the beauty of "The Song of Peace" as the 2011 National IFYE Conference came to a formal close. The wee small hours of the morning saw the actual closing of the conference as many returned CoCo Key to take advantage of the IFYE After Hours gathering for dancing, conversation, and a truly inspired game of "Spoons".

Hugs and "Have a safe journey" were the order of Thursday morning. As one conference ends, another is in the planning stages. The delegation from Nebraska assured all that the IFYE Spirit would be alive and well in Omaha, Nebraska in 2012. **SEE YOU ALL THERE!!!!**