

For Immediate Release:

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## **Janet Sparks and Blue MauMau Editor Don Sniegowski receive the AAFD Community Service Awards.**

DATELINE: SAN DIEGO, CA...

The American Association of Franchisees and Dealers (AAFD) has honored investigative journalists Janet Sparks and Don Sniegowski with the Chairman's Award for Distinguished Service to the Franchising Community.

Sparks and Sniegowski, the founder and editor of the franchise news social media Web site Blue MauMau, received their awards at AAFD's *Total Quality Franchising Awards* banquet at the recent Annual Franchisee Leadership Summit in San Antonio, Texas.

Janet Sparks, columnist and reporter for Franchise Times magazine and, over the past two years, an investigative reporter for Blue MauMau. Previously, Janet had been owner and publisher of the Continental Franchise Review, an industry trade journal she worked for and then acquired in 1991. When Franchise Times acquired CFR in 1998, she became the magazine's associate publisher, at which time Janet's journalism became focused on a critical examination of franchising practices, a focus that the AAFD applauds.

"The AAFD is pleased to recognize investigative reporter, Janet Sparks, as a recipient of our Chairman's Award for Distinguished Service to the Franchising Community," said Purvin. "Janet has emerged as a vigilant sentinel for fair franchising practices, tenaciously investigating and exposing unscrupulous conduct, and providing an important outlet for franchisee victims to have their stories taken seriously, exposed and investigated."

Continued Purvin, "In a journalistic environment that is largely patronizing to the franchising community, Janet never shies from a tough or controversial story. Her forte is to investigate, to challenge and, where appropriate, to expose. At the heart of Janet's journalism is a conviction that franchisee rights should be recognized and protected. Janet has urged grassroots activism amongst franchise owners, and has encouraged franchise owners to come together for their common good."

"I'm quite honored by AAFD selecting me for its Chairman's award," Sparks said. "I have known Bob Purvin for over 15 years and have followed the AAFD mission in bringing equality and balance to franchising. I'm in awe of the courage and zeal of the AAFD members to bring about a fairer franchise relationship."

Don Sniegowski is the vision, courage and proud parent of Blue MauMau, the country's leading online social media Web site covering news for franchise operators and investors and perhaps the single most influential vehicle and instrument for the empowerment of franchise owners ever assembled. In conceptualizing a community of citizen journalists to reveal 'truth and

transparency' in franchising, Sniegowski has created an online publication that offers honest dialogue with top experts and independent franchise news.

“Don is both innovator and entrepreneur, but is first and foremost a journalist who yearned to reveal hard truths about franchising—to place the glare of public scrutiny on a community that has been much insulated from the voice of franchisees,” said Purvin. “Because of Blue MauMau, franchisees and their advocates have found their voice, and franchisors are now less likely to succeed in coercive or predatory practices without bearing public scrutiny and scorn.”

“It’s an honor to receive such an award,” said Sniegowski. “It’s even more of an honor considering that this award is freely given from the audience we report for—franchise owners. It wasn’t very long ago when sources of reliable, spin-free information for franchise owners were next to nonexistent. What is really different nowadays is the Internet’s interactive news format, which allows those on the front lines to quietly share information without retribution from the franchisor. Investigative reporters have more sources to tap into and faster access, giving a better news product. That helps operators and investors make informed decisions based on authentic, more timely news, not conjured-up propaganda and re-wrapped press releases.”

To view the Chairman’s Award presentation, please go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdgSHNYS7SU>.

### **About the AAFD**

The AAFD is a national non-profit trade association representing the rights and interests of franchisees and independent dealers throughout the United States. Formed in 1992, The AAFD is focused on market driven reform to achieve its mission to define and promote collaborative franchise cultures that the AAFD describes as Total Quality Franchising. Since its formation the AAFD has grown to represent more than 50,000 franchised businesses throughout the United States. The AAFD currently has members in all 50 states and represents more than 100 different franchise systems.

The AAFD's Fair Franchising Standards, Fair Franchising Seal, Trademark Chapters, and emphasis on Marketplace Solutions led to the Association's recognition as a growing force in franchising. The AAFD’s Branded Partner programs add a new dimension to the value of AAFD membership. The AAFD provides a broad range of member services designed to help franchisees build market power, create legislative support of interest to franchisees, provide legal and financial support, and provide a wide range of general member benefits.

For more information about the conference or the AAFD, please call toll free - 800-733-9858 or visit [www.AAFD.org](http://www.AAFD.org).