

OCTOBER 2004

ffa *new horizons*



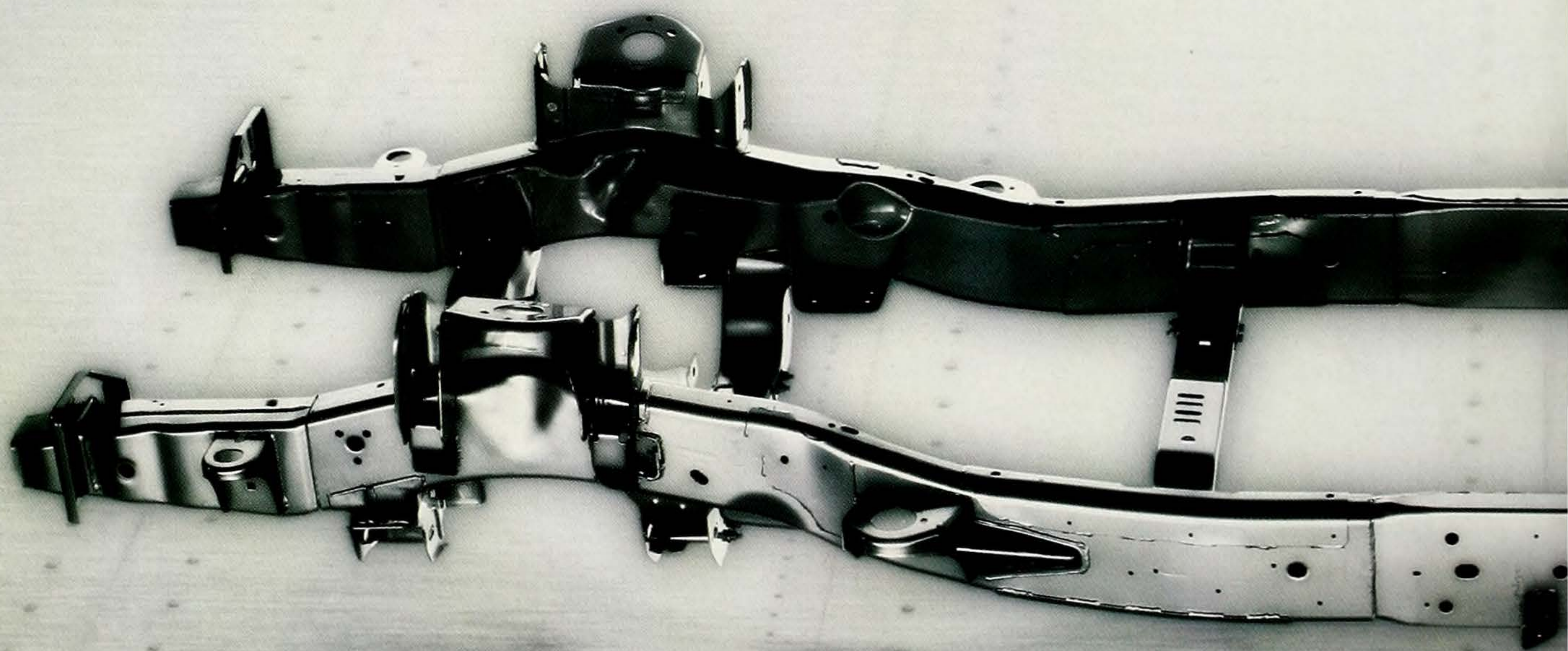
THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION



Keeping the Machinery Moving

Michael Brooks finds success through hard work, innovation and creative thinking

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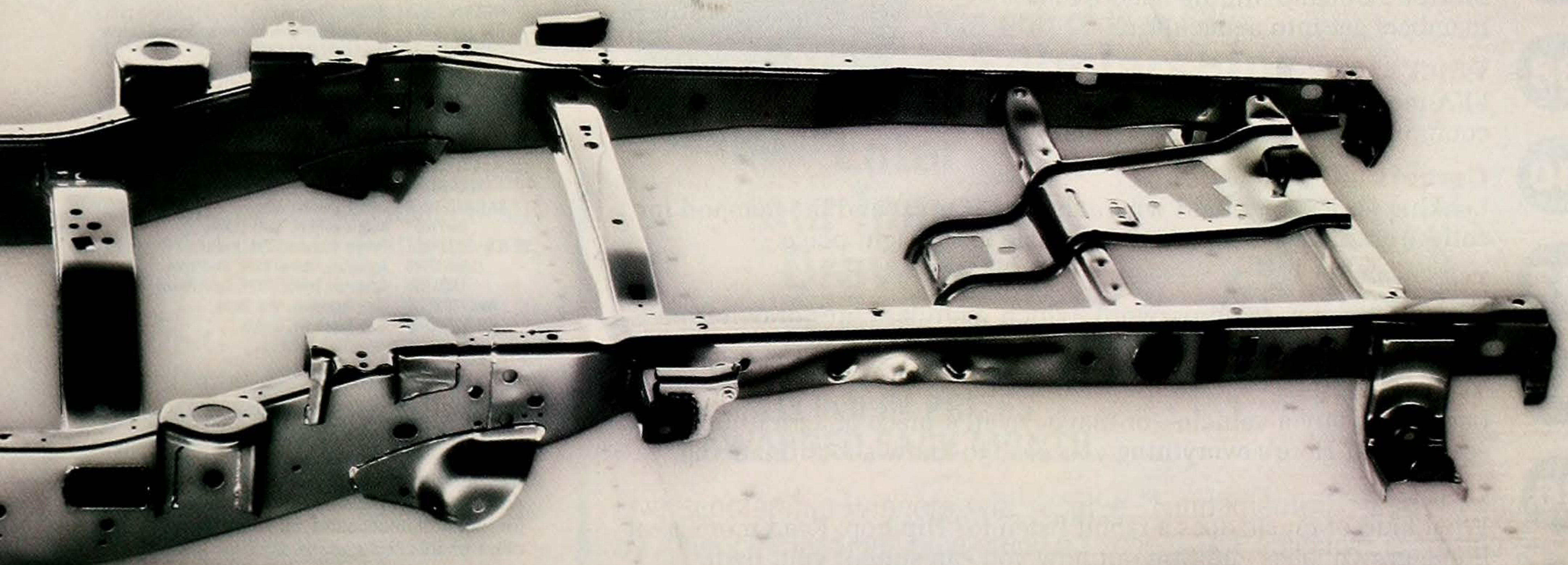


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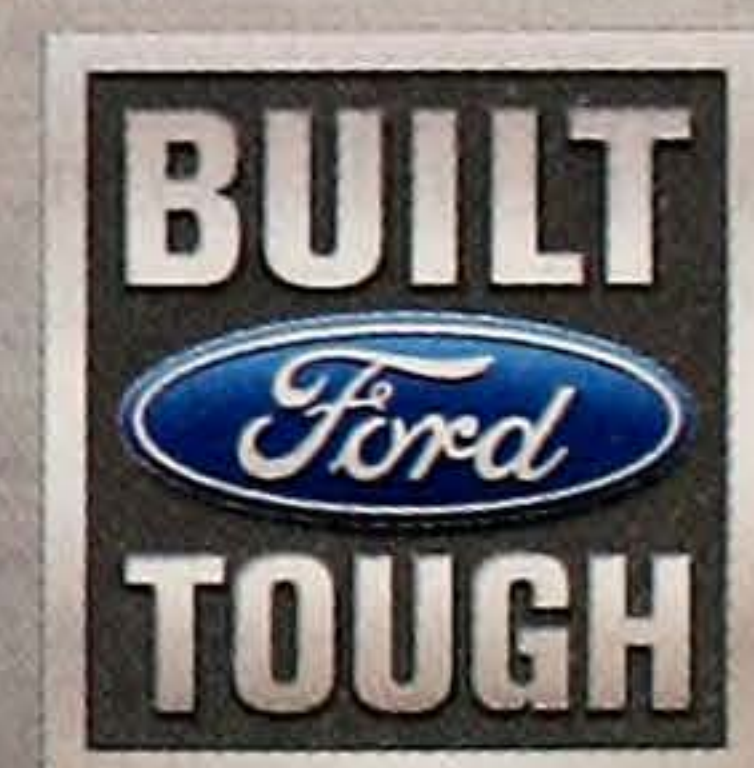
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What kind of music does a rabbit listen to? Hip hop. Read more great home-grown jokes and find out how you can submit your own.

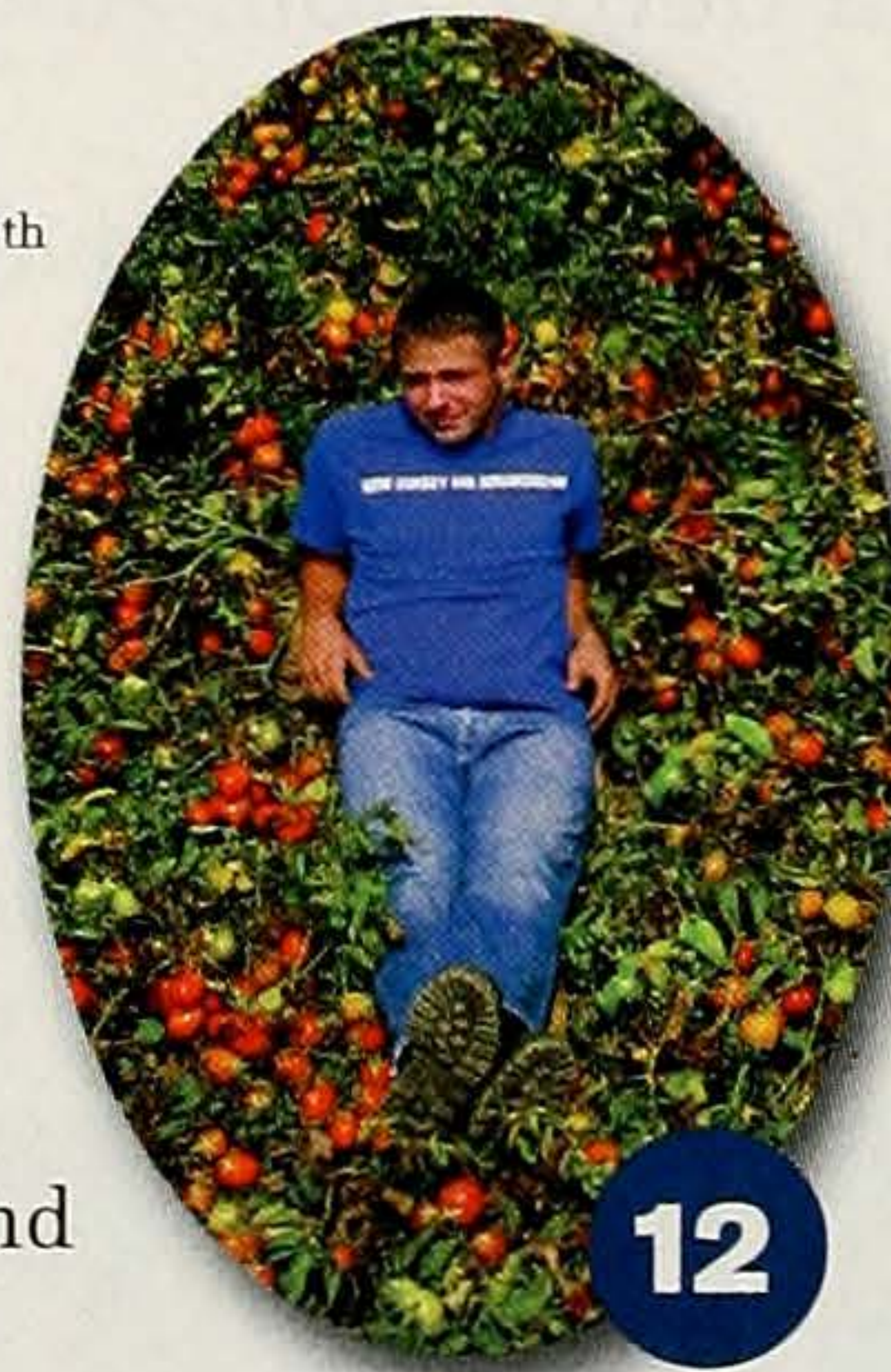
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FFA Across the USA

See what's happening in FFA chapters across the nation. Who knows? Maybe you'll get new ideas you can use in your own FFA chapter.

COVER

Michael Brooks, a 2003 National Star Farmer finalist, demonstrates his computerized sorter, which removes yellow and green tomatoes from the harvest. Since the processing plant only pays him for red tomatoes, the machine pays for itself. *Photos by Christopher Farber*



Jacket Renovation

The FFA jacket returns to its original colors and details

The National FFA Organization, with support from the board of directors, has started a three-year process that will both improve the quality of FFA jackets and lower the price. Here is what has happened so far, and what's to come during the next year:

FALL 2003:

The official FFA jacket price dropped to \$45. Sacrificing quality was not an option in lowering the price, so a portion of jackets is now completed overseas, which allows FFA to sell the jackets to members for less. At the same time, the jackets will have more stitches per inch and better trimming and detailing. The fabric is still made from American cotton and is dyed and finished in North Carolina. From there, it's shipped to factories in Ohio and South Vietnam, where the jackets are cut and sewn and emblems attached. All lettering and embroidering is done in Ohio. Even the jackets assembled in South Vietnam are shipped there for the final touches. The option to request a domestically assembled jacket is available at an additional charge of \$10.

SPRING 2004:

The official FFA emblem on the jacket was restored to the original color and design. The original elements on the jacket's front and back have gradually been altered over the years. So, when the contract for producing the emblem came up for bid in 2003, suppliers were asked to restore the design and color of the original emblems. Manufacturing of the new emblem began in the fall of 2003.

FALL 2004:

The official FFA jacket color goes back to National Blue. The jacket color has ranged from blue to purple through the years. We worked with our fabric supplier to set a new stan-

dard for the blue corduroy. The color was selected based on samples from the archive of jackets at Universal Lettering, the company responsible for the jackets' embroidery. The first fabric was dyed in the spring of 2004.

FALL 2005:

It's been more than 15 years since the jacket patterns have been updated. To address this issue, FFA hired the Clemson Apparel Research Center at Clemson University to create new patterns that will fit today's students more appropriately. These jackets are currently being developed with the help of members from several South Carolina FFA chapters. Samples of the new jacket will be available for FFA

members to try on at this year's national FFA convention.

FALL 2005:

Jacket styling details to be restored. Along with changes to the fit of the jackets, FFA will be reintroducing some of the early details, such as the double-needle welt stitching originally used on the side seams, underarms, sleeves and shoulders. Bringing back key elements will result in more durable, higher-quality jackets with increased wear-ability. The outer appearance of the jacket will remain the same. The jackets featuring the improved fit will also feature the updated details, and will begin shipping in August 2005. ●

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FFA Talk

What's on your mind?

YOUR LETTERS

It is with great interest that I read your article, "Idea Exchange" in the June 2004 issue. I have a great interest in the former republics of the Soviet Union, after having some contact with citizens of Ukraine through some work of our church. Our family has hosted 37 foreign exchange students over the years. A good many of them came to our farm through the FFA Work Experience Abroad program. Our daughter Paulette was an exchange student to Europe twice, once through the FFA program, and our oldest daughter Gwendolyn was an exchange student on a Swedish farm. At present, Paulette is the president of the local FFA alumni and a member of the Wisconsin FFA Alumni. Gwendolyn is a former president of the Minnesota FFA Alumni and I am a lifetime member.

Vernon Kressin
Bloomer, Wisconsin

Thank you so much for helping me out in my dream job with your career section on Agronomy [June issue]. It's good to know that I will benefit from something I love to do. Now entering college, I can learn about what I love



and not be made fun of every time I tell people why I like the FFA so much. I found myself when I found the FFA and knew that I needed to stop running away from who I really was (a farmer's daughter) and embrace what I was good at. Agronomy, the study of plants, is what makes me happy and I know no one can take that away. Thanks for helping this farm girl with a stepping stone in life.

Kelsey Benson
Blackfoot, Idaho

Show us your sign

Is there an FFA emblem painted on your neighbor's barn? Or outside your school? Or maybe there's a sign that says "FFA" on the highway just outside of town. Wherever it happens to be, we want to see it. Snap a photo and send it to us at the address at the bottom of this page. We'll feature one photo per issue.



This sign comes from California's Petaluma FFA Chapter, chartered back in 1928. "Known as the wrist wrestling and chicken capitals of the world, Petaluma has a population of 56,000, but agriculture is still thriving here in the heart of wine country," writes chapter reporter Kasey Carli. This sign is just south of town on Highway 101.

The BIG question:

What is your dream job?

Here is your chance to respond to an FFA- or agriculture-related question. We'll print some of your answers in future issues. For our next issue, we want to know—in 50 words or less—your answer to this question: What is your favorite FFA career development event (CDE) and why? Send your responses to the address at the bottom of this page.

Here are responses to last issue's BIG question: What is your dream job?

My dream job is to become an ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) officer, to protect animals and their rights.

Carrie Jo Buzard
Falls of Rough, Kentucky

My dream job would be a landscape designer because I really enjoy the outdoors.

Jessica Moody
Sanford, North Carolina

My dream job is to be a veterinarian, because I love animals and I love to be around them.

April Perdue
Franklin County, Virginia

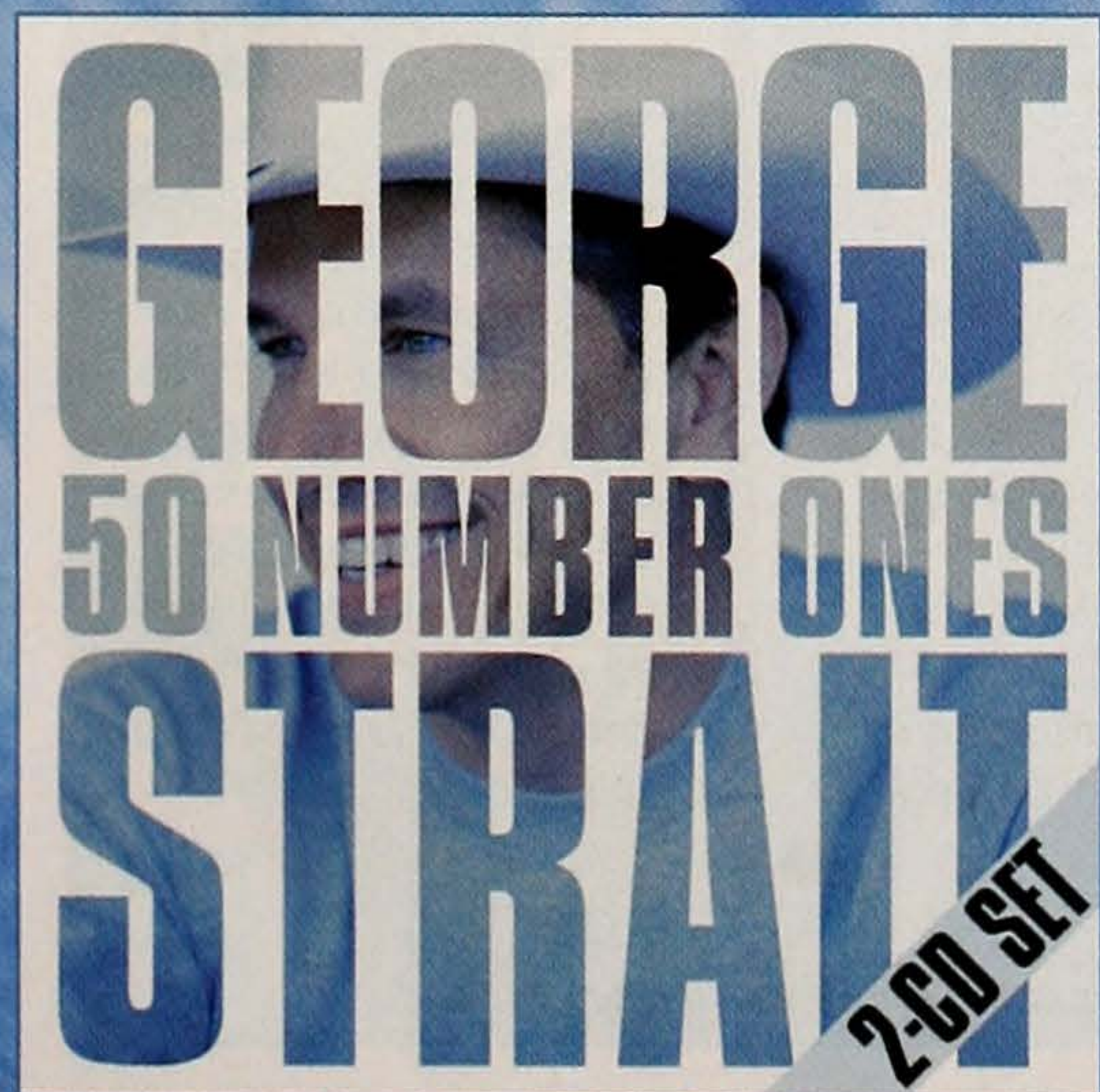
My dream job is either being a soil conservationist or a milling scientist. Land judging taught me how much our land needs to be cared for.

Shaylan Ennis
Paola, Kansas

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FFA Faces

Members making a difference

Win a Chevrolet backpack!

Chevrolet, sponsor of FFA Faces, will award each FFA member and advisor featured on this page a heavy-duty backpack. Nominate yourself, a friend or advisor by sending us a letter with the following details about your nominee: name, grade, address, phone number, e-mail address, FFA and academic achievements, extracurricular activities. All submissions must include a color photo of the nominee. Due to the

large quantity of entries, we can't use every entry we receive, nor can we return or acknowledge submissions.



Pennsylvania



PAMELA DOBROTA

It should come as no surprise that this 2004 Pennsylvania Draft Horse and Mule Association Queen competes in the FFA horse evaluation CDE. This Chestnut Ridge FFA Chapter reporter also has an SAE program that includes rabbit production, swine finishing, chicken production, lamb finishing and food service. Pamela also volunteers her time coordinating farm safety demonstrations and petting zoos for elementary students.

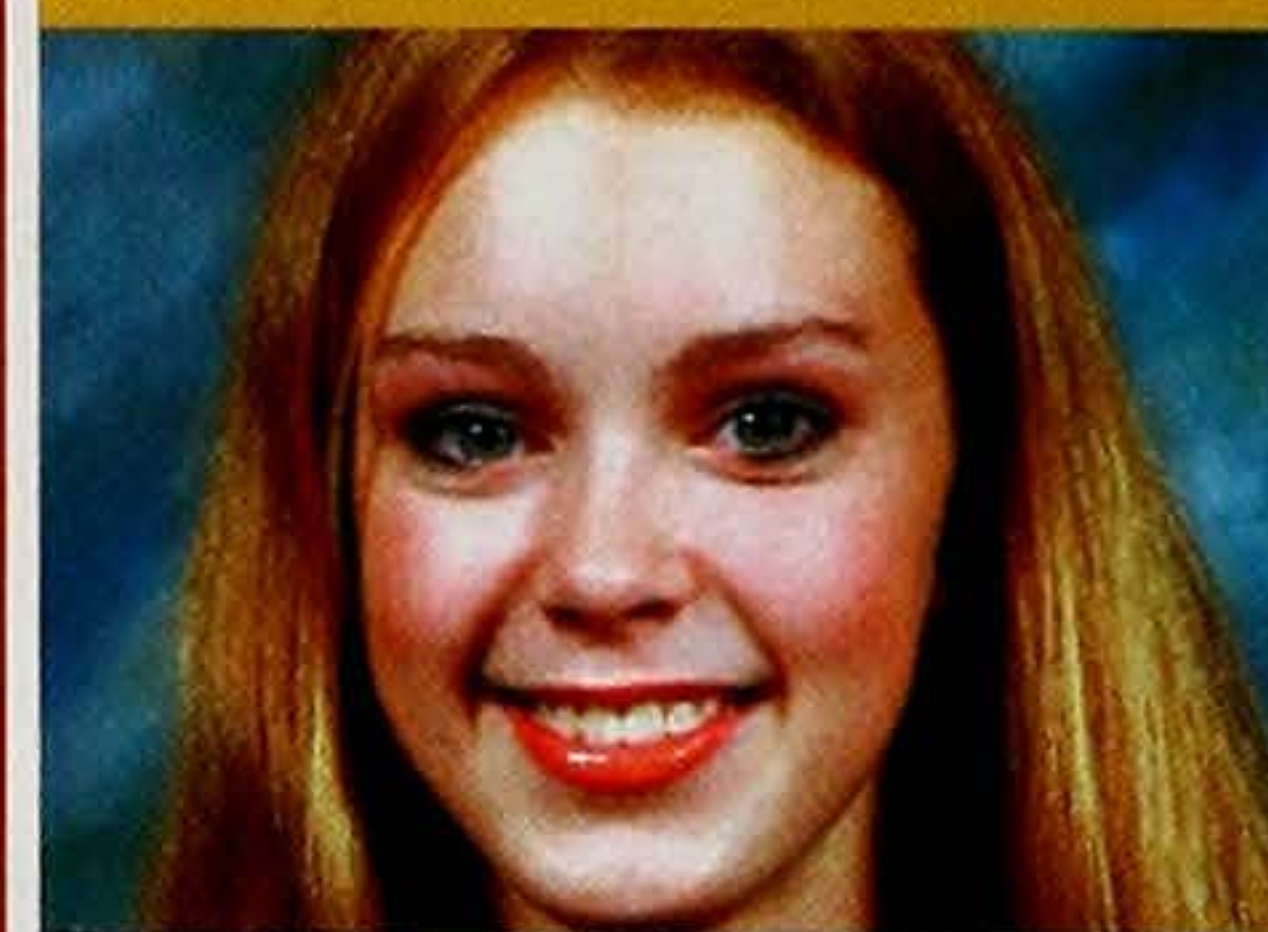
Missouri



TAVIO CERVANTES

This Plato FFA Chapter member's SAE program includes market steers and sheep. With star Greenhand and star chapter farmer honors, Tavo has excelled in all aspects of FFA and now is serving as second vice president. His public speaking skills have earned him first place at district competition and a top five finish at state. Tavo ranks in the top five in his class at school and, when he's not busy with FFA, he plays the saxophone.

Colorado



MELISSA DUTTON

Persuaded by a friend to join the Arickaree FFA Chapter four years ago, Melissa is grateful she took the advice. "FFA has helped me tremendously through my speaking fears, my knowledge about agriculture, and it has taught me responsibility and bookkeeping skills," says Melissa, who is now FFA chapter president. For the past two years, she has used her singing abilities to entertain attendees at the Colorado FFA Convention.

Kentucky



ALEX SEATON

Even though he's missed a lot of school and FFA activities due to an extended illness, Alex has stayed on top of his academics and FFA. He grew up on a dairy farm and even though his family left farming last year, he is determined to make a difference in agriculture. He served as Grayson FFA Chapter secretary last year. His short-range goals are to become an FFA regional officer and to attend Western Kentucky University.

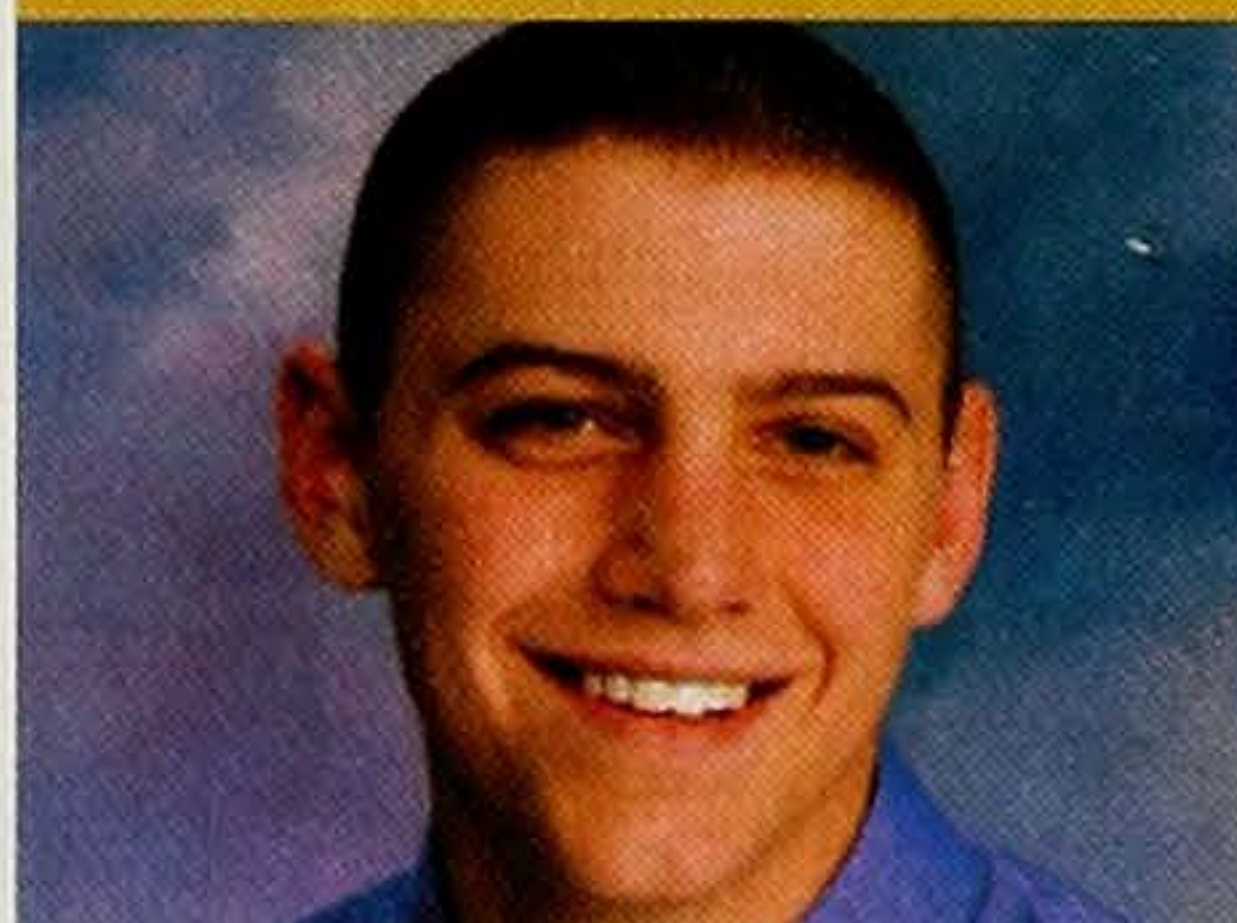
Alabama



NIKKI VAN WINKLE

Credit for her success in FFA, Nikki says, goes to her FFA advisors, Mr. Williams and Mr. King. "My first year of ag, I didn't really know anything about it. I went into the class not expecting to learn much or like it," she admits. But that all changed once she got involved and placed second in a competition and was voted by her peers to be FFA representative. Nikki also enjoys fishing, playing sports and cheerleading.

Ohio



ADAM GABEL

He won the Lakota FFA Chapter's outstanding sophomore, junior and senior awards. The school's teachers also voted him outstanding citizen in his class. So, it didn't surprise anyone when he was elected FFA chapter president his senior year. Adam has competed everything from soil judging to small engine troubleshooting to Envirothon. Now enrolled at Terra Community College, he is working toward a career in industrial electricity.

Florida



JOHN KELLEY (ADVISOR)

Since 1981, Mr. John Kelley has been the driving force behind the Tate High School agriculture program in northwest Florida. His alumni program boasts 40 members who put on an annual professional rodeo, which raises nearly \$15,000 for the school's agriculture program. His students understand and appreciate his high expectations, and they will tell you he's the reason many of them go on to successful careers in agriculture.

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National Officer Q&A

10 questions for Amy Rasmussen, FFA central region vice president

How has FFA helped you shape your leadership abilities?

With encouragement from my FFA advisor, I took the first step toward leadership by standing up in front of my classmates and reciting the FFA Creed. My FFA experience has given me the confidence to try new things and find what I am really passionate about. That has given my life a clear purpose.

How have FFA career development events (CDEs) help you grow?

I learned what teamwork is all about and how working together shapes your individual character in ways that you can't experience when you're competing as an individual.

Who are the most influential people in your life?

Without a doubt, my parents have had the biggest impact on my life. They have been there for me through the tough times and have always shown me unconditional love. They are my number one fans, and are always there to listen and give advice.

What do business and industry leaders say about FFA members' future roles in the industry?

Business and industry leaders want to hire people who have been in the



vitals

Hometown: Mead, Nebraska

Age: 21

Chapter: Mead FFA

Advisors: Joe Baldassare, Jenny Kocian and Phil Miller

SAE: Diversified crop production and beef production

Education: Junior at The University of Nebraska

Major: Agricultural education

Favorite musicians: Michael W. Smith, Rascal Flatts, Kenny Chesney

What I'm reading: "The Faith of George W. Bush"

Favorite food: Ice cream

Favorite TV re-runs: Saved by the Bell, Full House

Hobby: Reading, shopping and playing sports

Car: '98 Saturn

FFA. They see them as the future of the agriculture industry. They like the combination of life skills that FFA members gain through classroom experience, their SAE programs and the many FFA leadership opportunities.

Why is it important to set goals?

Without a goal, you have no vision of where you want to go. Having a goal focuses your attention on the task at hand. It is the driving force that will continue to motivate you to always strive for the best. Goals are critical to maximizing your full potential as a leader.

How do you rebound from failure?

My faith is what has gotten me through the setbacks in my life. In eighth grade I was in a sledding accident that broke both of my legs. This was the biggest physical setback I have ever experienced, and without my faith and family I know I wouldn't have gotten through it. It's important to surround yourself with positive people who motivate and encourage you during those tough times.

Describe agriculture in Nebraska.

Our state slogan says a lot about agriculture in Nebraska. We are the Cornhusker state, and you can imagine that this means we grow a

lot of corn! Ninety-six percent of the land in Nebraska is farms and ranches. While we do produce a large amount of corn, there are a variety of other crops (soybeans, wheat, alfalfa) as well as livestock (cattle, hogs, sheep). Beef cattle is a huge market for us and we take pride in the quality of our product.

What do you see yourself doing ten years from now?

I hope to be teaching agriculture to middle and high school students while also coaching. I hope that I am still involved with production agriculture, and that I can raise a family in the country because it's a great place to grow up.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

My dad always told us to always show up for the task or challenge at hand, to try by giving our best effort, and to never give up.

What do you do for fun back home?

I love to be outside on our farm helping my dad with the many projects that we always seem to have going, as well as shopping with my mom, going to my brothers' ball games, hanging out with friends and cheering on the Huskers. ●

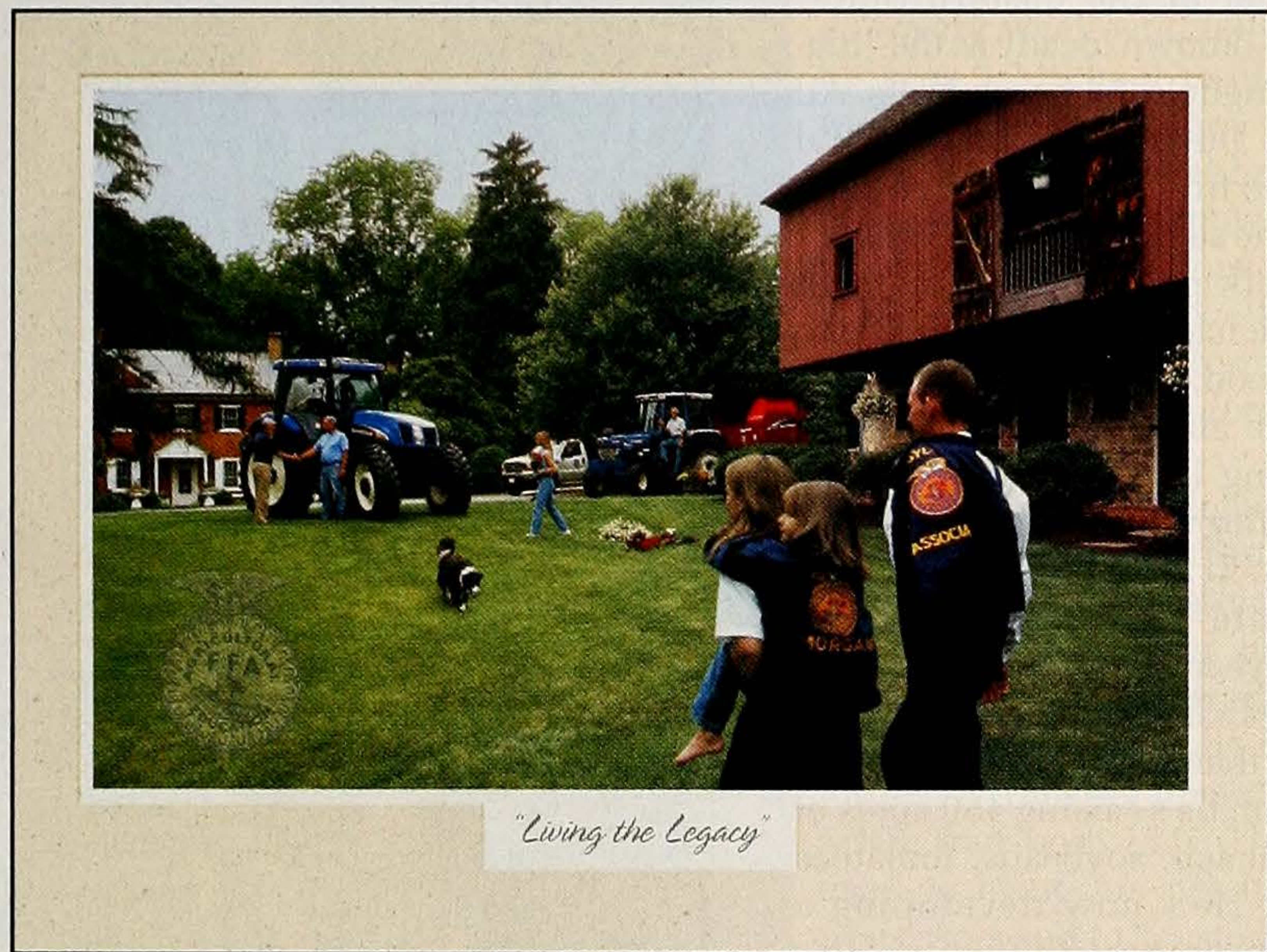
timeline

age	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> joined FFA started my SAE received greenhand FFA degree
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lost race for FFA chapter treasurer filled out my first FFA proficiency application
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> elected FFA chapter vice president placed second in FFA state extemporaneous speaking member of FFA chapter parliamentary procedure team attended FFA Washington Leadership Conference named FFA chapter star farmer
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> received DeKalb award
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> graduated from high school elected FFA state vice president went on FFA International Leadership Seminar for State Officers
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> earned American FFA Degree
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> elected FFA central region vice president

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NEW HOLLAND



As an eighth-generation farmer from Elmer, New Jersey, Michael Brooks, one of four 2003 Star Farmer finalists honored at last year's National FFA Convention, has worked the land for as long as he can remember. He's spent countless hours first learning his trade and then making that trade his life. "I've been farming," the 22-year-old says, "since the day I could walk."

According to New Jersey Agriculture Secretary Charles Kuperus, Michael is "an outstanding example of the future of New Jersey agriculture." Rosalie Hunsinger, program manager for the National FFA Organization's supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program, agrees. "Michael has this tremendous knowledge of the field," says Hunsinger. "And it comes across in his confidence. He has a way of connecting with people that really makes him stand out."

While he spent most of his childhood helping out on the family farm, up until high school Michael had no idea he'd make agriculture his career. In fact, as a freshman at nearby Woodstown High School, earning a living as a farmer was the furthest thing from his mind. "I thought I wanted to be a stockbroker," he recalls. "But then I joined the FFA."

By the end of freshman year, Michael was off to the FFA Washington Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. Then, as a sophomore, he dove headfirst into his SAE. His project? Vegetable production. "The truth was," Michael says, "I had always wanted to raise crops on my own."

FIRST CROP

Michael kicked off his project with a half-acre of strawberries. From there he went to 10 acres of spinach, then green beans. Once harvested, he sent the vegetables to a local processor. Growing vegetables came naturally for Michael—and so did working hard and serving others.

In 1998, Woodstown FFA Chapter members elected him vice president. Senior year, he served as president, won the state Star Farmer award, then went on to win FFA Eastern Region Star Farmer at the Eastern States Exposition (known locally as the "Big-E") in Springfield, Massachusetts. All along, his business hummed. "I'd come home from school and go right to work," he says. "That's all I knew."

The work paid off. Leaving high school, Michael turned his SAE into his livelihood, continuing to develop his acreage and adding tomatoes to his growing list of crops. He also started college and remained active in the FFA. In 2000 he served as New Jersey State FFA Secretary. The following year, state president.

Today Michael's business is more successful than ever. Still working the family farm, he's raising 450 acres of wheat, spinach, soybeans, tomatoes and corn. He's now developing a reputation as an innovator. He's discovered a way, for instance, to rig a sprayer to his cultivator for more efficient spraying.

Keeping the machinery moving

Michael Brooks finds success in production agriculture through hard work, innovation and creative thinking

.....

By Chris Hayhurst





Until he joined FFA, Michael thought he might someday be a stockbroker. Now he owns and operates a successful farm in New Jersey.

He's also added a computerized sorter to his mechanical tomato harvester to ensure that only ripe tomatoes make it to the processor. "The sorter uses an electronic eye to find the green and yellow tomatoes and then kick them out so all you have coming in are red tomatoes," Michael explains. Since the processing plant only pays for red tomatoes, this boosts the farm's bottom line. "It pays for itself," he says.

EFFICIENCY

Such high-tech additions to the farm are not the only ways Michael has shown his innovative spirit. Refining technique, he says, can be just as helpful as buying fancy equipment with all the latest technologies onboard.

Take his use of chemicals as an example. Hoping to maximize their

effectiveness while minimizing their need, Michael has turned to integrated pest management, or IPM. IPM emphasizes knowing exactly where chemicals are most effective at a given time. "I have a scout come out every week who tells me what he sees," Michael explains. "He walks the fields and then sends me a fax summarizing what he's found." In this way Michael knows precisely what condition his crops are in and, if they're not doing well, why. He can then take that information and eliminate any pests before they hurt his business.

In the last year, Michael also has stepped up his entrepreneurial ambitions. To both streamline the farming business and supplement his income, he acquired a tractor-trailer, hired a full-time driver and formed a trucking operation called MNB Transport, LLC. The truck is used to bring his produce to the processors and to "custom haul" for other businesses in the area. "I'd always wanted a tractor trailer," he says. "I knew having a truck could provide year-round cash flow and a way for employees to make themselves useful in winter."

TRUCK IT

Using his farm earnings to secure a loan, Michael signed a lease for the truck in May 2003. By June he was using it to haul his parents' potatoes to Pennsylvania. He later added grain to the cargo and now hauls spinach up to New Jersey from Georgia and seed potatoes down from Maine.

He even trucks his share of non-food-related items, shipping trees and shrubs for nurseries. "I've found the best way to pay for the truck is to keep it on the road," Michael says. One of his many goals for the future is to add four more rigs to the business.

While he certainly came close, Michael wasn't named Star Farmer of America last October. But the whole process, that long ride to Louisville got him thinking about the future and about expanding, improving efficiency and embracing new technologies. "I've always tried to be well-rounded," says Michael. "I'd like to keep it that way." ●

JEANS. ONLY TOUGHER.




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It was an unseasonably cool August day in Iowa, and it was opening day at the Iowa State Fair. People poured through the gates, while traffic on the roads leading into the fairgrounds moved at a snail's pace.

Inside the fairgrounds, between the machinery grounds and a show barn, more than two hundred people crowded into a small outdoor stage for the "Twins, Triplets and More" contest. Onstage, eight sets of four-year-old twins looked bewildered as a local TV news celebrity held a microphone up to each of them, hoping for an unscripted comment that would give the audience a good laugh.

Meanwhile, a panel of four judges looked over the contestants and tried to decide which twins looked least alike. After the top five place winners were announced, the twins and their parents exited the stage. Greeting them were four FFA members, who handed the youngsters a rainbow of colored ribbons.

Across the fairgrounds, more than 170 other FFA members performed similar tasks throughout the fair, a 150-year-old event that now draws



nearly a million visitors annually.

For more than 50 years, Iowa FFA members have volunteered at the fair, which is Iowa's biggest summer destination. "I do a lot of community service, but I love this one because it's so much fun," said FFA member Derek Coleman, as he and Mark Irlbeck waited for more twins to come off the stage for their ribbons.

As a designated "stage attendant," Derek and three other members—all

A fair deal

More than 175 FFA members spent 10 days of their summer volunteering at the Iowa State Fair

By Erich Gaukel



An opening day crowd at the Iowa State Fair (above) kept FFA volunteers busy around the clock. After handing out programs at the fair's main gate all day, these two FFA members served as ushers at a concert and fireworks show at the fair's 10,000-seat grandstand.

from different parts of the state—were on the first full day of their 10-day assignment at this stage, which later in the fair would host the State Auctioneers' Contest, The Dancin' Grannies, The Iowa Ventriloquist Association and the Pigtail, Ponytail and Braid contest.

"This is our stage the whole time," said Tracy Ruhland, who, like her cohorts, was most excited about the upcoming Dierks Bentley concert. "We get to go in his R.V. and everything," Derek added.

Amanda Kleitsch got the idea for volunteering at the fair from someone who had done it before. "I have an aunt. She was really big in FFA and she told me it was a lot of fun."

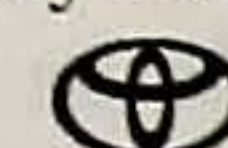
More FFA volunteers, known as "ushers," were found handing out programs at each of the fair's entrance gates. At night, these same FFA members ushered events at the grandstand, a huge facility that hosts car racing, rodeo events and major concerts during the fair.

Wearing bright yellow T-shirts with a big FFA emblem and the word "usher," these members helped people find their seats, notified security guards of problems and helped move equipment.

The big bonus for the ushers was free admission to such mainstage shows as Montgomery Gentry, Nickelback, Josh Turner, Kid Rock, Brooks & Dunn and Gretchen Wilson.

The fair provided meals for the members, as well as lodging in fairground dorms. "For some of these kids, it's the first time away from home for an extended period of time," said Iowa FFA Executive Secretary Alan Spencer.

"The neatest part," Spencer added, "is that we have FFA members here in front of people on a regular basis at a state fair that draws a million people a year. With that many people here, there's a neat opportunity expose FFA and agriculture to people who don't think about agriculture as something that impacts their daily lives." ●



This FFA community development story is brought to you by **GET THE FEELING. TOYOTA.**

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toyota.com 2004 Tundra Double Cab Limited 4x4 shown with optional equipment. *1875 lb. for Tundra Double Cab SR5 4x2 4.7-liter V8. Including the weight of occupants, optional equipment and cargo; limited weight distribution. **1875 lb. for Tundra Double Cab SR5 4x2 4.7-liter V8 vs. 1530 lb. for Ford F-150 SuperCrew XLT 4x2 4.6-liter V8. Comparison data compiled from manufacturers' Web sites 12/10/03. ***43.88 cu. ft. for 2004 Tundra Double Cab 4x2 and 4x4 vs. 43.42 cu. ft. for Ford F-150 SuperCrew 4x2 and 4x4. Comparison data from ford.com 12/10/03. ©2003 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.



The **A** to **Z** convention guide

The 77th National FFA Convention is just around the corner.
Here are 26 reasons you should be there.

By Erich Gaukel

ACHIEVEMENT

Nothing can beat the feeling of achieving your goals. Each year, tens of thousands of FFA members leave the national FFA convention having done just that. Some are competition winners and others have come simply to develop leadership skills, explore career opportunities or learn from motivational speakers.

BUSINESS

For delegates, the national FFA convention means business. Their task is to shape the future of the National FFA Organization. Last year, hundreds of delegates from all corners of the country came to the convention two days early to discuss and debate ways to improve FFA programs and activities.

CAREER SHOW

Bigger and better than ever, the FFA National Agricultural Career Show will be bustling with hundreds of exhibitors. You'll meet agriculture industry professionals and college representatives, load up on all kinds of free stuff and meet like-minded FFA members.

DANCE

After an exhilarating day of convention activity, hang up the official dress, put on your casual digs, and head over to the convention dance. Join thousands of FFA members as they move their feet to the thumping sound system and hypnotic light show.

ENTERTAINMENT

You need look no further than the FFA ranks for top-notch entertainers. You can catch fellow FFA members performing in the convention band and chorus at Freedom Hall, but also onstage at the food court as part of the National FFA Talent program—they'll sing their hearts out, dance out of their shoes and strum up a storm.

FOOD COURT

Conveniently located between the career show and Freedom Hall, several food court vendors will keep you fueled throughout the convention for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

GREAT STUFF

Once again, the National FFA Alumni Association

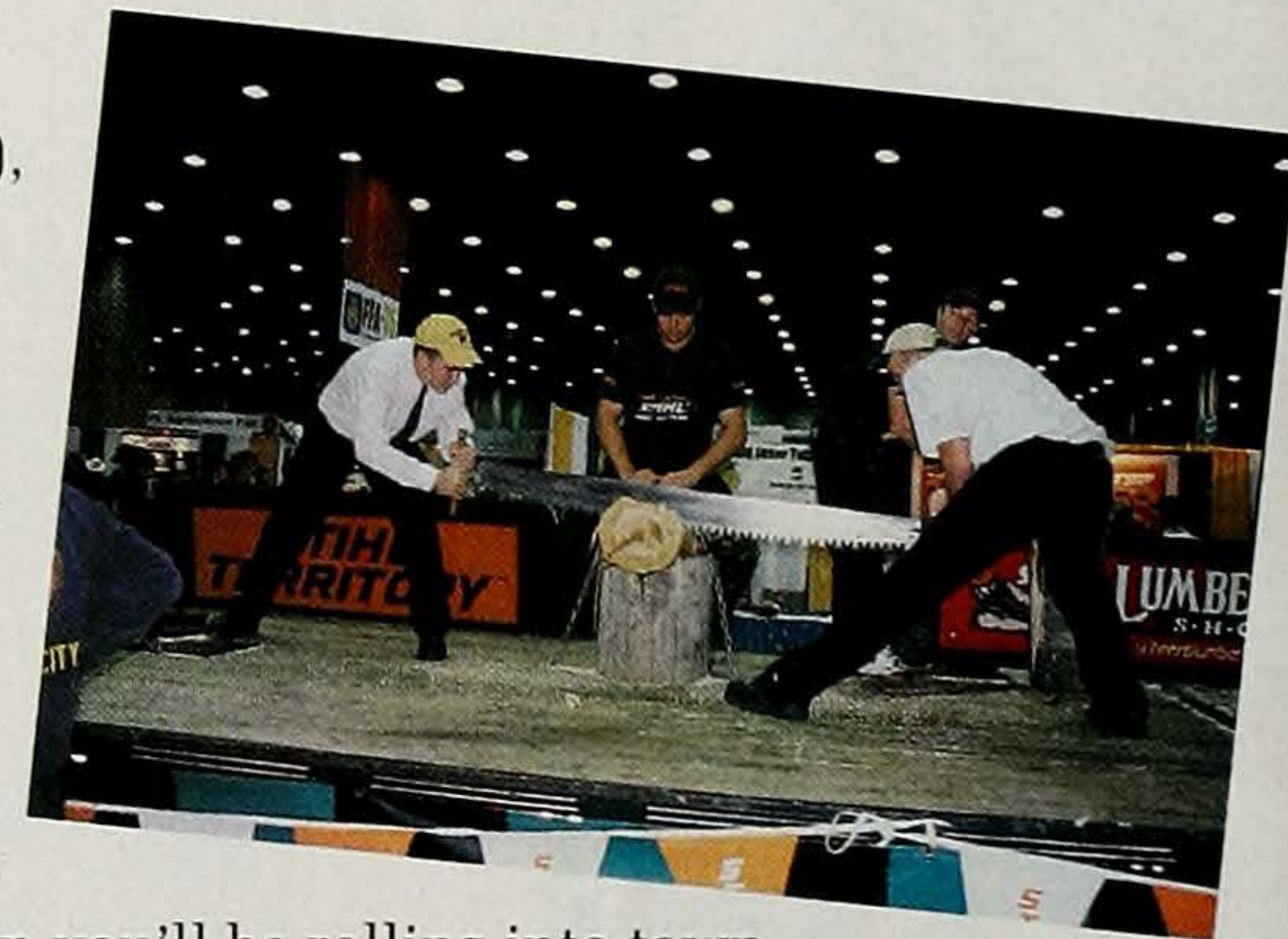
invites you to bid at its silent auction. Last year's merchandise included guitars, photos and memorabilia autographed by country music stars. Look for more of the same plus artwork, tools and other great stuff.

HOTELS

Each year, FFA members set up camp at dozens of hotels during the national FFA convention. Besides the luxuries of cable TV, swimming pools and maid service, hotels are a great place to unwind after a long day at the convention, get to know FFA members from other states and, of course, get some much-needed sleep.

INDIANAPOLIS

If you haven't yet visited the National FFA Center in Indianapolis (a two-hour drive from Louisville), this might be your best shot. Tours are available all week during the convention. All you have to do is call ahead (317/802-6060) and let them know when you'll be rolling into town.



JOURNAL

Keep a national convention journal—it's a great way to document your involvement in FFA. Even if you only write a few lines a day, it will help keep the convention experience vivid in your mind. When you get home, illustrate it with convention photos and memorabilia, such as ticket stubs and schedules.

KENTUCKY

In Louisville, you're never far from lots of great attractions and historic sites. Here are a few that come to mind right off the bat: The Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, The Kentucky Horse Park, Churchill Downs, Mammoth Cave and the Perryville Civil War Battlefield.

LASER LIGHT SHOW

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Continued from page 16

some. You'll find it only at the convention general sessions in Freedom Hall. Don't even think about missing it.

MEDIA

It's difficult *not* to attract media attention when over 50,000 students and guests come together to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. In the past, CNN, RFD-TV, Channel Earth and local TV news stations have covered the event.

NATIONAL FFA OFFICERS

They've been on the road since the last year's convention. Now hear the 2003-04 national FFA officers give their emotionally charged retiring addresses. Then, at the closing session, feel the energy level rise as the gavel is passed to the newly elected 2004-05 national FFA officer team.

OWL

Who will be stationed by the owl at the largest FFA meeting of the year? Larry D. Case, the national FFA advisor. He'll be on hand to offer his wisdom, to meet with FFA members and to celebrate another great year of FFA achievements.

PEOPLE

With attendance figures exceeding 50,000 for the last few years, the national FFA convention is the largest annual youth conference in the United States. Take some time to people-watch. See if you can meet FFA members from each of the 50 states.

QUALITY SPEAKERS

Danny Glover, President George H.W. Bush and Terry Bradshaw are just a few of the distinguished speakers to have addressed the national FFA convention. The tradition will continue this year with inspirational keynote addresses slated for each of the general sessions.

RODEO

The Bluegrass Bull Bash Rodeo, located right on the convention grounds at Broadbent Arena, is the place to catch all the rodeo action—bull riding, bareback bronc riding, saddle bronc riding, calf roping, steer wrestling and barrel racing.

SHOPPING MALL

On your way to the food court from the career show, you'll walk right through the shopping mall. Load up on FFA shirts, hats, boxers, jewelry and souvenirs. You can also stop here for cowboy hats, work boots and film for your camera.

TRAVEL

FFA members arrive in Louisville on planes, trains and automobiles, but they also show up in school buses, minivans and charter buses. Whatever your mode of



transportation, the trip itself is a great way to bond with fellow FFA members and plan the busy week ahead.

USER'S GUIDE

When you register for the convention, you'll receive a pocket-size copy of the national FFA convention guidebook. It tells you when and where every session, workshop, meeting, meal function, contest, speech and tour happens (don't leave your hotel without it!)

VALUE

Instead of paying the \$30 convention registration fee, you could always buy a couple CDs, a pair of plastic shoes, or maybe a night at the movies. But if you really want to see your \$30 do wonders, attend the national FFA convention. This small fee will open the doors to an experience you will always remember.

WORKSHOPS

Worth the registration fee alone, workshops for students will provide you with lessons lasting a lifetime. Several exciting workshops, conducted by former FFA leaders and industry experts, are offered in areas of premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Space is limited, so grab your seat early!

XENIA

We couldn't think of any other relevant words that begin with X, so we're hoping there will be a contingent of FFA members from Xenia, Ohio, at the convention. If you see one of them, be sure to say hello!

YOU

Remember, you are the reason the national FFA convention exists. Take advantage of its many offerings—the speakers, the competition, the career show, the workshops, and the people—and you'll find the experience one of the most rewarding of your life.

ZOO

If you want to check out some exotic animals, check out the Louisville Zoo, which just announced the rare birth of Sumatran tiger cub triplets. Among the animals you'll spy are chimpanzees, gorillas, meerkats, hippos and warthogs.

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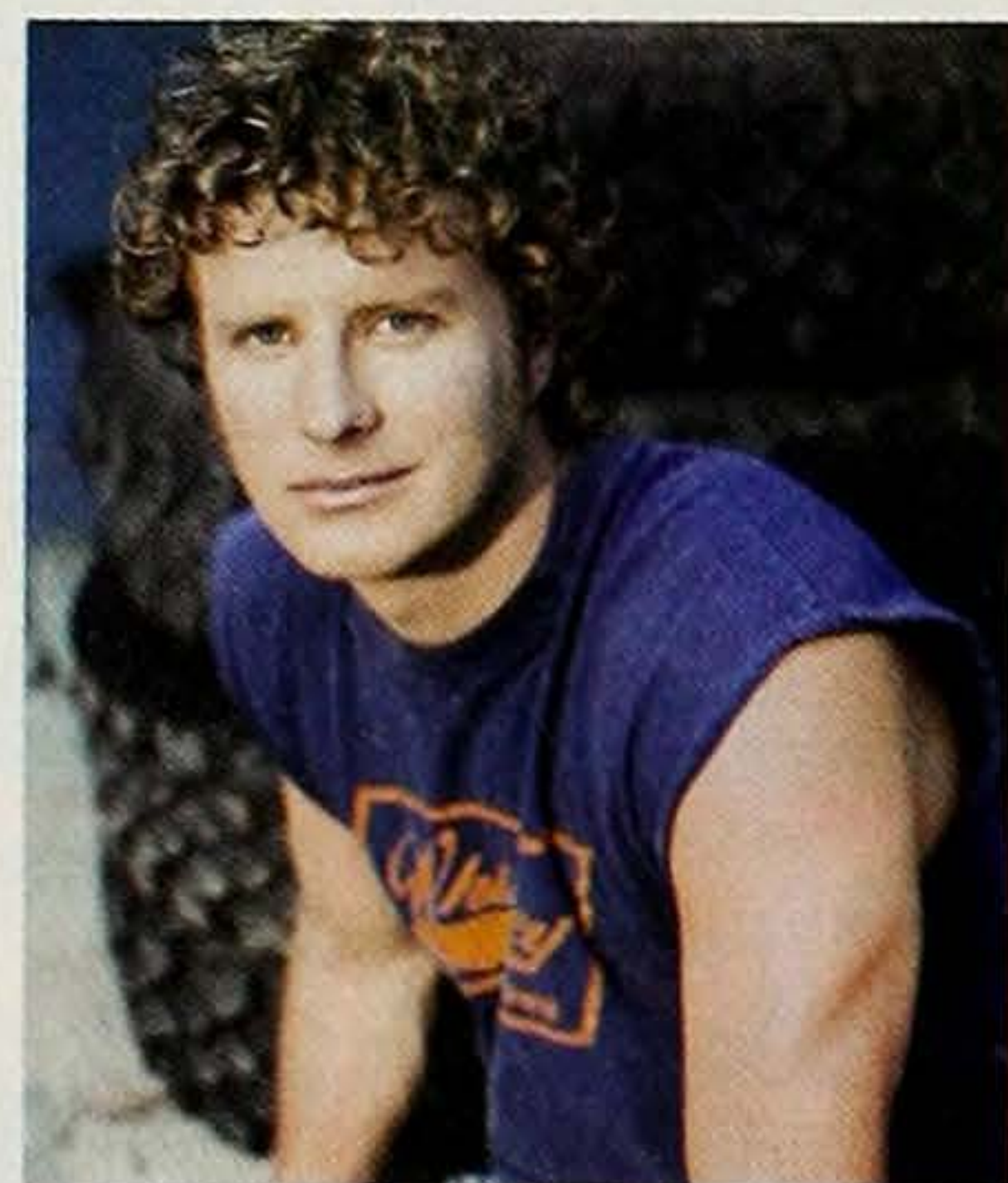


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*A preview of the 2004
National FFA Convention
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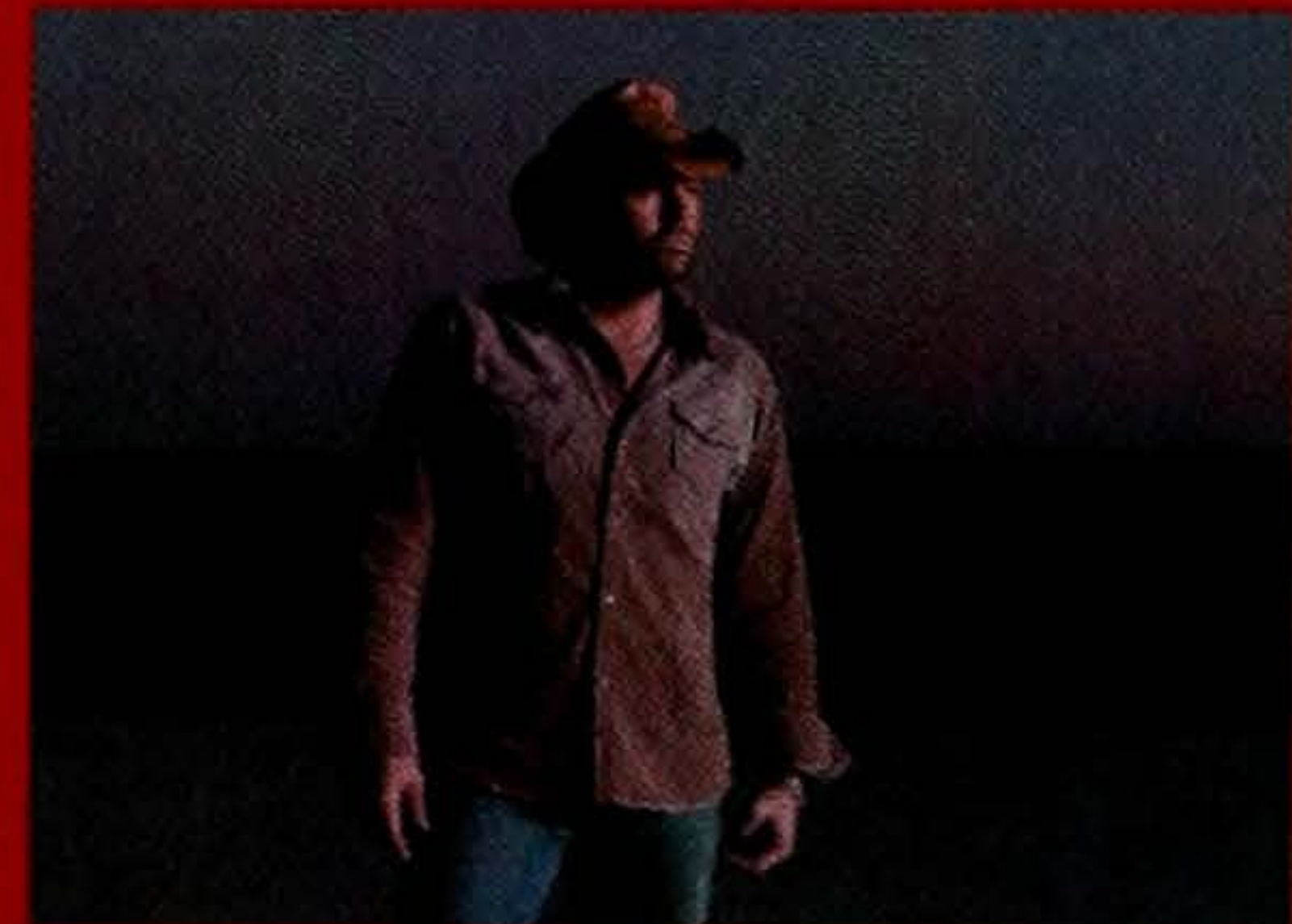
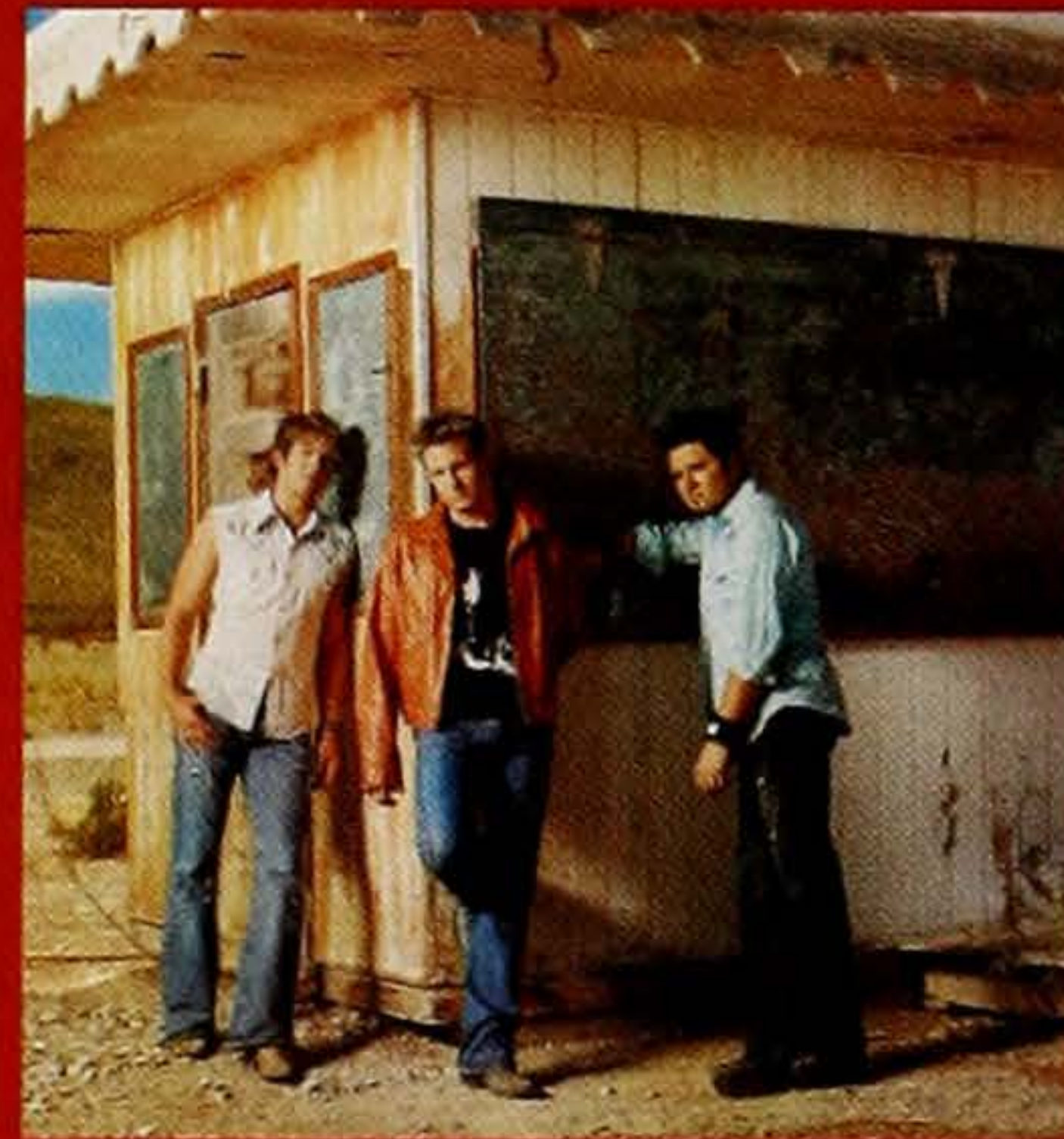
Trace Adkins, Dierks Bentley,

Montgomery Gentry, Billy Currington

*Plus the latest news on
Cross Canadian Ragweed,*



*Third Day,
The Jenkins,
Toby Keith,
George Strait and
Rascal Flatts*



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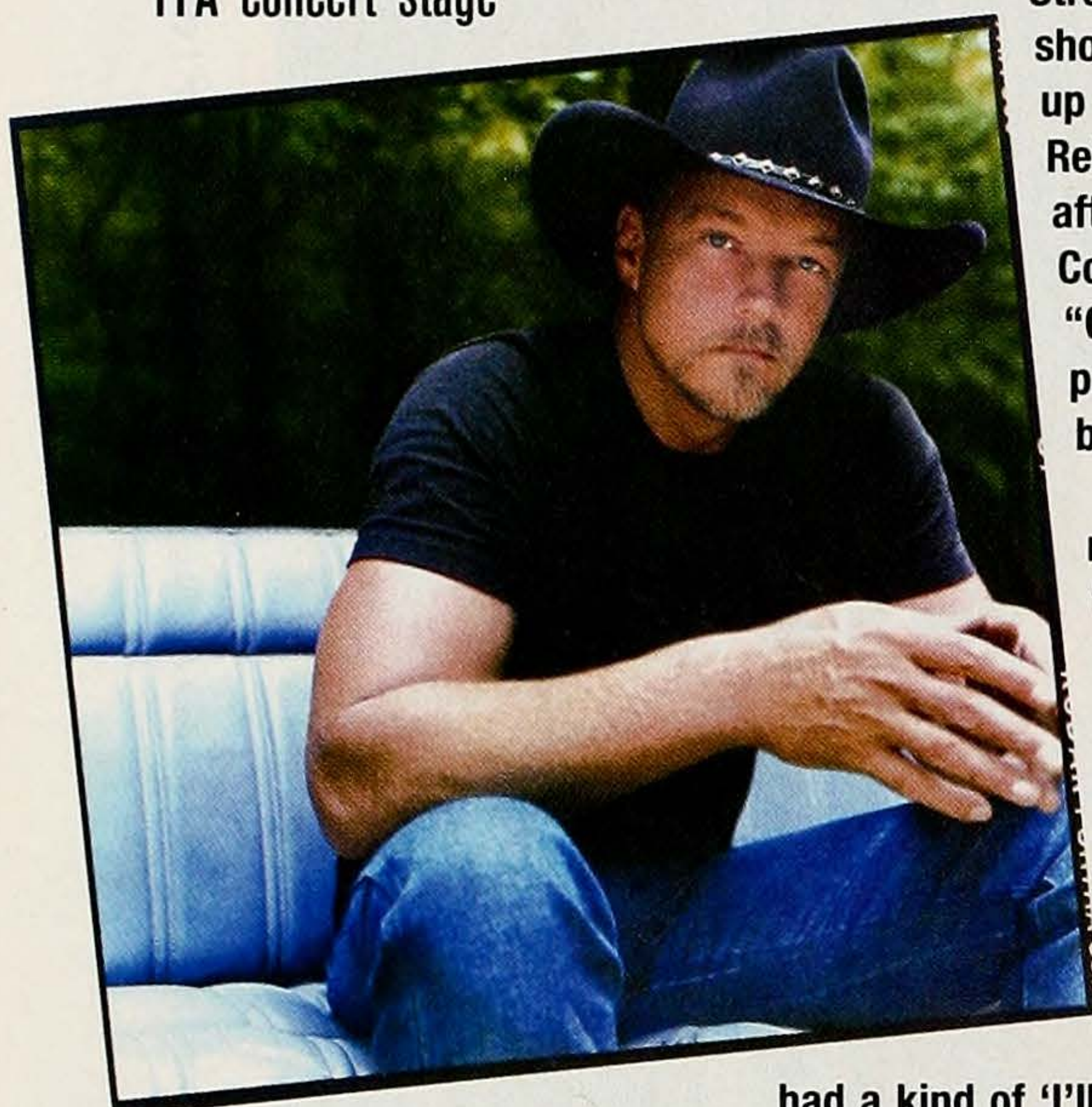
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The real deal

Trace Adkins, a former FFA member, rides the wave of his new CD to the FFA concert stage



Trace Adkins has rarely approached anything—in his life or career—conventionally. At 6' 6", he dominates a room. He has one of those truth-telling country voices that just grabs you, whether it's coming through a car speaker or over an arena sound system. Although a string of hits made him a superstar, he truly sings about the joys and challenges of everyday people. That knack for authenticity has created a huge base of devoted fans, sold millions of records and made him the most-recent inductee into the prestigious Grand Ole Opry.

With his new album, "Comin' On Strong," the straight-shooting Adkins is shaking up the rules—again. Released just five months after his "Greatest Hits Collection, Volume 1," the "Comin' On Strong" CD is perhaps Trace Adkins' best work yet.

The former FFA member offers 11 tunes that are the essence of country music—lyrics about themes that feel absolutely real, melodies that stick in the mind, and just plain great interpretive singing.

"I've always kind of had a kind of 'I'll show 'em' attitude, and I'm just feeling really confident right now," Trace says in his thick, Louisiana baritone. "When we went in to make this album, I got lucky and found a lot of songs that spoke to a lot of experiences I've had—life experiences that I've been through that make me who I am. What I care about most is finding material that's real—something I can sing with conviction and sink myself into."

With this new album, Trace did just that.

Trace's current CD is "Comin' On Strong." For more information: www.traceadkins.com

Concert details

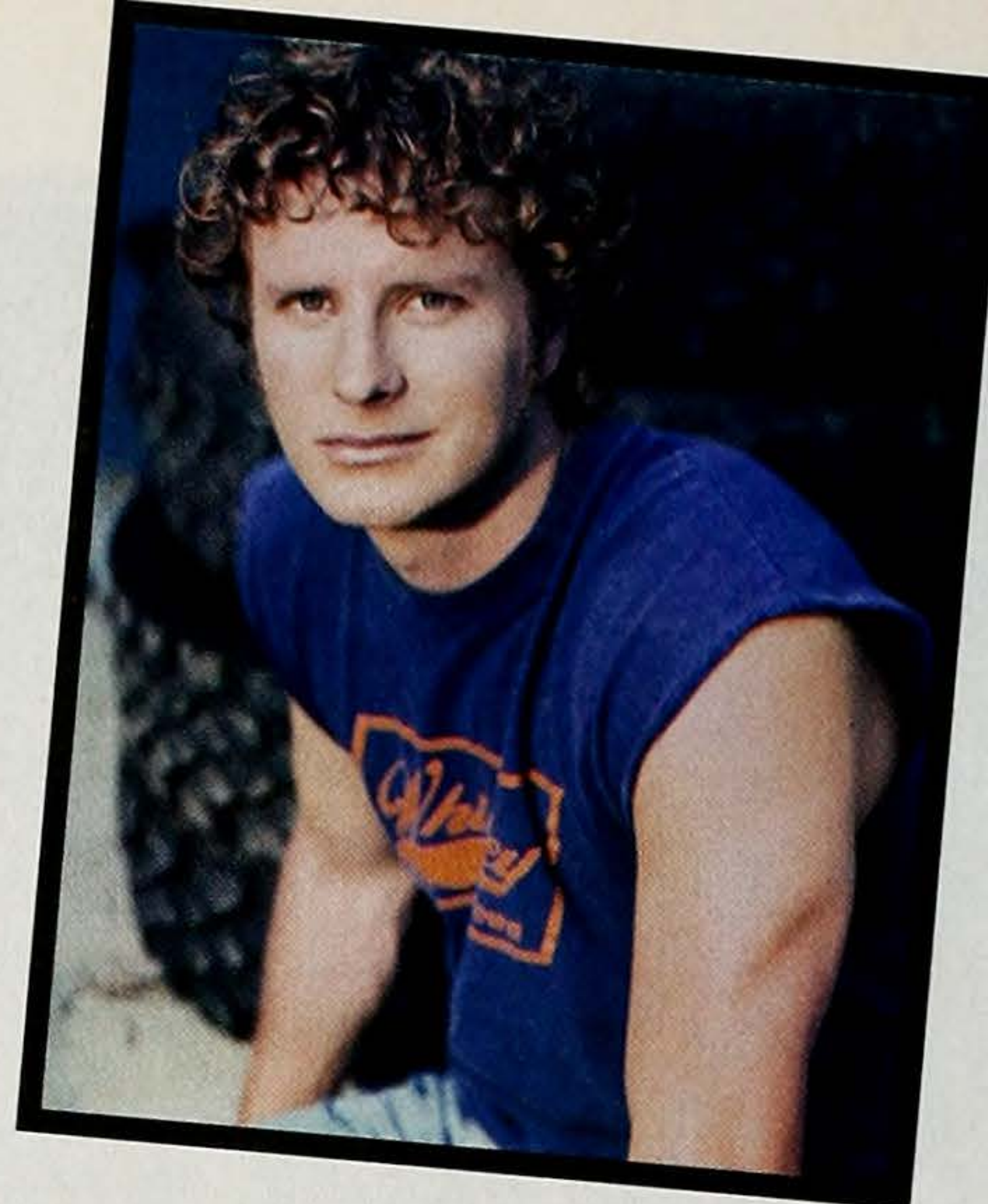
Acts: Trace Adkins and Dierks Bentley

Date: Thursday, October 28

Time: Entire show will be staged twice, first at 5 p.m. and again at 9:30 p.m.

Location: Broadbent Arena (on the national FFA convention grounds)

Tickets: \$20



Chasing a dream

Dierks Bentley takes a leap of faith and finds success

"I once heard George Jones say in an interview that country music was like religion to him," Dierks Bentley says. "I couldn't agree more. It's where I turn when times are tough and I need answers and it's where I go when I want to cut loose and have fun. As a singer and songwriter, it's not only how I make a living but what gives me direction and purpose in life."

Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, Dierks moved to Nashville when he was nineteen and immediately immersed himself in the Nashville music scene. "I discovered a whole community of musicians and singers that played music for all the right reasons. They didn't play because they wanted to be stars or be in music videos, they played because they loved the music," he says.

One night, in his early days, Dierks was playing a gig when Vince Gill and Amy Grant walked through the door. Vince had his mandolin with him and he sat down about five feet away from the stage. Dierks asked Vince if he would come up and sing a few songs and without hesitation, Vince nodded yes. "I thought he would sing a song or two and sit back down but he ended up picking with us for almost an hour and half. 'Truly unbelievable' is the only way I can describe it. I thought that if my music dreams never went any further, that would be alright because I got to share the stage (albeit a very small one!) with Vince Gill."

With his self-titled recording, "Dierks Bentley," this emerging star has found his voice and he'll be sharing it with thousands of fortunate FFA members in Louisville.

Dierks' current CD is "Dierks Bentley." For more information: www.dierksbentley.com

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Homecoming

Playing for FFA members in Kentucky is a special treat for *Montgomery Gentry*

After a stellar performance at the 2002 National FFA Convention, Montgomery Gentry is on its way back for another convention performance. It's a rare treat for Eddie Montgomery and Troy Gentry, the "outlaws" of country music, to play in their home state, in front of a crowd of enthusiastic FFA members, which, last time through included Eddie's son Kevin, a member of the Boyle County FFA Chapter.

This year's performance promises to be every bit as energetic as the last. Both singers are at the peak of their form, making music that is as raw and powerful as it is compelling.

"FFA is as much a part of this country as baseball or John Wayne movies," Eddie says, "and these kids are the next generation of this tradition."

"And certainly for Kevin," adds the proud father, "FFA is a big part of his daily life. Getting to go to the national convention is such a big deal for him, I don't think he even cares that we're a part of this. I mean, he's always into what we're doing, but this is about something much more important."

Montgomery

Gentry's connection to FFA goes beyond playing at the convention. They have made a long-term commitment to FFA by creating a Montgomery Gentry scholarship through the National FFA Foundation. The duo is providing this award to encourage young people to return to the farm and continue the family farm's legacy. For more information on applying for this and other FFA scholarships, check with your FFA advisor or visit www.ffa.org.

Montgomery Gentry's current CD is "You Do Your Thing." For more information: www.montgomerygentry.com

Concert details

Acts: Montgomery Gentry and Billy Currington

Date: Friday, October 29

Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Broadbent Arena (on the national FFA convention grounds)

Tickets: \$20



Billy's back

After greeting FFA members at the convention's career show last year, this rising star returns as a mainstage performer

If Billy Currington's impromptu appearance at the 2003 National FFA Convention is any indication, this year's concert will be a smashing success. Last year, FFA members swarmed this youthful, curly-haired performer whose voice recalls Ernest Tubbs and other old-time country singers.

Some of the lucky FFA members who met the singer included a group from the Screven County FFA Chapter in his home state of Georgia. Currington will show his wares to a much larger group this year as a mainstage performer.

His music—a blend of traditional country and modern pop music—often recalls a time when life seemed simpler, although the singer-songwriter certainly can't claim to have had an easy life.

Billy lived in a home troubled by his father's alcohol abuse. "He'd get drunk and a little crazy," Billy says. "He eventually died of drinking and cancer."

Billy's debut single, "Walk a Little Straighter," tells the story of a child watching his father stumbling through the door and vowing not to make that same mistake when he becomes a father. Billy wrote the chorus at age 12.

As a high school junior, Billy went to Nashville to audition at the Opryland USA theme park. "I didn't make it, but that didn't bother me, because all senior year I knew I was going back to Nashville." His first move lasted less than a year, during which time he worked in a local pawnshop. He returned to his grandmother's house and joined a local country band. After eight months of playing a local gig, he decided to give Music City another shot—and it has paid off.

Billy's career is off to a promising start, but his immediate goal is to build my grandma a log cabin house. "We grew up in a trailer all our lives. That's something she's always wanted and could definitely not get on her own. . . . Wherever she wants the house, that's where I'm going to put it."

Billy's current CD is "Billy Currington." For more information: www.billycurrington.com

IMPACT

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Just Love Them?
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Caution: Construction
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E Student Spotlight

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G FFA Brightens Members' Lives

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I Here Today Because of the FFA

J Good Luck to Indiana FFA!

K FFA Camps Offer Fun and Friendship

L Bugs...Don't You Just Love Them?

N FFA Helps Members Find Jobs

O Caution: Construction Ahead for Southmont

P Strain Your Brain



September

Calendar of Events

11-12 Premier Leadership Training Retreat

20-30

- 20 - District 1 Aged Kickoff
- 21 - District 2 Aged Kickoff
- 22 - District 3 Aged Kickoff
- 23 - District 4 Aged Kickoff
- 27 - District 5 Aged Kickoff
- 28 - District 6 Aged Kickoff
- 29 - District 7 Aged Kickoff
- 30 - District 8 Aged Kickoff

October

2 Animal Science Skill-A-Thon CDE, Boone County

4-7

- 4 - District 9 Aged Kickoff
- 5 - District 10 Aged Kickoff
- 6 - District 11 Aged Kickoff
- 7 - District 12 Aged Kickoff

15-17 SOAR Conference, Indiana FFA Center

17 State Executive Committee Meeting,
Indiana FFA Center

23 State Soils CDE, Southern Indiana

27-30 National FFA Convention

Indiana FFA Staff

Craig Rebich Association Executive Director
Christian MacKinnon Foundation Executive Director
Robert Juncker State Advisor
Stephanie Warner Program Specialist
Brian Buchanan Development Director
Samantha Lucy Magazine Editor
Joshua Coleman Magazine Designer

2004-2005 State Officer Team

Matthew Metzger President
Jill Steiner Secretary
Eric Barnard N.R. Vice President
Todd Ault S.R. Vice President
Jennifer Shepherd Treasurer
Sara Egan Reporter
Joey Dunn Sentinel

Stationed by the Emblem of Washington

Jennifer Shepherd, 2004-05 State Treasurer

FAST FACTS

PARENTS: Rhonda and Martin Shepherd

SIBLING: Shannon

HOMETOWN: Fort Wayne

FFA CHAPTER: Carroll @ Fort Wayne

FAVORITE SPORT: Basketball

FAVORITE FOOD: Tacos

FAVORITE SONG: Life's A Dance by John Michael Montgomery

FAVORITE MOVIE: Sweet Home Alabama

FAVORITE FFA ACTIVITY: Agricultural Issues or
Working the Arcola Tractor Pulls

FAVORITE QUOTE: "Whoever I am and whatever I am doing
some kind of excellence is within my reach."

After Jennifer completes her year serving as the Indiana FFA State Treasurer, she plans on attending Indiana University to major in Business and Law. She hopes to eventually become the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Indiana.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT JENNIFER...

"Jenn has always brought great joy to our lives. She is a very hard worker and achiever. She sets high goals for herself and always achieves them. She is a great person to be around, and very energetic. She is our pride and joy."

Rhonda and Martin Shepherd JENNIFER'S PARENTS

"I am proud to call Jennifer a student, leader, and friend. I hope that someday my children grow up to be like her, hardworking, a leader, caring, honest and sincere. She is a prime example of a true leader at the chapter, state, national, and community level."

Ms. Cindy Raker JENNIFER'S FFA ADVISOR

"Jennifer is an outgoing, hardworking individual. She is great person and an amazing friend. She has an outstanding personality and always strives for the best."

Jay Messman FRIEND OF JENNIFER'S

FFA Timeline

14 Joined FFA
Elected Chapter Reporter

15 Elected Chapter Vice-President and District III Reporter
Elected Chapter Reporter

16 Elected Section I Director
Lost State Agriculture Issues CDE
Received Hoosier Degree

17 Delegate of the 76th National Convention
Lost State Public Speaking Contest
Elected State Treasure



THE 2004-2005 STATE OFFICER TEAM VOTED
JENNIFER MOST LIKELY TO BE THE FIRST FEMALE
PRESIDENT...A REPUBLICAN OF COURSE.

FFA Advisor Strives to Put Students First

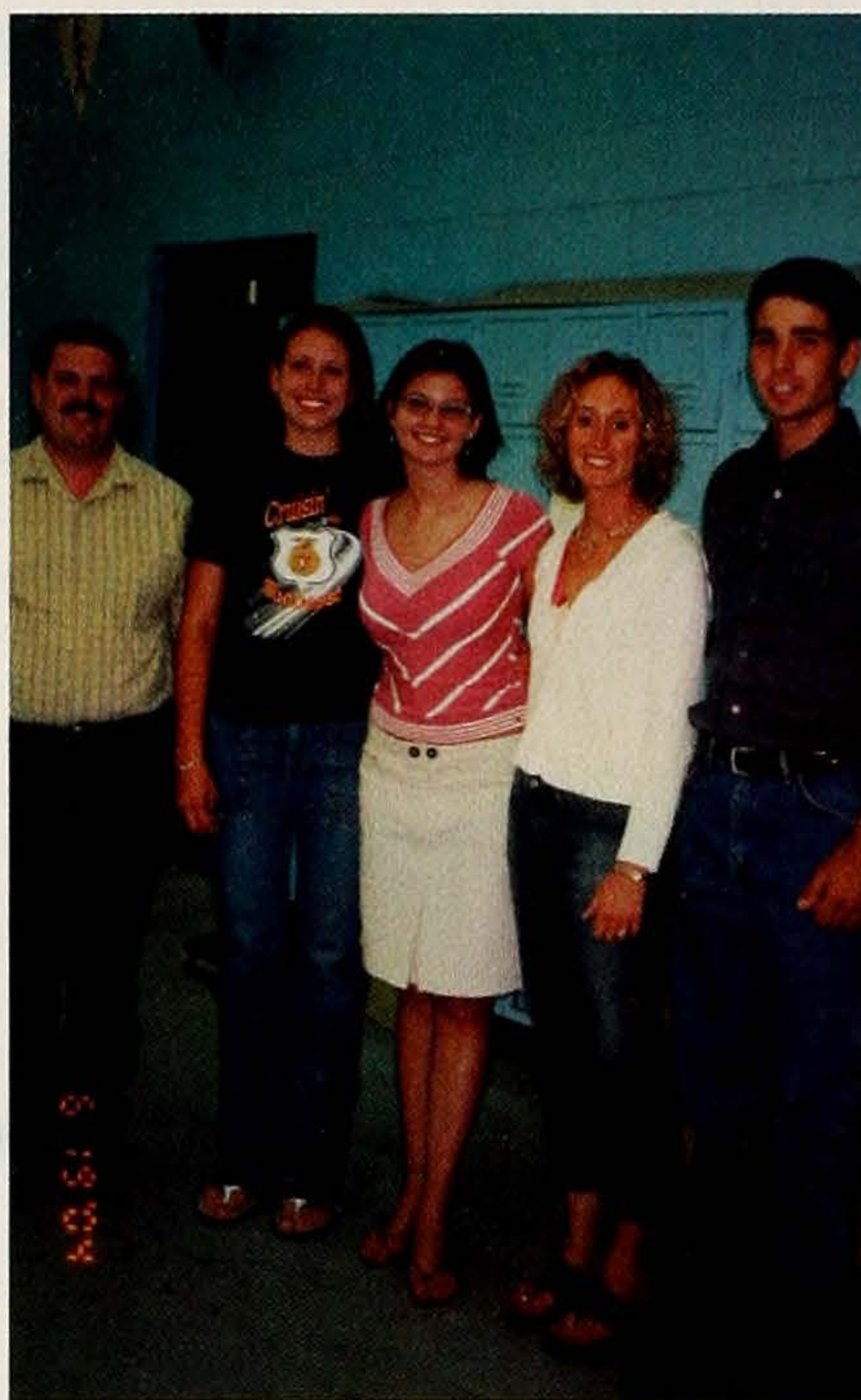
By Jill Steiner

FFA advisor, track coach, friend, teacher-of-the-year nominee, and sweet corn entrepreneur are all words that describe Mrs. Faith Okos, the young FFA advisor from Rensselaer High School located in Northwest Indiana.

Mrs. Okos always knew that she wanted to be an agricultural teacher, so it was no surprise when in 2001 she graduated from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree in science and agricultural education. Mrs. Okos's first – and only – teaching position has been at Rensselaer. When members of the Rensselaer FFA Chapter were asked to describe Mrs. Okos, it was evident how much she cared for her students.

"Mrs. Okos is one of those teachers who can relate to the students," says Randy Lehman, a sophomore of the Rensselaer FFA chapter. "She has a lot of life and enthusiasm for the FFA."

As an advisor, Mrs. Okos enjoys the leadership contests, and at Rensselaer



students can participate in a wide variety of FFA activities ranging from leadership activities, soils judging, parliamentary procedure, livestock judging, fruit sales, and work auctions. A major event for the Rensselaer FFA chapter is their annual livestock invitational. Mrs. Okos enjoys all of the activities her students participate in and encourages them to explore different activities.

Mrs. Okos said that one of her favorite FFA activities as an advisor is attending conventions because she is so proud to see her students become successful and accomplish their goals after they have invested a large amount of time. And Mrs. Okos's students are equally proud of her, too.

"Mrs. Okos is a strong leader in our chapter," says Jamie Goodman, a senior at Rensselaer. "She is always giving good advice, and she is really good with proficiencies, professionalism, and words."

While in high school at South Newton, Mrs. Okos was very active. She served in many leadership roles, including chapter secretary and vice president, as well as a district sentinel and secretary.

As an agricultural teacher, Mrs. Okos finds the importance of the total agricultural education model, and truly understands how important the FFA was in her life. Mrs. Okos's advice for students is to



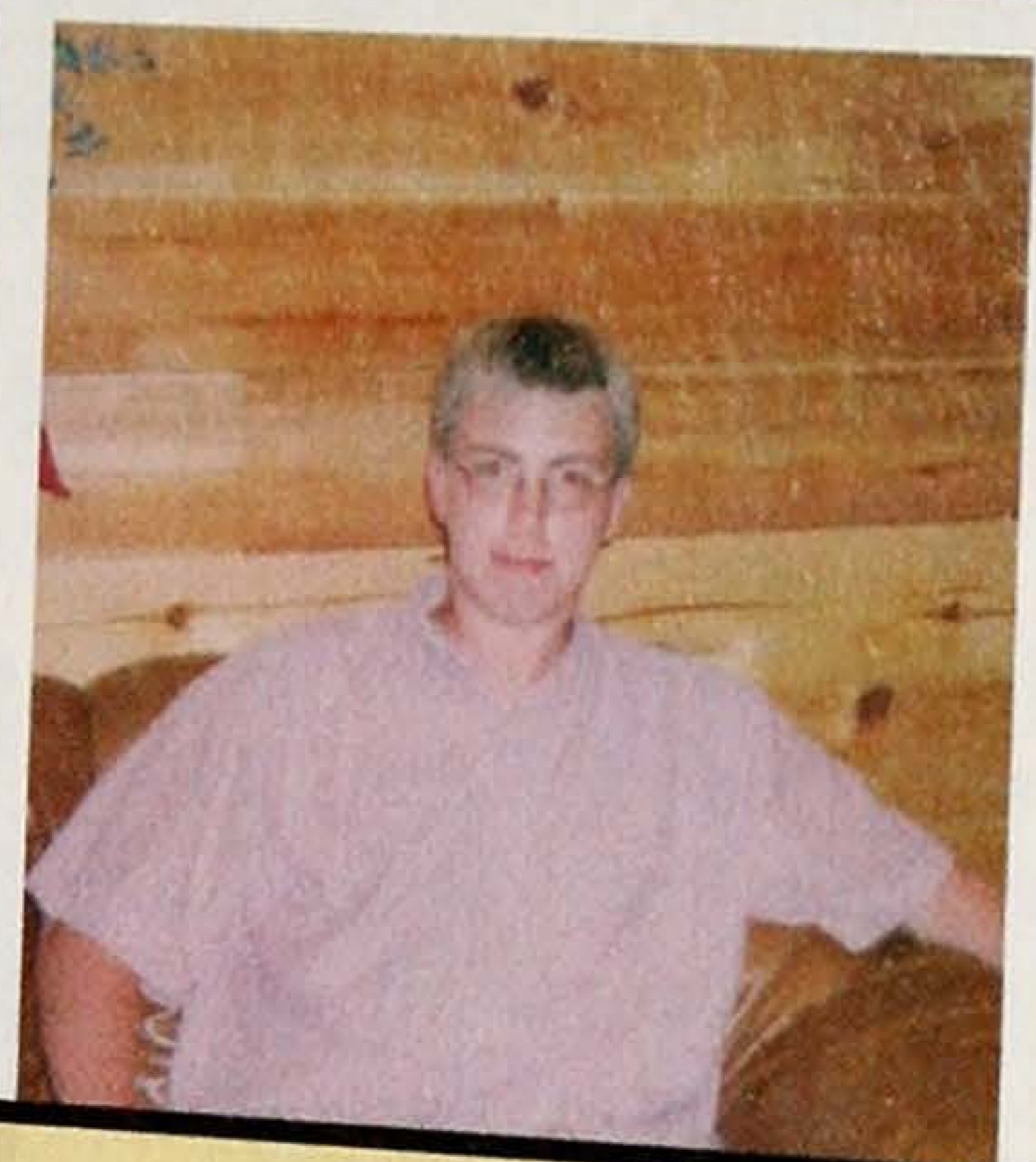
get involved while in high school, and to realize that not everyone can be a star, but instead find your niche and strive to become a star. ★





"My favorite part was when the State Officers dressed up in the different decades."

Janelle Oppe
Senior, Rochester



"Being hypnotized and everyone telling me what I did afterwards was my favorite part."

Sawyer Sparks
Senior, Bloomfield

Student Spotlight!

What was your Favorite part of the 75th state convention?



"I loved being able to experience Indiana's 75th Anniversary."

Shawn Gearhart
Senior, Warsaw



"My favorite parts of State Convention were participating in the nominating committee and meeting new people."

Jessica Palmer
Senior, Eastbrook

NEXT ISSUE'S SPOTLIGHT QUESTION:

What is your favorite fall FFA activity?

.....
E-mail your answer to inffaspotlight@yahoo.com

Dow AgroSciences Believes in the Benefits of FFA

By Jennifer Shepherd

The Indiana FFA relies upon sponsors to ensure that FFA members across the state get the opportunity to partake in events which will assist in developing their true potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Dow AgroSciences helps our mission statement come true by sponsoring several events, including the Crops CDE, Project Impact, and State Convention. Steve Furste, a representative and a 2003-2004 Distinguished Service Award winner from Dow AgroSciences, will discuss why he and his organization chose to partner with the Indiana FFA. ★



FULL NAME OF COMPANY: Dow AgroSciences

LOCATION OF HEADQUARTERS: Indianapolis, Indiana

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 6,000 people in over 50 countries

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 14 years

HISTORY OF COMPANY: Dow AgroSciences began as a joint venture in 1989 between the Agricultural Products Department of The Dow Chemical Company and the Plant Sciences business of Eli Lilly and Company that resulted in the creation of DowElanco. In 1997 the Dow Chemical Company acquired 100 percent of DowElanco, and was renamed Dow AgroSciences in 1998.

IF A STUDENT WAS INTERESTED IN A CAREER WITH DOW AGROSCIENCES, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR A CAREER? Dow offers a variety of different career paths ranging from lawyers, scientists, and sales and marketing associates. It is necessary for one to attend college, majoring in one of many agricultural or science fields. Most importantly, one should pick their passion and enjoy whatever they may be doing.

"DOW AGROSCIENCES IS A GREAT SUPPORTER OF INDIANA FFA. THE FUNDING THAT THEY PROVIDE ALLOWS NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FFA MEMBERS TO GROW AND DEVELOP INTO FUTURE LEADERS OF OUR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY."

BRIAN BUCHANAN
INDIANA FFA FOUNDATION
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

ARE THERE ANY INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH DOW, AND HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN THAT POSITION? Intern opportunities are available at the college level. To become an intern, one should contact their local representative, and prepare themselves for the competitive interviewing process.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDIANA FFA TO A PEER ORGANIZATION? This partnership is great! Dow AgroSciences is a continued sponsor and supporter of FFA at the state and national levels. Many of our employers were past FFA members, and the skills that they have carried from the FFA are obvious. We have fun with the sponsorship. We enjoy offering tours of our facility during FFA week and national convention.

FFA Brightens Members' Lives

By Eric Barnard

David Mohler is a face you wouldn't normally forget. This fun-loving 17 year old has been around FFA for a number of years and usually leaves members remembering his outgoing and unique personality. FFA has been a family experience for David and he will be continuing that tradition as he begins his senior year in the Western Boone FFA.

David lives on a predominantly corn and soybean farm with his parents Allen and Jane Mohler, and his younger sister Elizabeth. David has followed some of the footsteps of his older brothers, Justin and Kyle, through his past three years in FFA. He has been very active in his community, and even though he lives on a grain farm, David has still been able find ways to show cattle and hogs in his local fair.

David's SAE consists of many aspects. His proficiency is mainly his hay and straw business, but he still finds time to do other agricultural jobs. He often helps on his family's grain farm and at his grandfather's cattle farm. Recently David has expanded his business by purchasing a bailer

and some wagons in order to further develop his proficiency area.

Even with all of David's agricultural pursuits he still finds time to be active in his school's sports. David is a three-sport athlete, participating in soccer, wrestling, and golf. Not only that, but he is active in his local 4-H and Jr. Leader's club.

"Winter is the hardest time of the year to keep up with my schedule," says David. "My family is very supportive of my interests and activities, and they definitely help me to balance my schedule."

Looking back at his FFA experiences, David attributes a lot of his enthusiasm to all the camps he has attended. He has been to most of the camps available since his freshman year in high school, and eagerly awaits each upcoming one.

"My most memorable experience happened at my first Summer Challenge camp when we had an M&M war and I painted my hair instead of my face and it didn't wash out," says David. "The greatest part of that

first camp was that I got to meet new people and be 100 percent myself. I learned a lot about who I am and what FFA members are really all about."

David is currently serving this year as the District IV Vice-President. He sees a lot of opportunities available this year to serve the chapters and looks forward to taking advantage of those. David is also the Western Boone FFA's Sentinel, and has been a chapter officer for the past two years.

"It is really great getting to be a part of the number one chapter in the state and to know that I had a hand in what the chapter has done," says David.

David attributes a great deal of what FFA has done for him to his advisor Mr. Don Haberlin.

"I owe a lot to Mr. Haberlin - he's the one who really got me started in FFA," says David. "I wasn't sure if I wanted to be in FFA like my brothers had been, but Mr. Haberlin convinced me. He has always been there to help me out and give me advice. Without Mr. Haberlin I wouldn't be where I am today in FFA."★



Stationed by the Plow

Todd Ault, 2004-05 State Southern Region Vice President

FAST FACTS ABOUT TODD AULT

PARENT: Barbara Jo Ault
SIBLINGS: Chris, Jody, Kimberly
HOMETOWN: Versailles, IN
FFA CHAPTER: South Ripley
FAVORITE FOOD: Macaroni and cheese
FAVORITE SONG: Enter Sandman S & M Version
FAVORITE SPORT: Basketball
FAVORITE MOVIE: Braveheart
FAVORITE FFA ACTIVITY: State Convention

Todd is planning to attend Vincennes University for two years and double major in Construction Technology and Construction Sales. After college he hopes to go into the Peace Corps and eventually own his own business.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT TODD...

"The thing I love best about Todd is his sense of humor. He makes me laugh even when I don't want to but when he thinks I should. He wants to be able to help others, whether it's through FFA, the Peace Corps or a career in Building Trades. He feels this is the best way to say thank you to all the people who have helped him."

Barbara Jo Ault TODD'S MOTHER

"Todd is probably the most likeable young man our chapter has ever produced. He will go out of his way to help anyone succeed. He is a rare individual."

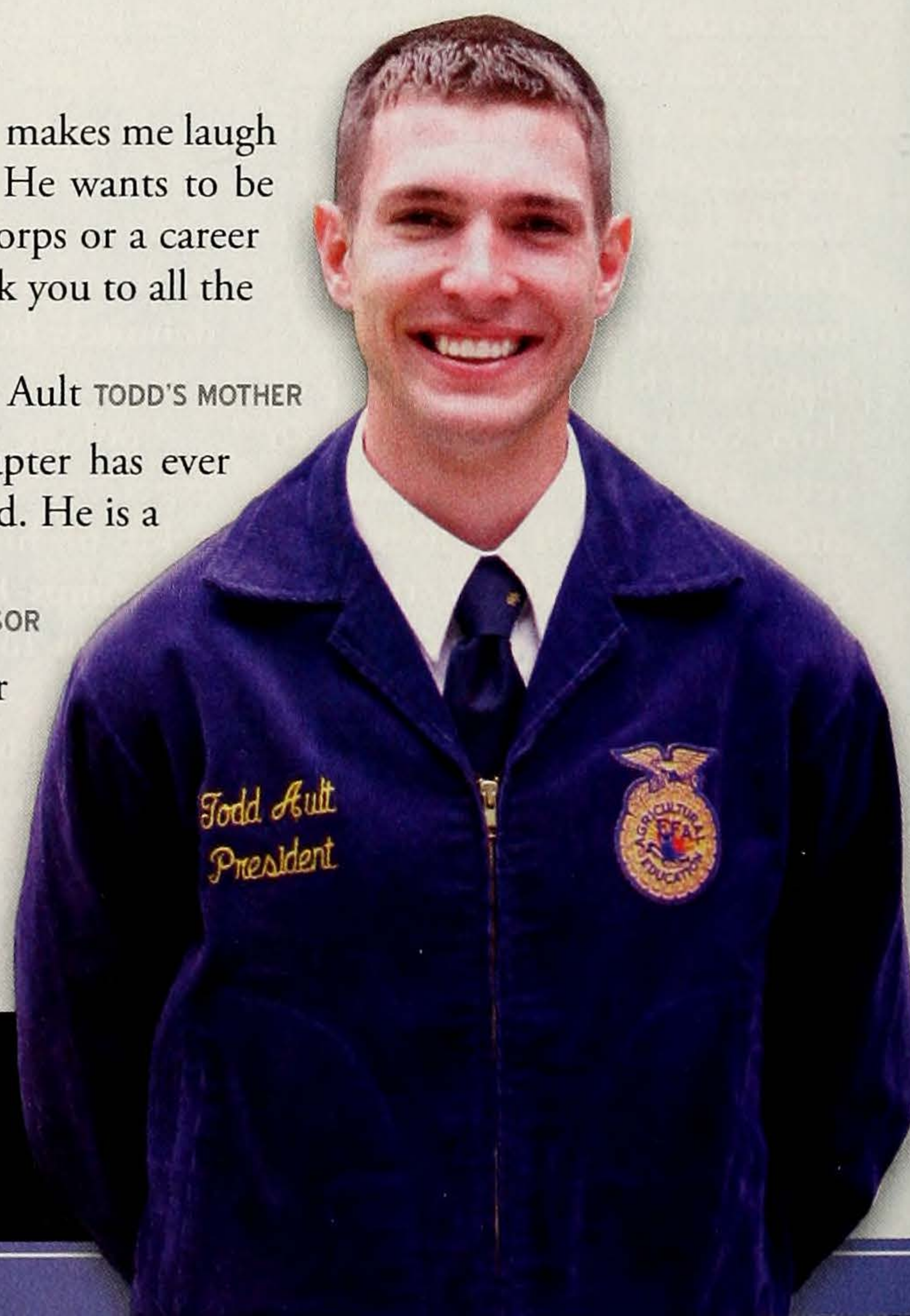
Mr. Holland TODD'S ADVISOR

"Throughout high school, Todd was an outstanding leader who excelled because of his hard work and dedication. On top of that, Todd was the best friend anyone could ever ask for."

Matt Hartman TODD'S BEST FRIEND

FFA Timeline

- 14** Todd joined the FFA
- 15** Participated in first CDE-Parliamentary Procedure
Named most active Greenhand
- 16** Received Chapter Degree
Elected Chapter President
- 17** Elected District XII President
Received Hoosier Degree
Lost Area Dairy Judging Contest
- 18** Lost State Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest
Elected State Southern Region Vice President



THE 2004-2005 STATE OFFICER TEAM VOTED
 TODD THE MOST LIKELY TO MARRY LITTLE
 DEBBIE AND BECOME THE SNACK CAKE KING.

Here Today because of the FFA

By Michael McDaniel

The Indiana FFA is proud to have a heritage of student success. Many times the FFA has impacted students to grow and find their leadership potential, but in some cases being in the FFA actually writes members life stories. This issue's former member, Chris Wickard, never expected that the FFA would not only prepare him for his future, but be his future as well.

Chris Wickard was born in Albuquerque, NM in 1971. His father was stationed there Air Force, but within a year, he moved back to the family farm near Wilkinson, IN. As he grew up on the family grain and cattle farm, he gained much respect for the agriculture industry. With this background, he participated in livestock, dairy, soils, and crop judging while also acting as chapter reporter. With his FFA advisors' help, Mr. Brandt, Mr. Scott Jacobs and Mr. Engleking which he had at Eastern Hancock High School, he was involved in many other leadership contests such as Parliamentary Procedure and public speaking. Through all of these contests many skills were acquired, but most of all was the ability to speak and present before the public.

The FFA offered many opportunities to grow and come out of his shell. It was during one of these opportunities – the Washington Leadership Conference – that Chris met his future wife Julia. After

graduating high school and moving on to college, he found that his people skills that he gained led to an interest in sales and management. After graduating from Purdue University in 1993 with a degree in Agribusiness Management, he took a full time position in sales with R.G. Applegate Steel Company traveling all over the country.

“Young individuals can learn so much from FFA,” says Chris. “As a person that once had a speech impediment, I can testify that livestock reasons can help anyone with fear of public and speech problems. The FFA will be a life long experience.”

However, after he married Julia, they wanted to start a family, so a few years after college, Chris began to look for a career change to bring him closer to home on a constant basis. The CISCO Companies was hiring for an Agricultural Specialist. This position was sales, training, marketing and consulting for the Farm & Home Division. After 10 months with CISCO, he was asked to manager the new division, Horticultural Supplies. He knew that this was going to be a challenge, but he knew that this would be exciting. Almost two years later, the Horticultural Supplies division is growing by leaps and bounds.

“My time in the FFA in high school and a lot of hard work is

why I'm enjoying the success I am today,” Chris says.

His current involvement in the FFA is two fold. He tries to be an ambassador of FFA by telling people not related with the organization the great advantages of FFA. He also volunteers his time to the local FFA by being a judge for contests, helping the livestock teams get cattle together for a practice, and tries to be available for any other needs that need to be met. His wife, family, and he try to help as much as possible in their local community.★

Good Luck to Indiana FFA!

By Todd Ault



Ben Leu, 2002-03 State Vice President, was chosen to represent Indiana as our national officer candidate at the National FFA Convention, held October 27-30, 2004, in Louisville, Kentucky. Ben hails from the Prairie Heights FFA Chapter, where he was an active member for all four of his years.

"The chance to travel around the country as a national officer would be great," said Ben. "I really enjoy talking to all the members and learning about their achievements."

Ben had to go through four rounds of interviewing to be chosen to represent the state. The rounds included agriculture issues, FFA knowledge, individual interview, and a team work round.

On the Friday, Saturday and Sunday before National Convention begins, Ben will participate in interviews and other sessions. His responsibilities after the interview process includes being at all sessions, getting members excited, and representing Indiana. Members will be able to see him at most of the dances, on the floor during sessions, and just around the trade show.

Ben grew up in Lagrange, Ind., with his parents Robert and Crystal Leu and his sister Caitlin. Ben's love for agriculture came from his grandpa, Ned Stump, who happened to be his agriculture advisor for his first years in the FFA. Mr. Stump's influence started earlier than that, though, because he had a small farm that Ben helped out with growing up.

"Ben is a most capable, caring young man full of energy and zeal to accomplish good things for youth and agriculture today," said Mr. Stump. "He is a pretty good young man here in our community."

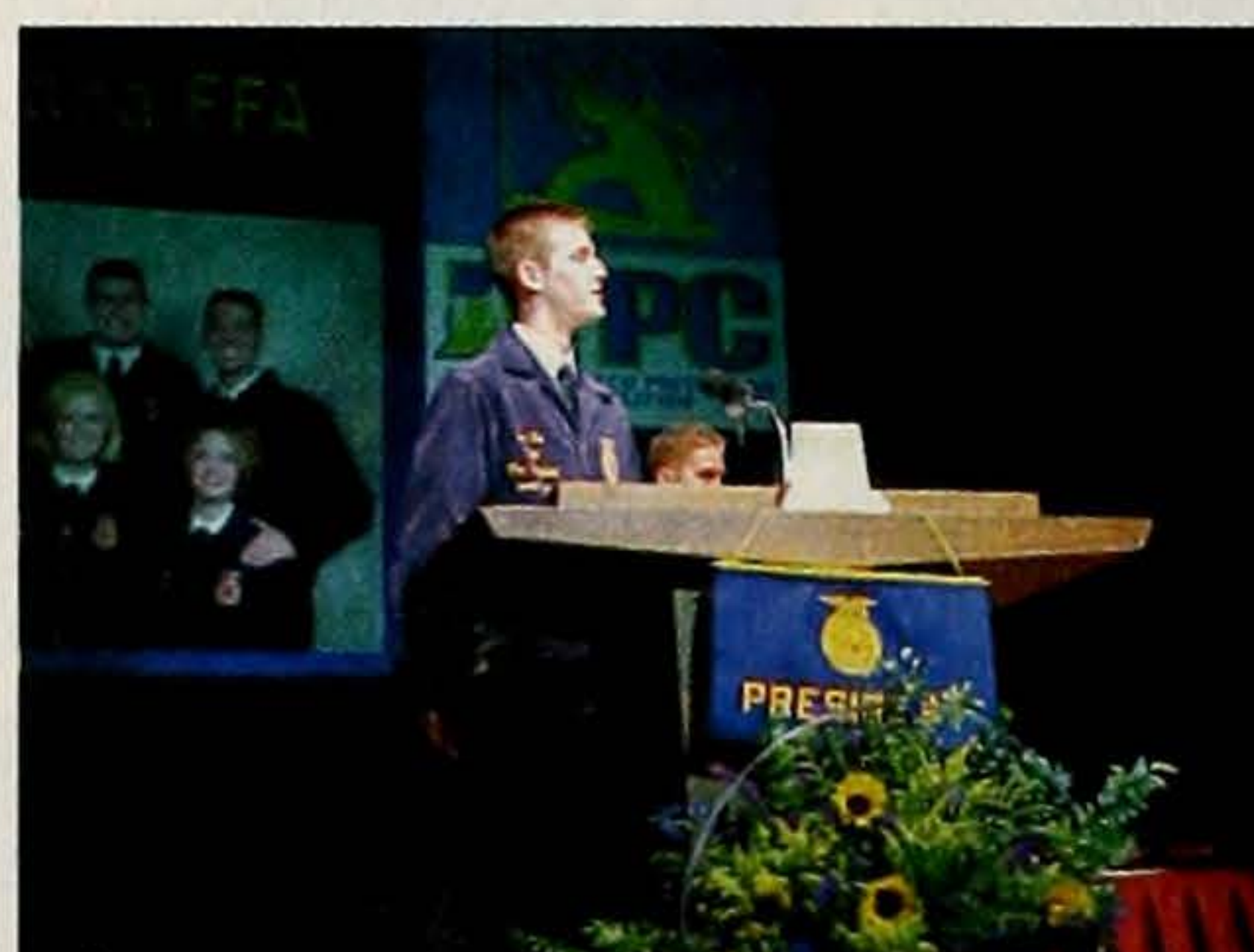
Throughout his FFA career Ben served in several leadership positions. He was elected District III Vice President and President. He also participated in several CDEs, including Agriculture Production Demonstration, Public Speaking, and Extemporaneous Public Speaking.

Members while at the National Convention can participate in leadership sessions, visit the trade show, and listen to the top candidates in many CDE areas. If members get bored at the Convention there



are many sites around Louisville that chapters could go tour and enjoy while being educated on the agriculture industry.

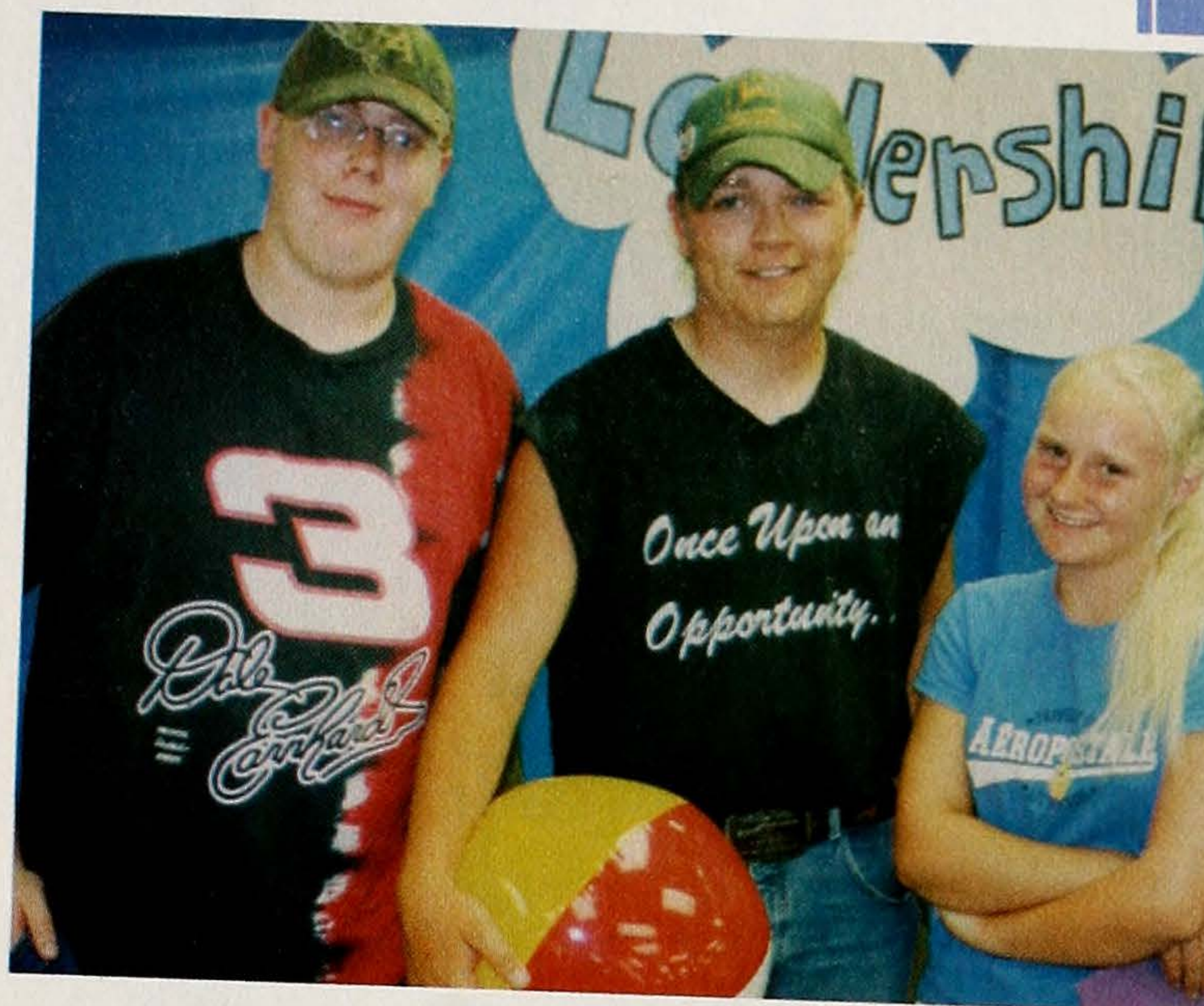
Members can go support Ben on the last Saturday of National convention where slate will be announced. After slate is announced, the delegates from each state will vote on slate. The voting process is the same as that of our state's election of officers. Good luck, Ben!★



FFA Camps Offer Fun and Friendship

Are you completely bored during the fall? Do you need something to do? Would you like to meet people outside of your hometown? Would you like to learn a little more about FFA? If you answered yes to any of these, then FFA camp is for you! Camps are a great way to meet FFA members from all over the state while participating in creative and interactive workshops focusing on leadership and agricultural opportunities.

At camps you can have fun doing anything. There is a dance at every camp for you to shake your groove thing, as well as some recreation time and even a little surprise at the end of camp that always proves to be a blast! All camps are held at the Indiana FFA Center in Trafalgar, Indiana. SOAR and FIRE are the two camps offered this fall at the FFA Center. ★



October 15-17, 2004

SOAR, which stands for Seeking Opportunities and Achieving Results, is geared toward greenhands who are just learning about the organization.

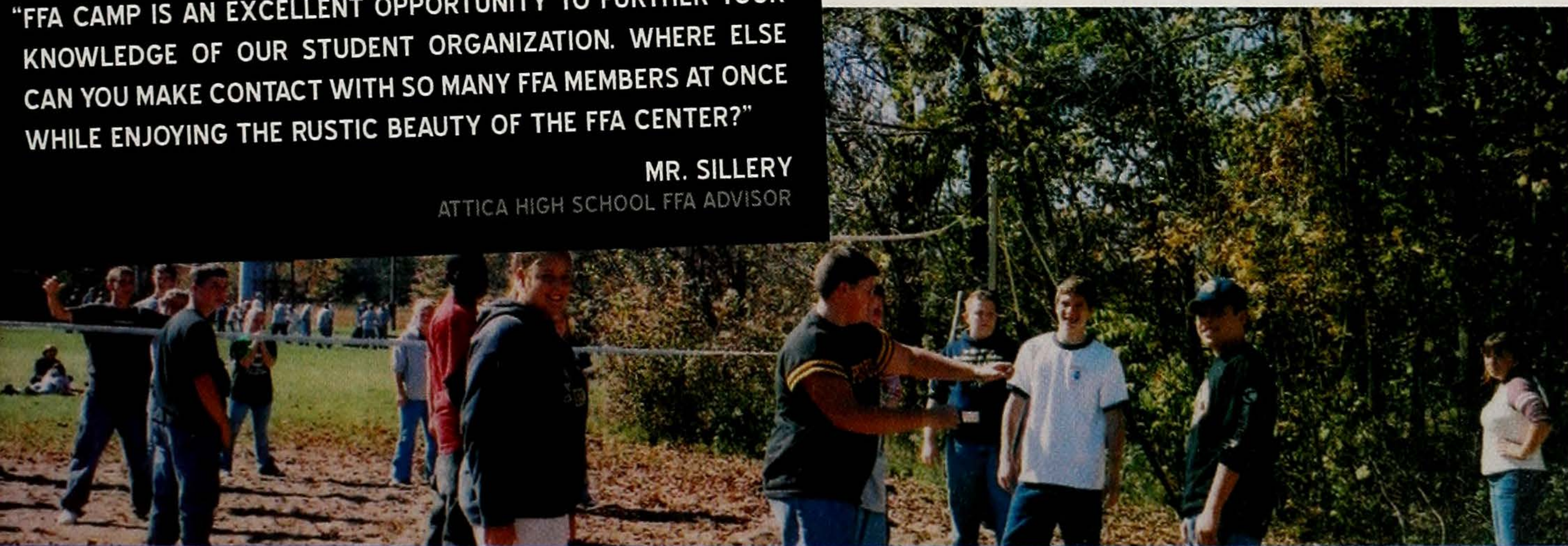
November 19-21, 2004

FIRE, or Foundations in Reaching Excellence, is designed for older members who want to continue their development through the FFA.

Think of what you would be doing instead of camp...probably doing something you have done hundreds of times before! Why not take advantage of this opportunity to have fun, make new friends, and learn a little more about the FFA?

"FFA CAMP IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR STUDENT ORGANIZATION. WHERE ELSE CAN YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH SO MANY FFA MEMBERS AT ONCE WHILE ENJOYING THE RUSTIC BEAUTY OF THE FFA CENTER?"

MR. SILLERY
ATTICA HIGH SCHOOL FFA ADVISOR



Bugs...Don't You Just Love Them?

By Joey Dunn

Okay. So you have just joined FFA or have been in FFA for about a year. But you want to know more about this organization and find new things to participate in. Now think back to what you enjoyed doing when you were younger. Does that remind you of bugs? Well if it does then maybe Entomology is for you. Entomology is a Career Development Event that FFA offers that is not commonly known but can be very beneficial for students.

Are you now wondering why you had not heard of Entomology before? Entomology is a great contest that unfortunately most schools do not participate in.

"Entomology is a contest that is not well known around the state so it gives the kids that do it a better chance to compete in a contest at the state level," said Todd Ault.

Entomology gives students the opportunity to study agriculture from a different perspective. You will learn what insects affect crops and how. You might even learn some interesting

facts about insects that you did not know before. This



contest entails identification of common insects, meaning there is memorization involved. Not too many people enjoy memorizing, but through Entomology you might learn different, easier ways of memorizing, helping you in school

as well as in the contest itself. There are fun ways of memorization. You could make a song to help you memorize or make a rhyme or you could make up a completely random story to help memorize.

The state Entomology contest is on the same day as the state Crops and Forestry contests are, December 11, 2004, at Purdue University. In the contest you have to identify fifty different adult or immature insects, and answer a twenty-five question quiz. Each insect is worth five points, for a total of 250 points for the identification portion. Each question on the quiz is worth two points, giving you a grand total of 300 points for the contest.

Are you thinking, "This sounds like a great contest but I do not know anything about bugs?" My suggestion then would be to go to your advisor for the facts. If they do not know then there are other people that would be a tremendous help. Other teachers in the school, such as a biology teacher might know more about insects. Extension Agents and the Department of Natural Resources are also very knowledgeable in all agriculture areas.

There are many career opportunities in this field. A field scout would have to know what insects are valuable to crops and which ones are not. Teaching Entomology at a college, a scientist studying insects, and consultants on integrated pest management are

just a few career ideas in the field of Entomology. You could also raise honeybees or sell insecticide.

Now are you interested in bugs? Almost all of us were at one point in our life, why not continue those fun filled days of catching bugs and participate in Entomology Evaluation? Just talk to your advisor and your chapter members and get a team together and judge those bugs! ★





The Indiana FFA Leadership Center

It's the Natural Place to Meet for more people than only Indiana FFA

The Indiana FFA Leadership Center hosts over 10,000 people annually. Did you know that only 1/3 of those guests are FFA members? 'Non-FFA' guests' usage of the Leadership Center enables the facility to offer discounted rates to FFA members. You can help the Leadership Center help you!

Word-of-mouth marketing has proven to be one of the best methods of marketing. Start sharing with your friends, family, school administration and staff, community leaders and business owners about your experiences at the Indiana FFA Leadership Center. Tell them about the beautiful facility you've come to love and how this place has helped to mold and shape you into the youthful leader you are today! So get out there and START TALKING!!!

Talking Points for You to Share:

- ✓ **Beautiful 170 acre facility**
- ✓ **Meeting space for up to 500**
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- ✓ **All events are customer driven**



Common types of groups that choose the Leadership Center:

- ✓ **School groups including bands, peer facilitation groups, student councils**
- ✓ **Companies hosting customer appreciation days, staff training, holiday parties**
- ✓ **Youth and adult church groups**
- ✓ **Community organizations**
- ✓ **Weddings and receptions**

Contact info:

Indiana FFA Leadership Center
 Dawn Davis, Facilities & Marketing Manager
 P.O. Box 9
 Trafalgar, Indiana 46181
 (317) 878 – 5464 ext. 2
 Email: mdd@mindspring.com
 Website: www.indianaffacenter.com





FFA Helps Members Find Jobs

By Jessica Geisler

FFA has always been an organization that helps members find their passions in agriculture. Upon graduation of high school, many FFA members find themselves entering into the workforce or higher education in a general area that relates back to their favorite FFA activity. Mark Thomas, a resource specialist who works with the Department of Natural Resources and the Soil and Water Conservation District found this to be true also.

When Mark first joined the FFA, he became involved in numerous activities, but his favorite was soils evaluation. He also served as Chapter Secretary and President during his four years in FFA, but the memory he enjoys most was winning area soils in 1982. Winning that contest was what pushed Mark in the direction of Soil Conservation.

Each day, Mark is in either the office, or scouting fields. He works with landowners and farmers to solve land erosion. As Mark puts it, "I help people keep dirt where it is at, because soil sediment is the

number one pollution problem in water." Mark spends his time designing and installing conservation practices. He is constantly taking phone calls and setting appointments to implement the designs he creates with computer programs according to the landowners' wants and needs. This includes conservation planning, watershed planning, and talking to local community members to teach knowledge of conservation practices. He also has to keep track of everything he does, because these are government programs that he implements.

Working with the actual conservation process is not all that he does. Mark also gets to travel around Ripley, Decatur, and Switzerland County to teach people about conservation. He enjoys working with many FFA members to put on events such as Ag Day, Field Days, and Forestry Days. The SWCD even hosts the Ripley County Soils Invitational, which Mark assists in running. Getting to work with all kinds of people is what makes this job interesting. His biggest

highlight over the past 14 years was being awarded the honorary FFA degree.

Some of the most interesting things that have happened while on the job is getting to survey in a lightening storm and watch lightening strike less than 50 feet away, traveling up and down creeks to survey, and going back to look at projects from the early 90's and getting to see the changes that he has made.

"The FFA taught me leadership, responsibility, organizational skills, and how to communicate with all kinds of people. Even parliamentary procedure skills are used at the annual SWCD meetings," says Mark Thomas. "I learned to have fun, work hard, and enjoy everything that I do while being a member of the FFA. I still implement these morals today." ★



CAUTION: CONSTRUCTION AHEAD FOR SOUTHMONT

By Eric Barnard

Wishes can come true, and as the Southmont FFA has seen they can all come at one time. The Southmont chapter is looking forward to having several new tools at hand to further develop their agricultural knowledge. A renovation project will be adding several new areas to the school, and they will provide some great opportunities for members.

The Southmont FFA is located in District IV and has about 60 members, including their junior high. They are located about seven miles south of Crawfordsville in a booming area that has forced their school to do a major renovation and expansion. The school has cited a need for larger and more updated learning areas in order to fulfill the demands of a growing school population and agriculture interest.

"The school really didn't start with an Ag department," said Gary Mosbaugh, chapter advisor. "It was just added into the area normally for industrial arts. It's really exciting that we're going to have an actual department."

The additions make a long list of exciting attractions for FFA members. Two new science classrooms and several shops for ag sciences and mechanics top the list. The chapter has been active in raising Tilapia fish, and they will now be getting a new horticulture/aquaculture shop. With this they will be able to breed and raise fish and also raise plants through hydroponics.

Southmont has usually had a very strong horticulture program. Their flowers have often graced the FFA Pavilion at the Indiana State Fair and brought about SAE programs for the students. A brand new glass greenhouse is part of the plan and will include many interesting features. One is that the green house can be partitioned into two different sections. Each section can have its climate independently controlled in order to provide for the best growing conditions for the plants.

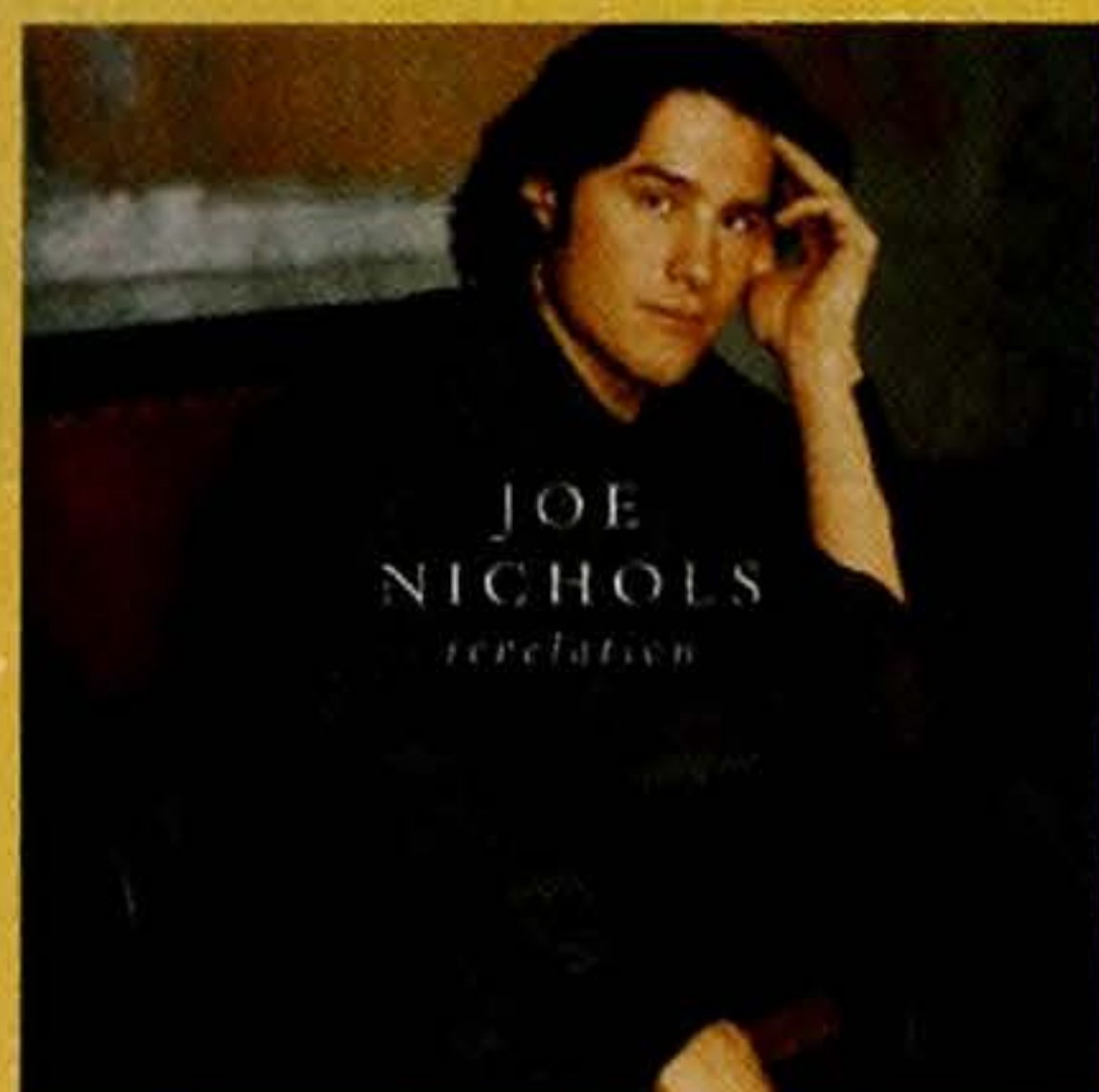
The students at Southmont are very excited about the new scenery that is coming for them. The school's classes have grown over the years and are actually pretty full. Normally classes would have to be juggled so that one class would be in the shop and one class would be in the classroom.

"It's been hard for the two teachers to teach separate classes with only one shop and one class room," said Lilly Paxton, a student at Southmont. "The new renovation will really help the teachers to have individuality and be focused on their classes. It will be really great to see the advantages this is going to make for the younger members."★



NEW MUSIC

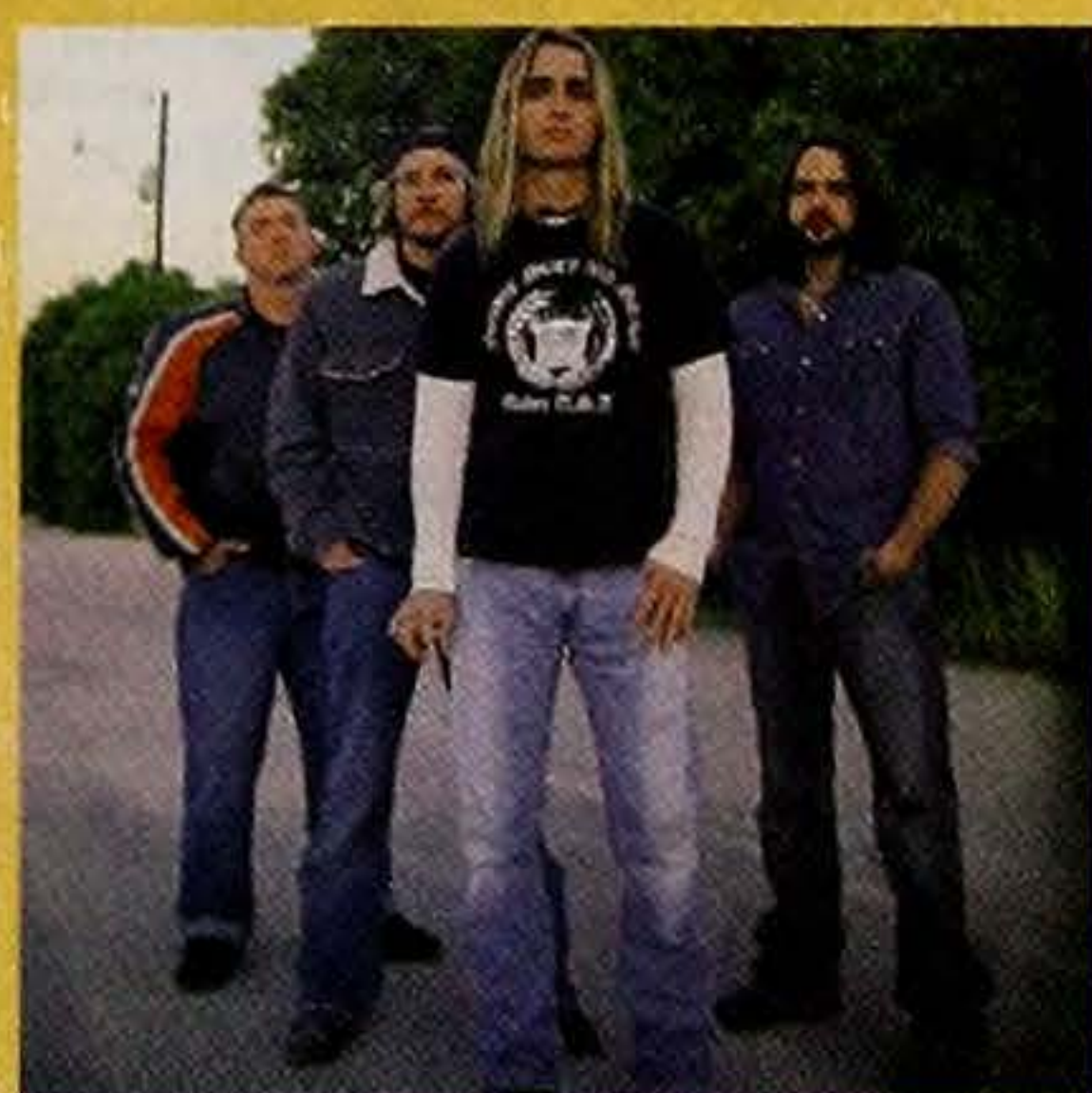
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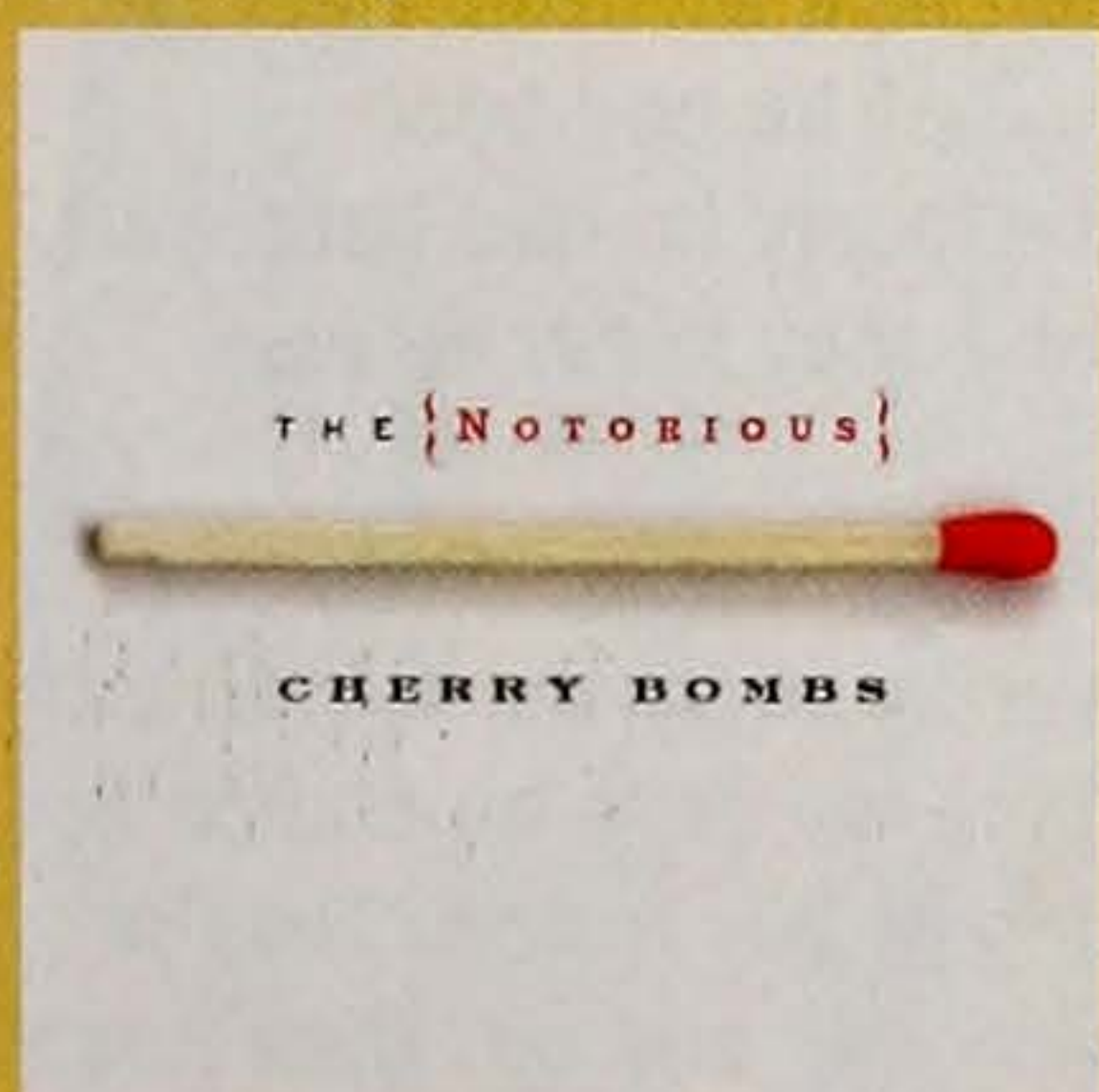
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ANN WOMACK * TOUR DATES WITH ZZ TOP, PAT
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GEORGE CANYON

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ONE GOOD FRIEND

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FEATURING "IT'S HARD TO KISS THE LIPS AT NIGHT
THAT CHEW YOUR @#& OUT ALL DAY LONG"

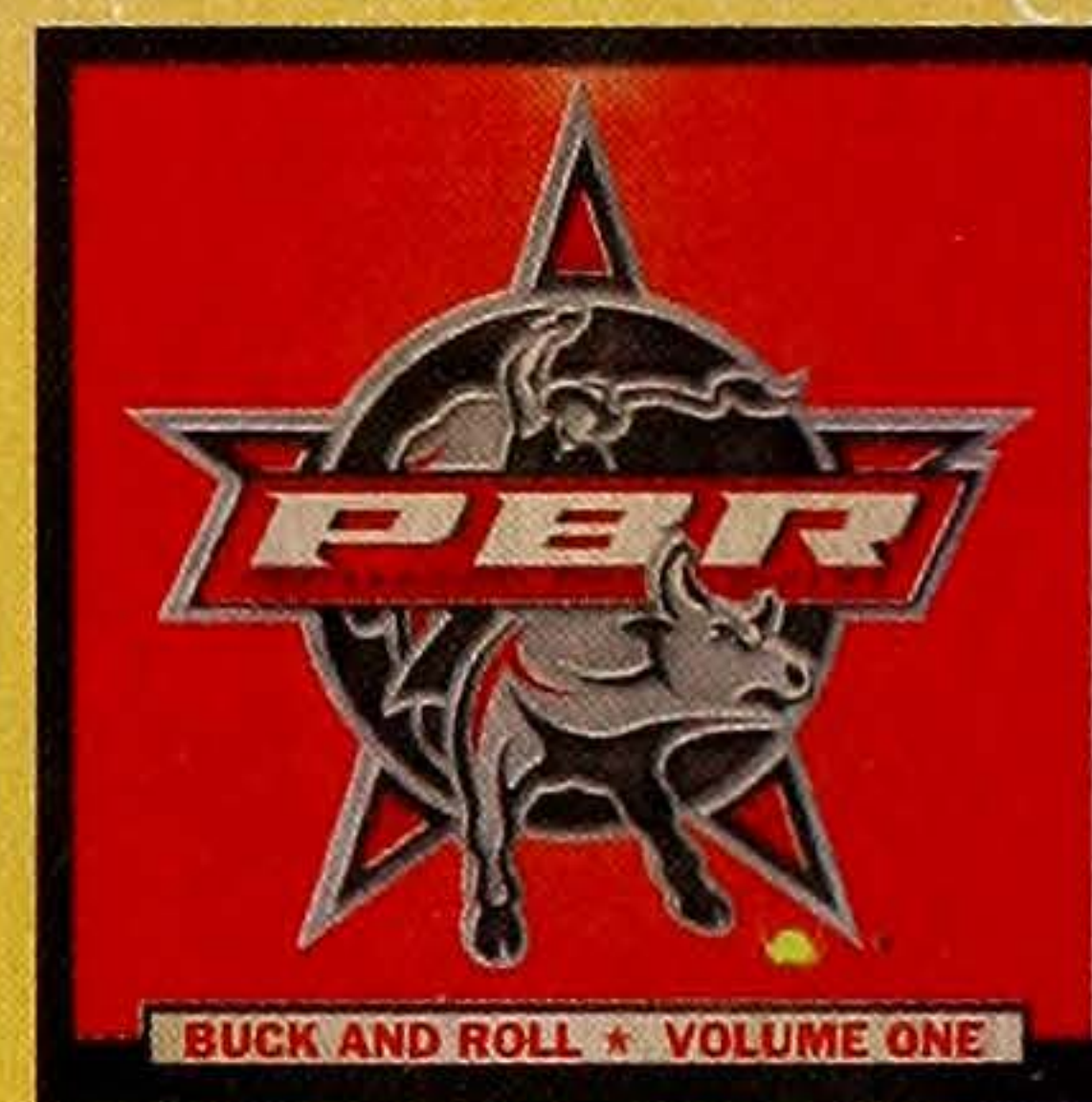


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Tunes for the troops

Toby Keith takes his show on the road

From humble beginnings as a member of Oklahoma's Moore FFA Chapter, Toby Keith is now the reigning Academy Of Country Music's "Entertainer of The Year." As if that weren't enough, he was named the most successful country artist of the new century by United Stations Radio Networks, and he's sold more than 20 million albums.

Not bad for a musician who started out in a garage band with his high school buddies. Even though Toby has lost track of the FFA jacket he wore during those years, he hasn't lost some of the influences he was exposed to through his involvement in FFA—patriotism and community service.

He recently demonstrated both during an extensive U.S.O. tour that took him to visit U.S. troops in Kosovo, Germany, Italy, Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition to performing and meeting troops, he visited several hospitals and spent time talking with the wounded.

Several heart-warming stories have since emerged. One soldier's family back in the states saw a picture on the Internet of Toby with their son in a hospital. Prior to seeing photo, all they knew was that he had been wounded and had no idea how seriously he had been hurt. When they saw their son with Toby, they knew he was going to be okay.

In describing his song, "American Soldier," Toby says, "I get accused of banging the war drum by the media. I'm all for peace, but from time to time we have no choice but to fight for our freedom. So I support our troops. They're working people—they get up every day and put their boots on and go to work; every day they defend our country overseas. But in this song, you don't realize the working people I'm singing about are soldiers until the end."

Toby's current CD is "Shock'n Y'all." For more information: www.tobykeith.com

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Living the dream

For Rascal Flatts, it's all about the music

Four short years ago, the guys in Rascal Flatts—Jay DeMarcus, Gary Levox and Joe Don Rooney—were three unknowns. Now, after selling four million CDs, the band has found its audience and its sound.

"It's unbelievable—the thrill of a lifetime," Jay says. "We're beyond blessed. It keeps getting better and better. It's meant bigger crowds and more people knowing our music."

The seeds of the trio were sewn in Columbus, Ohio, where second cousins Gary and Jay grew up as close friends. Their musical families got together often for jam sessions, inspiring a love of music in both.

Jay took that love of music to Nashville in 1992, using his voice and instrumental skills in a Christian group called East to West. In 1997, he convinced a reluctant Gary to leave behind his job to follow his musical dreams as well.

"We started writing together," says Jay. "We caught up on lost time and sang every chance we got. We just hit it hard. We'd stay up endless nights writing music and playing together." Joe Don, who grew up in tiny Picher, Oklahoma, later joined the group and the stage was set for a first album and opening slots for the likes of Alan Jackson, Jo Dee Messina and Toby Keith.

The band is now known for its potent combination of superb musicianship and solid songwriting. "It's awesome to see people responding so well to music that really came from your soul," Jay says. "It's been almost surreal. I keep waiting to wake up."

"We're absolutely living out a dream," Gary admits, "and we're just going to keep on rolling."

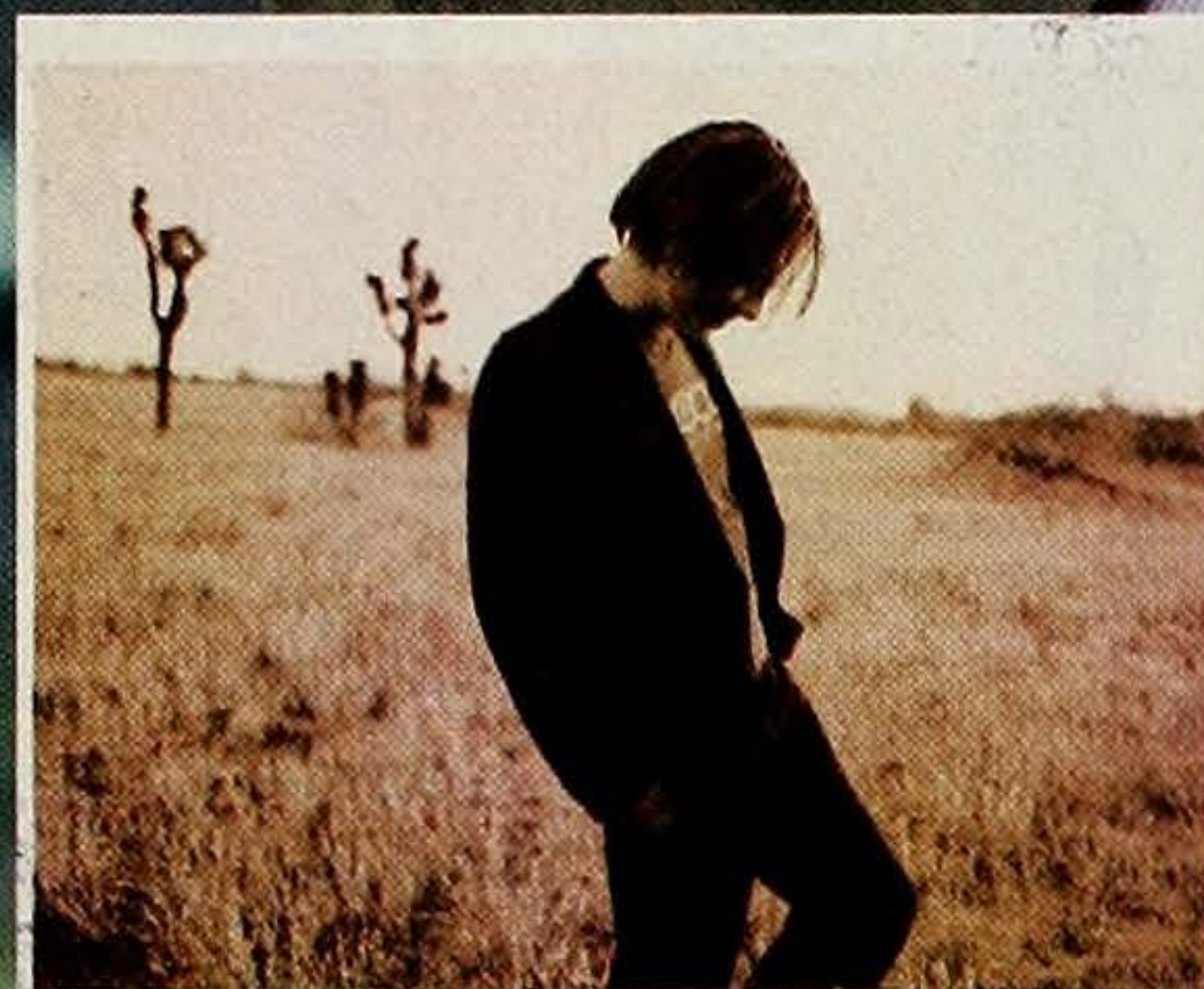
Rascal Flatt's current CD is "Melt." More information:
www.rascalflatts.com



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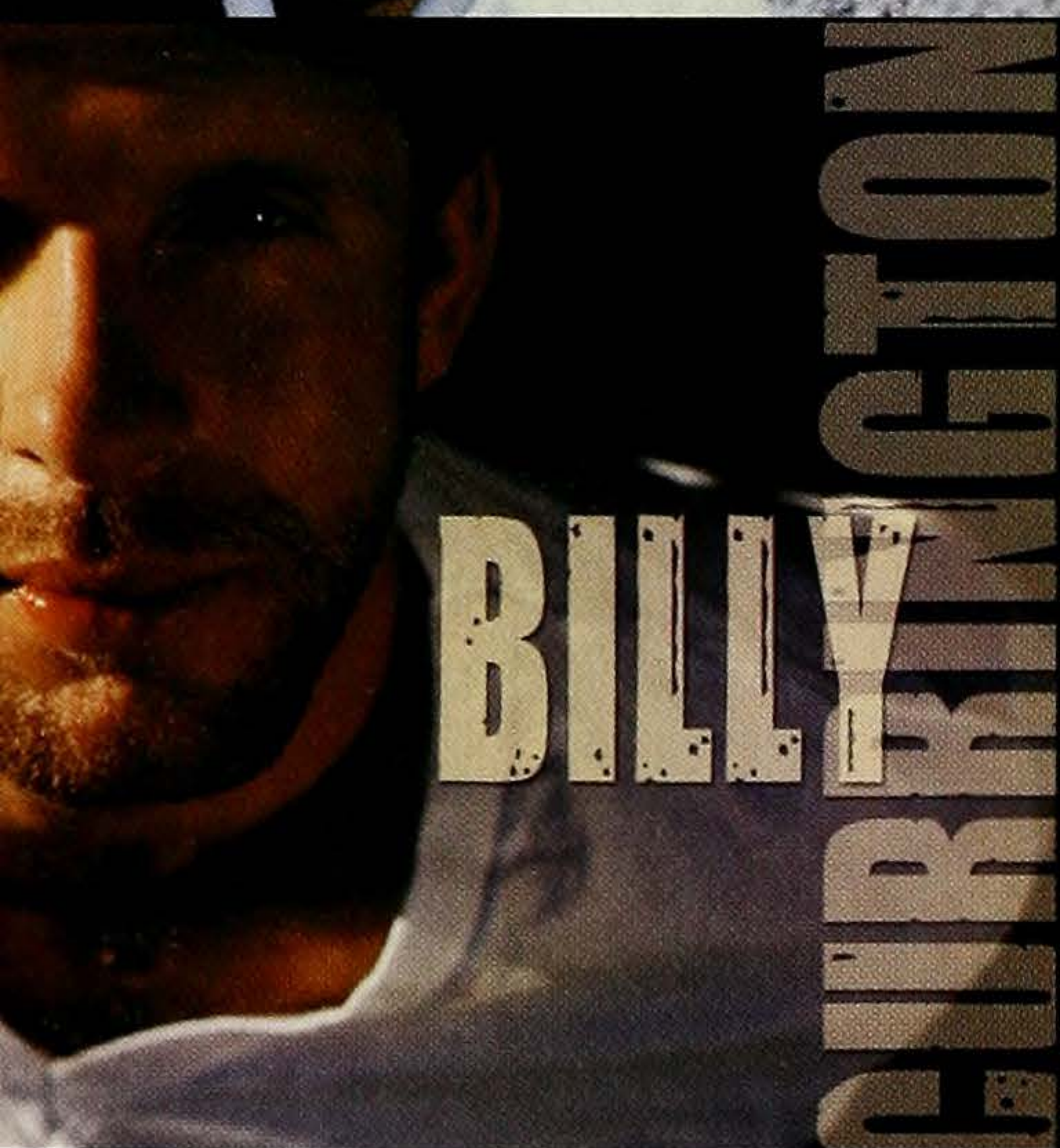


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My favorite band

The National FFA Western Region Vice President
interviews Cody Canada of **Cross Canadian Ragweed**

By Casey Hogan

Traveling around the country this year on behalf of FFA members, it is very easy to figure out the things that I am passionate about—Texas Rangers baseball, sushi and, of course, my favorite band, Cross Canadian Ragweed. After their concert at the Texas FFA Convention this summer, they took time away from hanging out with their families to say hello to National FFA President Javier Moreno and me. Javier was surprised they took the time, but I wasn't, because they are a great group of guys and that's what makes them successful. It is my honor to interview Cody Canada. By the way, Cody and the rest of the band are all former FFA members.

Q: For those who don't know, tell us how the name Cross Canadian Ragweed came about?

A: It's our last names put together. Grady Cross, Cody Canada and Randy Ragsdale. We came up with it at a high school party. I don't really remember who came up with it. It was kind of a group effort.

Q: What made you join FFA during your high school years in Yukon, Oklahoma?

A: It was just what everyone did. And Mr. Goodson was the coolest teacher at the school. We all had horses and animals we showed, so it was a natural choice for us.

Q: What valuable lessons did you learn from being an FFA member and taking an agriculture class?

A: Basic responsibility and hard work.

Q: Take us back to 1994. How did the band's musical journey begin?

A: Randy came by my house one afternoon and wanted to play. I told him I was busy and blew him off. Luckily he was persistent and we finally got together over at his place to jam. It all took off from there.

Q: What allowed you to pull through as a group when times were tough and it didn't look like y'all would make it?

A: Just being good friends I guess. We were all always there for each other.

Q: There are lots of FFA members out there pursuing not only dreams in music but in all areas of life, what is the one piece of advice you would give to them?

A: Just be patient and keep at it. It's a long, hard road. If you love what you're doing, though, it will be worth it.

Q: How important are setting goals to Cross Canadian Ragweed?

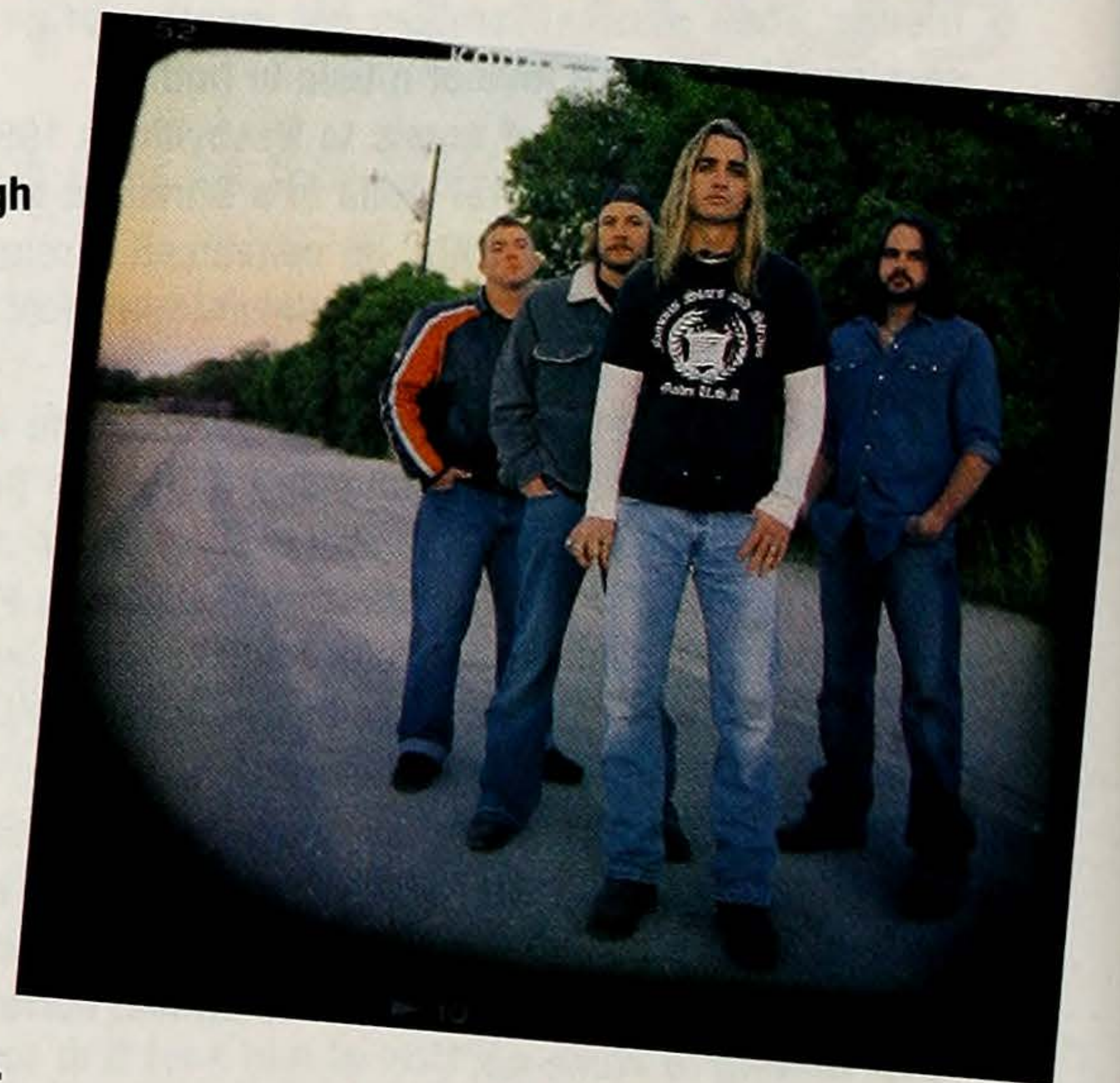
A: Musically it's very important. We all strive to become better musicians. As far as record sales and that sort of thing, we don't really worry about it—we concentrate on the music.

Q: Any words of wisdom for FFA members?

A: Follow your dreams and don't let anyone tell you that you can't achieve them.

Well, Cody, thanks for your time and keep up the good work and awesome music!

Cross Canadian Ragweed's new CD is "Soul Gravy." For more information:
www.crosscanadianragweed.com

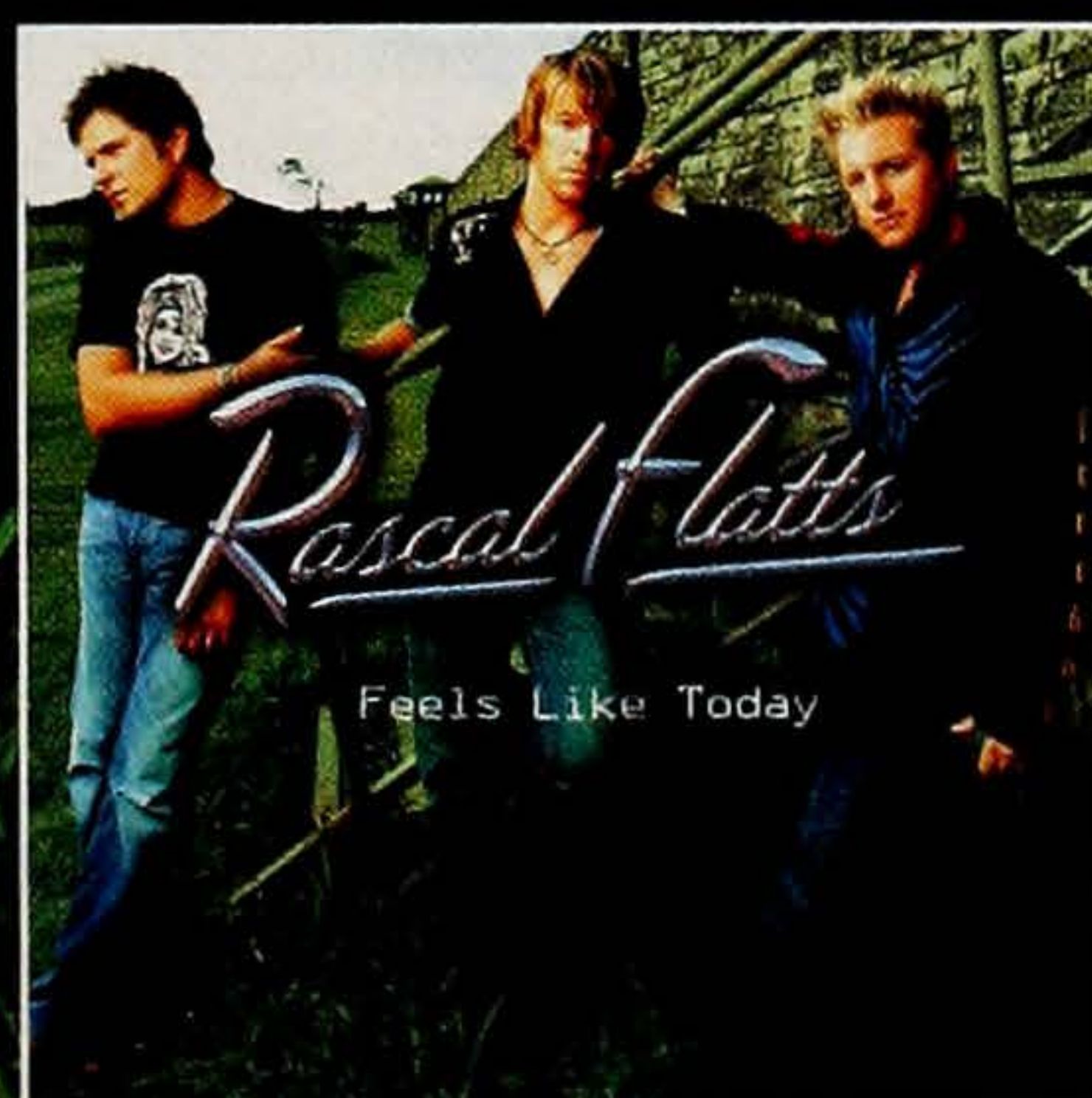


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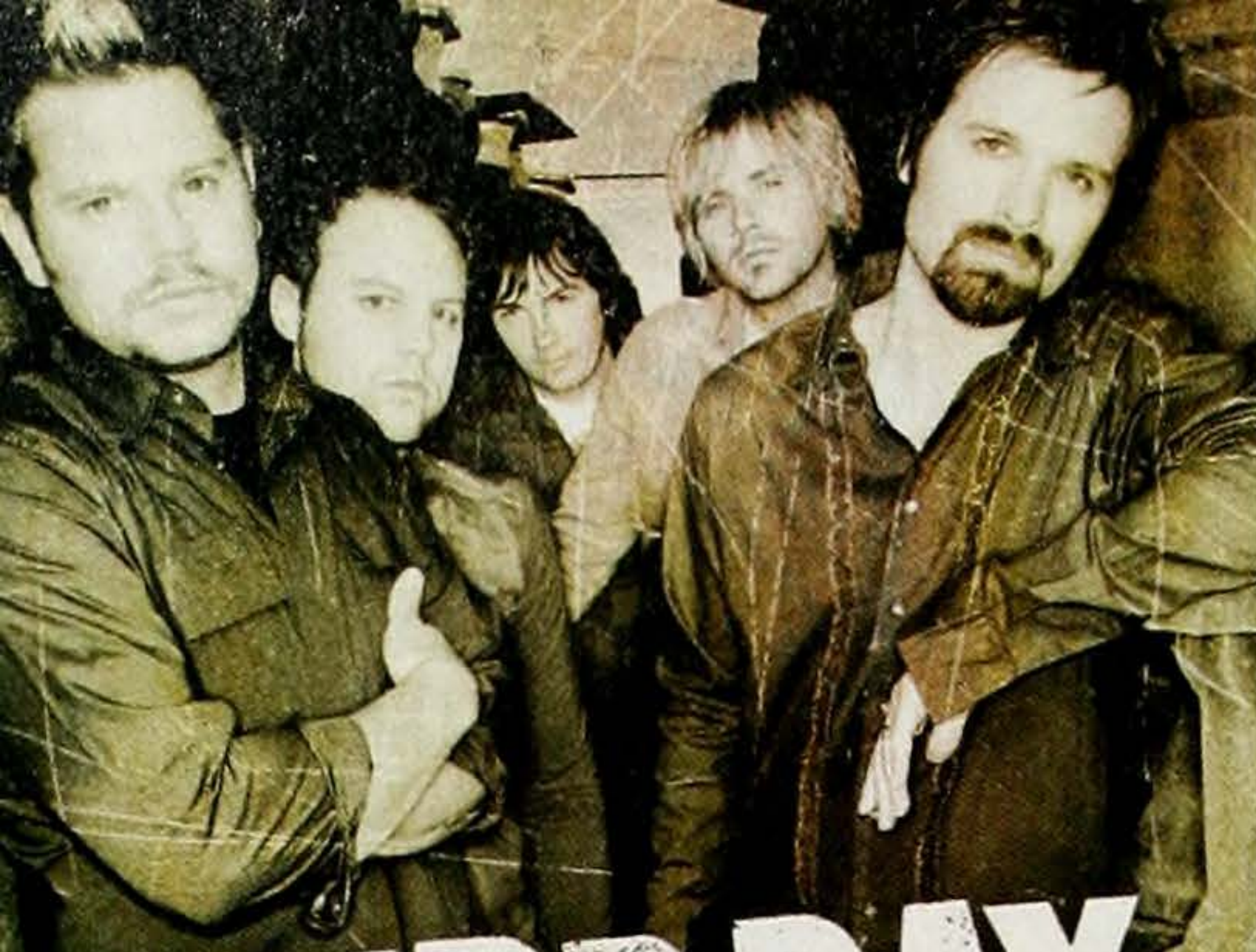
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10/13	Green Bay, WI	11/19	St. Charles, MO
10/14	Detroit, MI	11/21	Lake Charles, LA
10/15	Columbus, OH	11/26	Columbia, SC
10/16	Cincinnati, OH	11/27	Ozark, AL
10/17	Pittsburgh, PA	11/28	Tupelo, MS
10/21	Hershey, PA	12/1	Abilene, TX
10/22	Bethlehem, PA	12/2	Wichita Falls, TX
10/24	Lowell, MA	12/3	Belton, TX
10/27	Charlotte, NC	12/4	San Antonio, TX
10/28	Hampton, WV	12/5	Oklahoma City, OK
10/29	Hampton, VA	12/8	Amarillo, TX
10/30	Fayetteville, NC	12/9	El Paso, TX
11/3	Tallahassee, FL	12/10	Albuquerque, NM
11/4	Savannah, GA	12/11	Colorado Springs, CO
11/5	Fort Myers, FL		

All Dates & Cities Subject to Change

Keeping it in the family

The Jenkins' music comes from experience

For The Jenkins, music has always been a family affair. And you don't have to listen long to their self-titled debut album to uncover a host of family secrets.

The Jenkins, a stunning mother-and-two-daughter trio, blend the pure, traditional harmonies of Kentucky bluegrass with contemporary sounds and themes to create unique and irresistible music. Although they carry on the rich tradition of country singing families, from the Carter Family to The Judds, their music is fresh and different because they sing the stories of their lives.

"The Jenkins," the trio's debut CD serves as a musical diary for the entire family.

Nancy and her daughters Brodie, age 17 and Kacie, age 19, penned seven of the 10 songs, all of which stemmed from personal experiences. "We bring the Jenkins family household with us wherever we go with our music," says Brodie. "You can call our songs 'conversations put to music' because they are." Adds Kacie, "When we're singing them, it's everything we've lived through."

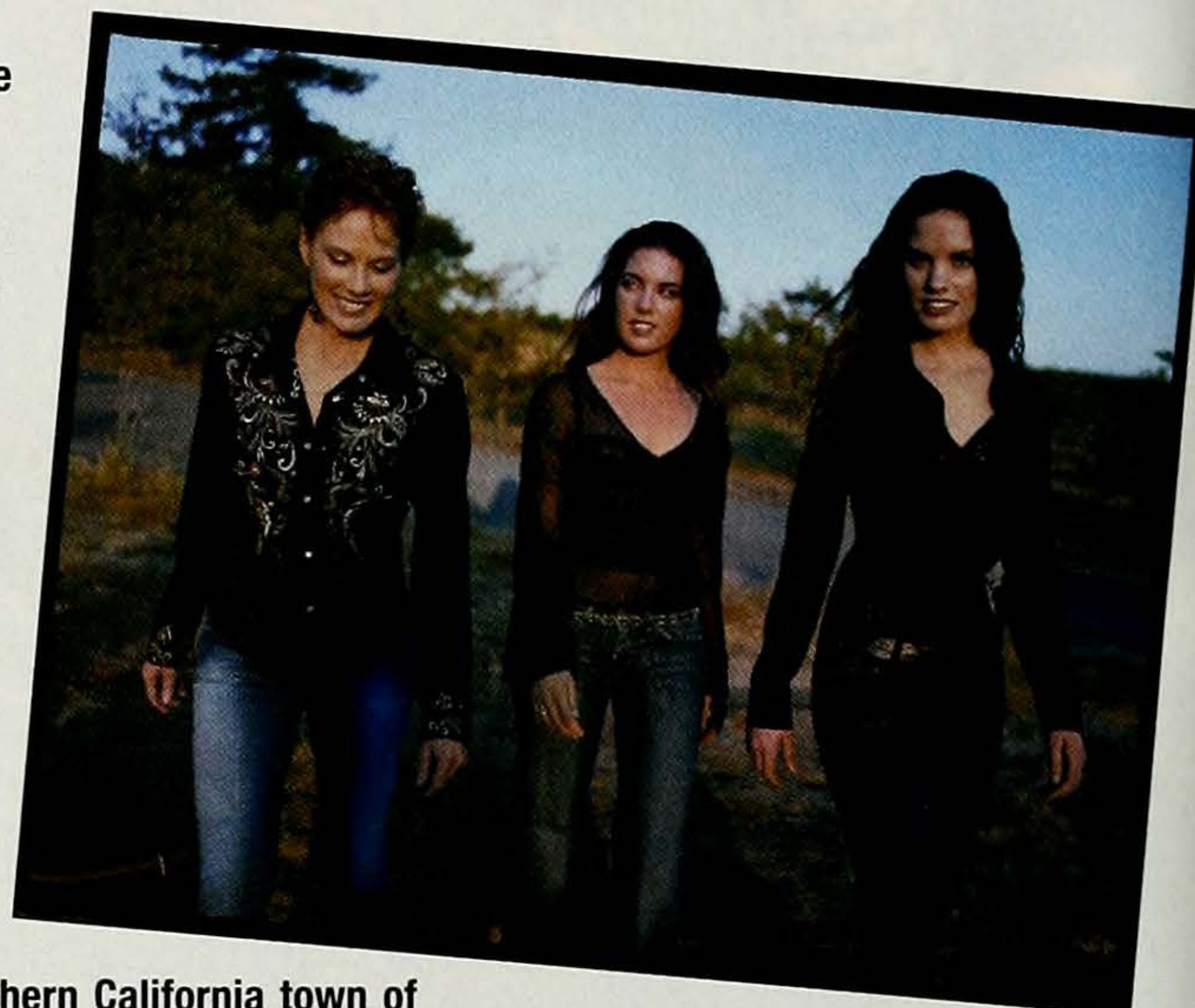
But the Jenkins never dreamed that anyone else would listen to their musical family album. After all, they live in the small northern California town of Sebastopol, where people make wine, not records. The girls were raised in an old farmhouse on a vineyard, where they stomped grapes and studied for school. Singing was just a pleasant pastime that brought the family closer. "We had no idea that this was going to work at all," Kacie says. "It was just a fun adventure."

However, that all changed the first time all three took the stage in public. What seemed like a routine school production launched the careers of the then-unnamed trio after their impressive performance immediately sparked attention and career activity. Their wildest fantasies soon became a reality when Capitol Records offered them a deal and a chance to share their personal stories with the world.

"God Only Knows," which is about a young girl asking her grandfather whether her dreams would come true, paints the portrait of the visits Brodie and Kacie used to make to their grandparents. "I feel like it really encompasses everything that our music is about: family connections, stories, love and a sense of hope for the future," Kacie says.

The recording projects the joy and enthusiasm reflected in the attitudes of confident, coming-of-age women who are strong, independent and secure. "There's an innocence there because these girls have experienced the thrill of falling in love, and they both have been hurt by things, but nothing a good cry and a shopping trip can't fix," Nancy says.

The Jenkins new CD is "The Jenkins." For more information: www.the-jenkins.com



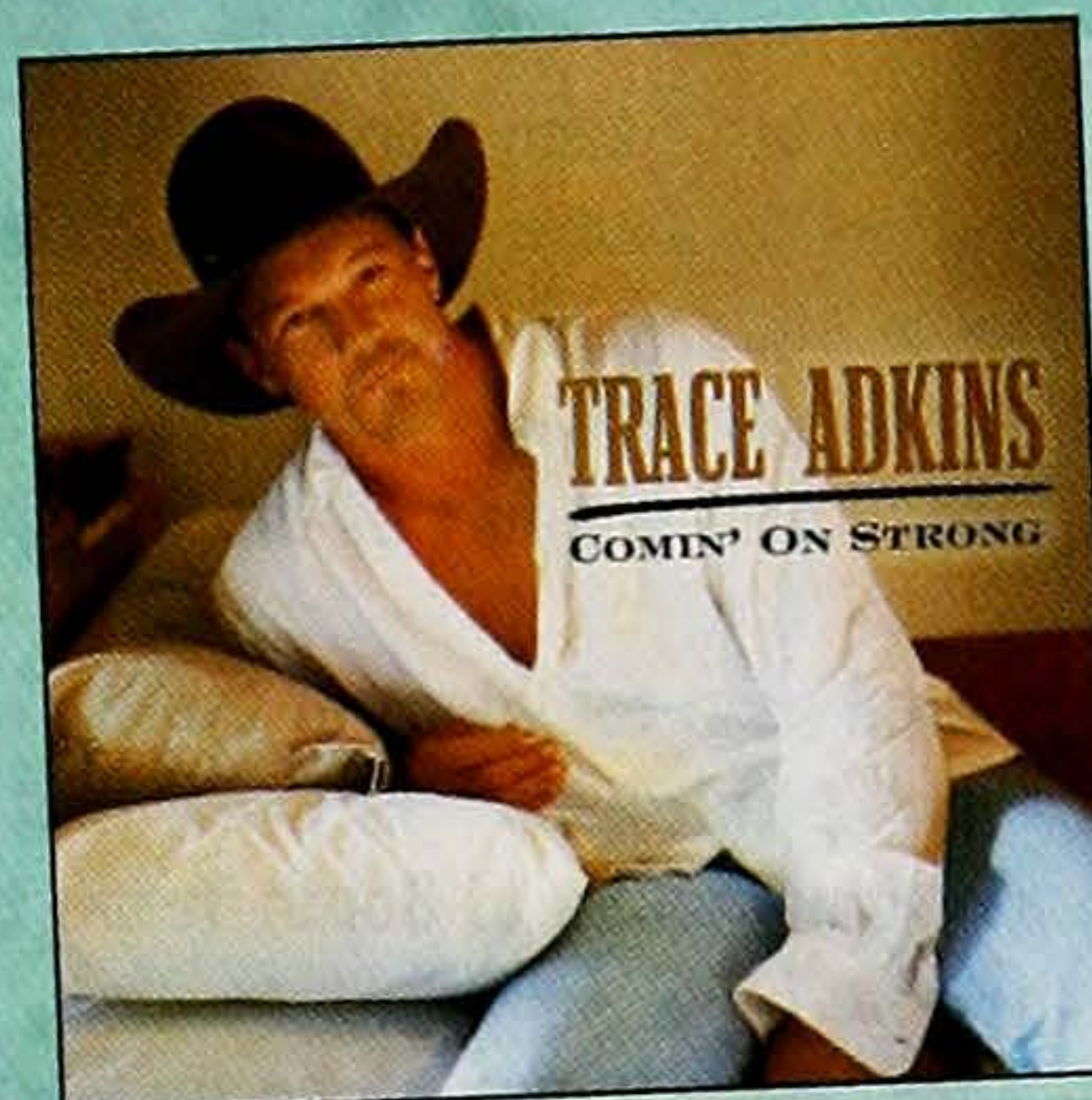
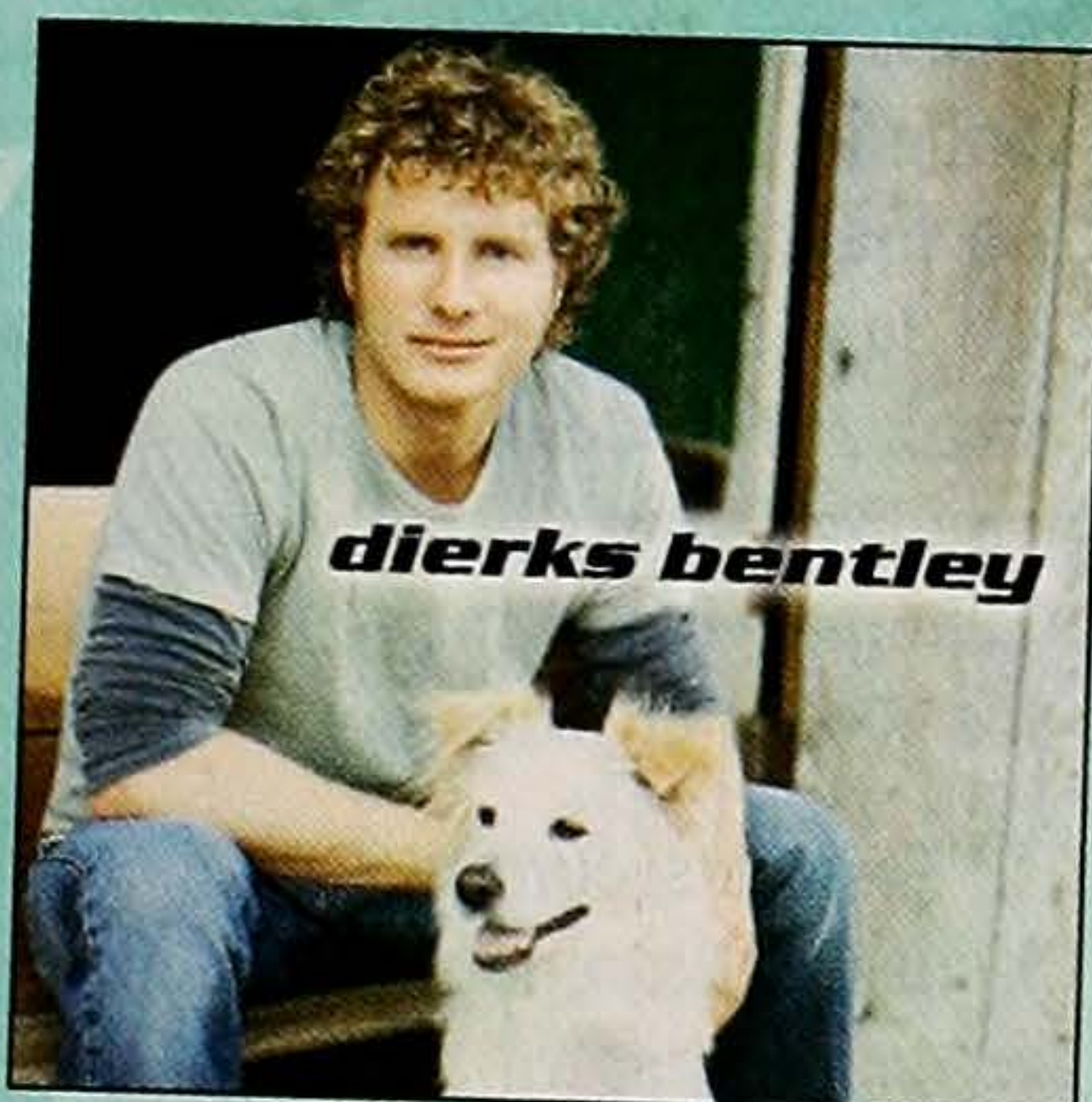
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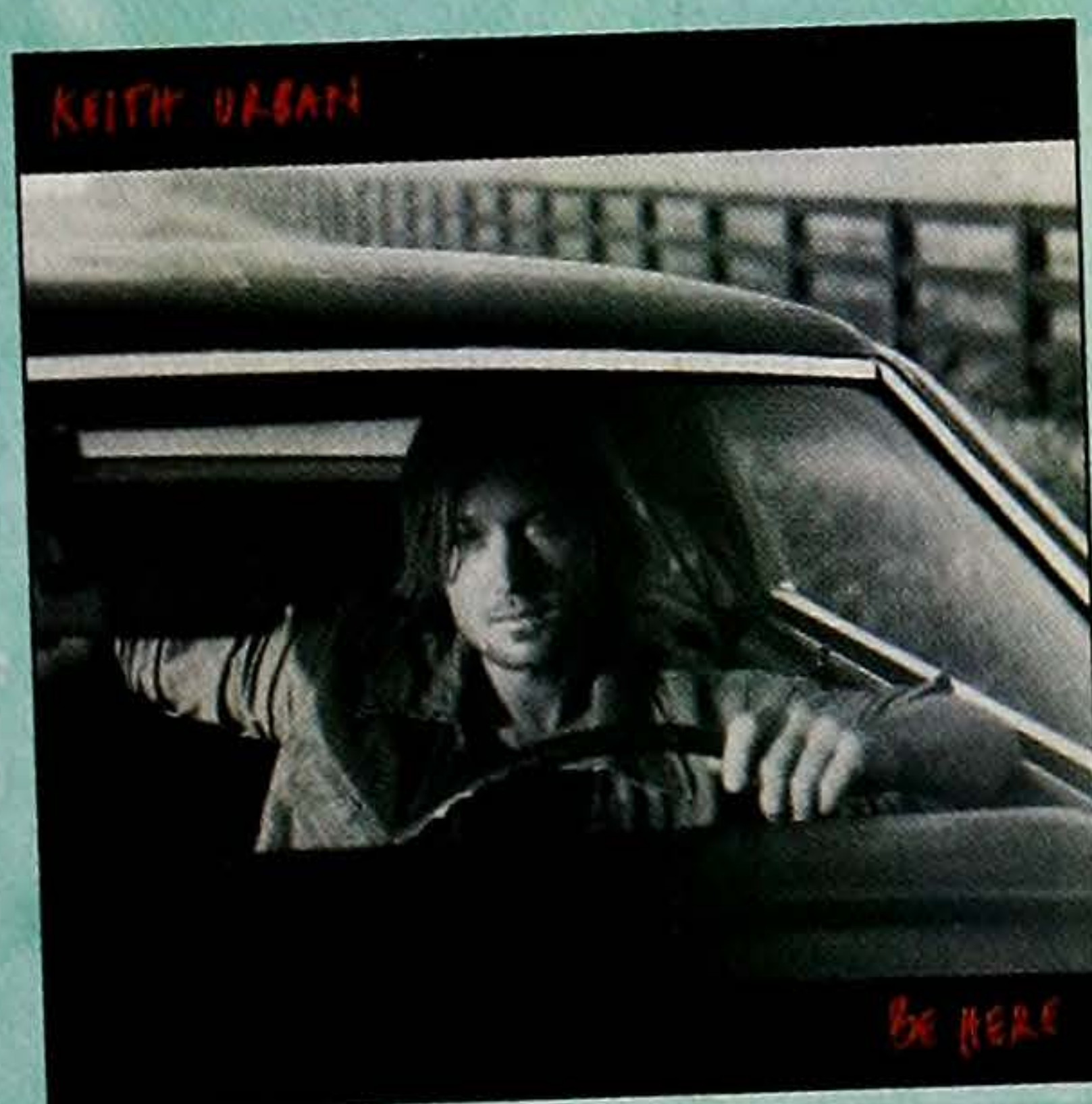
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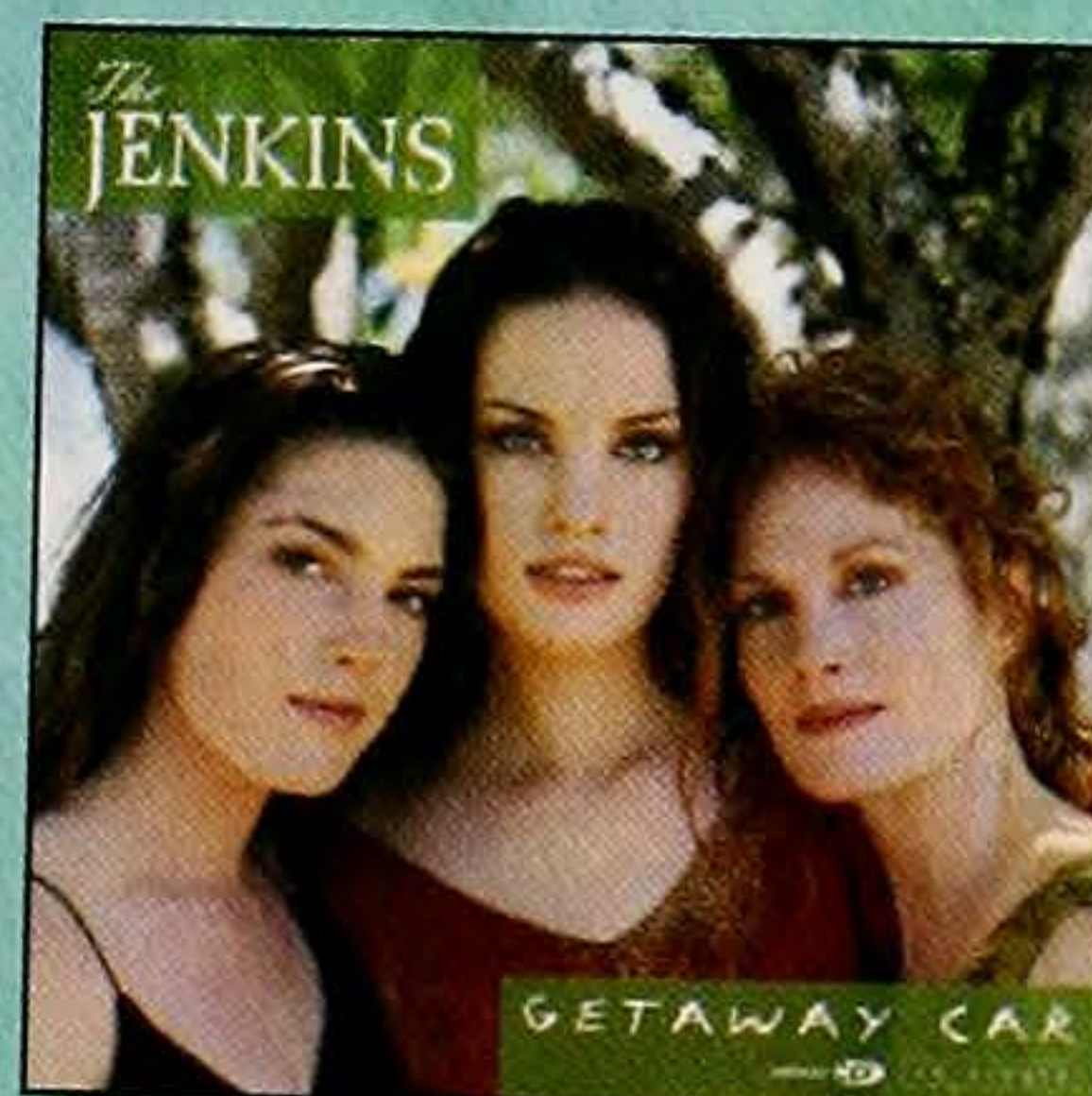
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Strait from the President

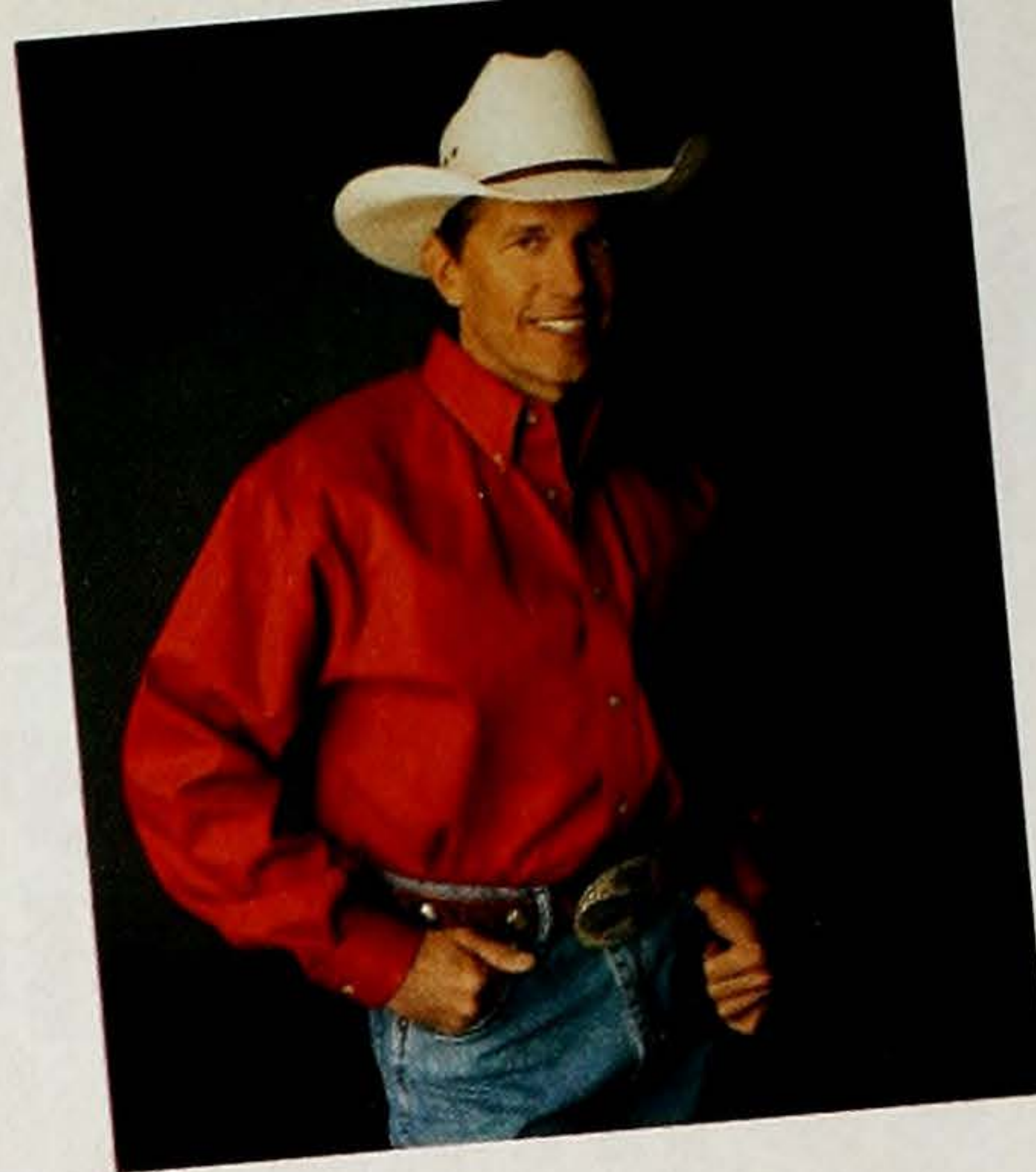
George Strait earns the praise from former President George Bush and earns an honor from President George W. Bush

At 2002's Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, George Bush the elder had this to say about fellow Texan George Strait, who played at the event: "Everybody at the rodeo loves him, everyone in Texas loves him and everyone across this country loves his music. And I can tell you, he's just as great a guy in person as he is up here on this stage."

The next year, President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush invited the singer to The White House to award Strait the 2003 National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence. It is given annually to those who make extraordinary contributions to the creation, growth and support of the arts in the United States.

"I'm deeply honored to be named as a recipient of the President's National Medal of Arts," Strait said. "To think that my career has taken me from the honkytonks of South Texas to the White House is really remarkable."

Former President Bush's remarks from Houston can be heard



on Strait's first ever live album, "For the Last Time: George Strait Live from the Astrodome." The performance, before a record-breaking audience of 68,266 at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo last March, marked the event's final appearance at the historic Astrodome after 37 years. It also proved to be the perfect occasion for his first-ever live album.

Just don't be fooled when Strait croons, on the longing finale, "The Cowboy Rides Away," when he says, "It's time to say goodbye to yesterday / this is where the cowboy rides away." This man is not hanging up his guitar, his patented Resistol hat, his Wrangler jeans or his Justin boots any time soon.

George's current CD is "For the Last Time: George Strait Live from the Astrodome." For more information: www.georgestrait.com

Speaking out

Third Day takes an honest approach to songwriting and making the world a better place

Third Day has always been known as a band that stand up for honesty, spiritual faith and making the world a better place. On their new album, "Wire," Third Day creates music inspired by their own experiences with the thrills and pitfalls of being celebrities.

"It's always a risk when you're a musician and you start writing about being a musician," Mark Lee laughs. "There's a fine line between writing it in a way that can be universal and writing it in a way that's like, 'Oh, woe is me, I'm on tour and miserable,' where everybody's like, 'Well, I'll take your job.'"

On the surface, the songs reflect their own unique vocation. But on a deeper level, they deal less with the issues of a musician's life than with topics such as risk of failure, loneliness and struggle — themes that easily mirror the experiences and issues of fans in more traditional lines of work.

Expanding from those central songs, the material on the CD builds upon the

issues that the band's members—each of whom is married with children—face in balancing their work with their families and spiritual lives.

"This is our most personal record," Tai Anderson affirms. "Because of that, the songs aren't about big, sweeping principles. But being so personal probably makes it our deepest record spiritually."

Part of what keeps their faith and spirituality strong their commitment making the world a better place for people who face poverty, disease and hunger on a daily basis. The group is heavily involved with DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa), the relief organization World Vision and Habitat For Humanity. Following a recent trip overseas, the group has begun addressing the AIDS crisis in Africa during its concert appearances, knowing that that step alone is a major risk.

"It's not a popular subject," Anderson concedes. "There are going to be people who will be offended by that, but it's the right thing to do. It's what's goin' on in the world. There might be some people that walk away, but we feel like most of our audience consists of great people, and when they hear about this problem and know there's something they can do about it, they'll respond."

Third Day's current CD is "Wire." For more information: www.thirdday.com



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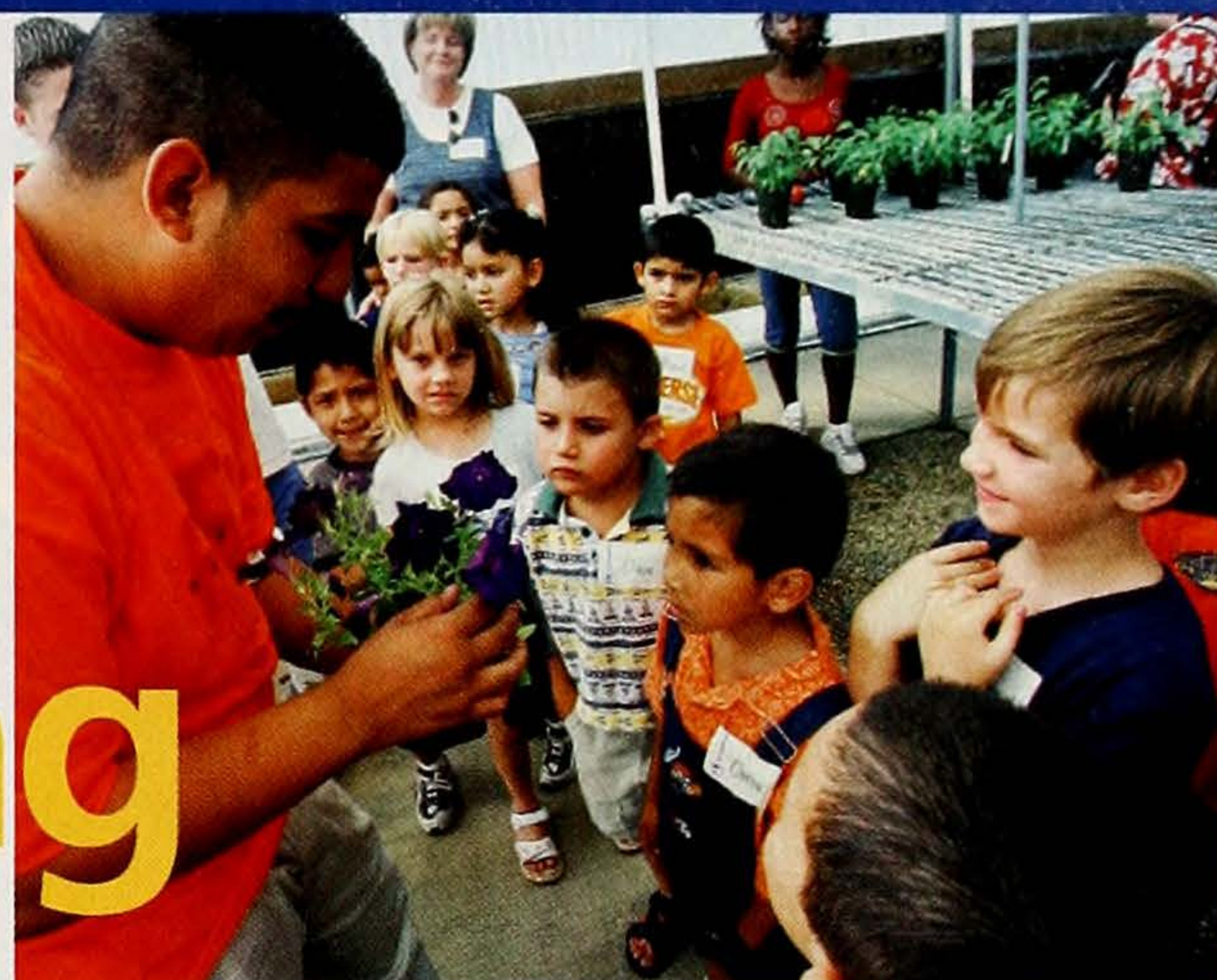
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Gone Fishin'

Florida FFA members learn all sides of an agriculture business by growing and selling fish

By Stephen Regenold

Gene Dulac, an FFA advisor and middle-school science teacher in DeLand, Florida, wanted to give his students a hands-on experience that would demonstrate the entire lifecycle of an agricultural product.

In 1988, while attending a national FFA symposium, the idea of an aquaculture experiment came up. Basically a fish farm, an aquaculture setup would let students see all sides of an agricultural business. Everything from the spawning of the eggs and the care of the fish to the marketing and selling of the product could be observed in a relatively short time period.

"With aquaculture, students see the whole enterprise system of one kind of agriculture business," Dulac says. "The kids can be a part of the breeding, raising, monitoring, feeding, harvesting, slaughtering, packaging, labeling and selling of the fish."

Under Dulac's direction, and with grants from the FFA and local businesses, the DeLand Middle School Aquaculture Project got rolling the same year Dulac attended the symposium. The school soon had a single tank of 250 tilapia fish that students cared for and raised.

Each year the project grew, and today the school has two ponds of tilapia. The students raise about 15,000

fish annually and literally sell tons of fish meat to local businesses, friends and family and large commercial accounts.

"The students are involved from start to finish," Dulac says, noting that they collect the money from the sales and put it into the school's FFA treasury. "They even have to follow up with customers if there are any problems."

GROWING THE FARM

With the tilapia operation running relatively smoothly and successfully, Dulac's students have expanded to a new breed in the past year. Sturgeon, a fish that's best known for its caviar, is the world's largest freshwater fish breed, with the biggest fish reaching as much as 2,000 pounds. Sturgeon is an ancient species, dating back 200 million years, and some can live as long as 100 years in the wild.

Despite their large size and longevity, some types of sturgeon have suffered from pollution, overfishing and the damming of rivers where the fish spawn. The Atlantic and Gulf sturgeon, two of the 24 sturgeon, are considered endangered species.

DeLand Middle School began its sturgeon program in early 2003, acquiring Osetra and Siberian breeds with the help of another local aquac-

ulture operation. The fish began as 12-inch-long fingerlings weighing just a few ounces apiece. After a year and a half of care by Dulac and his students, some of the fish have grown to five feet in length and eight to ten pounds in weight.

This growth, which is significantly faster than sturgeon achieve in the wild, can be attributed to DeLand Middle School's careful monitoring and care. The sturgeon tanks are attended to by several students who volunteer and come in early to clean and feed the fish. The sturgeons' environment is regularly checked to make sure temperature, alkalinity, chlorine levels, oxygen content, nitrate levels and other variables are optimal.

By feeding the fish a protein-rich diet and keeping the water temperature warmer than it would be in the wild, Dulac believes his fish will



A University of Florida professor shows FFA members Todd Evans and Amber Wren a necropsy procedure.

reach maturity years ahead of their traditional biological schedule.

"We're guessing the sturgeon will reach maturity in as little as five years in our tanks," he says. "In the wild, maturity takes 12 to 15 years."

CAVIAR DREAMS

DeLand Middle School's sturgeon population is there purely for research. Dulac hopes to be able to

have some caviar from one of the fish before he retires in five years, but says a commercial operation similar to what the school has with tilapia is a long way off.

Instead, the school is providing valuable research data to the aquaculture community. The school works closely with a professor at the University of Florida who specializes in sturgeon, and Dulac believes the school's sturgeon operation is the only one in the world of its scale in an educational setting. Indeed, the school has hosted scientists from Russia and Japan who wanted to learn more

operation, but from an educational and research perspective.

"My experience volunteering with the sturgeon has taught me a lot and made me a more responsible person," Chelsea says. "The teacher really started to depend on me and everyone who volunteered."

Chelsea says her experiences with the FFA and DeLand Middle School's aquaculture and other agriculture projects has opened her eyes to new

interests. She would not have considered agriculture as a career option before. "I don't live on a farm, and anything relating to agriculture seemed just like a lot of hard work in the past," she says. "Now I've seen the fun and interesting sides."

As for the sturgeon, Chelsea would like to see them produce caviar. "It would be cool and kind of satisfying if we could get some caviar to try before Mr. Dulac retires," she says. ●



Chelsea Anderson says raising fish, such as this sturgeon, has taught her about responsibility.

about DeLand's processes. Even Florida's governor Jeb Bush has visited the site.

The backbone of the sturgeon and tilapia programs includes students like Chelsea Anderson, a 14-year-old FFA member who has volunteered to help with the sturgeon for the past two years. Chelsea and a couple other classmates came to school early every day during seventh and eighth grade to clean the tanks and feed the fish. During science class they would again be involved with the fish

WEB LINKS

DeLand Middle School Aquaculture Project
(www.osestrasturgeon.com)
■ **World Aquaculture Society**
(www.was.org) ■ **Aquaculture Network Information Center**
(aquanic.org/)

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Here's how FFA members from across the U.S. voted in our most recent poll.

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livestock evaluation
horse evaluation
parliamentary procedure
agronomy
food science and technology

TOP 5 FFA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

park cleanup
adopt a family
roadside cleanup
nursing home visits
cardboard city

TOP 5 FFA CHAPTER FUNDRAISERS

fruit sales
candy sales
bowl-a-thon
milk machine
plant sales

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PICK

george w. bush (79%)
john kerry (21%)

TOP 5 BASEBALL TEAMS

arizona diamondbacks
cincinnati reds
new york yankees
cleveland indians
tampa bay devil rays

TOP 5 CAREERS

veterinarian
agriculture teacher
farmer
welder
landscape designer

TOP 5 COLLEGES

the ohio state university
arizona state university
the university of arizona
ucla
texas a&m

TOP 5 COUNTRY ACTS

kenny chesney
toby keith
george strait
garth brooks
tim mcgraw

TOP 5 NON-COUNTRY ACTS

ac/dc
linkin park
usher
nickelback
outkast

TOP 5 SUMMER ACTIVITIES

work
travel / vacation
swim / go to beach
play sports
raise and show animals

TOP 5 FRUITS

strawberry
apple
watermelon
orange
peach

TOP 5 VEGETABLES

corn
carrot
green bean
broccoli
potato

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All surveys sent to FFA New Horizons are used in tabulating the above results. Here are the FFA chapters (in alphabetical order) that sent in the most surveys:

BENJAMIN LOGAN FFA

Ohio

GILBERT FFA

Arizona

LODI FFA

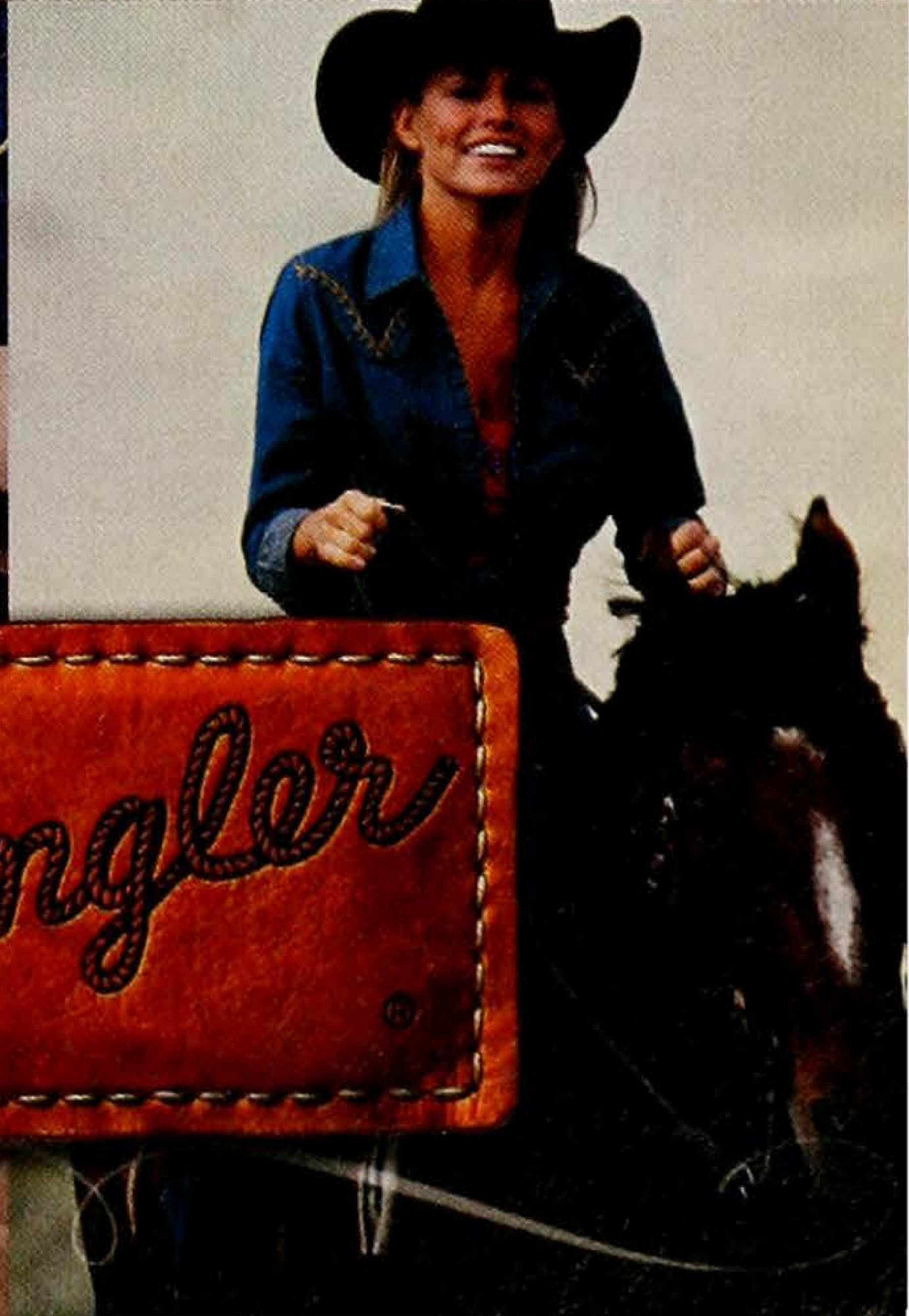
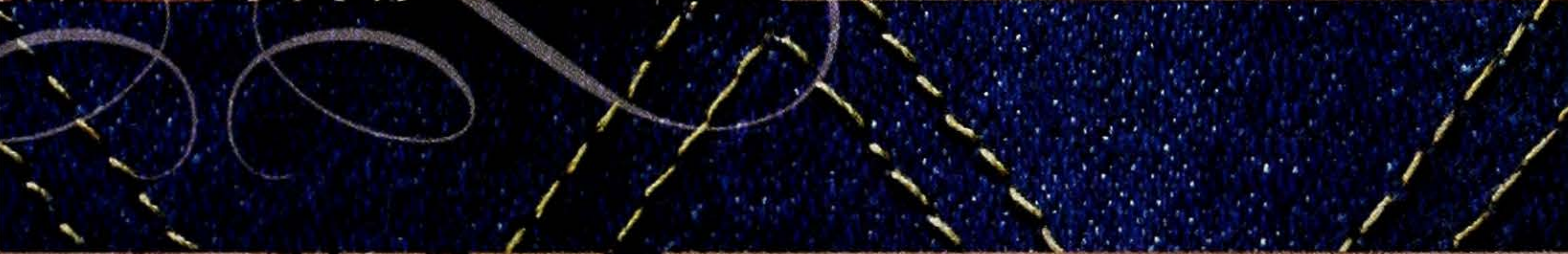
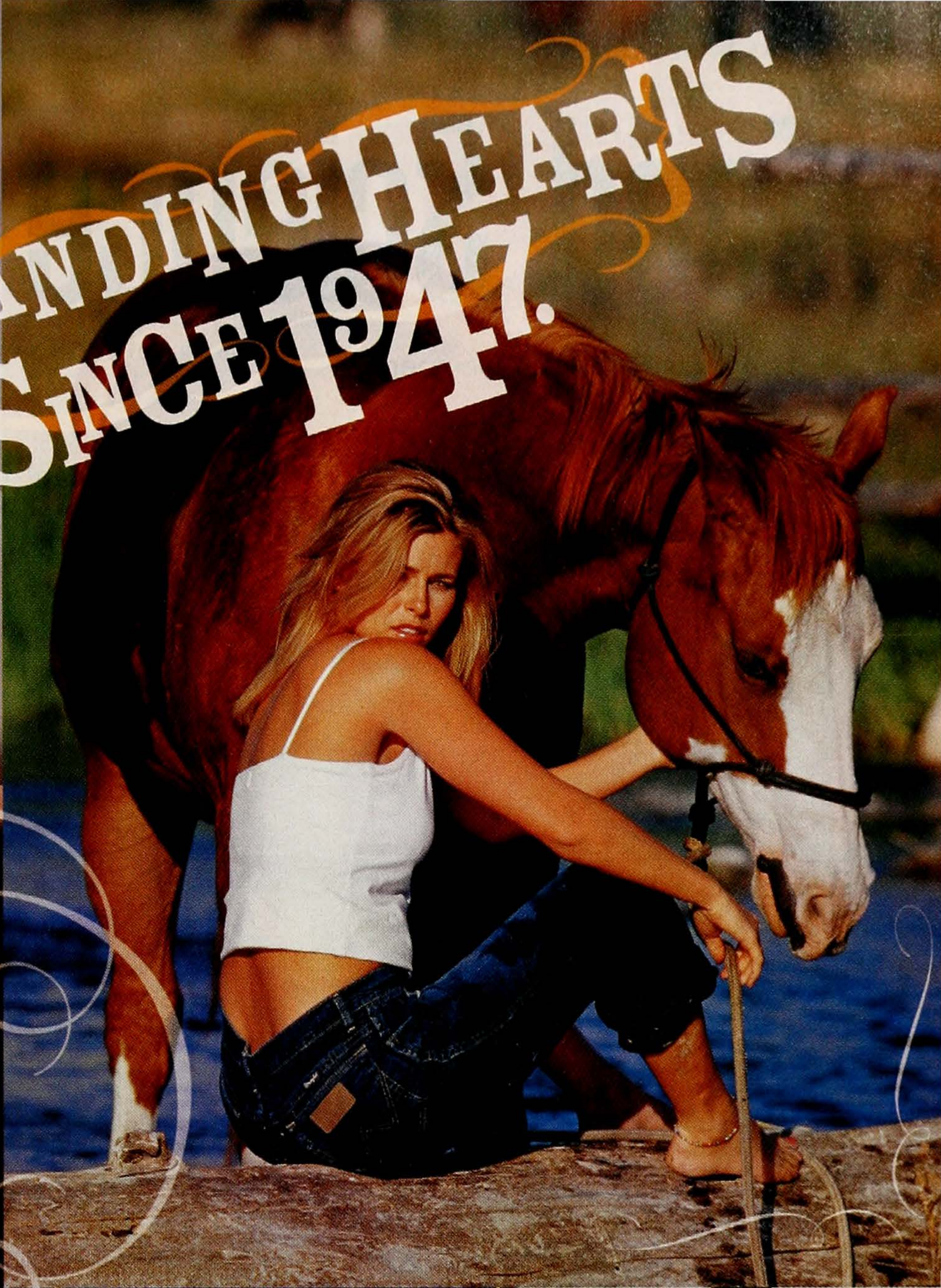
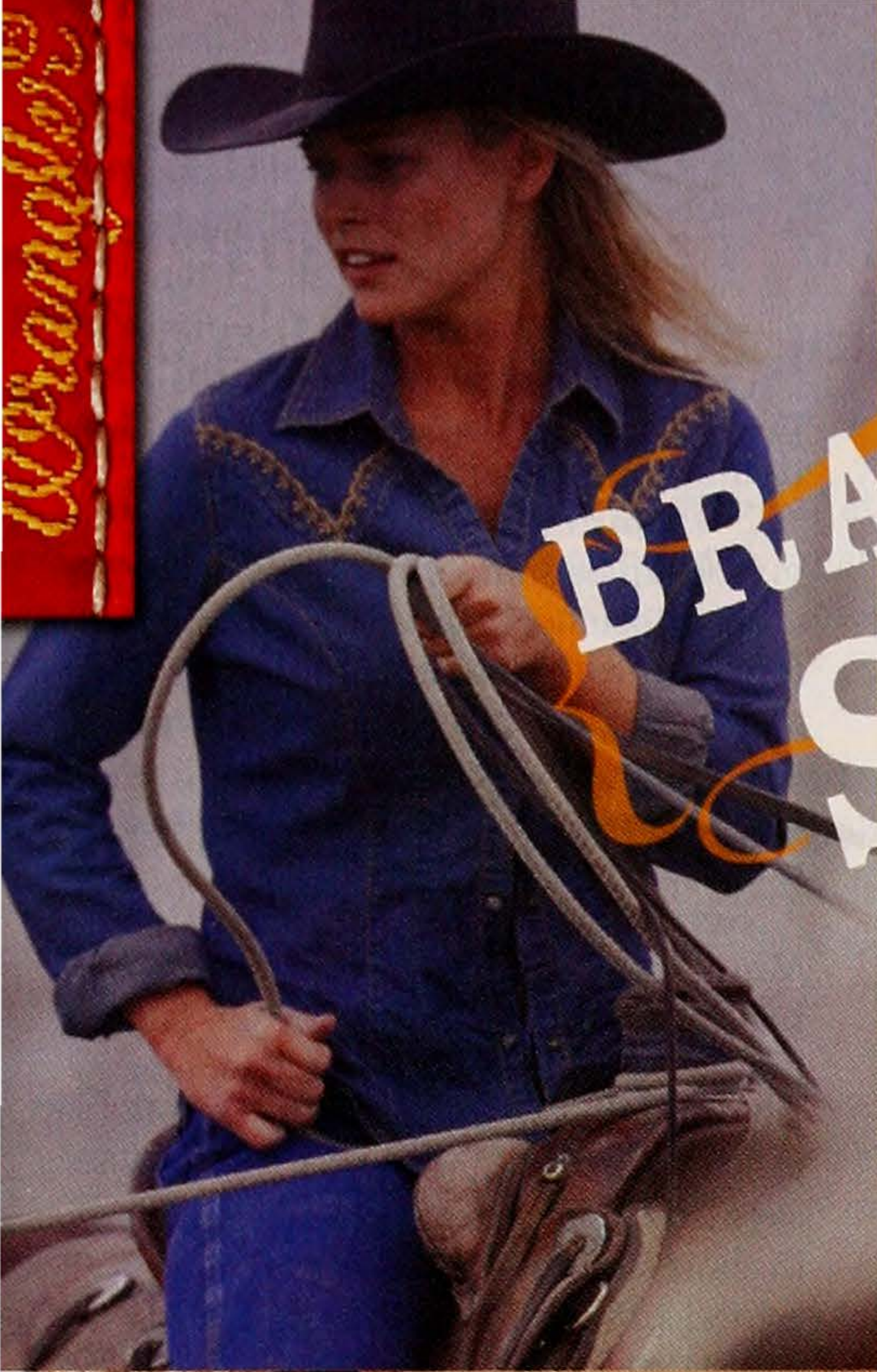
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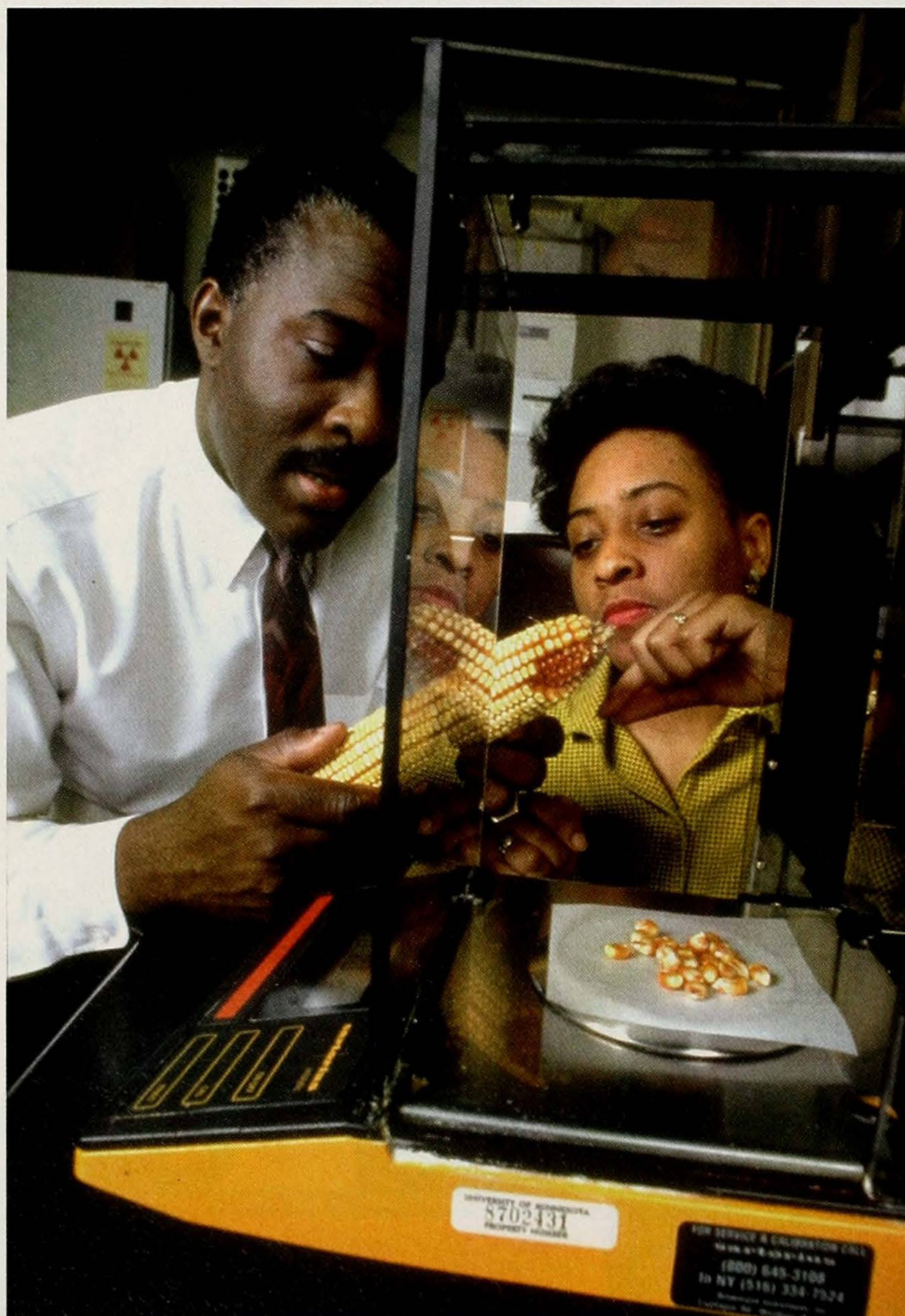
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Food Science

A career guide for FFA members

By Stephen Regenold



Robert Jones, a professor at the University of Minnesota, works with an undergraduate student to measure the weight of corn kernels. There is currently a shortage of food scientists, so the career outlook is good.

When I tell someone I'm a food scientist, I tend to get funny looks," says Dave Smith, a professor of food science and nutrition at the University of Minnesota. "They think I'm a chef trying to pump myself up or something."

Food science, a broad industry that focuses on the chemical, biological and ecological facets of food development, production and distribution, is a career choice that's somewhat under the radar.

Smith says the University of Minnesota has a tough time recruiting new students simply for the fact that few people know what the major entails and what the job market holds for food science graduates. He also says that food scientists are currently in short supply in the United States—a good situation for outgoing college graduates.

"Basically any food science graduate who wants a job can get a job. There are many opportunities out there," Smith says.

FROM PIES TO PACKAGING

The opportunities range from working in a quality control position in a small country dairy to creating new food products at major companies like Kraft or Cargill. Some food scientists may peer through a microscope on a daily basis working on grain genetics. Others may bake pies and taste test muffins all day long while wearing a lab coat.

As an industry, food science is hard to pin down. Most jobs are specialized and unique, as the amount of food products and processes is so vast, but the work often involves a blend of chemistry, physics, biology, engineering and some business and communications skills.

Nutrition and food preservation are big parts of the industry. So is flavoring and packaging and processing. Government food-safety regulations and even national security issues are linked to people in the food science industry.

Smith started out his career as a quality control supervisor in a dairy plant. He earned a Master's degree in biology and used the knowledge to ►

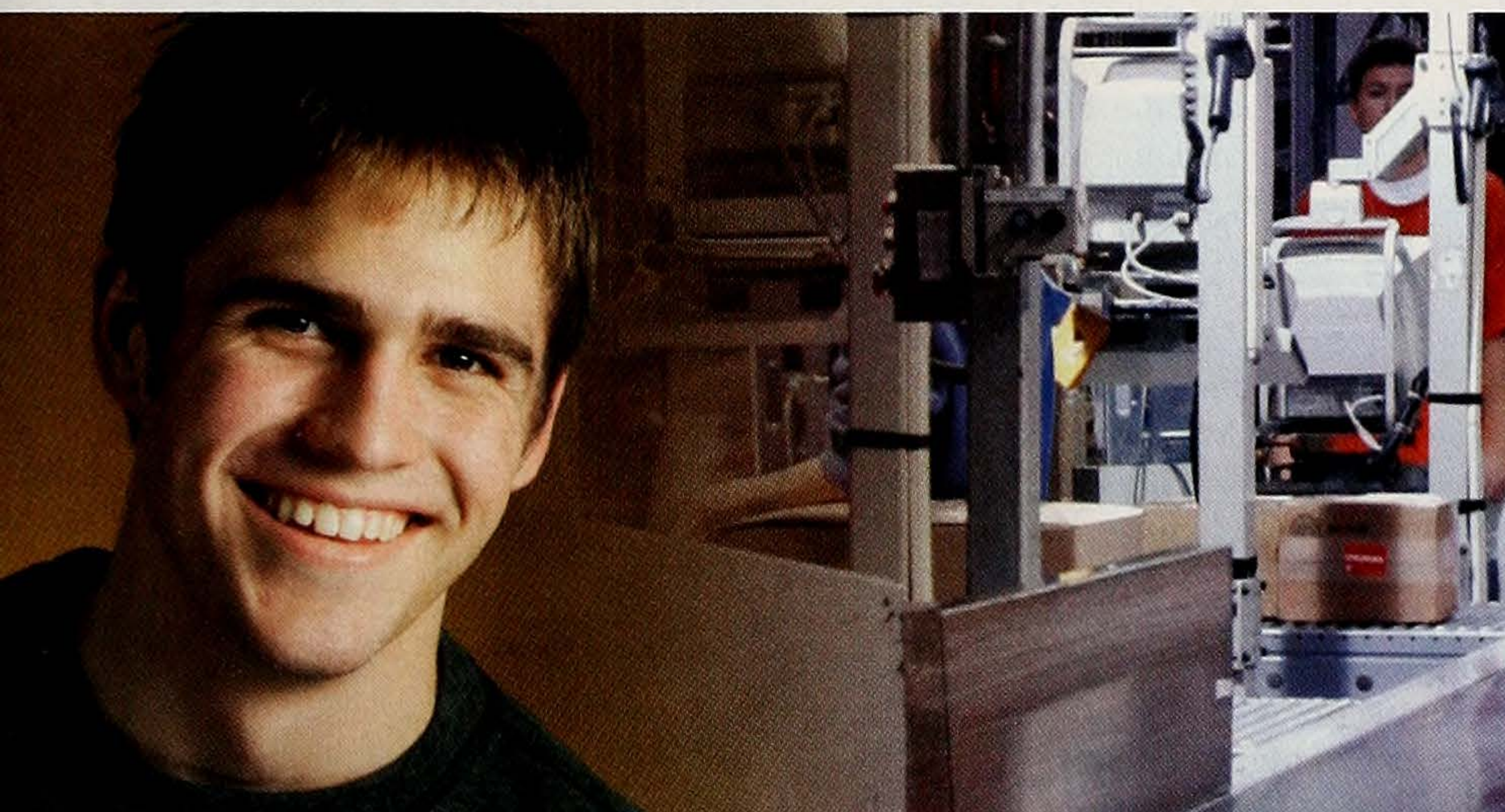
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*"This job might be part-time,
but it's putting me through school full-time."*

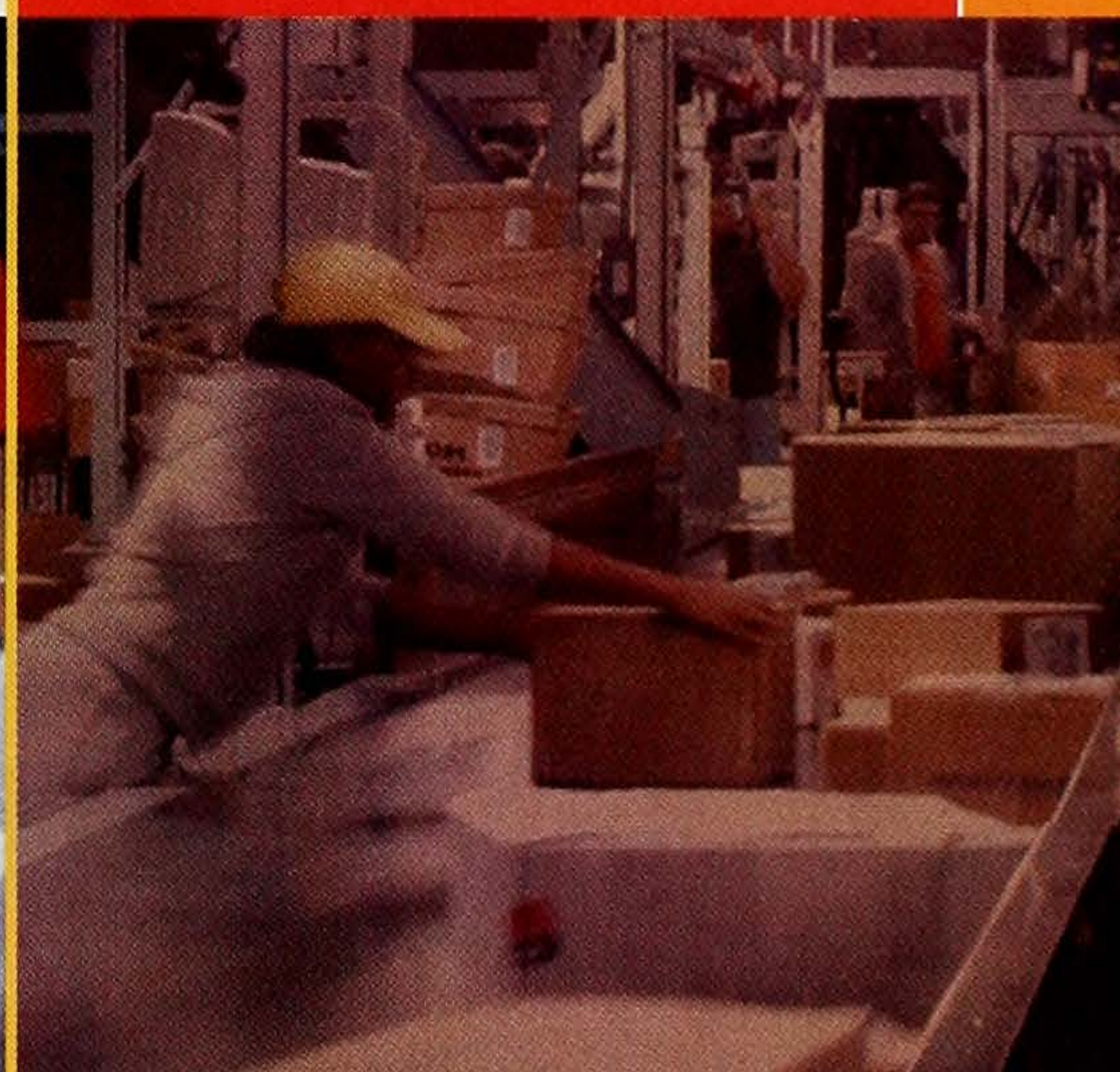
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Visit **www.upsjobs.com**
during the months of October through December
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*Benefits may not be applicable to seasonal positions in certain areas.

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Continued from page 40

keep the dairy plant's products up to standard. Smith's daily duties addressed any food-quality issues, going over compliance specifications, testing product samples and accompanying inspectors on plant tours.

He eventually earned a Ph.D. in food science from the University of Wisconsin, and now serves as a professor and interim department head at the University of Minnesota.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

William Atwell, a research fellow at Cargill, has been deeply involved in food science for 25 years. After earning a Ph.D. in grain science from the University of Kansas, Atwell went to work for Pillsbury for 21 years before taking his current position at Cargill. His specialty has always been grain and bread products, and he has helped develop such new products as a Pillsbury instant pie crust and a popular wheat and soy bread made by a company called Nature's Own.

Atwell started off his academic career as a chemist, but on the advice of his father turned his focus to food science. He enjoys being in the lab and working on new food products. He says no two days have ever been the same at his job.

"One day I'll work on a bread project, the next day I'll be making cakes or working on a shelf-life issue or applying for a patent," he says.

When he first started in the industry, Atwell says he was in the lab all the time. Now, in a more senior management position, he finds himself behind a desk more often. He goes to division meetings. He spends a lot of time working on a computer. He deals with the necessary bureaucracy of an international corporation.

"My job has changed over the years, but it's always been satisfying," he says. Overseeing a team of junior scientists and watching them mature

and produce innovations has been one of the high points of his career.

CAREER CHOICE

While Atwell and Smith both have Ph.D. degrees, that level of education is not necessary for success in the industry. A Bachelor's degree will get you a job working in a plant in quality control or in some lab settings. A Master's degree or Ph.D. is usually necessary to go into new product development or more advanced lab work, according to Smith. And like Atwell has experienced, the higher you climb on the corporate ladder, the more often your job may evolve into a management position.

Smith estimates a starting salary for a graduate with a Bachelor's degree is around \$35,000 a year. His estimates for graduates with a Master's or Ph.D. is about \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year to start. One recent University of Minnesota student Smith taught was offered \$80,000 a year to start at a big company, though the student had a double emphasis in food science and engineering, which made him a special case and a unique fit for the job.

To get an inside look at a food science education, Smith says a college visit day is a good idea. The University of Minnesota, for example, offers tours of its labs and facilities to interested students.

Science skills are probably most important for success in food science, say Atwell and Smith. Other areas to focus on while preparing for the career in high school or even middle school include agriculture, math, physics, writing and speaking.

"One of the things I like about food science is the fact that you're not narrowly focused on any particular field," says Smith. "It's an interesting blend of all the knowledge you learn over the years." ●

Puzzler by Matt Gaffney

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17	18	19		20		21	22	23
24			25					
26					27			
28					29			

ACROSS

- 1 Arizona FFA chapter whose alumni association recently donated scholarships worth \$1,000
- 5 ___ scientist (Dave Smith is one)
- 9 "Is that ___ not?": 2 wds.
- 10 Big car for celebrities or prom night
- 11 Florida FFA advisor/aquaculturist
- 13 "You're gonna be ___!"
- 14 Some high school FFA members: abbr.
- 15 Speak
- 17 It comes after "dot" in college e-mail addresses
- 20 Gets out of bed
- 24 New York town whose FFA chapter built strawberry stands
- 26 "What ___ can I say?"
- 27 "Come right ___!": 2 wds.
- 28 Kill, in the Bible
- 29 Some poems

DOWN

- 1 Stretching exercises
- 2 Stringed instruments from Hawaii, for short
- 3 State whose capital is Helena: abbr.
- 4 Parts of town
- 5 You might catch it in winter
- 6 Peanut and olive
- 7 Actor Epps or Sharif
- 8 They cure patients, for short
- 12 Makes pictures with a pencil
- 16 Popular search engine, or shout out West
- 17 They blink and wink
- 18 Toy that lives in a small house
- 19 ___ major (famous constellation)
- 21 Nice and pleasant
- 22 One of the five Great Lakes
- 23 100 elected people sent to Washington, DC: abbr.
- 25 It goes in a lock

Note: Some clues are based on articles in this issue of the magazine. See page 27 for solution.

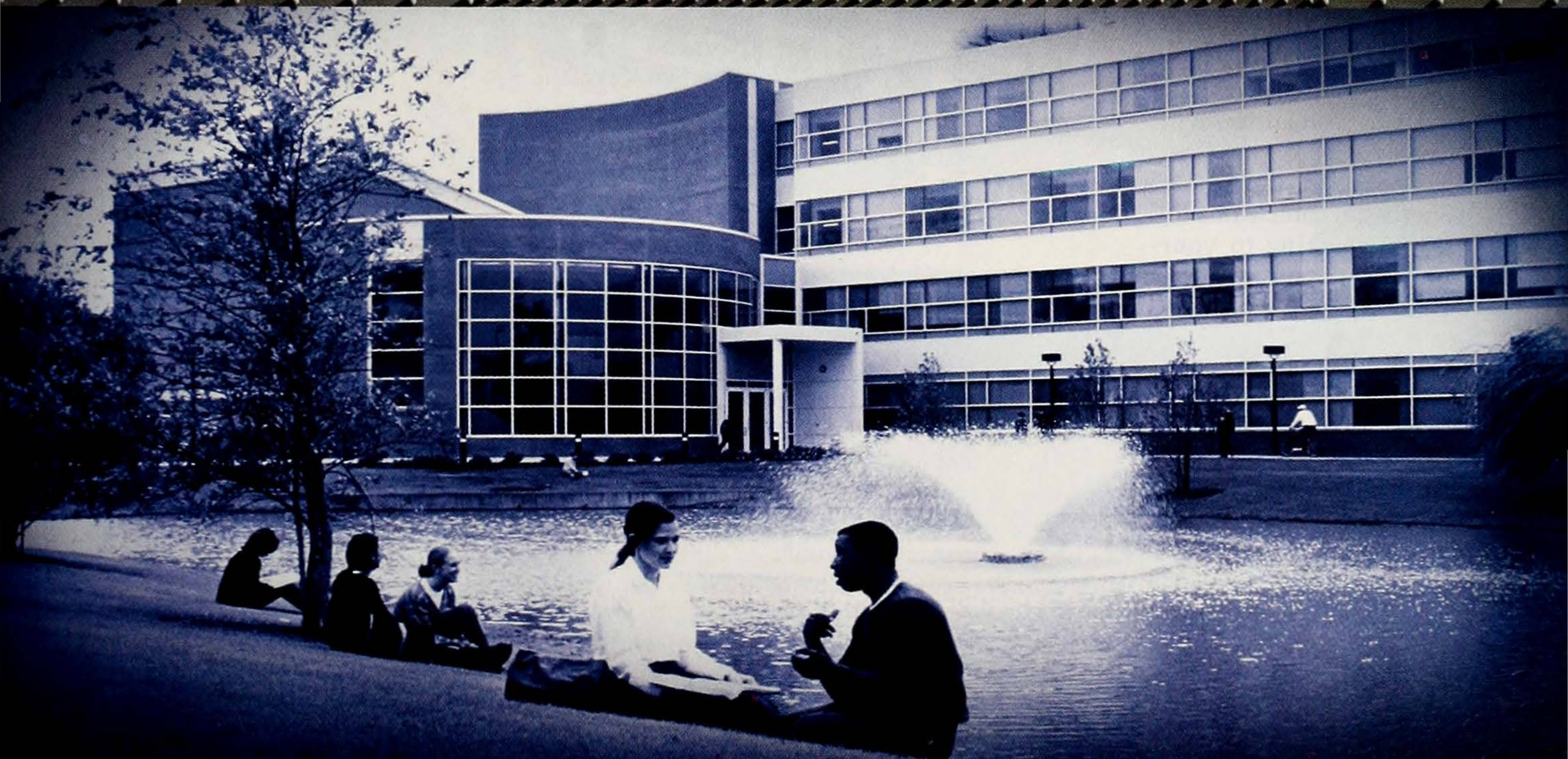
WEB LINKS

American Chemical Society (www.chemistry.org)

- American Public Health Association (www.apha.org)
- Careers in Food (www.careersinfood.com/collegerecruiting.cfm)
- Institute of Food Technologists (www.IFT.org) ■ The Riley Guide (www.rileyguide.com) ■ Vocational Information Center (www.khake.com/index.html)



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Your Money

Tips for building your financial standing

You've spent weeks looking for just the right vehicle. You've shopped everywhere—the paper, the Internet, dealers, even friends and neighbors. And now, despite the odds, you've found exactly what you want. Which leaves just one last question: How do you plan to pay for this thing?

Vehicle financing can be a tricky endeavor. You have all kinds of options, from paying with cash to taking out a loan to signing a lease. If you're buying from someone you know, you may be able to work something out between the two of you, a simple payment plan you can both agree on.

In some cases, your parents or relatives will lend you money. Whatever you do, the key to successful vehicle financing is sticking to your budget. After all, you're buying a car, not breaking the bank.

GETTING STARTED

Assuming a lump-sum cash payment is out of the question, and that you don't know the seller well enough to work out a private payment plan, it's time to get a loan.

The first thing you really need to do is order a credit report from one of the three major credit-reporting agencies listed below. Look through your report and make sure it's accurate because this is the same document lenders will check when deciding whether to loan you money. If you have good credit, you shouldn't have trouble securing a loan.

Many FFA members have already established credit, in the form of credit cards or other loans. But many FFA members probably haven't. If this is the case, you won't have a credit history and you'll likely have to ask



Driving a deal

Looking to buy a vehicle?
Here are your payment options

an adult to “co-sign” your loan. The co-signer uses his good credit history to secure the loan for you, and takes responsibility for the loan if you fail to repay it.

DIRECT LOANS

Armed with good credit, you can now shop for a loan. One method is through a process known as direct lending. With a direct loan, you'll secure a loan directly from a bank, credit union, Internet-based lender, or finance company. You'll agree to pay back whatever dollar amount you need financed (the agreed upon purchase price), plus interest and fees, over a specified number of months.

Each lender will offer a slightly different loan package, so shop around for the best offers. Once you have the best deal you can find, you use the loan to pay for the vehicle.

A second way to pay is through so-called dealership financing. Deal-

ership-based loans are nearly identical to direct loans, except the dealership itself lends you the money. One potential advantage of taking this route is that the dealership may offer special incentives, like low interest rates or cash back, to make the deal sweeter.

LEASING

Yet another means to finance your vehicle purchase is through a lease. In a lease, you pay for what you use. That is, your payments cover the vehicle's depreciation, or lost value, while under your possession.

The good news with a lease is your monthly payments will generally be lower. The bad news is that at the end of a lease, you must either return the vehicle or buy it.

A final thought: When financing a vehicle, strive to keep your total costs close to the price you would pay with cash. Do this by making your down payment as high as possible, your monthly payment as low as possible and your repayment time as short as possible. ●

Web links:

Your Pathway to Vehicle Financing
(www.yourpathwaytovehiclefinancing.com)
Federal Trade Commission
(www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm)

To obtain a copy of your credit report, visit one of the following credit reporting agencies. The report typically costs around \$9. In some states, you are entitled to one free report per year.

Equifax: www.equifax.com

Experian: www.experian.com

TransUnion: www.transunion.com



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LAST LAFF

Q: What magic spell turns you into a dinosaur?

A: The Tyrannosaurus Hex
Ryan Trahan
Arnaudville, Louisiana

Q: What kind of magazine does a leopard read?

A: Spots Illustrated.
Susan Caples
Toccoa, Georgia

Q: What kind of magazine does a horse read?

A: Horse Illustrated.
Adam Rickert
Kettlersville, Ohio

Q: Why is a leaking faucet like a horse race?

A: Because it is off and running.
Allison Jacobs
Orderville, Utah

Q: What kind of music does a rabbit listen to?

A: Hip hop.
Kathleen Welliver
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Q: What ship never sinks?

A: Friendship.
Addie Young
Magnolia, Texas

The Agrinuts

By Jim Bradshaw and Michael Bettendorf



Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Little old lady.

Little old lady who?

I didn't know you could yodel.

Cherie Mortensen
Mountain Home, Arkansas

Q: What do you get from a skunk?

A: As fur as possible.
Courtney Rachow
Alger, Michigan

Q: What was the banana doing on the road?

A: It was trying to peel out.
Josh Pyle
Mansfield, Missouri

Q: What do dogs do after they're through with obedience school?

A: They get their masters.
Glynis Dillender
Winchester, Virginia

Q: What is cut and passed around the table, but never eaten?

A: A deck of cards.
Michael Francis
Hardin County, Kentucky

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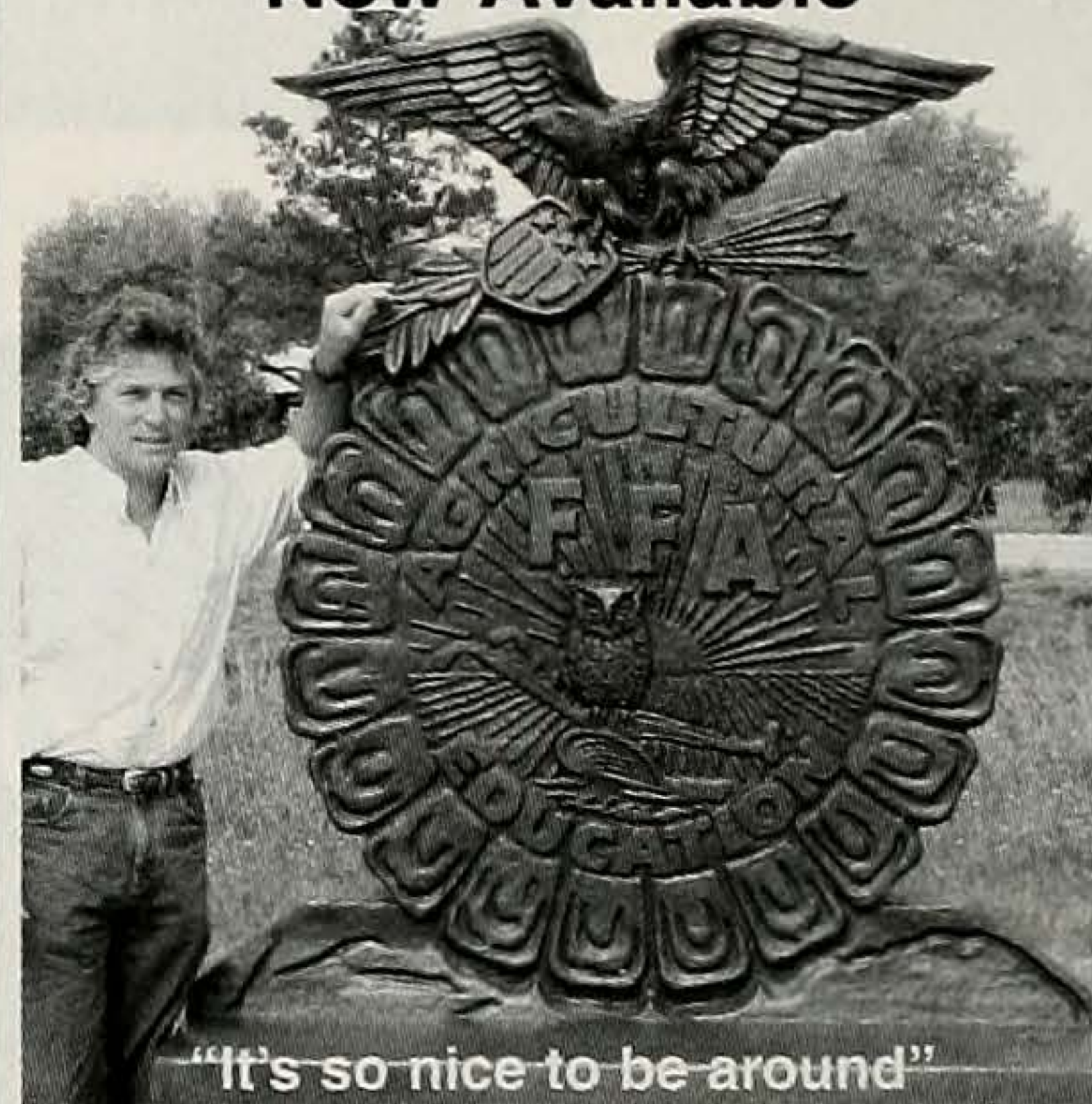
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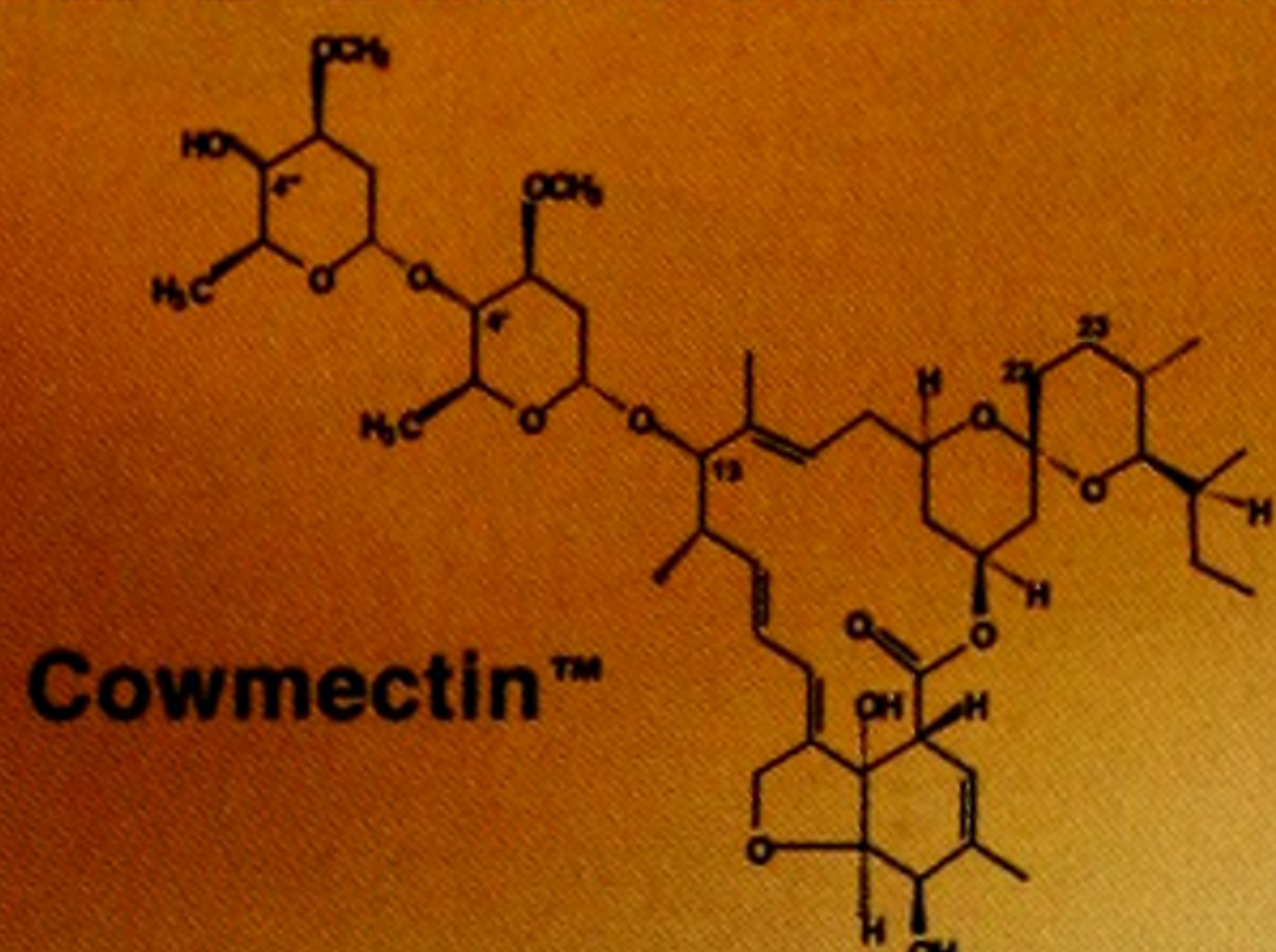
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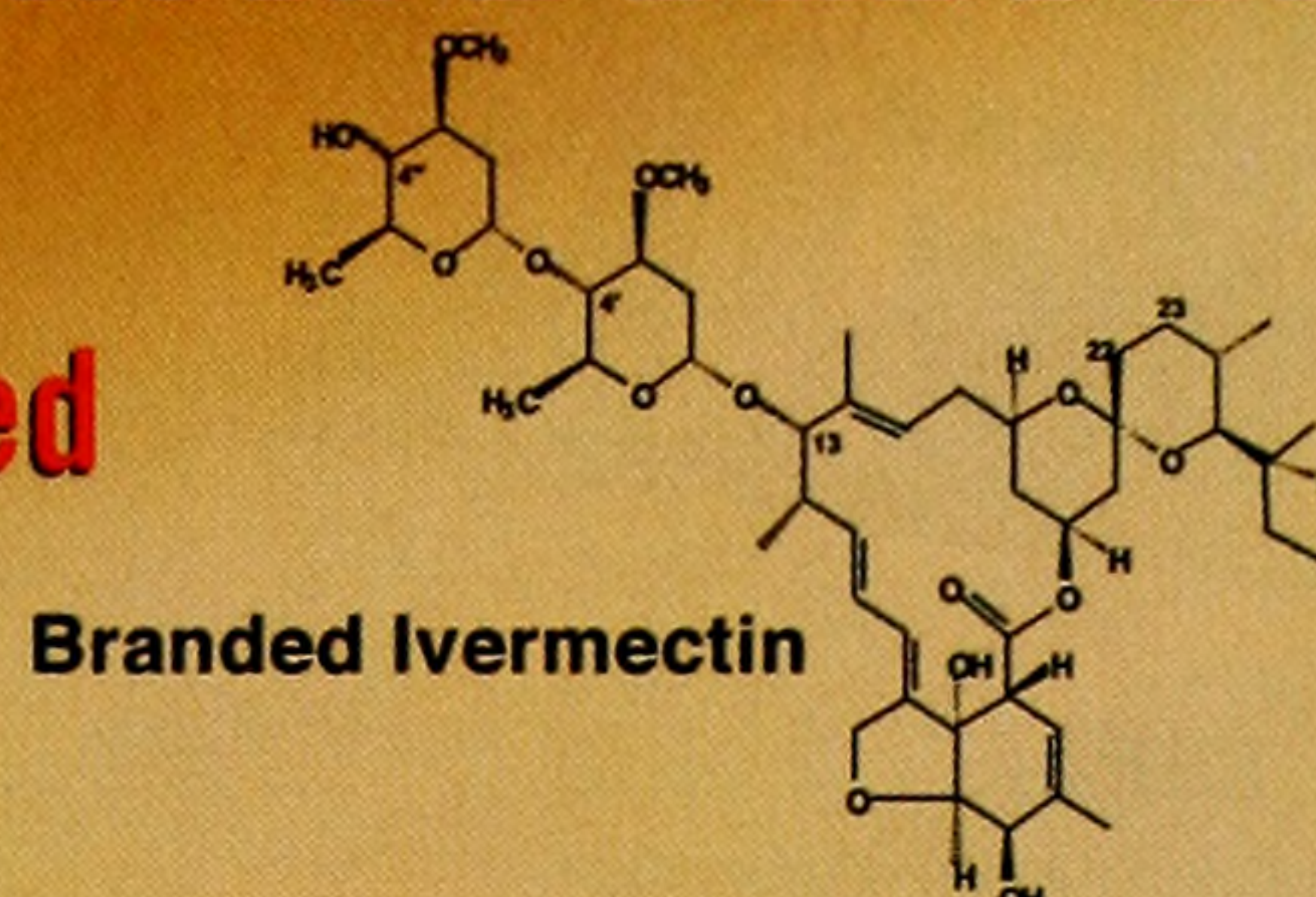
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FFA Across the USA

Dispatches from FFA chapters across the nation

New York



Strawberry sellers

The Pioneer FFA Chapter in Yorkshire has taken up a new project—selling strawberries. After proposing the idea in mid-May, the FFA members took up the task of designing, building and painting small portable selling stands. By mid-June, they had positioned three blue-and-gold strawberry structures around the community, where the members sell locally grown strawberries daily.

Submitted by Pioneer FFA Chapter Reporter Molly Bliss



\$1,000 for the future

Three Yuma FFA Chapter members received a total of \$1,000 in scholarships, thanks to the chapter's generous alumni association. The awards were made possible by donations from individuals and businesses, as well as from funds raised at a silent auction and the annual chapter barbecue. The recipients—Trish Allen (left), Jamie Jungermann (center) and Krissy Buchan—are now freshman in college, and they're putting the money to good use. Also pictured are Wayne Campbell (left) of the local Rotary Club and chapter alumni president Ed Kromer.

Submitted by Yuma FFA Chapter Reporter Micaela Rodriguez

Oklahoma

FFA chapter has new ride

Last spring, while attending the last session of the 78th Oklahoma FFA Convention, Drummond FFA Chapter members waited excitedly for the results of the Ford truck giveaway.

Up on the stage, a name was drawn from a hopper, the arena grew silent with anticipation, and the next thing the Drummond FFA members knew was that they had won a new pickup—a 2004 four-door Ford F-350. This is the third year the Oklahoma Ford dealers have teamed up with the Oklahoma FFA Association to give away a new vehicle. The Drummond FFA would like to thank both groups for their new wheels.

Reporting by Drummond FFA Chapter Reporter Justin Lollman

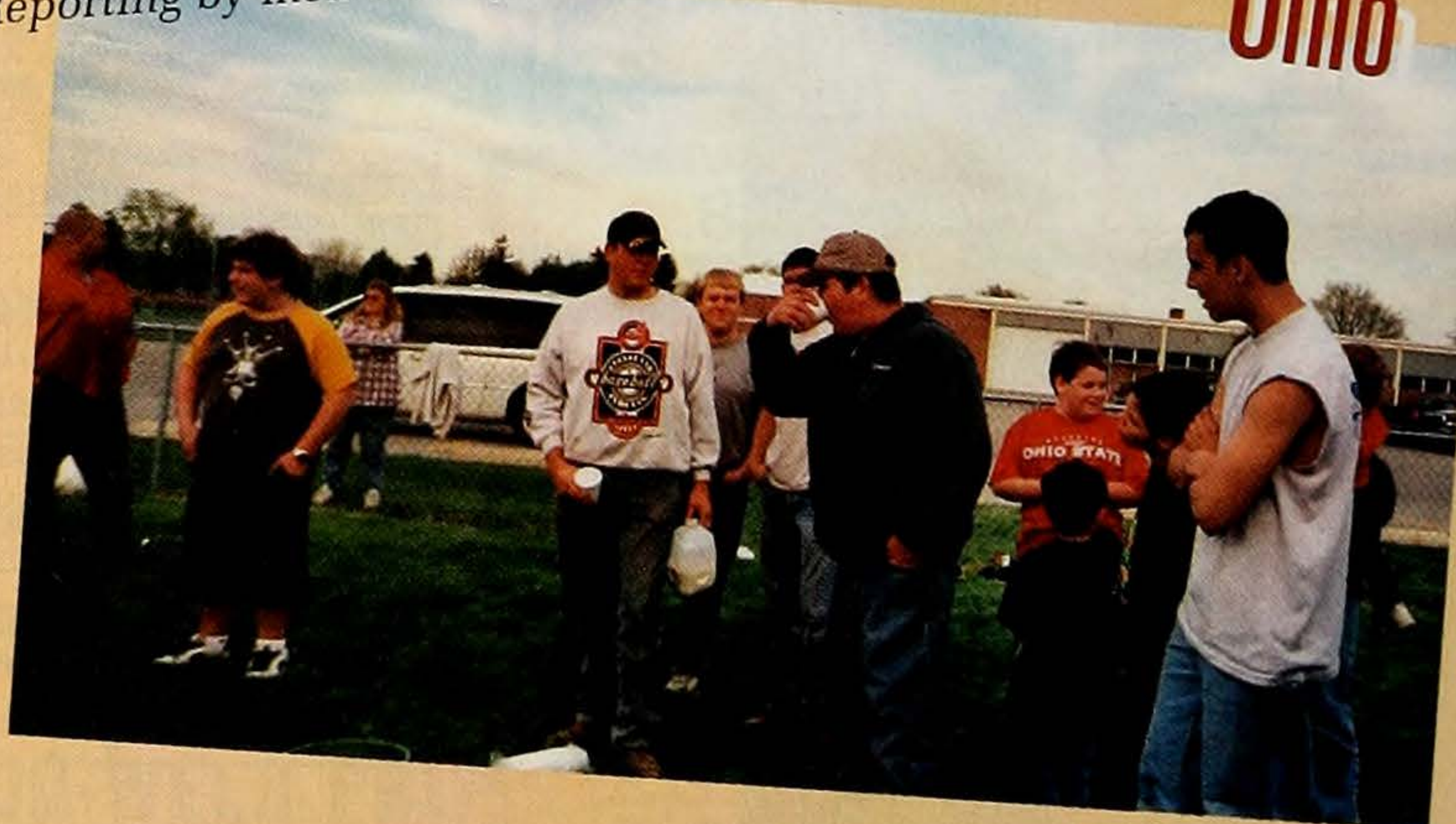


Barnyard competition

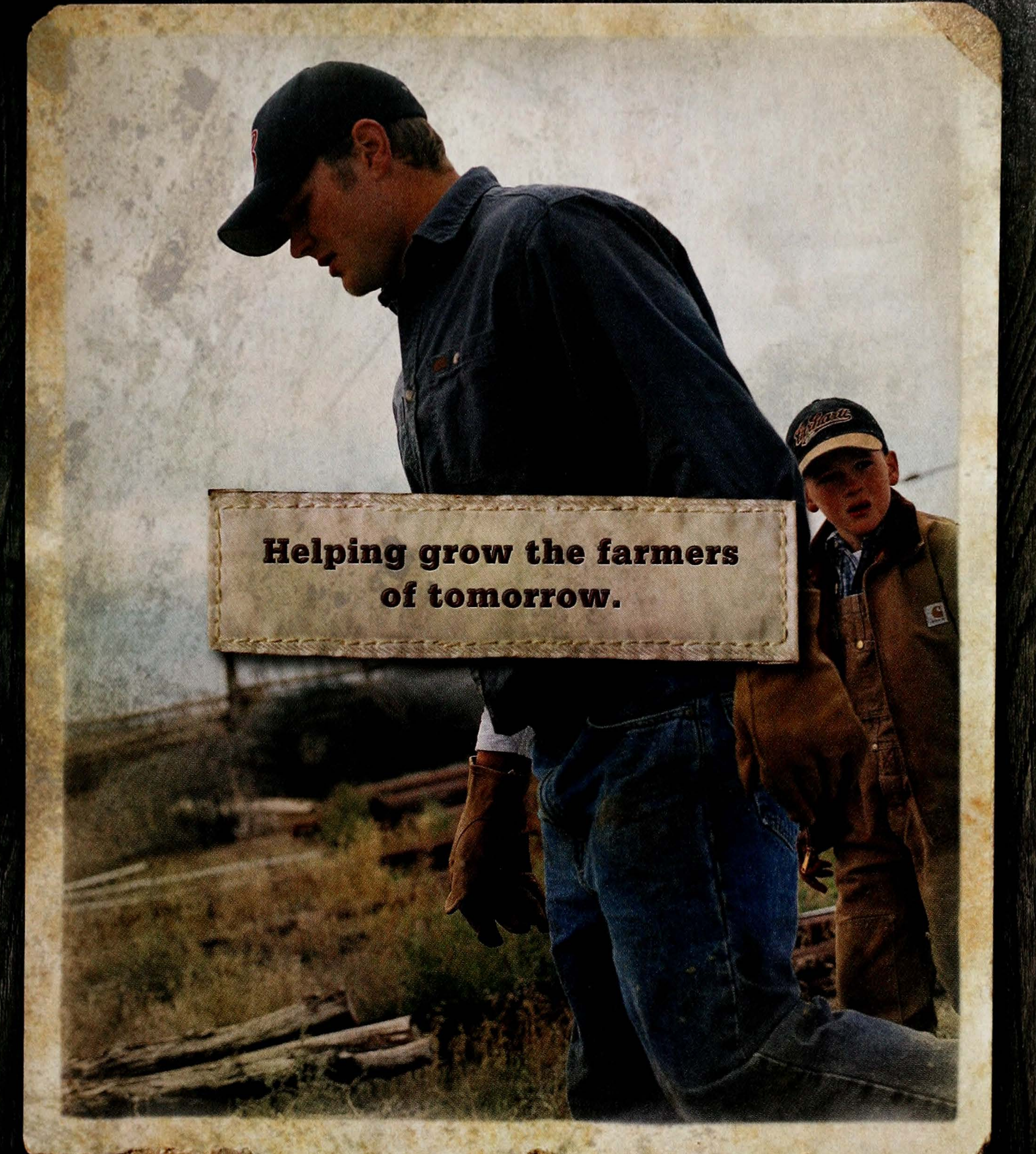
Members of the Bellevue FFA Chapter recently held their annual Barn Olympics, where members formed teams and compete in such events as the egg toss, balloon toss, sack race, three-legged race, wheel barrow race, egg throw, pop chug, milk chug (see photo), bale toss, shopping cart race and chicken. Eighteen teams qualified for the competition, which was attended by FFA alumni, family and friends. Winning teams picked prizes donated by the Bellevue FFA Alumni. Chapter members say the event is fun, competitive and is a favorite every year.

Reporting by members of the Bellevue FFA Chapter

Ohio



What's happening in your chapter? Send your news, along with a photo, to:
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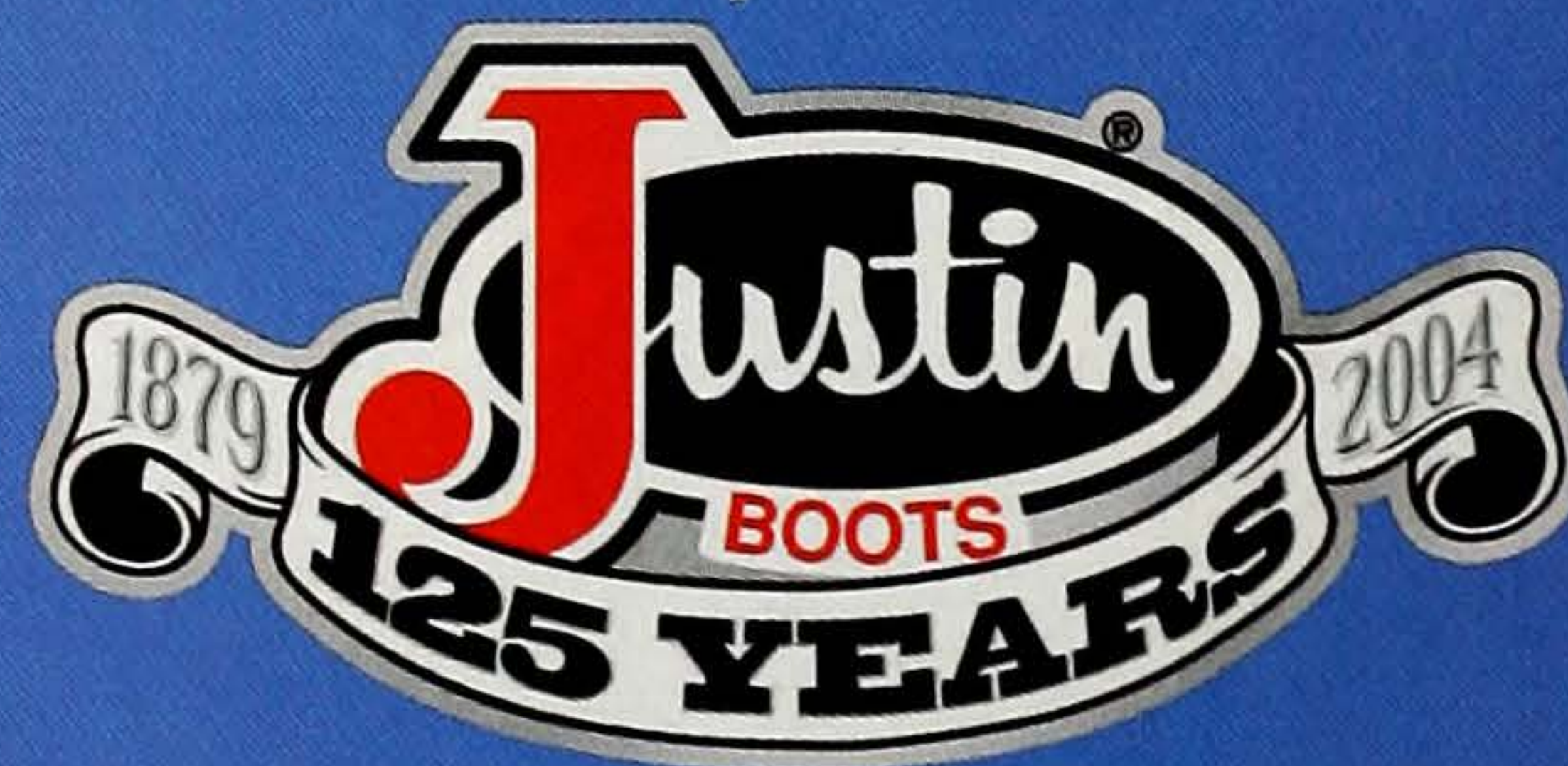
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