

new horizons

The magazine of the National FFA Organization

May/June/July 2000



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The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

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...way beyond! FFA members are burning up the road on the information highway, but Internet use and exploration doesn't stop with electronic messages. Read how one FFA chapter claimed its spot on the World Wide Web, and what the Internet offers you.



features

Careers in Country

You've probably seen their videos and heard their songs, but now go behind the scenes to see how teenaged country music artists juggle life's demands of education, relationships and life on the road.

12 Star Tour

Meeting FFA members at national convention offered encouragement to 16-year-old singer Jessica Andrews. Raised in a "farm town," Jessica is beginning to see hard work, patience and goal-setting pay off in her new career.

21 Teens in Tune Town

FFA-aged country entertainers are applying proven elements of success on their road to the top. The road is long with plenty of bumps along the way. These teens, though, never counted on smooth sailing through the competitive, demanding world of country music.

30 Career Focus: Small Animal Care

Pets are a major, and growing, part of everyday life. Job opportunities in animal care — from kennel technician to pet sitter — are flourishing. But competition is keen, and proper preparation is a must for success in this rewarding career area.



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FFA Mission Statement

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

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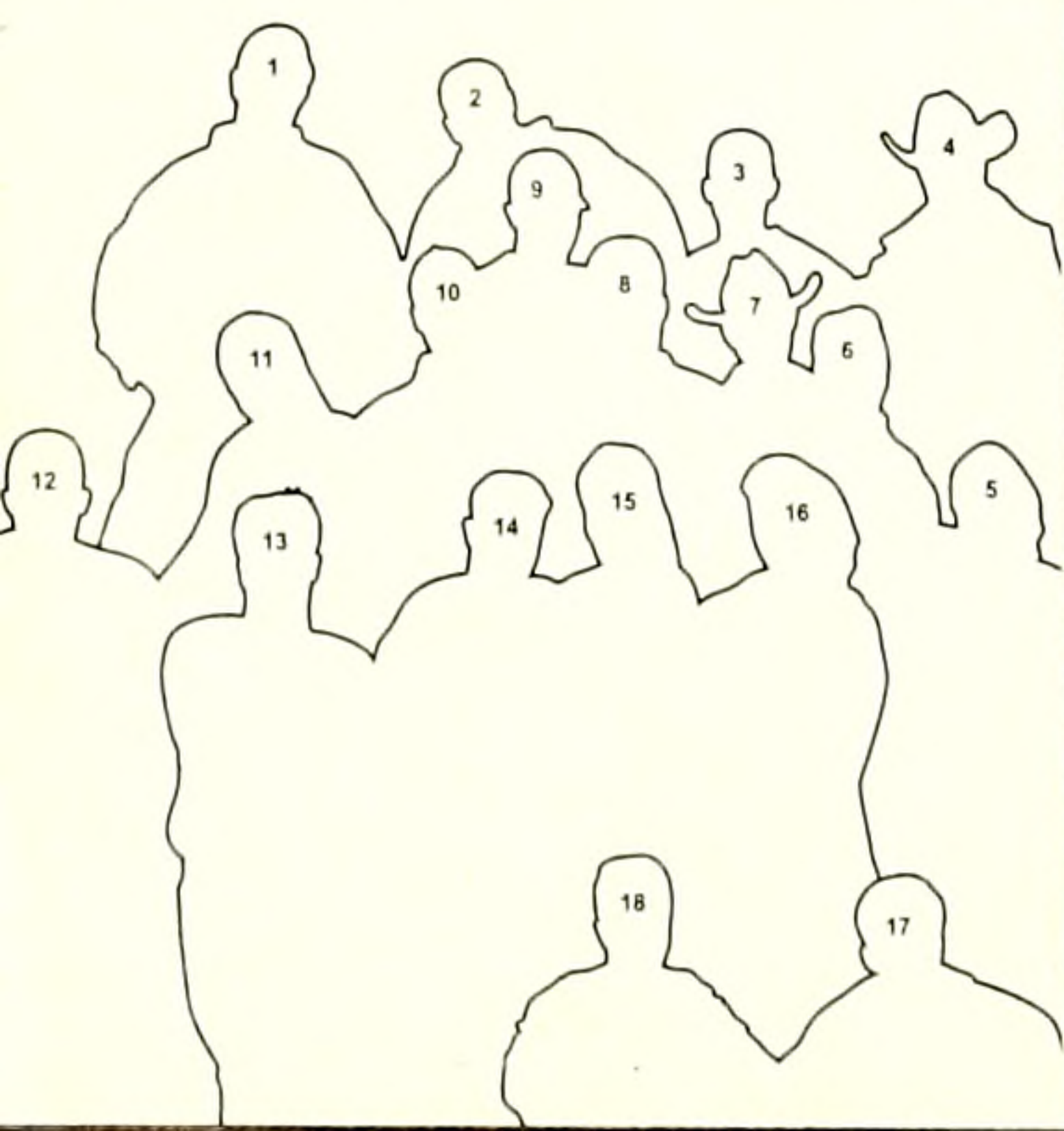
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5. Frosty
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7. Bull
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one on one with

Marshall Baker

What have you learned so far about your national officer team?

First of all, I have learned that college game days can get ugly. We have a gator, bulldog, wildcat, boilermaker and a buckeye. This combination can be deadly. Seriously, though, I love my fellow officers. These five people are amazing and will be best friends for the rest of my life.

What's the main lesson you learned from your officer trip to Japan?

Don't ask what you are eating! Japan is an amazing country, but the customs, language and lifestyle are so incredibly different. Our entire team learned how to be adventurous and be open to new ideas. Whether it was eating raw fish or getting "beat up" by karate black belts, we experienced new things every day.

You mentioned state FFA conventions as a highlight of your year so far — why?

I have had the opportunity to visit the Michigan and California conventions. They were unbelievable! Spending time with members is my absolute favorite part of being a national officer. I have danced my legs off, met so many new friends, worked with amazing state officers and witnessed students achieving their dreams. What more could you ask for?

If you hadn't been elected, what would you be doing now?

I would probably be asleep in my dorm room or playing a mean game of pingpong in the commons area. College life is wonderful, and if I were not elected, I would be enjoying friends and hitting the books at school.

What does your family do during any free time at home?

My mom, dad, three older sisters and I love to sit around as a family and sing gospel songs. We are definitely not the Backstreet Boys, but it is really fun to spend time as a family and sing "How Great Thou Art", "Sing and be Happy" and "Amazing Grace."

What's the sculpture you're holding?

The symbol in my picture is a DNA model. I feel that technology will revolutionize the agricultural industry in the future. It's exciting to see how FFA is preparing students for the roles that will need to be filled. ★

VITALS

Hometown:

Portales, New Mexico

Age: 20

Chapter: Texico FFA

Advisor: Bill Morrison

SAE: Valencia peanuts and beef production

Education: sophomore, Austin College

Major: agricultural education

Favorite food:

Home-cooked enchiladas

Hobby: Riding dirt bikes and snow skiing

Favorite musician(s):

Avalon, Creed

Vehicle: '97 silver Ford with extended cab and flared sides

TIMELINE

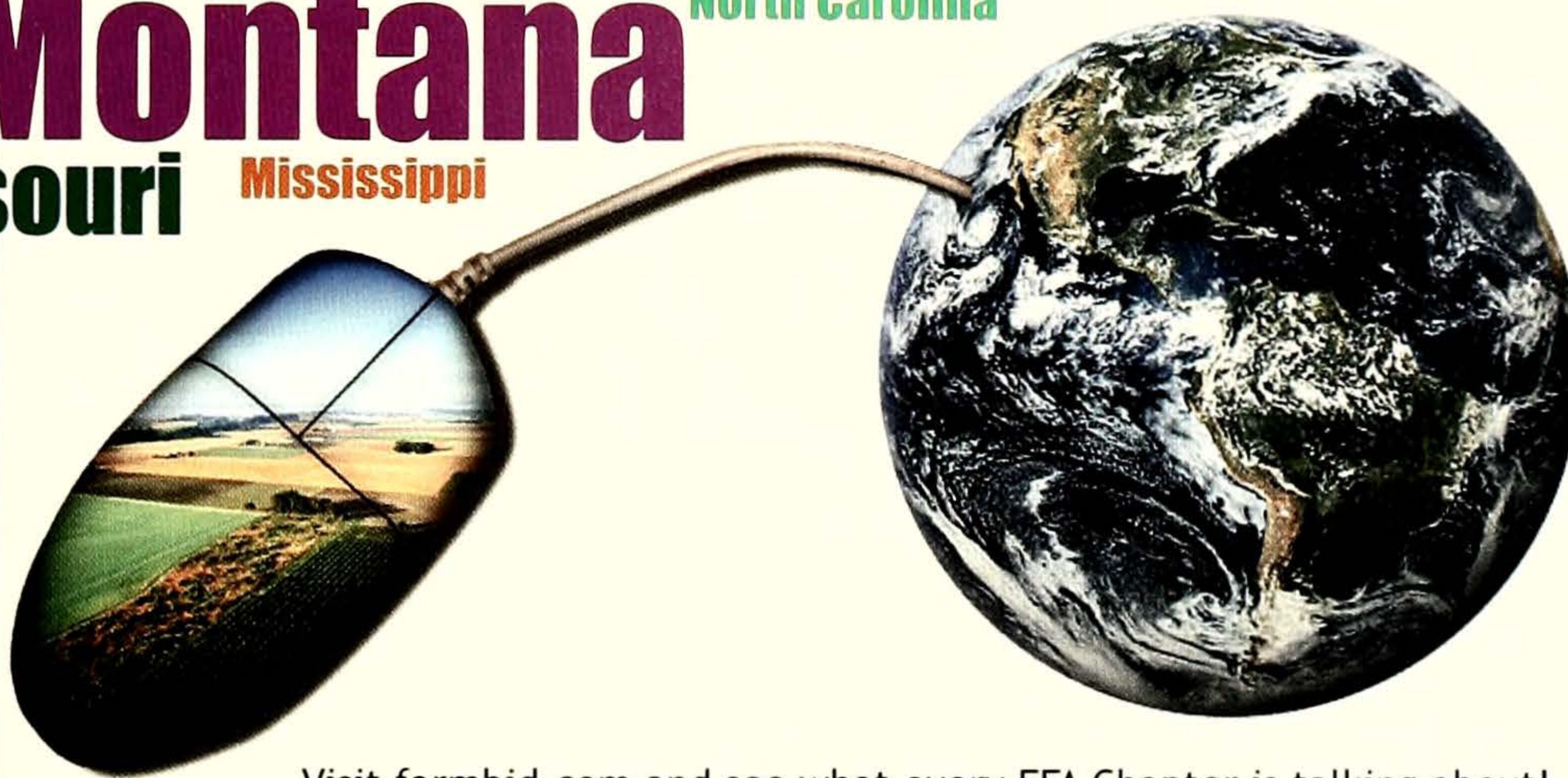
Age

- 14** • joined FFA
- elected Texico Greenhand vice president
- 15** • won state FFA Creed Speaking Contest
- 16** • elected chapter sentinel
- competed in national Prepared Public Speaking CDE
- 17** • elected state FFA vice president
- competed in national Extemporaneous Speaking CDE
- named District Star Farmer
- 18** • elected state FFA president
- on national reserve champion parliamentary procedure team
- 19** • elected national western region vice president
- national finalist for oil crop production — entrepreneurship proficiency award



Mbaker@ffa.org

National western region vice president: Marshall Baker



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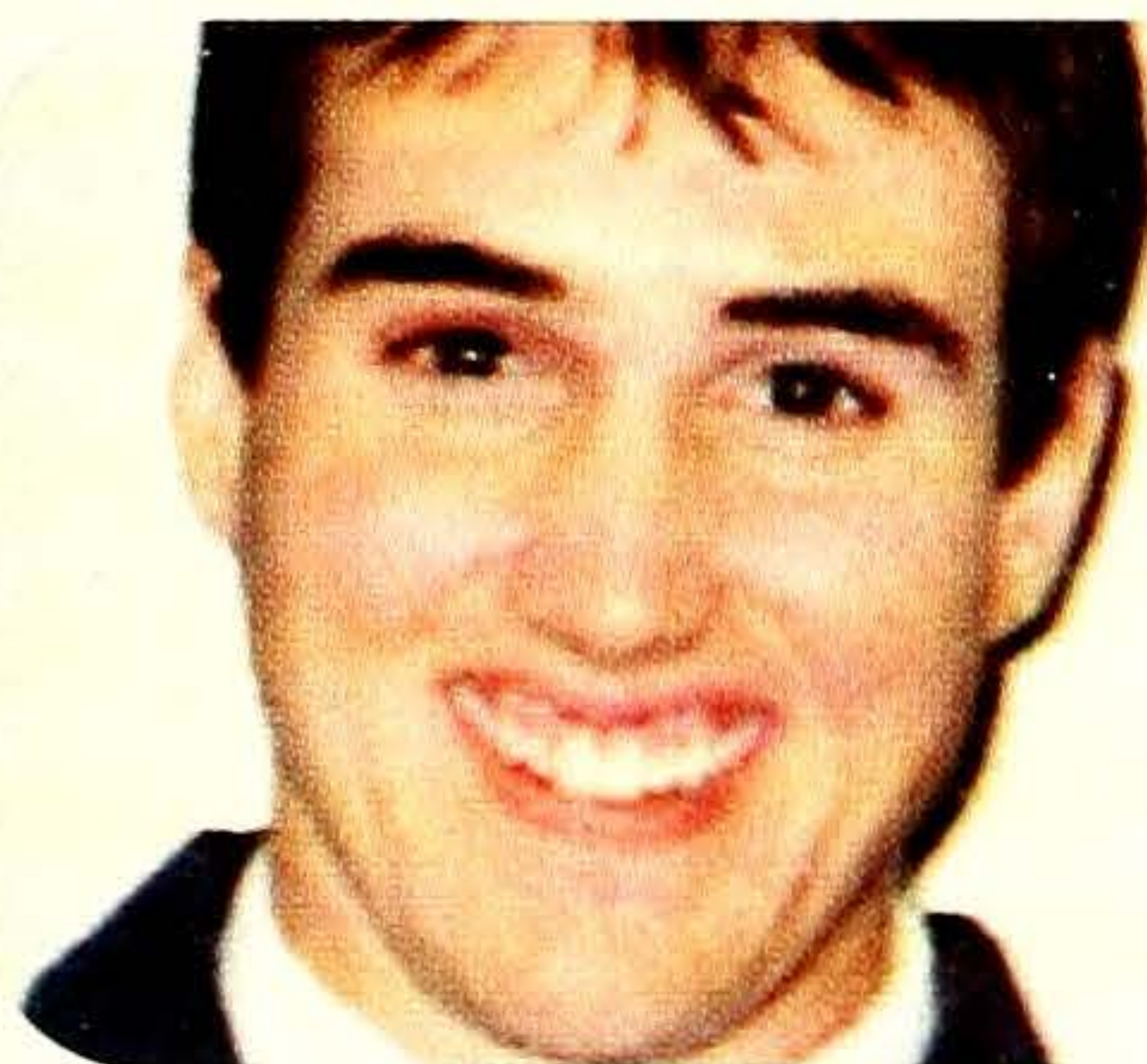
Something New in the Stars!

FFA New Horizons is saluting the nation's agricultural education teachers. The magazine plans to feature a teaching "star" in upcoming issues, just like we feature FFA members on the "Stars" page. Send us a good photo of an agriculture teacher you think is special, and tell us why. Include your phone number, and a number for the teacher, so we can let them know they'll be in *FFA New Horizons*. We can only use one nominee each time, so tell us about your star teacher today!



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OHIO



Chad Barr

During the 1999 National FFA Convention, Chad became the first American FFA Degree recipient since the Mapleton chapter's reestablishment five years ago. Fourteen members joined Chad at the convention, all participating in various events. For Chad, 19, the American degree is a culmination of hard work and support from his parents and teachers. "Little steps get you further in life than no steps," Chad says. His steps on the convention stage are an inspiration to others who'll follow. ★

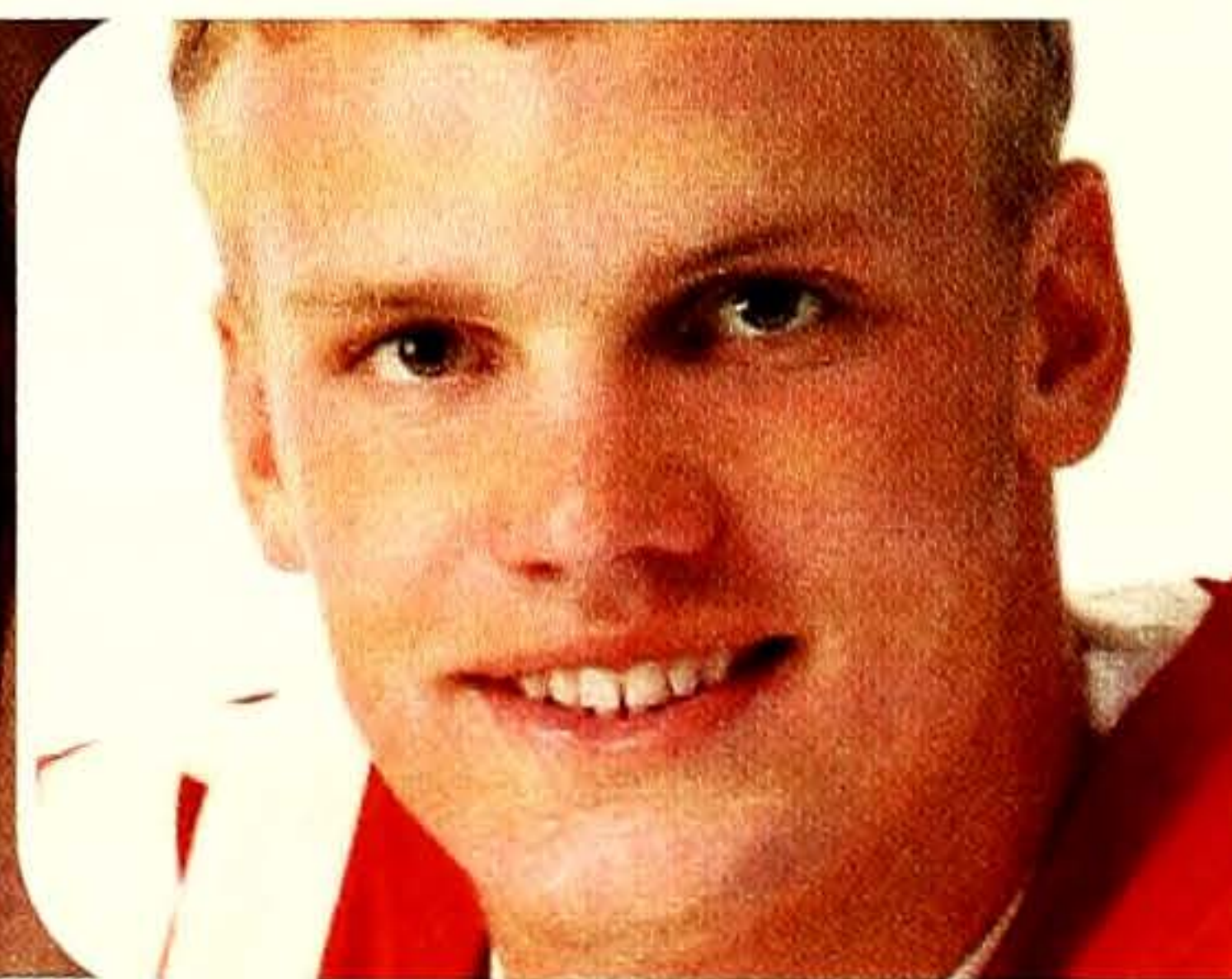
NEW YORK



Torri Hasseler

Torri, 17, says she first joined Carthage FFA as someone "really shy and quiet," but now she's "outspoken and loud." Torri grins at her own self-description, but she truly does have much to smile about regarding FFA. She rose through the ranks of leadership, serving as chapter sentinel, then sub-district president and tri-county area district president. Hard work behind the scenes included attending conventions, chapter field trips, contest participation and earning her State FFA Degree. ★

IOWA



Clint Miller

Clint, 18, is known for outstanding achievement in both FFA and athletics. Fellow members say, though, that "Clint is continuously kind to those around him, while still finding time to be active in FFA activities." Clint has served as Star-mont FFA treasurer, president of the agricultural issues team, and member of champion dairy judging and meats teams. He also makes the honor roll while earning all-state honors in football and all-conference in other sports. ★

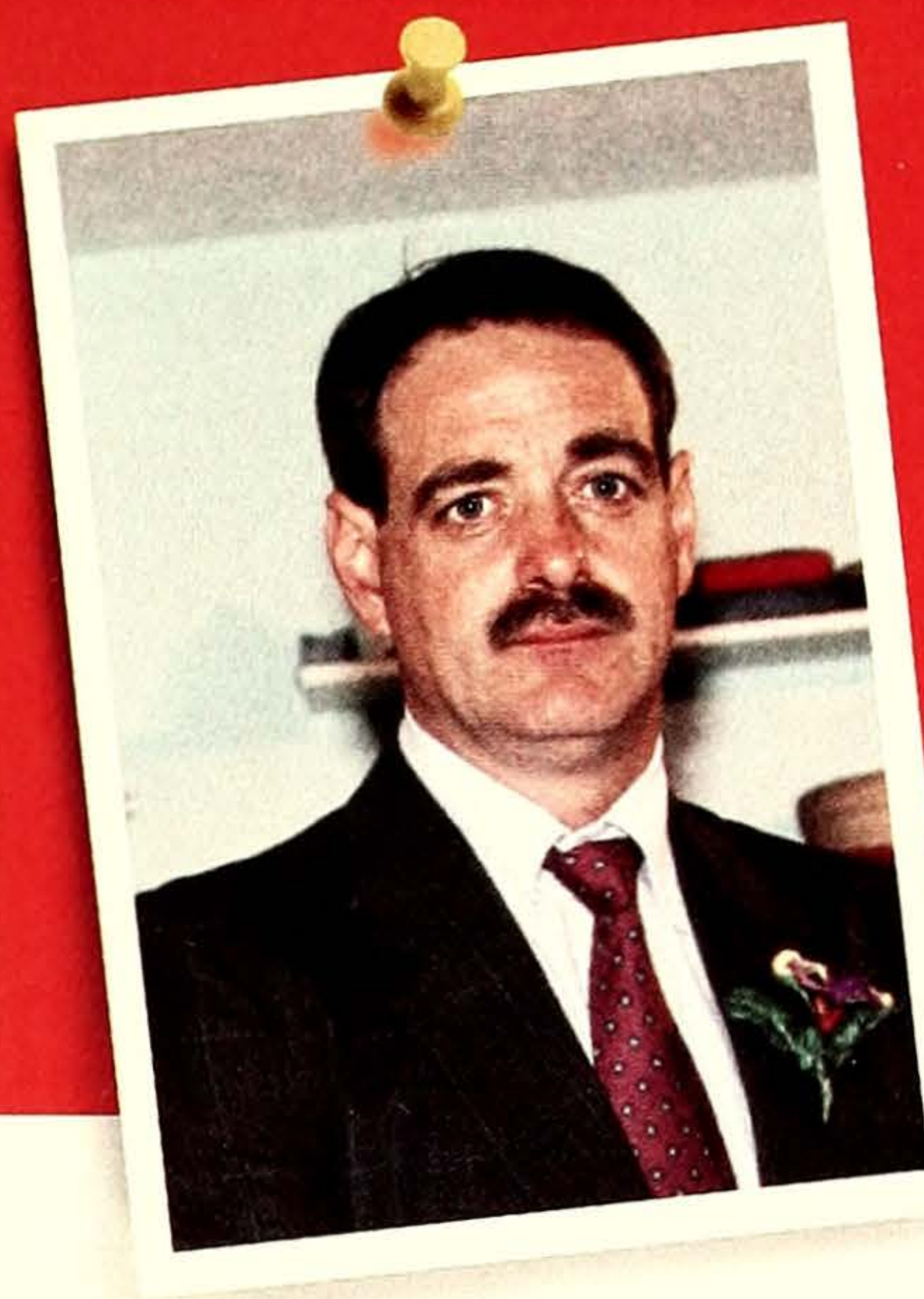
TENNESSEE



Andrea Turbeville

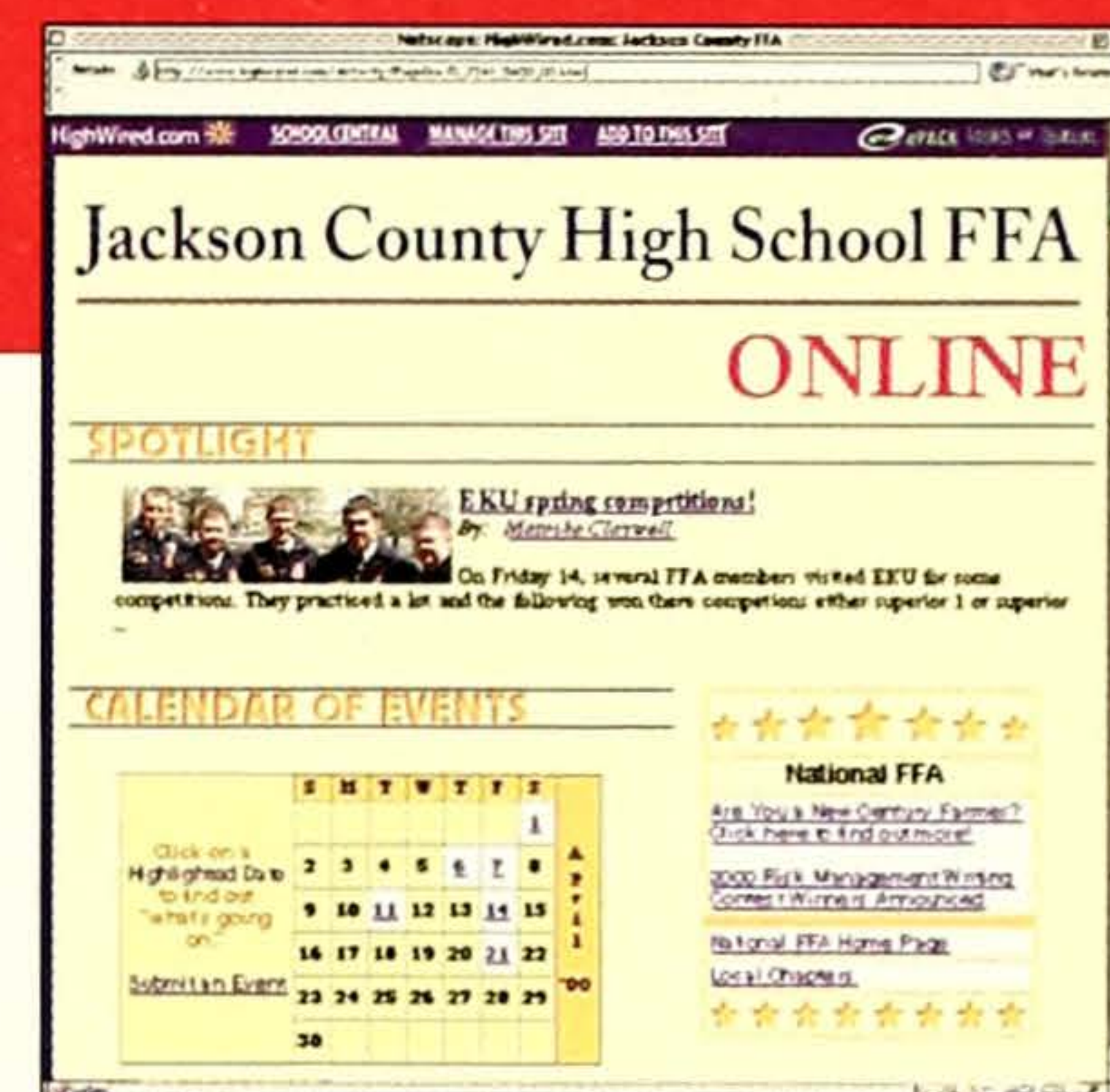
Since age 12, Andrea has worked extensively on her family's diversified live-stock and crop operation near Dresden. While farming, Andrea also won the District FFA Creed Speaking Contest as a freshman. The next year she won the District Prepared Public Speaking Contest, and also earned a leadership award at the 1999 state FFA camp. Andrea, 17, recently repeated as district speaking champion and placed second regionally. She hopes to use her speaking ability as a teacher. ★

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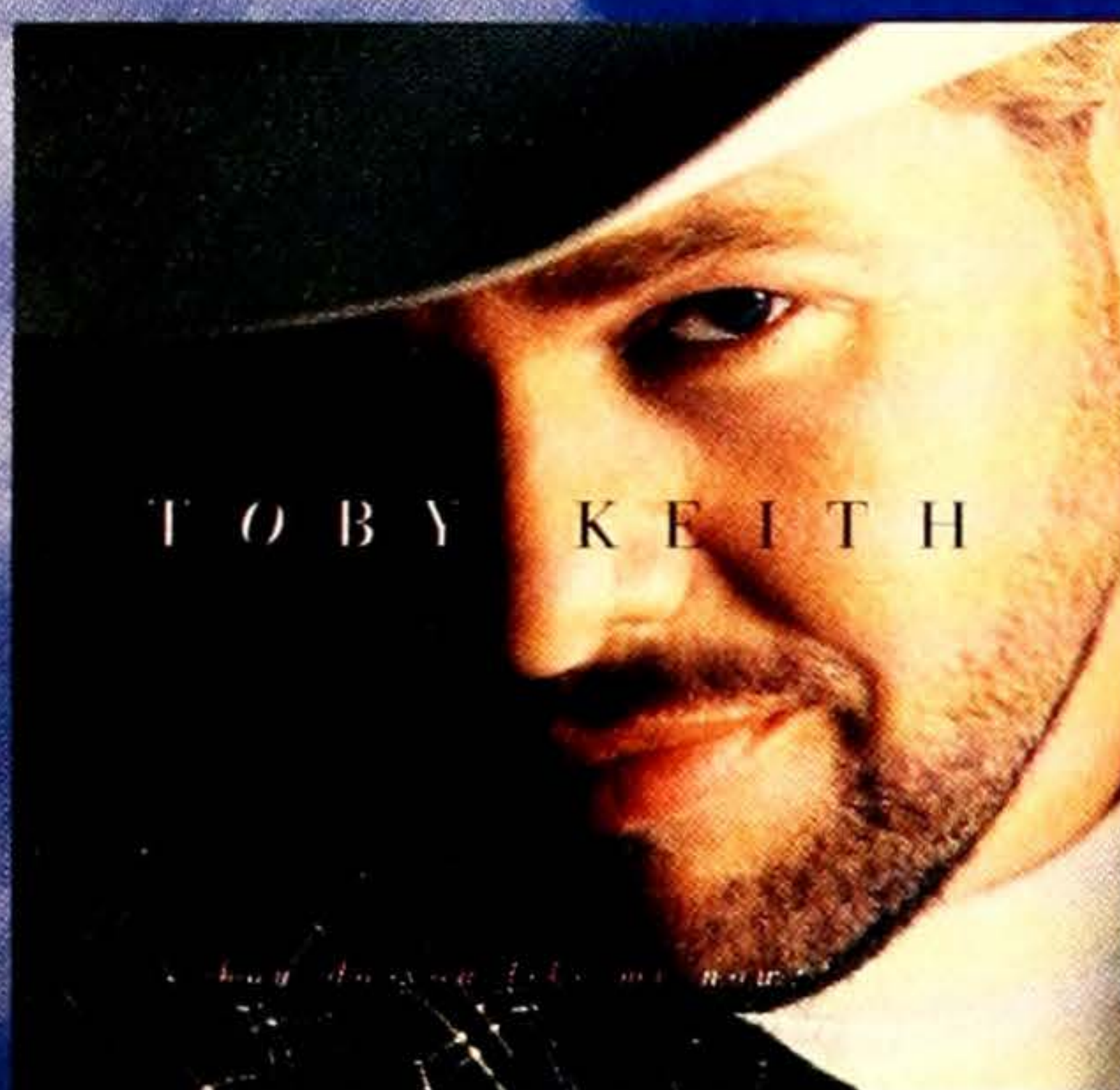
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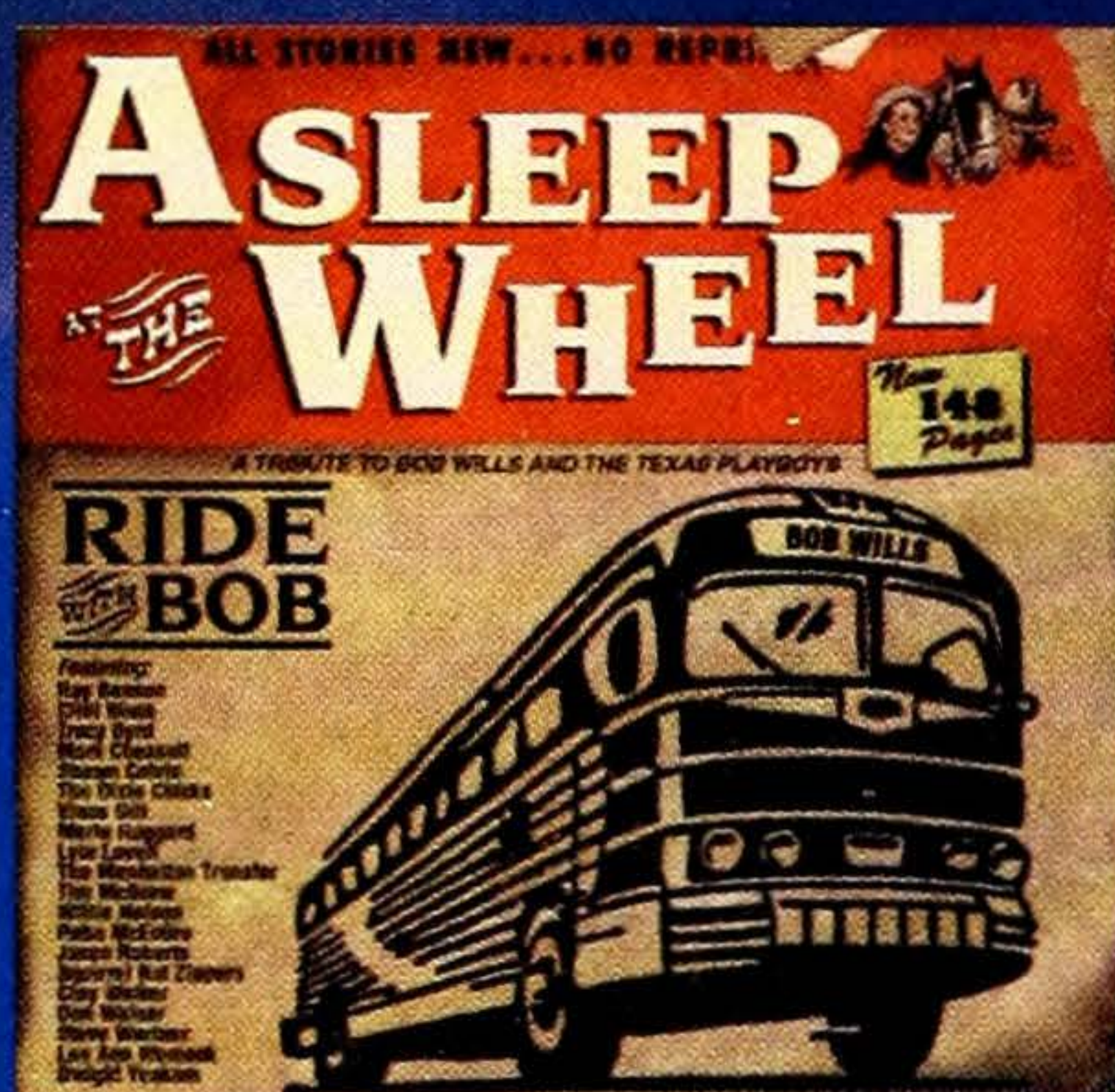
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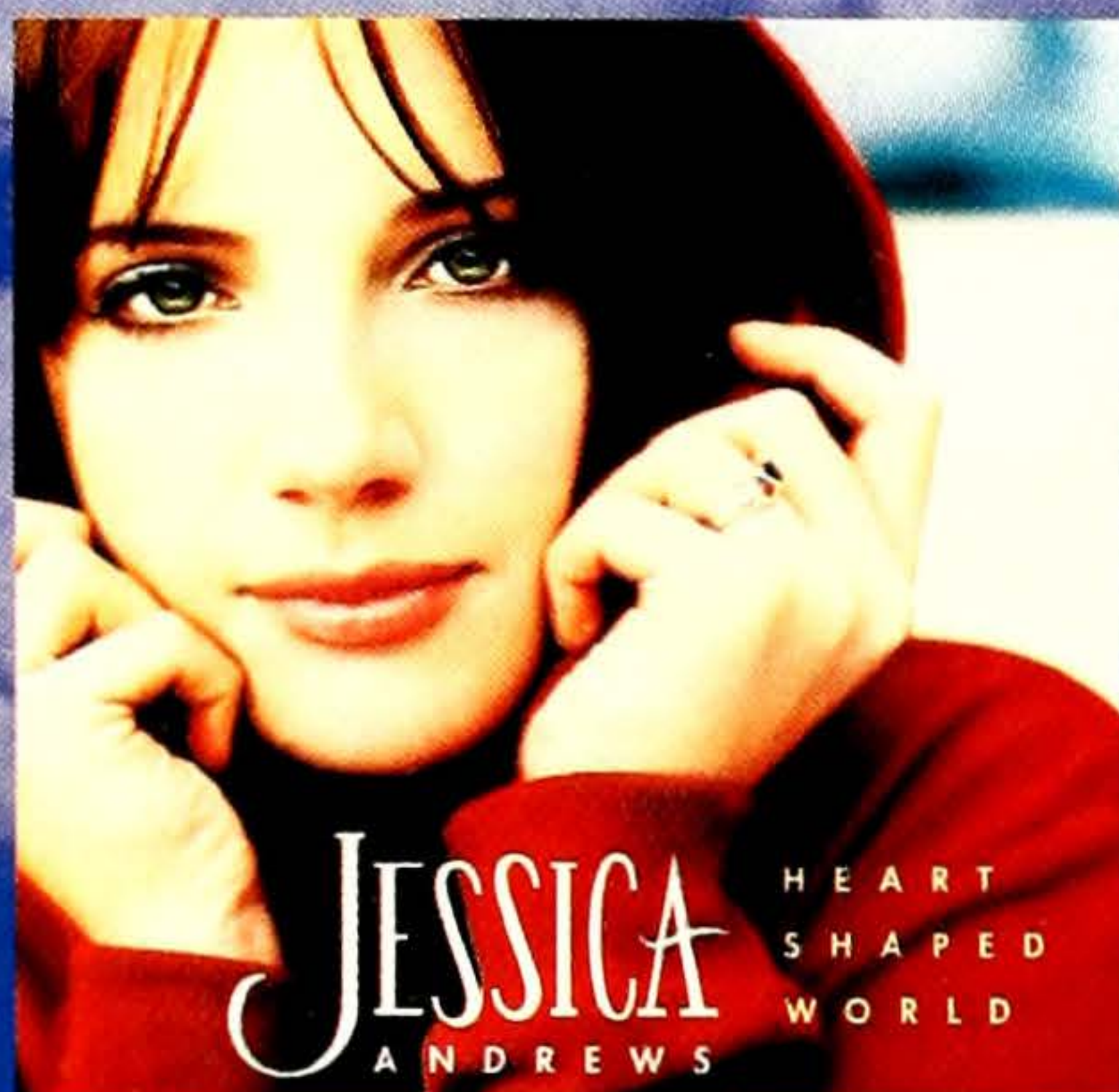
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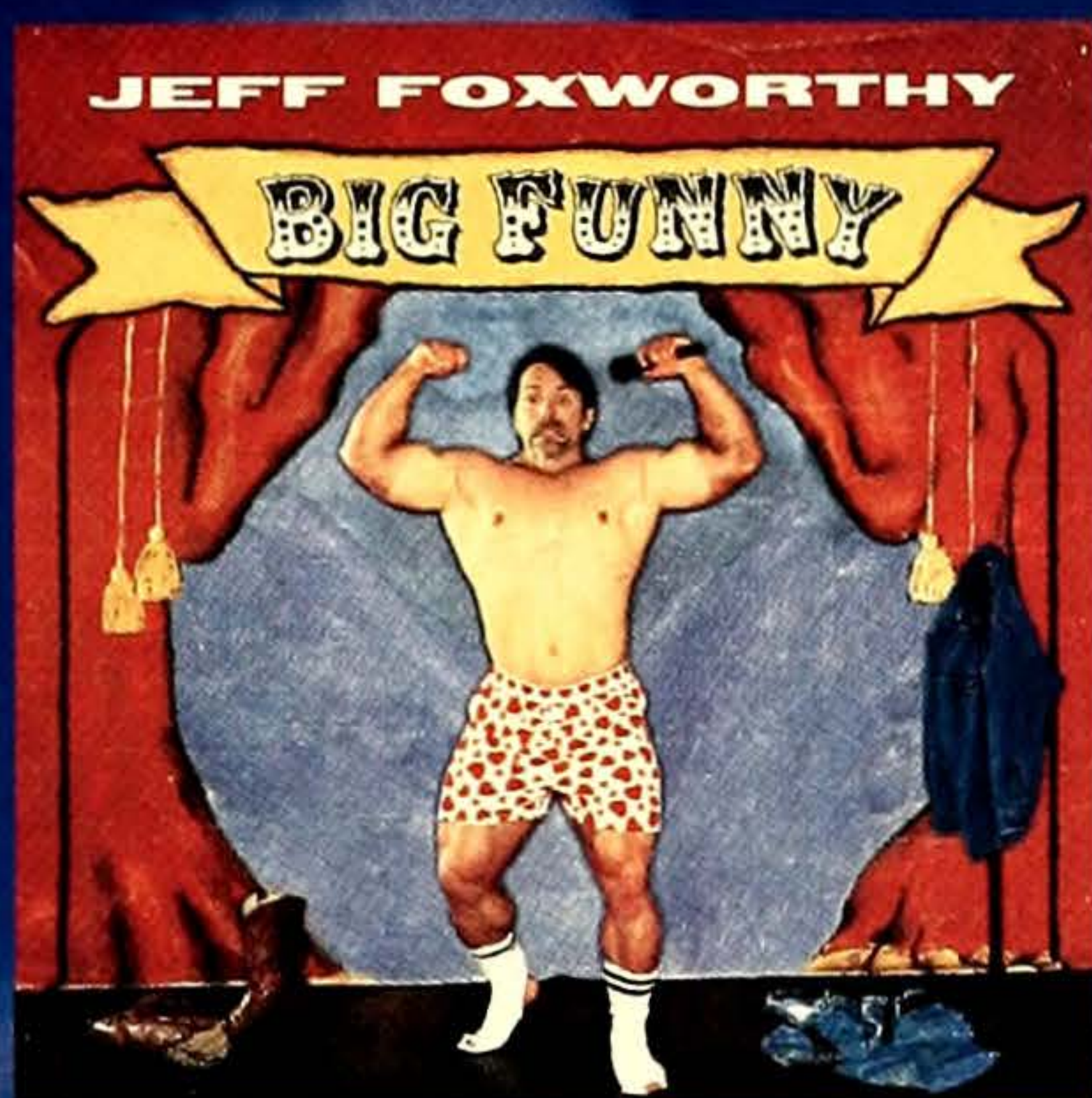
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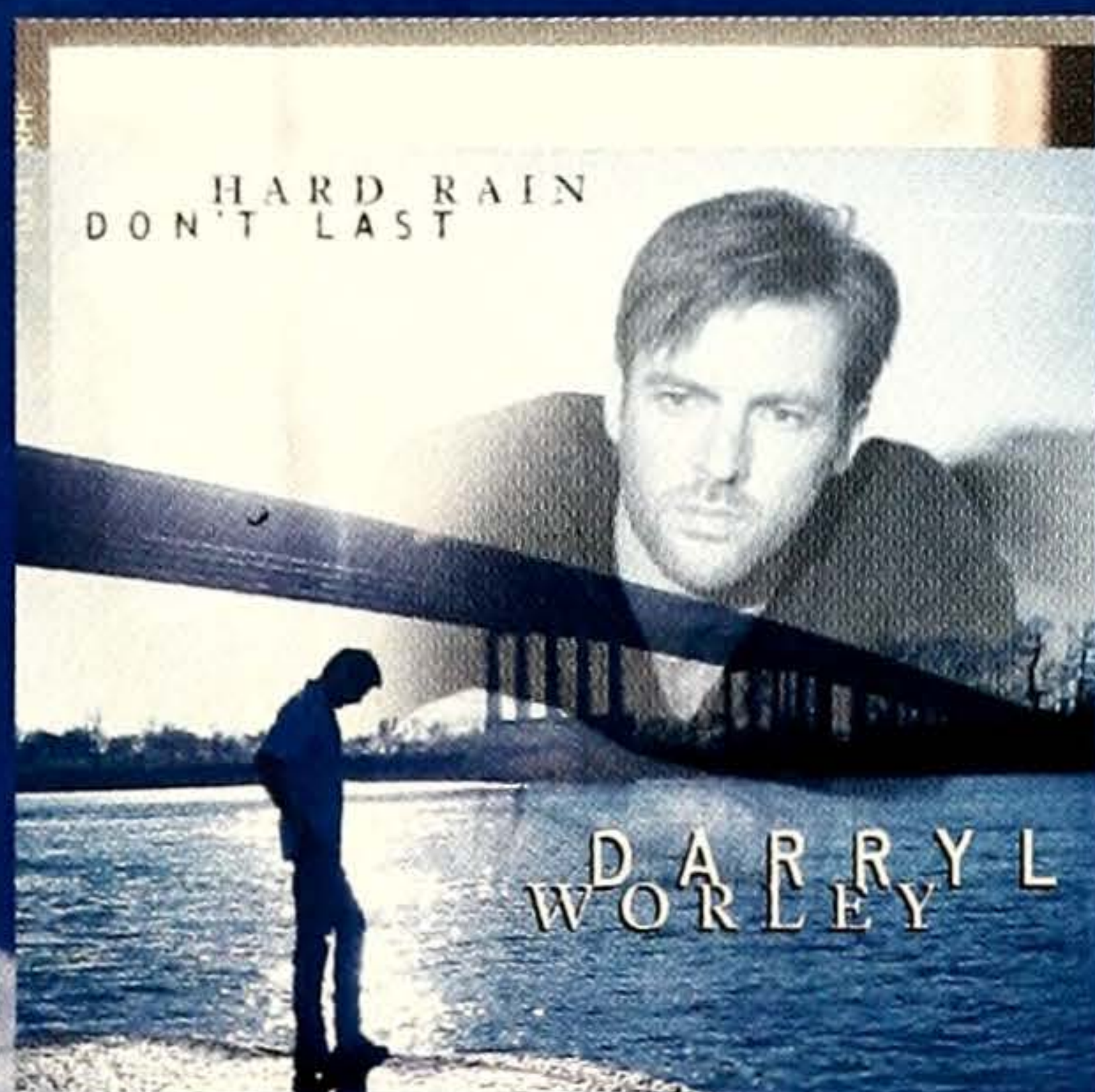
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star tour



By Jeff Tennant

launches from a heart-shaped world

When teenaged recording artist Jessica Andrews met throngs of FFA members at last year's national FFA convention, she gained a big dose of motivation on her road to success.

"Country fans, especially FFA members, are very encouraging," says Jessica, remembering her warm reception in Louisville. At Nashville, Tennessee's, Grand Ol' Opry show recently, many of country music's legendary performers excited the crowd, but only Jessica drew younger fans to the stage area for a quick photo. Jessica realizes she's among the newest young generation of country singers, and she continues to draw on family, friends and fans for support.

Be confident, do your best

"When I walk out on this stage, most people may think I'm very nervous," Jessica tells the Opry crowd. "But it's almost like all of my musical heroes who've been here before are whispering, 'Don't worry, just do your best and it'll be all right.'"

Giving it "her best" is nothing new to Jessica, who grew up in Huntingdon, Tennessee, surrounded by a big, musical family. The Andrews clan still enjoys

sing-alongs, and Jessica remembers "just listening" as a little girl. Then, one day her exceptional talent began to bloom, and her confidence soared.

Family support drives the dream

"When I was 10, I was singing the Whitney Houston/Dolly Parton song 'I Will Always Love You,'" Jessica remembers. "My sister heard me sing and talked my parents into listening to me. They all talked me into singing more, and have been tremendous supporters ever since."

Although she's still a teenager, Jessica has impressed critics with her "soulful expression" of a song. But the emotion she pours into a performance is born from experience and pain.

Learning from adversity

Jessica faced a potentially catastrophic medical problem at the age of 7, a time when she found comfort and strength in music as she went through a rare surgical procedure.

"They found that a bone was growing through my spine," Jessica shares. "I didn't understand fully what was going on at the time, but I knew it was very serious. The doctors said if I

didn't have an operation, the bone would grow quicker than my spinal cord, which could leave me paralyzed."

The surgery was a complete success, though it took her months in bed and four years of a back brace to fully recover. "Going through all of that," Jessica says, "I feel like everything that's happening now is God saying, 'You went through all that, now I'm giving you all this.'"

Small steps lead to leaps

Though Jessica now knows "all this" to be TV shows, a major tour with Faith Hill and a CD heralded as one of country's best for 1999, she remembers "starting small" after her surgery. She sang at as many fairs, festivals and talent competitions as she could around her hometown. As fate would have it, a tape of one of her performances soon found its way into the hands of noted producer Byron Gallimore. He led Jessica to a recording contract with Dreamworks in 1997, after almost five

years of waiting for the right label and the right songs. Jessica saw her first single, "I Will Be There for You," climb the charts and find a place on the "Prince of Egypt - Nashville" soundtrack. "Once the right elements were in place, it happened very quickly," she says of her success. "I guess I'm a good example of taking little steps to achieve bigger things."

Family, school top priorities

To handle her busy schedule and still complete her education, Jessica is home-schooled by her mom, who doubles as a road manager. Jessica's continuing closeness to family, and years of effort, remind her of life's most important things. "She's a great talent," says her bass guitar player, Ernie Smothers, "but she's also a wonderful human being."

"This is the happiest time for me," Jessica says. "I keep saying this is a dream come true, but if I am dreaming, don't wake me up!" ★

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ffa in action

ARIZONA

Two-day blast builds leaders

More than 500 chapter members, past state officers and alumni learned, ate, played and worked their way through an intensive weekend "Mini Leadership Camp" coordinated by Peoria FFA. The 26-hour event kicked off in style with a dramatic opening ceremony, laser light show and stirring music. The "famous mini-camp dance" capped off the evening, followed the next day by continuous leadership workshops led by past state officers. A "foot rodeo" full of games and a closing banquet concluded the hugely successful project.



Hundreds of FFA members come eager to learn and go away enriched during one of Arizona's largest youth leadership camps, conducted by one local chapter.

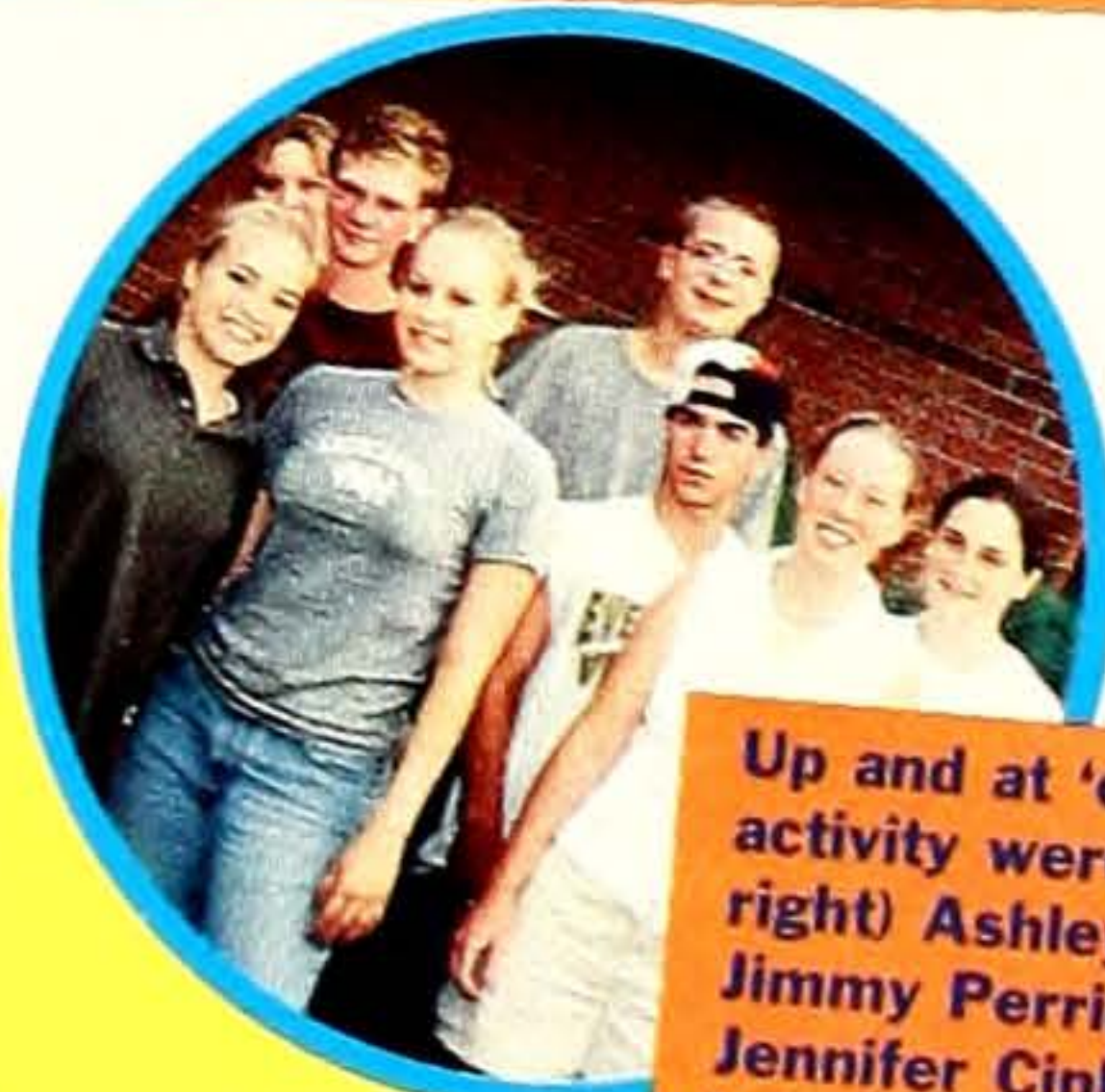


Quentin Smith, of Cortez, accepts the presidential gavel from Brian Hutt, of Sterling, following Smith's election as president of the Associated Student Government at Northeastern Junior College. Both are former Colorado state FFA officers.

COLORADO

FFA rules beyond high schools

Past state FFA officers are continuing their leadership roles at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling. More than 150 officer alumni have attended college at Northeastern since 1970, with many of those holding offices in student government. As many as nine officers, and no fewer than three, have attended the college at the same time.



Up and at 'em early for hosting activity were (front row, left to right) Ashley Derbey, Natalie Gill, Jimmy Perrine, Shelly Ledyard, Jennifer Cinkowski, and (back row, left to right) Alex Schuette, Chris Kirkum and Ryan Eager.

OHIO Fair duty showcases FFA

Eight Evergreen FFA members and two advisors rose well before dawn to open and host the FFA building at the Ohio State Fair. Members paired up and split two-hour shifts with advisors, providing plenty of time to enjoy the midway and agricultural events. Even full of fair food, the group talked advisors into a supper stop on the long drive home to Metamora.



CALIFORNIA Five and counting sheep

Firebaugh FFA members took a practical lesson in veterinary medicine as a chapter ewe delivered five commercial-cross lambs. Only one lamb needed extra milk, but members learned first-hand that three or more lambs birthed together presents many complications. The chapter and a local vet kept a close watch on "Lily," though, including ultrasounds performed in critical stages. One lamb is being saved as a ram, while the others have been adopted for FFA projects.



FFA members utilize W.B. Saul High School's meat lab to prepare 5-10 pound packages of ground venison all donated to a food charity.

PENNSYLVANIA Have deer, will clear

FFA members at the W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences "shared their love" for the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, by organizing a "planned hunt" to remove deer from two Philly airport runway areas, creating safety hazards. Removed deer were processed in the high school's meat lab, with more than 1,000 pounds of venison donated to a local food charity. Skinned hides were donated to American Indians.

Is your

chapter in action?

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FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The mission of Agricultural Education is to prepare and support individuals for careers, build awareness and develop leadership for the food, fiber and natural resource systems. The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer. Produced by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies. Sponsored by the Monsanto Company as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



Check out those who have conquered risk, and are going to D.C....



Cheryl Ramsey
Talawanda FFA chapter
Hamilton, Ohio



Kate Wrage
Hartsburg-Emden FFA chapter
Emden, Illinois



Kevin Hilton
Bowman FFA chapter
Bowman, North Dakota



Aleece Lahr
Denton FFA chapter
Denton, Montana



Lars Enerson
Stanley FFA chapter
Stanley, North Dakota



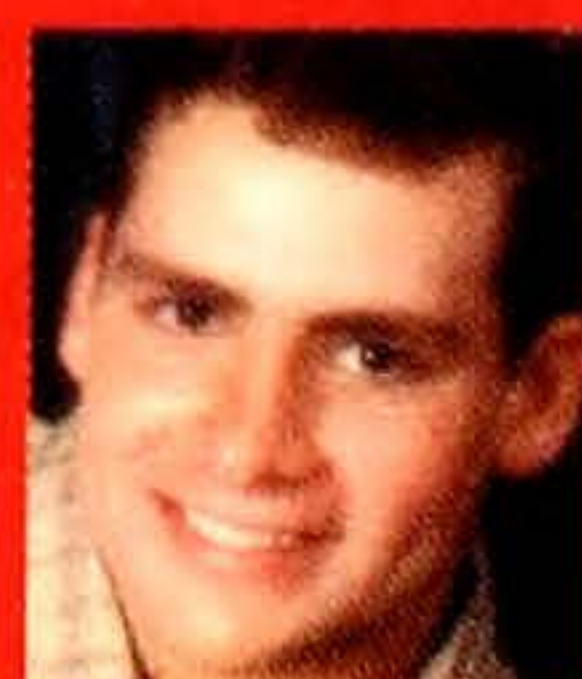
Michelle Pavelka
Blue Hill FFA chapter
Bladen, Nebraska



Pam Coffey
Southwestern FFA chapter
Nancy, Kentucky



Ryan Fegley
Berthold FFA chapter
Berthold, North Dakota



Shawn Sponheim
St. Ansgar FFA chapter
St. Ansgar, Iowa



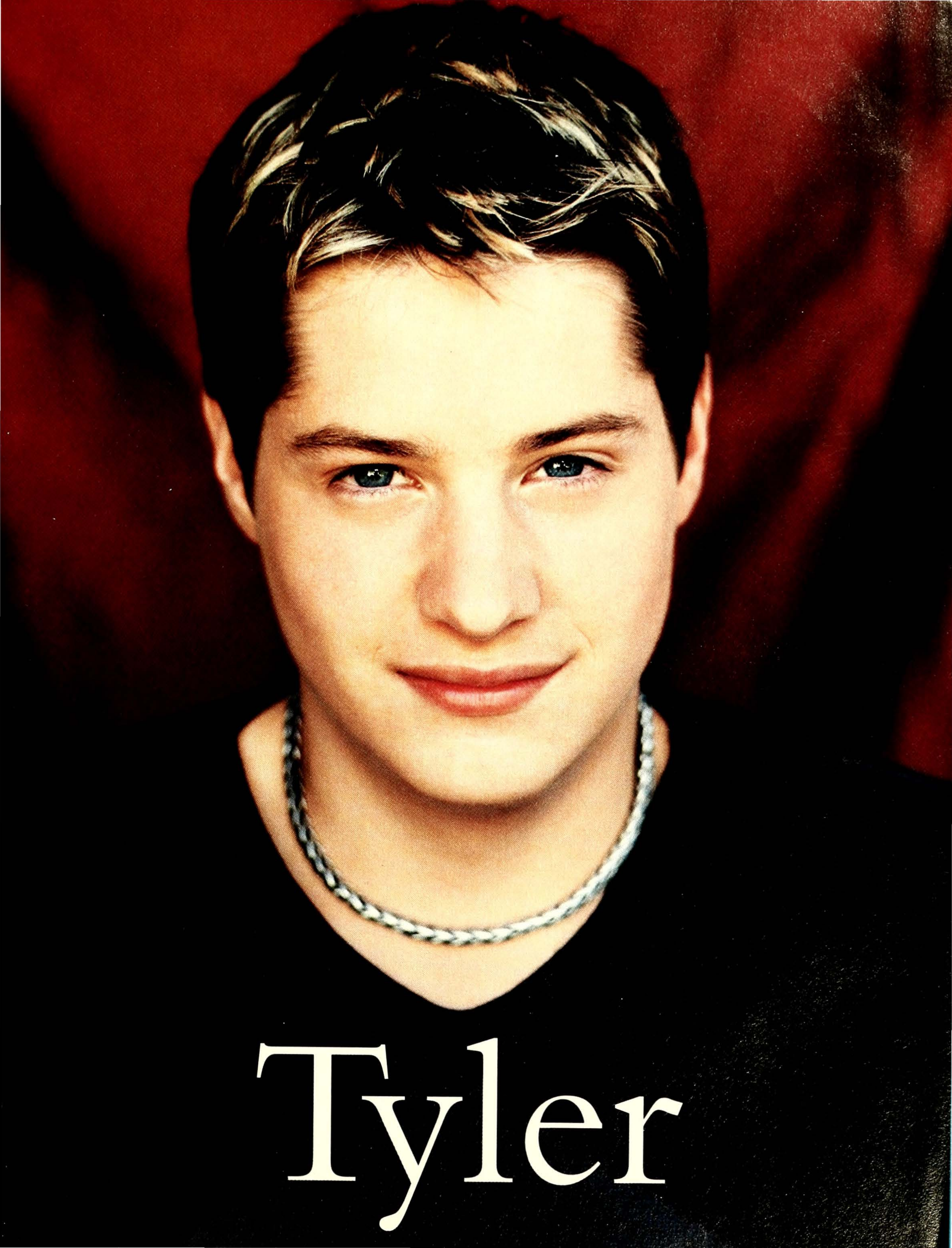
Ted Ulkes
Southeastern FFA chapter
Bowen, Illinois

That's right, these FFA members have told us how they conquered risk and have won an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for themselves and their advisors. While in D.C., they will be recognized in a special ceremony at the U.S. Department of Agriculture; they'll meet high-ranking USDA officials and congressional representatives and they'll tour our nation's capitol. Who knows, maybe the winners can teach Commander Risk and Miss Manage a thing or two about managing risk while in D.C.



The Risk Management Essay Contest is offered by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the National Council for Agricultural Education and with funding from the Risk Management Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.





Tyler



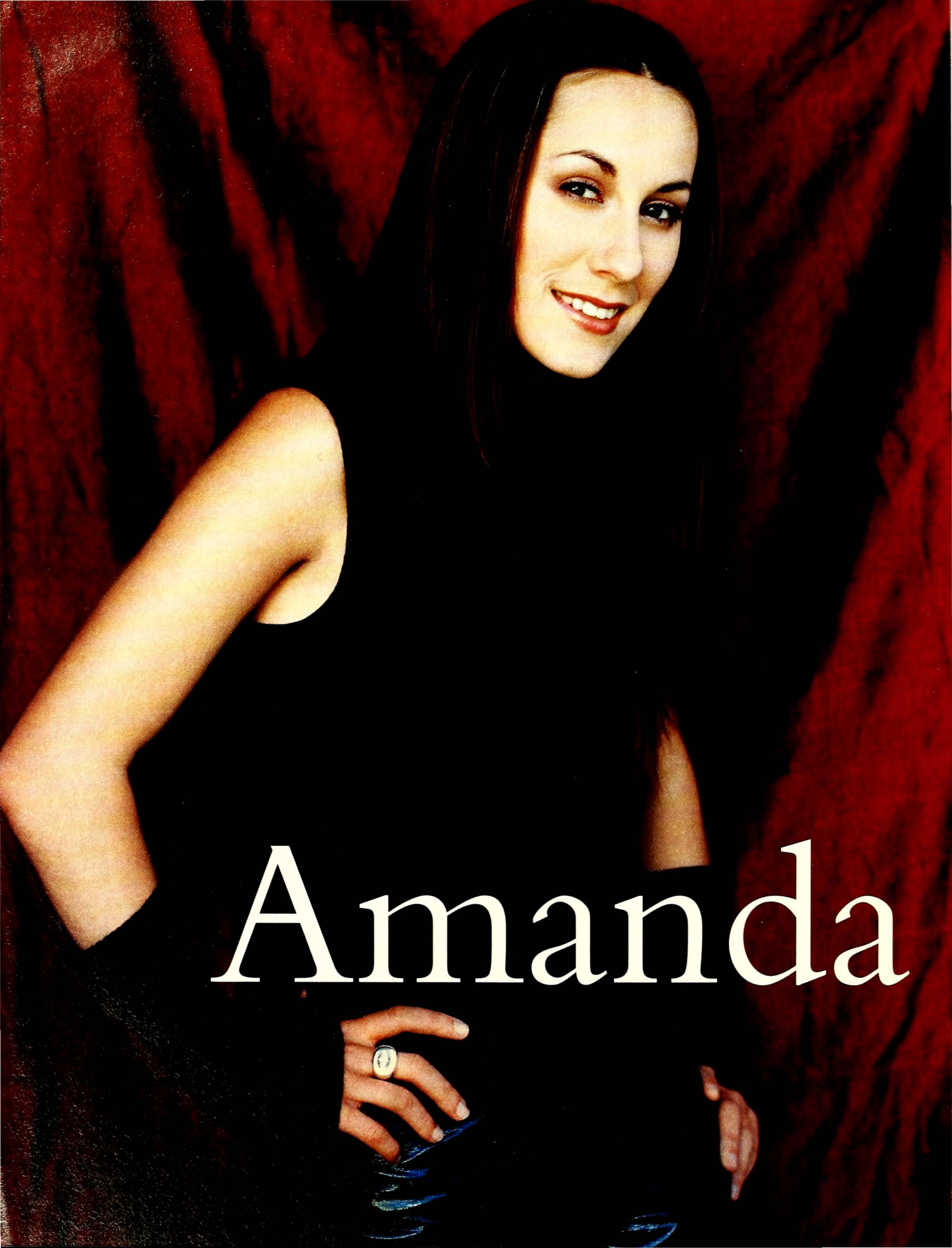


the wilkinsons



www.giantnashville.com

www.wilkinsonsonline.com



Amanda

teens in tune

Nashville, Tennessee, is known to many as "Music City USA," but the nation's "Tune Town" is also the adopted home of many young and aspiring singers and musicians, often the same ages as most FFA members. Young country music artists face special challenges and enjoy unusual rewards, but enduring success is still based on hard work, "making your

claim a lot in common with FFA members and advisors. Most identify strongly with rural America, and many took advantage of FFA and agricultural education while in public school. Johnny Staats, for example, is receiving acclaim as the world's best mandolin player. But while his recent debut on Nashville's Grand Ol' Opry fortified his fame, Johnny noted backstage that he is grateful for his studies in agricultural education.

Success the old-fashioned way

Perhaps more than any form of music, "country" has been built around strong family ties and rural traditions. One family could claim the title as the reigning

"First Family of Country Music." The Wilkinsons, virtually unknown two years ago, have received more nominations, awards and honors in two years than many artists garner in a lifetime.

Like many achievements in life, though, such acclaim comes with a price, and often starts with a good plan. "Just like a lot of jobs in agriculture," notes dad Steve Wilkinson, "our industry requires a strong work ethic. Nothing comes to you for free. We've tried to instill in our kids that rewards won't just fall into your lap. Opportunity knocks, but you've got to answer the door."

Teamwork that works

As evidenced by the family's newest CD, "*Here and Now*," the Wilkinsons strive

to write and record songs that are "honest and believable." "We cling to a belief that it's impossible to know where you're going if you don't remember where you've come from," says Steve.

Not unlike inspiring public speakers, the family is grateful for the opportunity to touch lives in a positive way through their musical messages. And, it's all done with a healthy respect for family team work. Even the two non-performing Wilkinsons, mom Chris and 10-year-old Kiaya, play important roles in the family enterprise. Kiaya recently contributed lyrics to a new song, and Chris works in all areas of management. For Amanda, 18, and Tyler, 16, mom has also taken on the crucial role of schoolteacher.

by Jeff Tennant



Tyler Wilkinson hard at work

breaks" and finding ways to survive in a very competitive industry.

Many of country music's young singers and musicians

School on the Road

"Our schedule is kind of crazy for teenagers," says Amanda, noting that most of her friends were in school during her mid-day interview with *FFA New Horizons*. Both Amanda and Tyler spent years in public school, but their musical success has required adjustment to home schooling.

"It's going well," says Tyler as his dad grins in agreement – he knows that test scores show healthy progression. "We might have to study on weekends or at night," Tyler continues, "and we don't get spring and summer vacations like a lot of kids. But, when we do schooling, it's very intense and focused with just the two of us as students. We can get a lot of work done in shorter spurts of time."

Counting the costs

Sports, dating and other extracurricular activities are generally out for Amanda and Tyler. "But I'm only 18," Amanda laughs, "so I have time for those things later. We'd like to be able to hang out more with our

friends, but our friends also get to do stuff with us that's neat – like join us on the bus, and even tour with us."

Life on the road has not prevented Steve and Chris Wilkinson from instilling in their children the values of self-discipline, modesty and responsibility. Mom and daughters find private time together, as do dad and Tyler, and all are respectful of the need to enjoy personal time away. "On the bus, you can tell when somebody's having a bad day," says Tyler. "We just let that person work it out, just like people do at home."

Familiar keys to dreams' doors

The teens are also not exempt from parental discipline, as they found out while unwinding prior to a concert schedule with famed country artist Alan Jackson. "The kids went on a church hayride one night before the tour," remembers Steve. "They got into singing around the campfire, and stayed much longer than they'd promised. They had a

phone, but they didn't call and their mother and I were worried sick. When they got back to the bus, we told them they were grounded. I remember them both saying, 'You guys can't ground us, we're going on tour with Alan Jackson.' But we did."

"Our parents have tried to teach us that hard work and discipline are necessary to achieve your goals," says Amanda, "and that's important for any person. The video we did for our newest single, 'Jimmy's Got a Girlfriend' meant 5:30 a.m. filming and long hours. But we're glad we put in the required effort."

Speaking up and sticking to it

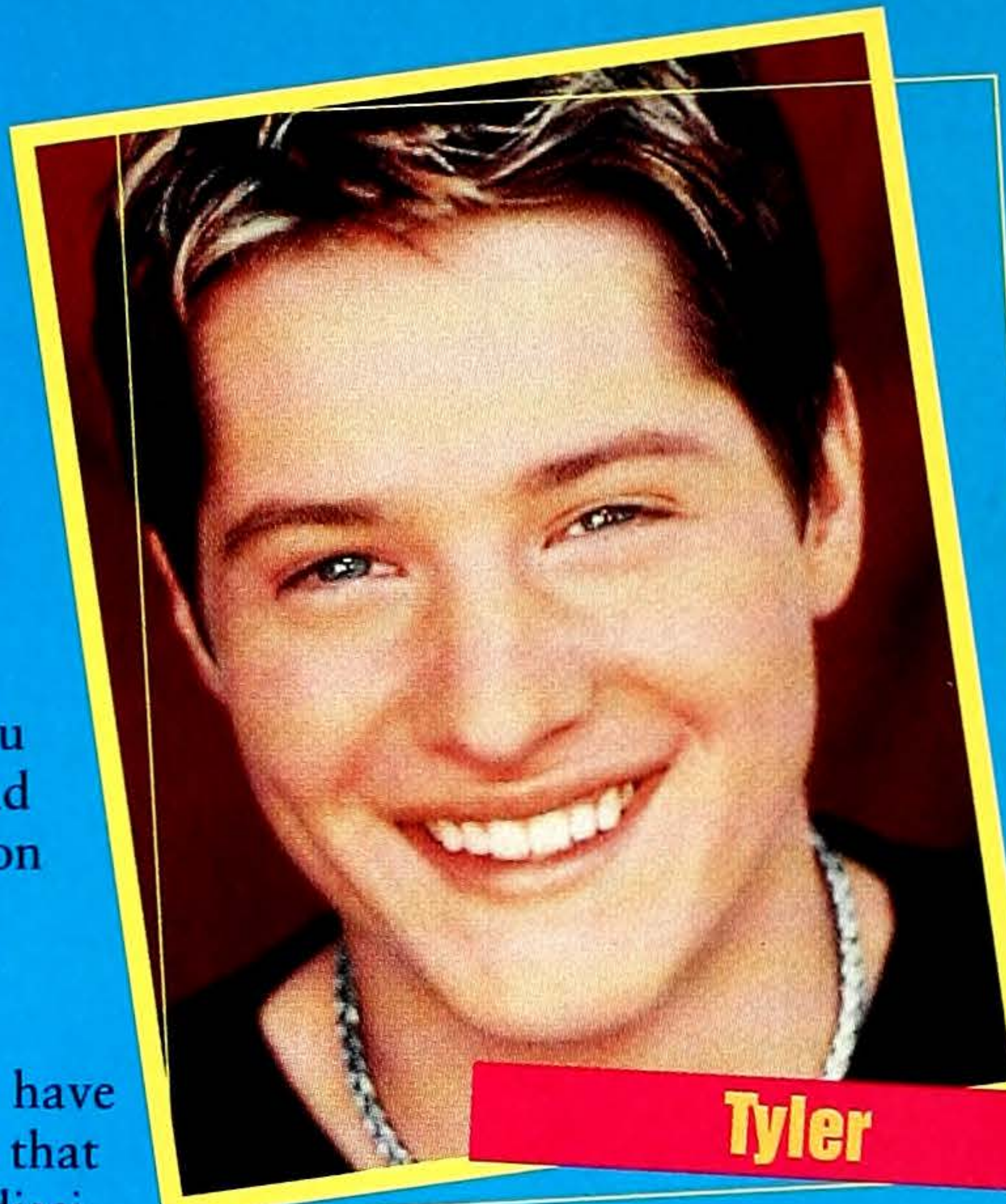
The sheer love of music is one reason why the Wilkinsons are enjoying continued success in the recording industry. And, just as many people are motivated by a

special mentor, Steve says his children have often provided strong encouragement.

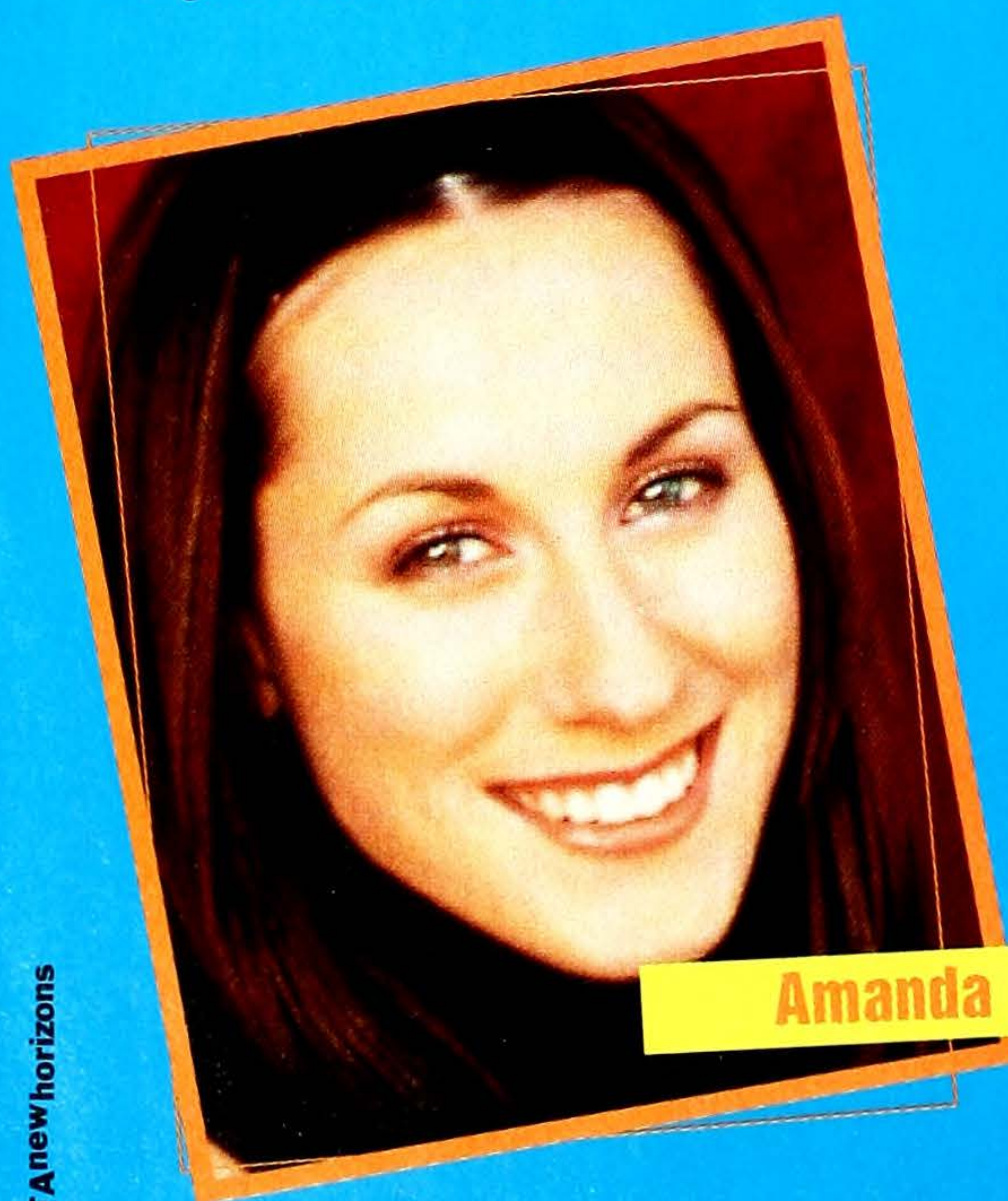
"If anybody ever dragged their feet on our musical career, it was me," Steve admits. "In 1996, some gigs fell apart for the family and the rug just seemed to be pulled from under me. I told the kids we were going to call it quits. They started crying, and both of them said, 'Dad, nobody loves quitters.'"

"After a few minutes, Amanda gave me a tremendous boost of motivation when she said, very respectfully, 'Dad, you can stop if you want to, but if I stop, I'll die.' I saw then that we all have a place and a role to play, and mine was to continue on as best I could to help my children reach their goals and dreams."

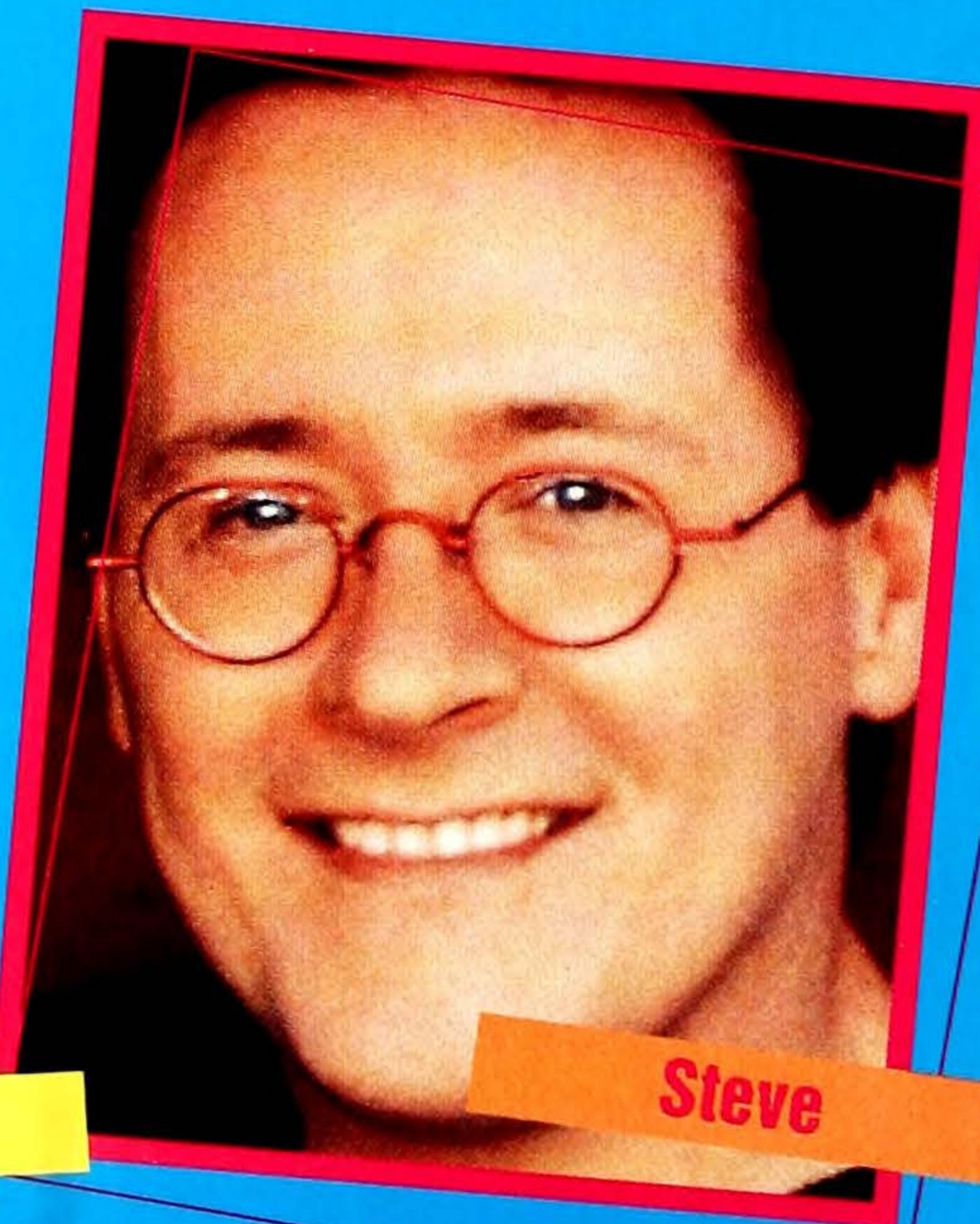
For the Wilkinsons, family experiences together strongly shape their music. Even as they change, the things that make the family special remain the same: the wonder of life, the gift of love, the joy of music and the ethic of working hard to achieve success. ★



Tyler



Amanda



Steve

Alecia Elliott, 17, keeps in tune with herself and her audience while singing her way to the top

teen singer

follows heart and soul to record deal



Since she was 8, Alecia Elliott of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, has captivated crowds with her joy of singing and entertaining.

She also noticed FFA members in her local school who believed in setting goals and trying your best. Similar ideas have all played a role in Alecia's singing career, which blossomed recently with the release of her first CD, *"I'm Diggin' It."*

"My parents have always been so cool about taking me where I want to be, which is singing somewhere," says Alecia, 17. But we all believe you must make opportunity happen. Achieving goals and progressing in life is more than just luck."

Alecia began her career by singing at an early age to crowds at state fairs, talent contests, festivals and any other events with a stage.

"I didn't always win those contests," admits Alecia, "but I always figured it was the participation that mattered. I guess I'm a good loser! Plus, I was doing what I love. I think FFA members can relate to that. The best advice I ever got was to just keep trying your best, and success will come. It truly isn't whether you win or lose, though, but what you learn in the process."

Alecia encourages FFA members and others close to her age to remain sensitive to opportunities, to expect setbacks and then to use setbacks as guiding posts for life. "We all get discouraged from time to time," Alecia says.

"When I was 14, before I got my record deal, I had pretty much given up and started getting down about it. But I just knew I was supposed to be doing something different, something more with music. Thinking like that, and the movie *'Selena,'* which is about a young singer who didn't give up, made me get up and start going back to Nashville.

"So keep your eyes and ears open to inspiration, and then follow your heart."

— by Jeff Tennant

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e-mail review



...way beyond

by Jeri Mattics



and online

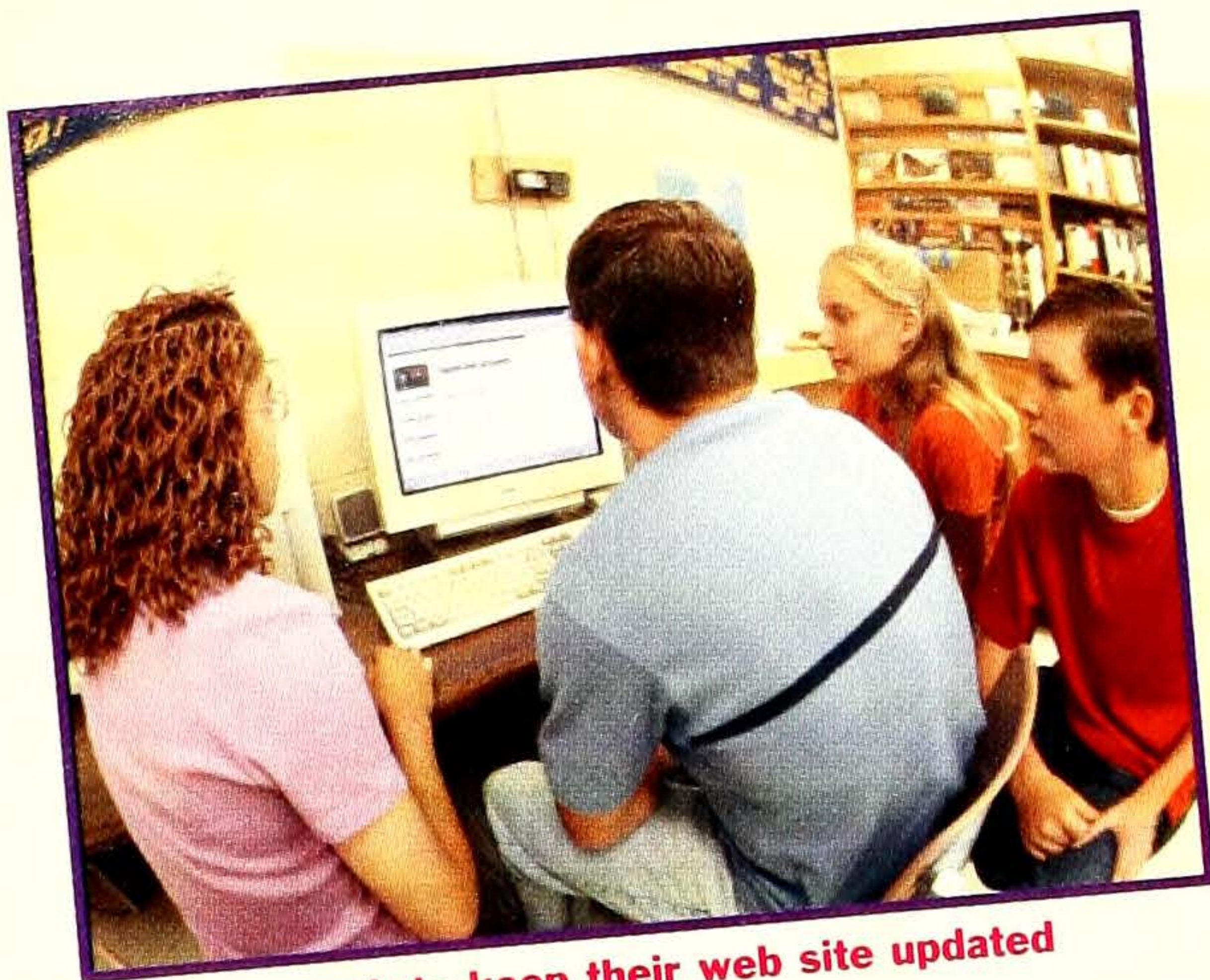


Teenagers have taken to the Internet in droves. They are heavy users of e-mail and downloadable music not to mention chat rooms and live video. But that's not the half of it. Like so many other technologies, young people have adapted to the Internet more quickly than adults and tend to be more sophisticated users. Today's FFA members not only exchange hundreds of messages daily on the FFA chat sites, but they also build

their own web sites, both for chapter and personal use, and conduct significant online research.

Kyle Christopher, a junior at Childress High School, Childress, Texas, is a prime example. He started using the Web during his freshman year to look up information, and the rest is history.

Christopher's FFA chapter completed several research projects on local wildlife and wanted to share their results. "We decided to publish the



Members work to keep their web site updated

results on a web site so that the information would be available to others," Christopher says. "I enjoy developing sites and coding information, so I volunteered to create the site. Plus, it's kind of neat to think that people from all over the world can see what we're doing and access the information."

Christopher says he got the idea while he was looking for information on another subject. "I use the Web a lot to find information," he says. "You can find practically anything you want fairly quickly. Since we use the results of other people's work, I thought it would be cool to share our results." For a look at Christopher's work, go to www.txsys.net/wildlife.

From the classroom to careers

As in other areas of industry, Internet start-up businesses are launching that are agriculturally oriented. And, many are hungry for talent. In particular, they are looking for young people who understand agriculture and the new technologies.

Rachel Fehringer, who served as a national FFA officer in 1996-97, graduated from Colorado State University last May with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business. She landed a job with VantagePoint as a mar-

keting manager. VantagePoint (www.VantagePoint.com), which launched in May, provides an in-depth online record keeping system to help farmers make better management decisions.

"Working at VantagePoint is really similar to working with my FFA chapter," Fehringer says. "We all work together as a team to get things done. We're all working to enhance this incredible tool that empowers farmers to make better decisions. With the information our users have, they will be rewarded for quality and environmentally sound practices in addition to volume. This tool will help farmers become better managers and drive the food industry toward more quality as opposed to just quantity."

Skills in demand

"Rachel is one of 17 former FFA members on our staff," says Dale Johnson, the company's director of corporate sales. "We are looking for young people with an agricultural background who have lots of people skills. We also need people who understand Web design, programming and database modeling and who have business skills."

Johnson continues, "Our ideal employee is someone who has a little bit of a technical background, computer skills and who was raised on a farm. Rachel is

one of those ideal people. Her can-do attitude and ability to be a team player are really important. Those are the skills FFA builds. As a company, we are very interested in the leadership skills FFA develops in its members."

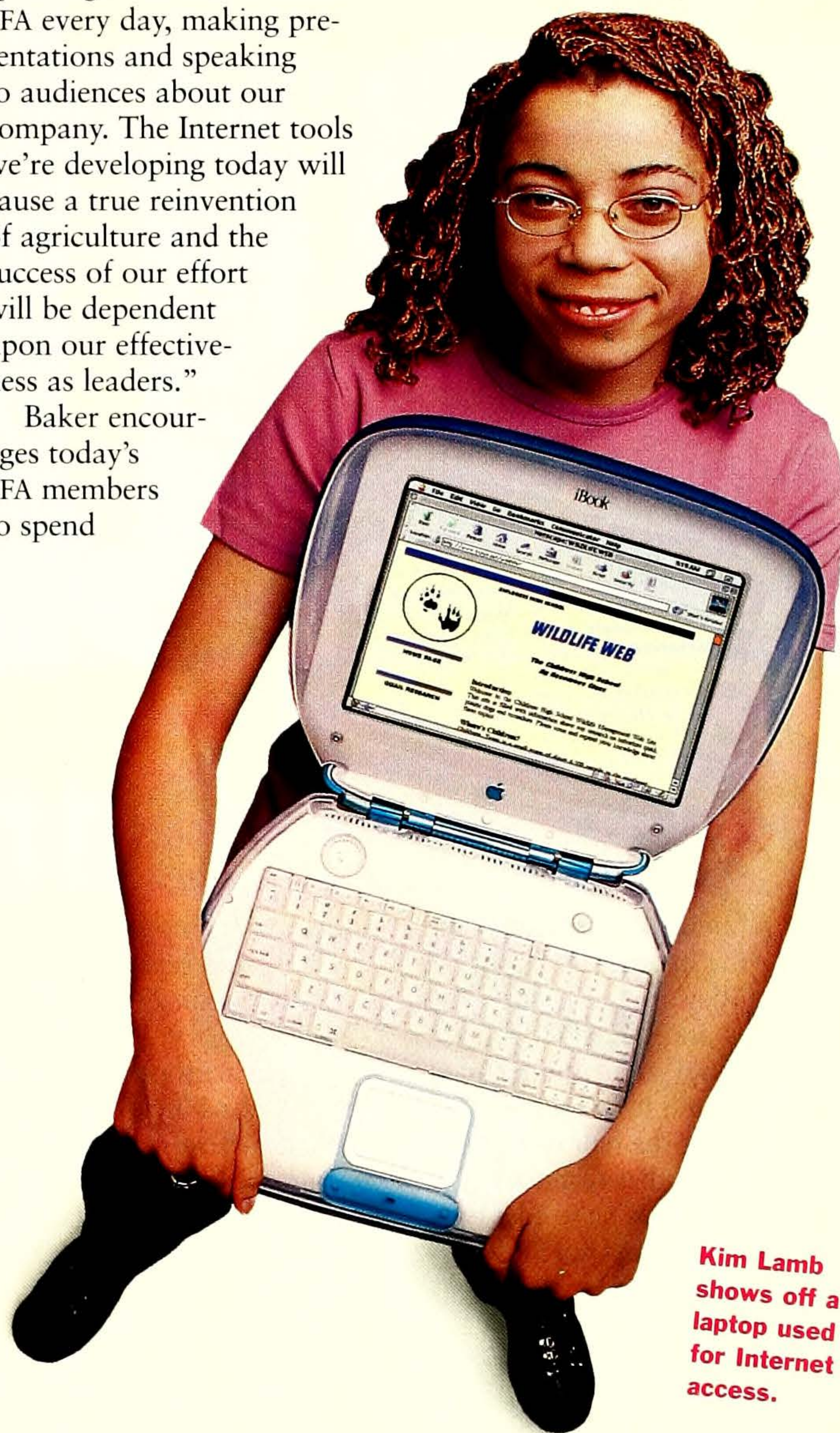
Steve Baker, vice president of business development for DirectAg.com, agrees. Baker, who once served as president of the Payson-Seymour FFA Chapter in Illinois, says, "About half of our leadership team has an FFA background. Exposure to leadership and developing those skills are very key in our business. I use the speaking skills I learned in FFA every day, making presentations and speaking to audiences about our company. The Internet tools we're developing today will cause a true reinvention of agriculture and the success of our effort will be dependent upon our effectiveness as leaders."

Baker encourages today's FFA members to spend

time surfing the Web and learning how business-to-business Internet transactions (also referred to as B2B) are changing the business world.

The outlook for today's FFA member is bright and this new industry is offering a ton of opportunities. As if that weren't enough, the leaders of this new industry are looking to today's FFA members for leadership.

"As we look at the future of our company," Johnson says, "I firmly believe it will be the next crop of students who will help us take this new type of business to the next level." ★



Kim Lamb shows off a laptop used for Internet access.

GETTING THEIR DIRT ONLINE.



The future of ag is growing online. Just ask the FFA Chapter in Taliuhina, Okla. By signing up 500 producers on DirectAg.com, they earn \$2,500 and take home the grand prize in our "E-Future of Ag" contest. That's \$7,000 travel cash to attend the national FFA convention in Louisville, Ky.

A big thanks to all the FFA chapters that participated in showing thousands of producers how the Internet is a powerful new tool in ag. Click onto DirectAg.com today to shop, buy and finance top ag brands online, plus get the latest news, weather and ag dirt 24/7.

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body & soul

reaching out with helping hands

by Jeri Mattics

You may have seen studies that reveal how rural teens abuse drugs and alcohol as much or more as their counterparts in urban environments.

FFA members in Spencer County, Kentucky, are fighting against substance abuse. The chapter hosts a drug and alcohol prevention assembly, bringing in a guest speaker and orchestrating activities before and after the gathering. "We work with a retired police officer who comes in and presents an assembly on drug and alcohol abuse to the whole student body," says Chad Thompson, Spencer County FFA Chapter president. "It's a very powerful presentation. He seems to influence a lot of students by helping them realize the consequences of their actions."

Members work hard to promote the assembly and other chapter drug-awareness efforts. They prepare news

articles, sponsor a poster contest, coordinate a graduation-night celebration and run a peer-mentoring program.

"Project Graduation" is another cornerstone in the chapter's plan of attack. The event occurs in conjunction with graduation, and "is basically a lock-in that starts at midnight," explains Chad. "Each senior is allowed to bring a guest and we plan a bunch of activities — basketball, volleyball and other games. Area businesses contribute and each senior will win between \$100 and \$1,000. By providing activities and incentives, we attract a good crowd and keep people out of accidents and mishaps on graduation night."

Volunteering your time to promote drug abuse awareness could change someone's life "for good." ★

Consider contacting your principal, guidance counselor or local social services agency for more information.

drugs in rural america

A newly released study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, based primarily on 1999 data, contains sobering news for many in rural America. The study found that eighth-graders in rural America are 104% likelier than those in urban centers to use amphetamines, including methamphetamines (meth).

The study also reported that rural eighth-graders were 83% likelier to use crack cocaine, and 34% likelier to smoke marijuana than their urban counterparts. In addition, the study found that rural youth were 70% likelier to have gotten drunk and 29% likelier to drink alcohol. Rural students were also more than twice as likely to smoke cigarettes and nearly five times likelier to use smokeless tobacco.

Clearly, drug and alcohol awareness and prevention is needed in rural areas. You and your chapter could lead the way in your school and community. Will you accept the challenge to make a difference?

did you know

More and more drug manufacturers are setting up shop in abandoned farm buildings in remote locations to produce "meth," a highly addictive, mind-altering drug. The manufacturers are drawn to remote locations for several reasons. First, the acrid odor the process produces is much more easily detected in populated areas. Next, drug makers want easy access to anhydrous ammonia, which is a significant component in the process.

What can you do? Be on the lookout for suspicious activity in your area, particularly near anhydrous tanks. If you see someone or something suspicious, call the authorities immediately. Do not try to deal with the situation yourself. Many who produce the drug also use it, and may be extremely volatile and dangerous.

You can learn more about drug and alcohol prevention, and the negative impact these substances can have on your body and mind, on the National FFA web site.

Click on
www.ffa.org/activities/healthy/body.html
for details.

The site also contains many helpful links regarding drug and alcohol abuse, and prevention information.

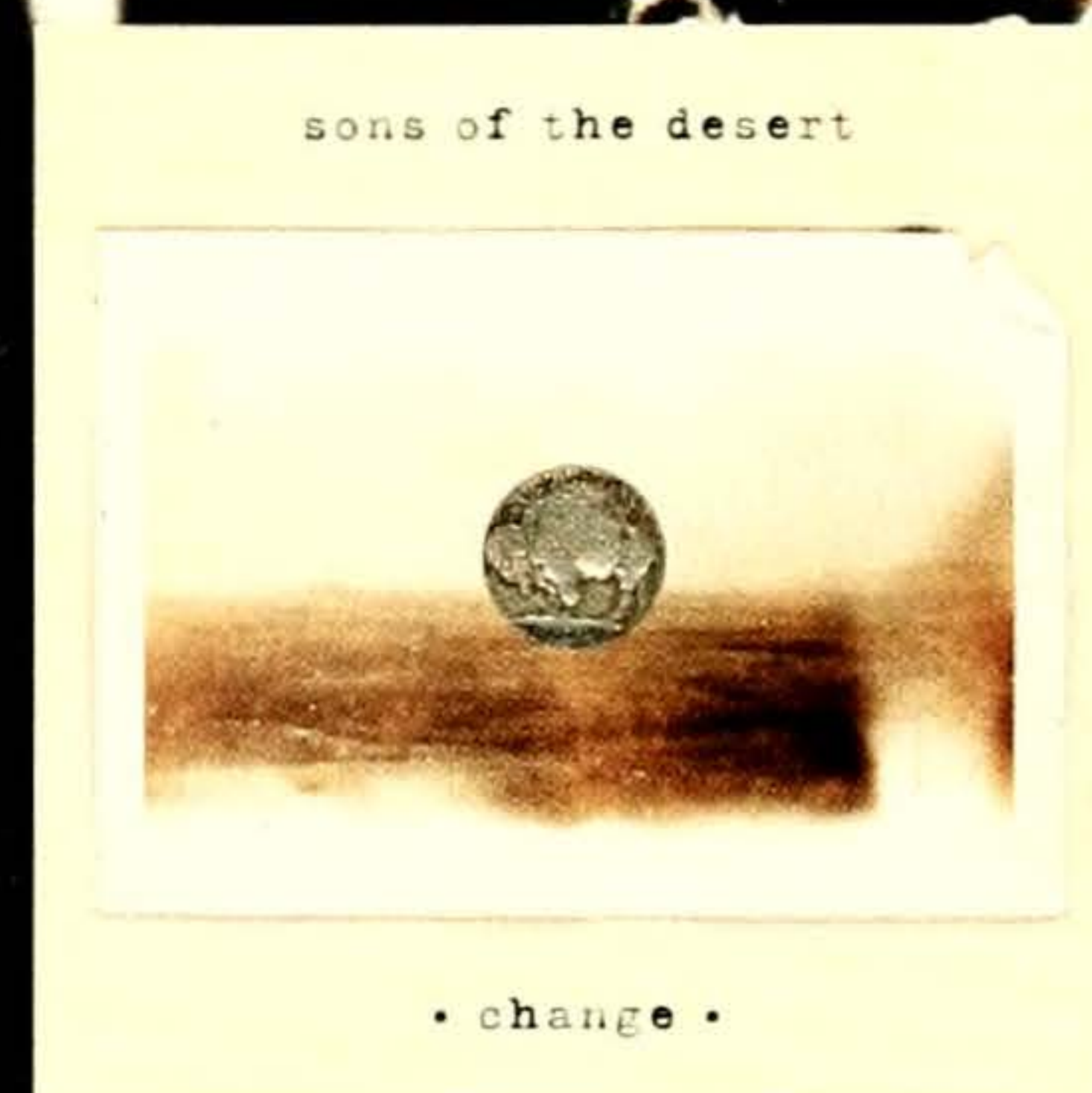
sons of the desert



change is good

"change"

The new album from the Sons Of The Desert featuring the hits "Change" and "Everybody's Gotta Grow Up Sometime".



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"Trout" obeys for Executive Director Jill Felice of Assistance Dogs of the West.



Plenty of jobs and rewarding opportunities await those willing to muster and master their caregiving skills

Small animal careers

By Chris Hayhurst

Wild Jobs with Tame Animals

Sure, you could always become a veterinarian, groomer, dog trainer or kennel worker, but there are tons of other small animal jobs out there, too. Here are a few professions you probably never considered:

Pet sitter

Search-and-rescue dog trainer

Wildlife biologist

Zoologist

Laboratory animal caretaker

Pet psychiatrist

Five-thirty in the morning is, for most teens, one of two things: a time for deep sleeping or a time to rise and greet the new day. Some drift in and out of dreams. Others do battle with blaring alarms. Still others wake peacefully, enjoying the sunrise or the scent of brewing coffee.

For Karen Thorpe, however, the predawn hour is devoted to dogs.

"There are seven," says Thorpe, a professional dog trainer with Assistance Dogs of the West, a nonprofit organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Thorpe and her colleagues train dogs to help physically and emotionally disabled people.

Not unlike the humans who train them, or the people they serve, the seven dogs here are special. One lucky Labrador sleeps on her bed. The rest fight for floor space nearby.

"The way we do things might seem a little crazy," says Thorpe, "but I'm used to it."

First the dogs are let out. Then, an hour or so later, breakfast is served: seven bowls, seven piles of food. Finally, when they're through eating, it's time for work. "If I leave the bathroom door open, they have to push it shut for me," says Thorpe. "If I drop the keys, it's their job to pick them up. They're constantly learning."

Career field booming

Even if your pet doesn't open doors or fetch your car keys, animals are a major part of modern, everyday life. Cats, gerbils, birds and fish are all kept as pets. Mice and rabbits are invaluable in the scientific community. The sound of barking dogs is common in almost any neighborhood. It should come as no surprise, then, that careers in animal care—everything from working as a veterinary assistant to pet sitting—are flourishing.

"There are tons of jobs out there," says Jerilee Zezula, an associate professor of

applied animal science, and the coordinator of the small animal care program at New Hampshire's Thompson School of Applied Sciences. "Groomers are looking for people left and right. The boarding kennel industry is going crazy."

Still, just because the jobs are there doesn't mean they're easy to get. "You've got to be willing to get in there and work," says Zezula. "And if you want to move up the ladder, you have to be able to think and reason."

Competition is keen, especially for positions that demand experience. While some jobs require little more than a high school diploma and a willingness to work, others are offered only to those with proper schooling or, in some cases, certification from professional organizations. And, to make matters more difficult, compensation is often low considering the amount of time and effort required, and working conditions can be



Professional trainer Karen Thorpe teaches animals to perform household tasks.



noisy, dirty and physically demanding.

"That's the problem with animal jobs," says Zezula, who is also a veterinarian. "A lot of people want to work in the field because they love animals, but they have no idea what they're getting into."

Steps to success

So what does it take to succeed? According to Nancy Peterson, an ex-veterinary technician, one-time dog trainer and the current animal-careers expert at the Humane Society of the United States, preparation begins in school. Courses in animal science are helpful, as is biology. If you think you may want to run your own business, a background in mathematics and communications can't hurt.

Practical experience

can be invaluable. If you have the opportunity, try volunteering or, even better, working as a paid apprentice. Then again, if science isn't your thing or hands-on animal work sounds too hairy, consider becoming a lawyer, accountant, receptionist or other professional and offering your skills to an animal-related business or organization that needs them.

Most of all, however, the key to a career in animal care, whether it be as a trainer of search-and-rescue dogs, a breeder or a pet-store employee, is remembering just what attracts you to the field in the first place. "It's a very rewarding job," Thorpe explains after a long day at work, her canine trainees asleep near her feet. "Nothing is ever the same." ★

Animal
acupuncturist

Animal
anatomy
teacher

Animal
massage
therapist

Animal
nutritionist

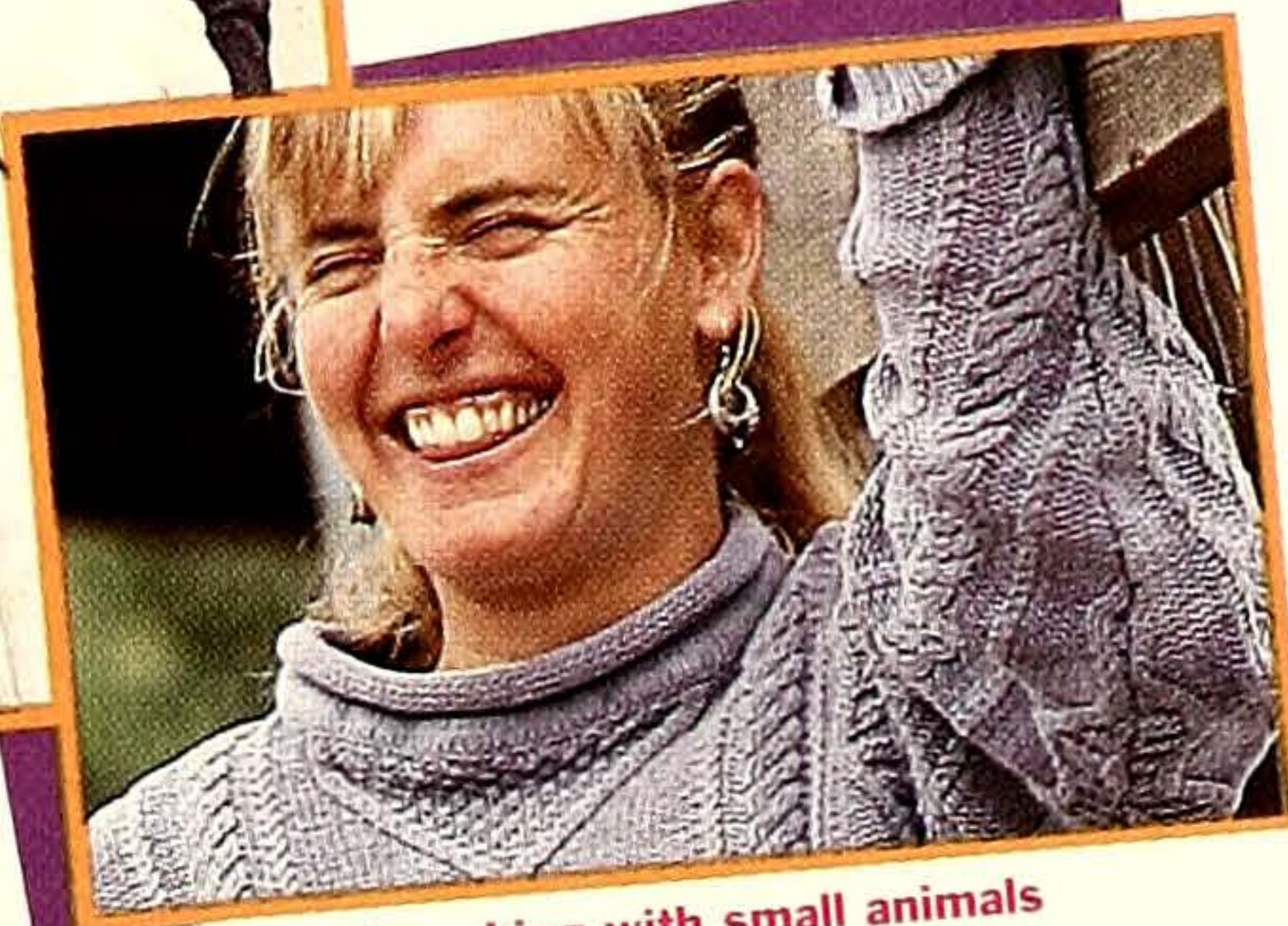
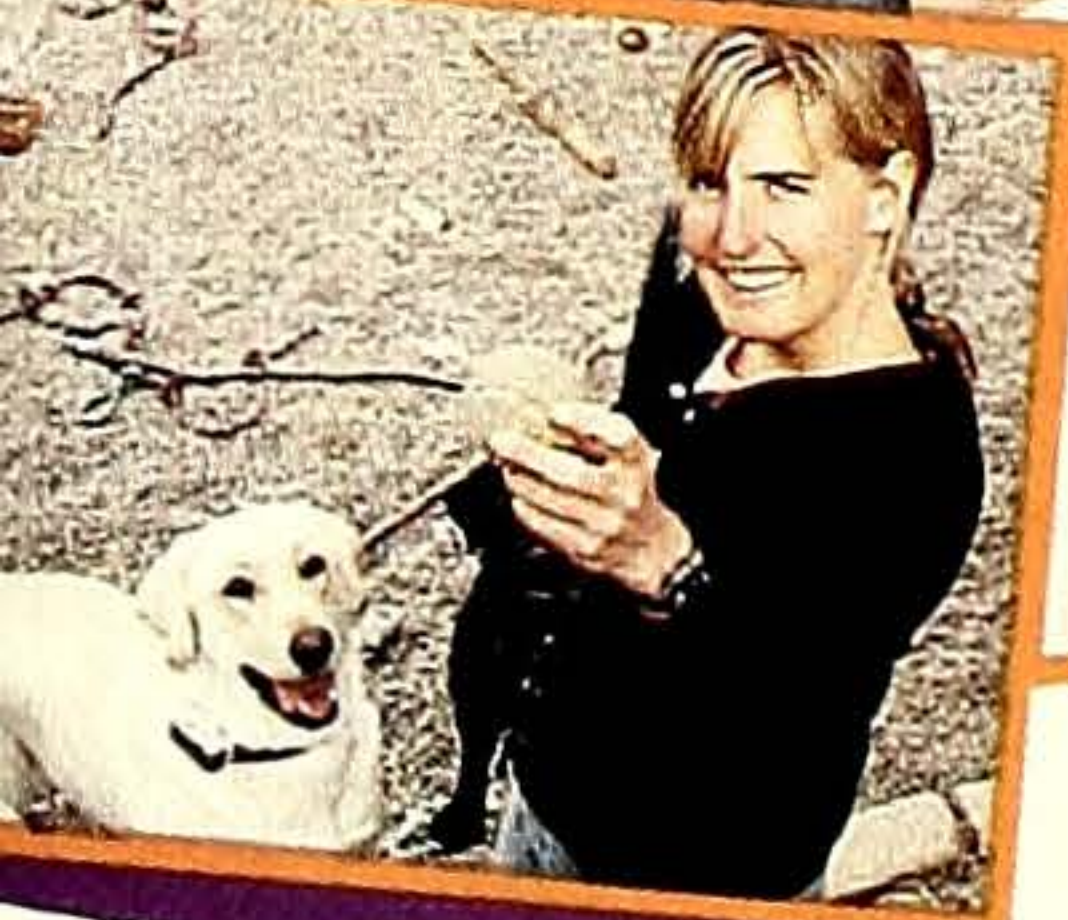
Animal
welfare
lawyer

Zoologist

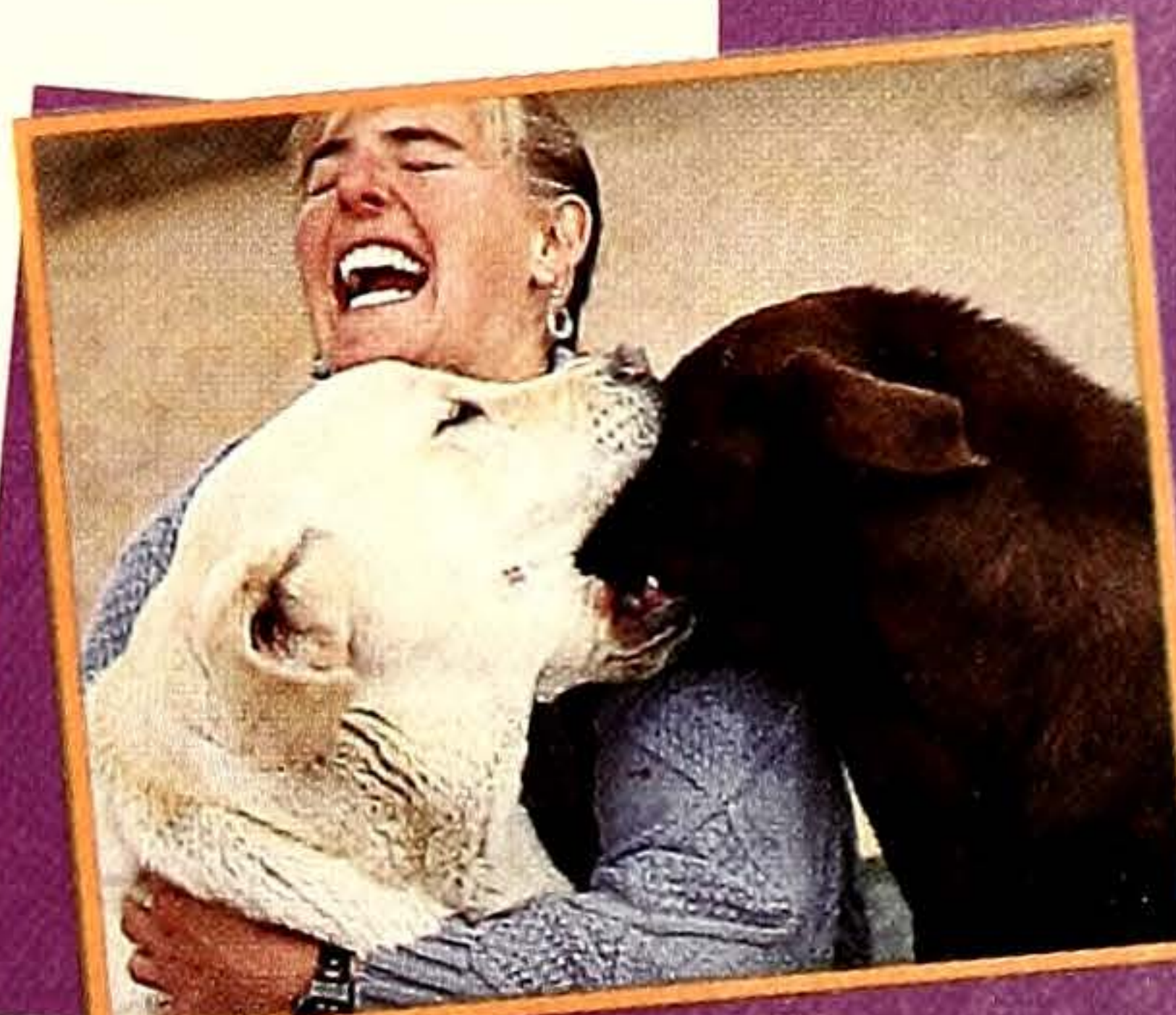
Job Search

The following organizations are great sources of information on all kinds of small animal careers.

- American Animal Hospital Association, 800/883-6301, www.healthypet.com
- American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, 901/754-8620, www.aalas.org
- American Boarding Kennels Association, 719/591-1113, www.abka.com
- American Veterinary Medical Association, 847/925-8070, www.avma.org
- Assistance Dogs International, 610/869-4902, www.assistance-dogs-intl.org
- Association of Pet Dog Trainers, 800/738-3647, www.apdt.com
- Delta Society, 800/869-6898, www.deltasociety.org
- The Humane Society of the United States, 202/452-1100, www.hsus.org
- National Animal Control Association, 800/828-6474, www.netplace.net/naca
- National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, www.nadoi.org
- National Association of Professional Pet Sitters, 202/393-3317, www.petsitters.org
- National Dog Groomers Association of America, 724/962-2711, www.nauticom.net/www/ndga
- North American Veterinary Technician Association, 765/742-2216, www.avma.org/navta
- Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, 800/553-7387, www.pijac.org



Rewards of working with small animals go beyond wages.



Tips on managing your cash

your money

making cents out of summer

By Chris Hayhurst

Summer, some say, is the sweetest of seasons. And with long days, lots of sunshine and no school for many, who would argue otherwise? But if you're like many high school students, summertime spells more than countless hours spent soaking in the rays or hanging out with friends. Unless you've found a way to make money grow on trees, your summer "vacation" likely includes a four-letter word: work.

Holding down a job, of course, doesn't mean the end of summer fun. In fact, a little hard work is a good idea for several reasons. For one, you'll get your first taste of what it's like to make your own money. You can use the cash you earn to pay off bills, save for college or buy things you "need" like movie tickets, clothing, computer accessories or a car. Second, if you play your cards right, you might find your work experience to be the perfect stepping stone toward a

better job the following summer or even a future career. If you like animals, for example, see if you can land a position as a kennel helper with a veterinarian (and see our feature on careers in animal care).

If you've already bagged the job of your dreams, you're a step ahead of the game. If not, however, it's time to get in gear. "There is a job out there to fit almost any personality," says Marshall Brain, author of "The Teenager's Guide to the Real World." "The important thing is to recognize that you do have options."

In determining your options, it's a good idea to assess your situation and the reasons you need a job in the first place. "Do you need to make \$3,000 because that's the only way you'll be able to afford college?" asks Brain. "Or is money not an issue?" If how much money you pocket is not high on your list of priorities, consider an unpaid internship with a local business or volunteering at a hospital or homeless shelter. "You won't make any money," says Brain, "but the experience can be invaluable."

the job hunt

Consider asking your agricultural education teacher about job opportunities on nearby farms or work with local businesses.

Once you've determined your goals, it's time to pound the pavement. Before school lets out, do your job-hunting homework:

Try flipping through the phone book for interesting businesses that may need help. Once you've compiled a respectable list, start making calls.

Check out the classifieds section of your local newspaper.

If you have access to a computer, jump on-line and give "Net-working" a shot. Sites like:

www.campjobs.com

www.coolworks.com

www.summerjobs.com

www.quintcareers.com

are great all-around resources and post thousands of jobs available nationwide.

Finally, don't forget to keep an open mind as you look. You could work in a restaurant, a retail store or an amusement park. If you're certified in CPR and first aid, you could also work as a lifeguard (call your local American Red Cross) or a camp counselor.

Once you've found a job, remember that not every dollar you make this summer will necessarily end up in your pocket. You may have to pay taxes. Contact the Internal Revenue Service for more information — www.irs.gov or 800-829-1040.

be your own boss

If you're really ambitious, consider running your own small business this summer. A little creativity and some solid plans are all it takes. "Figure out what people in your area want or need, then put together a plan," recommends Kevin Keith, manager of the national FFA Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards program. The Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards program is sponsored by the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The program offers cash prizes ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 for FFA members who come up with one-of-a-kind business plans.

Once you have a plan, you'll have to get to work. But don't forget, just because you're your own boss doesn't mean that your summer job will be a breeze. Hard work almost always comes with the territory.

For information on how to start your own business, as well as all the details on the Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards program, check out the program's Web site at www.ffa.org/activities/index.html (click on "Ag-Entrepreneurship") or call 317/802-4254.

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Many thanks to the Tamales, California, FFA Chapter for sending in the most survey forms. As you can see, the movie "Titanic" is history, Drew rules and Leo cools.

hot american pie **not** titanic
movie

hot drew barrymore **not** christina ricci
female actor

hot freddie prinze, jr. **not** leonardo dicaprio
actor

hot yahoo **not** amazon
web site

hot malcolm in the middle **not** seinfeld
tv show

hot veterinarian **not** fast food worker
career

hot shania twain **not** garth brooks
country artist

hot dmX **not** puff daddy
rap artist

hot limp bizkit **not** bush
rock artist

Editors note: Thanks to Jennifer Skrzypczynski, 17, of Carol Stream, Illinois, for her fine work in reading all of the surveys and tallying the results.

Here's our first "themed" Hot-Not Survey! And it's all about that wonderful, exciting, sometimes frustrating but always interesting world of **dating**. Don't worry if you aren't dating yet — tell us what big sis or brother does, or what you'll do when your time comes. So grab those pens and fill us in. Results next issue.

what's hot

Summer destination _____

Winter destination _____

Main activity _____

Place to hang out _____

Dance music _____

Type of party _____

Kind of clothes _____

Kind of movie _____

Type of restaurant _____

Kind of perfume _____

Kind of cologne _____

what's not

Summer destination _____

Winter destination _____

Main activity _____

Place to hang out _____

Dance music _____

Type of party _____

Kind of clothes _____

Kind of movie _____

Type of restaurant _____

Kind of perfume _____

Kind of cologne _____

send your
picks to:

FFA New Horizons
What's Hot
P.O. Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN
46268-0960

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

State _____

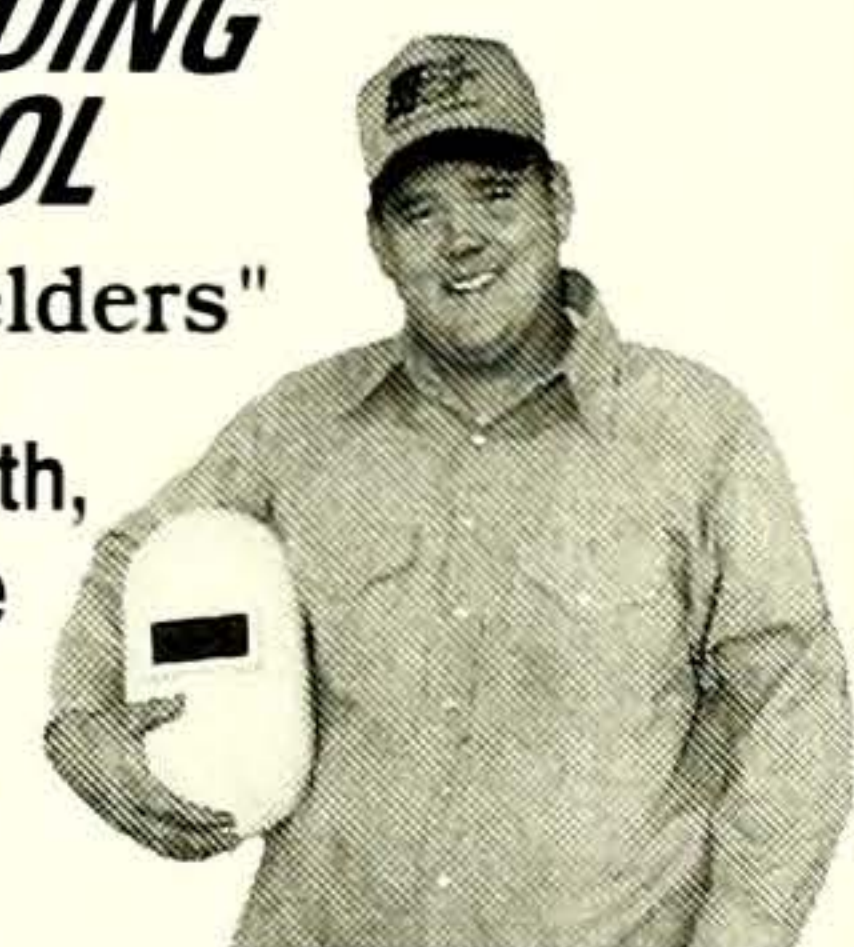
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FFA-Talihina, OK

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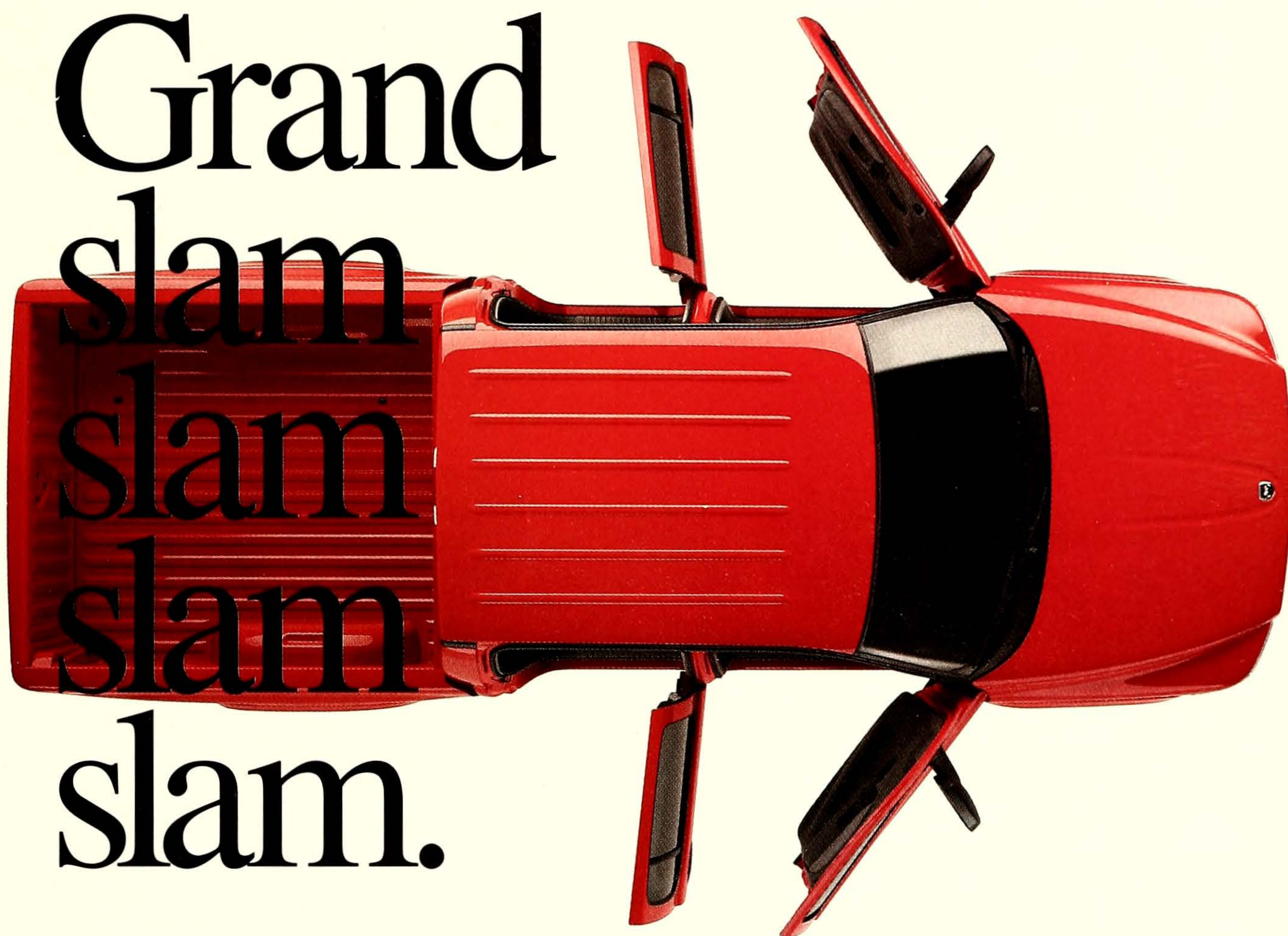
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Last Laff

Q: Why did the girl mushroom go out with the boy mushroom?

A: Because he was a fun-guy.

Jerry Downen
Altus, Oklahoma

Q: What do you say to Butch, Jimmy and Joe on a date?

A: Butch your arms around me, Jimmy a kiss, or I'll Joe home!

Melissa O'Shaughnessy
Monroeville, Indiana

Q: What kind of pants do ghosts wear?

A: Boo jeans.

Jeremy Littlejohn
Lafayette, Georgia

Q: What do you have when you have 100 female pigs and 100 male deer?

A: 100 sows-'n-bucks

Nick Rodina
Ottawa, Kansas

Q: Why do cows wear bells?

A: Because their horns don't work!

Stephen Kessler
Sanger, Texas

Q: What happened to the egg at school?

A: He got eggspelled.

Casey Rendon
Fullerton, California

Q: How does a poultry farmer know when it's cold out?

A: When a turkey walks around with a capon.

Natalie Macewko
Coventry, Connecticut

Q: Why do elephants have trunks?

A: Because they don't have glove compartments.

Jeremy Dankert
Reedsburg, Wisconsin

Q: Which side of the chicken has the most feathers?

A: The outside.

Josh Stryker
Gambier, Ohio

Q: If two wrongs don't make a right, then what does two rights make?

A: An airplane (Wright Brothers).

Jody Hart
Bell, Florida

Q: What sound might you hear if you threw a piano down a mine shaft?

A: A flat miner.

Fred Wiegand
Secor, Illinois

Q: How do you make anti-freeze?

A: Steal her blanket.

Jake Gerst
Grand Rapids, Michigan

FFA New Horizons will pay \$5 for each joke selected for Last Laff. In case we receive more than one of the same joke, payment will be for the first one received. Contributions cannot be acknowledged or returned.

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