

The Independent Voice

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association
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Contents

Message from the President.....	1
Organizing Meeting.....	1
Chocolate...Festival.....	2
Website.....	.2
What is Specialty Coffee?.....	2
Membership Information.....	2

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A Message from the President, Rick Funk.

Yet another Kona Coffee organization? Yes, but it was necessary.

Most of us have been members of the Kona Coffee Council for many years, and have respect for the work it has done and the position it has achieved. But the recent election of the new KCC Board, with a result distorted by 130+ proxy votes of new, unknown members, has caused a change that we are not willing to support.

As the specialty coffee industry has grown, and Kona coffee is one of its stars, it is apparent that the interests of Kona coffee FARMERS have diverged widely from the interests of the processors. We had hoped that, with the Hawaii Coffee Association as the voice of the processors, they would not undermine the KCC's work to

continue as the voice of the farmers.

The failure last week of the new KCC Board to support Bills which our legislators had written in response to the prior KCC Board's request was a clear signal that Kona coffee farmers need to have an independent voice. These Bills would have changed the labeling laws to prevent the current practice of attaching the Kona name to coffee that is 90% of foreign origin. In a letter from Representative Herkes sent out to the many farmers who had testified in support of the Bills, Herkes blamed the lack of consensus for the failure of the bills to be heard.

Our mission is to promote and protect the economic interests of Kona coffee farmers who grow and sell 100% Kona coffee, to protect the Kona coffee heritage, and to seek greater legal protection of the Kona coffee name. We will also pursue education, resource sharing, marketing, and other opportunities for our members.

Where our interests coincide, we will work with the Kona Coffee Council, and with all other farm and legislative groups. Where our interests differ, we will be The Independent Voice.

Aloha, Rick

Organizing Meeting

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association has filed Articles of Incorporation, and adopted By Laws at a meeting held on February 15 at the CTAHR offices in Kainaliu, which was attended by 24 members. The KCFA then elected its first Board of seven Directors:

Rick Funk of Honu Kona Coffee, Fred Housel of Kiele O Kona Coffee, Nancy Griffith of Aama Organic Farm, Mary Lou Moss of Cuppa Kona Coffee, Joan Rowe of Rowesview Coffee, Sandra Scarr of Daily Fix Coffee, and Suzanne Shriner of Lions Gate Farms.

The first action of the new Board was a letter to legislators and committee chairs in support of HB1974 and HB2163, Bills which would change the labeling laws so that a coffee containing only 10% Kona could not use the Kona name.

On February 17, the Board met to elect Officers: President Rick Funk, Vice-President Sandra Scarr, Secretary Fred Housel, and Treasurer Joan Rowe.

The new Board outlined plans for an active program of events and promotional opportunities for its members. Committee Chairpersons include Bruce Corker-Legislative, Nancy

Griffith-Membership, Barbara Housel-Branding, Fred Housel-Resources & Best Practices, Joachim Oster-PR, Joan Rowe-Estate, Sandra Scarr- Grants, Mark Shultise-Website.

Regular Board meetings will be every month at the CTAHR offices, dates to be advised.

Chocolate Festival

The KCFA will have a booth at the Fifth Annual Kona Chocolate Festival, our first event! Look for us Saturday March 25th, at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort, where we will be serving coffee samples to over 1200 residents and visitors. The Festival includes silent auction, live music, wine, champagne and beer, and of course tasting of the wonderful chocolate creations on display.

KCFA Website

www.konacoffeefarmers.org

Check it out! With huge thanks to Mark Shultise.

Look online for upcoming events and workshops. Join online as a Voting Member (farmers only!) for \$25. See Membership Information column for details

What IS Specialty Coffee?

Kona coffee (100% Kona coffee that is) is considered a "Specialty Coffee", and is one of the two most expensive specialty coffees in the world. So it is worth considering what exactly a specialty coffee is, and why it is so important to protect it from being devalued.

Here is what the Specialty Coffee Association of America has to say:

Extracted from "The Definition of Specialty Coffee" by Don Holly, Administrative Director, SCAA

My understanding of the origin of the term "specialty coffee" is that it was first coined by Erna Knutsen of Knutsen Coffee Ltd., in a speech to the delegates of an international coffee conference in Montreuil, France, in 1978. In essence, the concept was quite simple: special geographic microclimates produce beans with unique flavor profiles, which she referred to as "specialty coffees."

Underlying this idea of coffee appellations, was the fundamental premise that specialty coffee beans would always be well prepared, freshly roasted, and properly brewed. The Specialty Coffee Association of America continues to define specialty in this context.

The definition of specialty coffee should begin at the origin of coffee, the planting of a particular varietal into a particular growing region of the world. Some varieties of Arabica are clearly capable of producing specialty coffee. There are others that probably never will.

Given all of the effort that it takes to produce specialty coffee, and given how pleasurable such a cup can be, we should all jealously guard our definition for it, protect its meaning and credibility, and only use the word specialty when it is worth it.==

Membership Information

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association is a volunteer, non-profit, community-based organization of coffee farmers with the mission to promote and protect the economic interests of Kona coffee farmers who grow and sell 100% Kona coffee and to seek greater legal protection of the Kona coffee name.

Membership is \$25 per year per individual. Any Kona coffee farmer who has reached the age of eighteen (18) years may become a voting member of KCFA, upon payment of annual dues. Kona coffee farmers are defined as individuals who own or lease land in Kona and who derive the majority of their coffee-related income from the sale of coffee grown on their Kona property.. Prospective members shall submit an application for membership to the Board of Directors for approval.

Nonvoting Members:

Individuals or organizations who support 100% Kona coffee and the objectives of the KCFA may become Associate (\$20) or Supporting Members (\$250). They may be located in any state or region of the world and may attend all meetings and may participate in events of the organization. They may not hold office.

To apply, fill out the Application Form on our website, www.konacoffeefarmers.org. Or call Nancy Griffith at 328-2666.