



Our Lands. Our Future.

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# NEWSLETTER

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Ricardo Garcia



Becky and Melissa Yeung

## Support YLT at Nugget Markets

Nugget Markets is partnering with the Yolo Land Trust to raise funds for the preservation of farms and ranches in Yolo County. Through the Nugget Markets Scrip Program, Nugget Markets donates up to 4% of your purchases to the Yolo Land Trust each time you shop at Nugget Markets. THE SCRIP PROGRAM IS SIMPLE TO USE AND ABSOLUTELY FREE.



- Simply obtain a card from the Yolo Land Trust.
- Register it online.
- Show it to the cashier each time you shop.
- Sit back and feel our gratitude that you are conserving the land that grows our food.

Call YLT's office at 530-662-1110, or send an email to [mclark@TheYoloLandTrust.org](mailto:mclark@TheYoloLandTrust.org) to get your own Nugget Markets Scrip card. ■

## Generations in Farming

**F**amily-owned and operated farms are not only important in sustaining Yolo County but are also prized relics of the community's local heritage. The business and its time-tested farming practices have historically passed on to the next generation. However, many potential future farmers today choose to leave their family farms for different careers. This results in few choices for their parents when deciding who will inherit their businesses. For Ricardo Garcia and Becky and Melissa Yeung, they saw opportunity when given the choice to return to manage their family farms.

Owned by Yolo Land Trust, the properties leased by Garcia Farms and Joe Yeung Farms make up Elkhorn Ranch, which is located along the Sacramento River. Ricardo, Becky and Melissa all grew up on their respective family properties, and had varying degrees of early involvement. Ricardo was given the opportunity to operate heavy machinery when he was fairly young and was put on payroll at the age of 13. "I never asked my dad for money again after that. I paid for my own lunch, school clothes, and supplies." While Ricardo maintains that his father is the visionary, Ricardo's early experience has made him an expert in good business practices in terms of loans and finances.

Becky and Melissa transitioned into the family business a little differently. When they were in junior high, the two sisters worked a fruit stand. According to Melissa, "We picked all of the fruit ourselves and sold it at the stand until we were in high school. When we were in college, we started selling produce from the farm at the farmers' markets in Woodland, West Sac, and Elk Grove." The sisters now spend the majority of their time out in the fields. They are no strangers to 12-hour work days performing every kind of task needed, from harvesting and planting to tractor repair. Rich Yeung, their father, acts in a supervisory role and keeps himself distanced from the majority of the work. "He knows everything there is to know about operating this farm," says Becky. "But he's very hands-off, to allow us to learn on our own."

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## Welcome Board Member: **Neal Van Alfen**

Yolo Land Trust is proud to welcome Neal Van Alfen to our Board of Directors. Neal grew up in Modesto learning about agriculture from working in the peach harvest and on chicken farms. This experience convinced him that education was the route out of a life of hard manual farm labor. After receiving his PhD in plant pathology from UC Davis, he served on the faculties of Utah State University and Texas A&M University before returning to UC Davis as dean of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, where he served for 13 years. He retired recently from the faculty of UC Davis to return to hard manual farm labor on his small farm in Winters, CA where his current goal is to find a way to make a profit growing citrus, and to make drinkable wine and enough olive oil to meet the needs of his large family. He remains actively engaged with international agriculture and food issues, and recently served as editor-in-chief of the latest edition of the Encyclopedia of Agriculture and Food Systems. ■

## Generations in Farming

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Though reasons for their returns vary, the necessity of beginning their farm management careers early is a shared opinion. The Yeung sisters and Ricardo have all had the privilege of learning from their fathers.

“My sister and I realized that it was important for us to come back to the farm and start managing it now, as opposed to learning how to manage it when our father is too old to help us,” says Melissa. “He’s able to come out and teach us exactly what needs to be done when a tractor isn’t working properly, which he probably won’t be able to do once he’s retired for good.”

Ricardo left a career with the state and his family-owned restaurant to dedicate himself full-time to Garcia Farms. “I’m a workaholic,” he says. “Had I stayed with the state position, I would have moved up pretty quickly, as work ethic is a huge component of becoming successful there. I would have retired at 60, and then maybe came back to the farm to operate it. But then I’d be 60 and trying to learn how to operate a farm.”

The future of agriculture in Yolo County lies in the hard-working hands of young farmers such as Becky, Melissa and Ricardo. Their inspiring dedication to the preservation of their family’s farming heritage may motivate future generations to follow suit. Programs such as Young Farmers and Ranchers, of which Becky and Melissa are current members, and Future Farmers of America, help to educate and engage the next generation of potential farmers. In light of the success of programs such as these and that of Ricardo and the Yeung sisters, we may count on the future of Yolo County farming to be fruitful and trust in the preservation of our lands, our future. ■

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The Yolo Land Trust is a nonprofit corporation, founded in 1988 by an innovative group of farmers, ranchers, community leaders and conservationists dedicated to conserving Yolo County’s land. The Yolo Land Trust has helped landowners place voluntary farmland conservation agreements on over 60 family farms throughout Yolo County, permanently conserving over 11,000 acres for future generations. These farms remain privately owned and operated. The Yolo Land Trust is working to preserve the rural heritage of Yolo County.



For more information on the Yolo Land Trust or to receive YLT’s E-news, visit [www.TheYoloLandTrust.org](http://www.TheYoloLandTrust.org), or provide us with your email address on the enclosed remit envelope.



## A Day in the Country

The Yolo Land Trust’s annual community event, *A Day in the Country*, was held September 13, 2015 at Gold Oak Ranch. This beautiful commercial farm located in the Capay Valley produces almonds, walnuts, olives and organic mandarin oranges. It is owned by David Scheuring and his children, Chris, Rachel and Paul. David and his late wife Ann Foley Scheuring were honored at the event with an original painting by Claire Haag, a Capay Valley artist who painted the hills behind the Scheuring house. David was a founding member of the Yolo Land Trust; Ann was an editor and writer at UC Davis for more than 20 years. Governor Brown and Ann Gust Brown joined in the festivities. Proceeds from the event support Yolo Land Trust in realizing its mission of conserving farmland, ranchland, open space and wildlife habitats in Yolo County. Many thanks to the sponsors, growers, chefs, restaurants, wineries, breweries, musicians, donors and volunteers who made the 2015 *A Day in the Country* a huge success. Visit the “Events” page on our website for a complete listing of all who participated. ■

