

New VISIONS



The Official Newsletter of the National FFA Alumni Association

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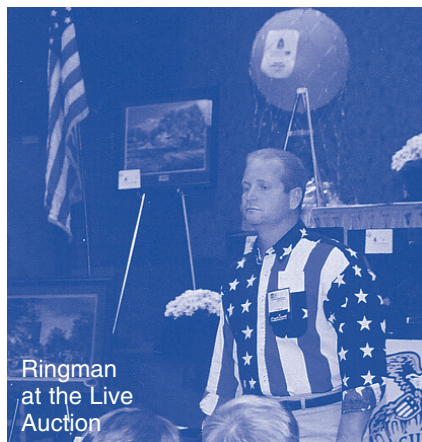
2003 Alumni Convention Tentative Schedule

Alumni Silent Auction	Wednesday, October 29: 12:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Thursday, October 30: 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Friday, October 31: 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	South Hall Lobby B
Awards Session	Thursday, October 30: 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	South Wing CC 105
Awards Appreciation	Thursday, October 30: 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	South Wing CC 104, 105
Business Session	Friday, October 31: 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	South Wing CC 105
Alumni Auction Social	Friday, October 31: 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	South Wing CC 104, 105
Alumni Live Action	Friday, October 31: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	South Wing CC 104, 105

Going Once, Going Twice, Sold to the Highest Bidder!

This year's Alumni Auction promises to be one of the best!

The auction committee and National FFA Foundation have been hard at work securing objects ranging from household items to weekend getaways. These auction items will



Ringman
at the Live
Auction

be on display at the National FFA Alumni Convention. Alumni members are also encouraged to participate by donating specialty items that will contribute to the auction's success. For a listing of all auction items, visit our website at <http://www.ffa.org/alumni> and watch for the auction catalog in the next issue.

While at the convention, plan to set aside some time to view and bid on the approximate 1,000 items available. The silent auction will run from Wednesday, October 29 to Friday, October 31. A complimentary social is being planned as a pre-live auction activity on Friday evening. Together the food, fun, and bidding will make for one of the most exciting evenings at the convention!

STATE BASKET CONTEST

Each state Alumni leader should have received information about the "Your State's Signature" Basket Contest. Each state may enter one FFA and one Alumni official entry in the contest. As in the past, state associations are encouraged to submit as many entries as possible, which can be donated to the auction. However, only official entries will be eligible for prizes. Baskets should reflect each state's agriculture and uniqueness. Please stop by to bid and vote on your favorite state basket.

To obtain donation forms, basket contest information, or to request an auction catalog, send your request via e-mail to asmeyer@ffa.org or call 317-802-4294.

CALENDAR 2003

DEADLINES ARE POSTMARK DATES

July 15

Auction Items to Appear in Catalog

July 22-27

State Leaders Conference
Corpus Christi, Texas

August 15

Legion of Merit Applications
Rosters Due to the National Office
to Qualify for Awards

September 15

Chapter Grant Applications

October 29-31

National FFA Alumni Convention
Silent and Live Auctions
Louisville, Kentucky

Visit our website at www.ffa.org

ROUND TABLE

A Helping Hand for Our Most Valuable Resource: Agriscience Teachers

It should come as no surprise that more than half of our nation's agricultural education instructors leave the teaching profession by the end of their fifth year. Even more alarming, they are among the thousands of general education instructors who leave. Agriscience teachers have an advantage. They have access to community support. In spite of this, agriculture teachers are so often overwhelmed by



J. Frank Saldaña

their day-to-day activities, they forget to ask for help. When they finally realize that help is available, many are already beyond the point of no-return.

A study, "Predictors of FFA Program Quality in North Carolina," conducted by Zane Vaughn of North Carolina State University indicates that multiple teacher departments are the most likely to build successful local agricultural education programs. Nationally, nearly 3,500 local programs have only one teacher. One strategy to enhance the success of single-teacher departments is to mobilize Alumni/volunteers to serve as additional "arms and legs" for the local teacher. These volunteers are critical in planning the local program, developing resources, mentoring members, creating supervised agricultural education program opportunities, building community support and the list goes on.

The National FFA Organization and National FFA Alumni Association are committing resources to support one strategy: To mobilize legions of Alumni/volunteers to support agricultural education at all levels with an emphasis on the local program level. This initiative is known as Local Program Success. One of

the keys to local program success is creating effective local partnerships, of which volunteers are one part. At the initiative's core are tools and resources developed by local agricultural education teachers. Agricultural education at the national level has a long history of commitment to creating successful local agriculture education programs.

One critical need in agricultural education is the availability of personnel on all levels. An effective volunteer support group can help first-year teachers more effectively assume the reins of the local program. Any such efforts could help reduce the 25 percent non-renewal rate among new teachers. It seems logical that the extra support of a local volunteer group could reduce the work load, time commitment, and sense of burnout leading to teacher resignation.

The student-to-teacher ratio has expanded rapidly and today is approximately 90 to 1. How can effective individual student instruction and career development take place when one teacher must manage the education for 90 students? Again, an effective local support group of Alumni/volunteers can be a terrific asset in helping to build strong local programs.

For more than 75 years agriscience instructors have definitely made an impact on millions of young people. They need our support. One way to help is by starting an Alumni affiliate and volunteering to support the local program. The partnerships and friendships could keep the teacher smiling for many years to come.

If you would like to volunteer at the local, state, or national level, please contact J. Frank Saldaña, National FFA Alumni Executive Director and National FFA Organization Volunteerism Manager at fsaldana@ffa.org or 317-802-4292.



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10 Tips for Wise Volunteering

The following material has been adapted and reprinted from the website of INDEPENDENT SECTOR: www.IndependentSector.org. Some of it has been edited and may be helpful in planning and implementing a successful volunteer program.

1. Research the causes or issues important to you. Look for a group which deals with issues about which you feel strongly. You might already be giving money to one of these organizations, and that might be a good place to begin your volunteer experience. If you can't find such an organization, here's a challenging and intriguing thought: why not start one yourself? You can rally your neighbors to clean up that vacant lot on the corner, patrol the neighborhood, paint an elderly neighbor's house, take turns keeping an eye on the ailing person down the street, or form a group to advocate for a remedy to that dangerous neighborhood intersection. There is no end to the creative avenues for volunteering.

2. Consider the skills you have to offer. If you enjoy outdoor work, have a knack for teaching, or just enjoy interacting with people, you

may want to look for volunteer work which would incorporate these aspects of your personality. Many positions require a volunteer who has previous familiarity with certain equipment, such as computers, or who possesses certain skills, such as ability in athletics or communications. For one of these positions you might decide to do something comparable to what you do on the job during your work day, or something which you already enjoy as a hobby. This sort of position allows you to jump right into the work without having to take training to prepare for the assignment.

3. Consider volunteering as a family. Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity which would be suitable for parents and children to do together, or for husband and wife to take on as a team. When a family volunteers to work together at a nonprofit organization, the experience can bring them closer together, teach young children the value of giving their time and effort, introduce everyone in the family to skills and experiences never before encountered, and give the entire family a shared experience as a wonderful family memory.

4. Would you like to learn something new? Perhaps you would like to move into areas which will provide you with novelty or change.

Then seek a volunteer opportunity involving training in an unfamiliar skill. Many nonprofits seek out people who are willing to learn, especially if the needs they serve are specialized or unique. Many nonprofits have a demonstrated need, but few volunteers skilled in what it takes to fill that need. Realize beforehand, however, that such work might require much more of an effort or a time commitment for training before the actual volunteer assignment begins. Make sure you are willing to commit to the responsibilities.

5. Don't over-commit your schedule. Make sure the volunteer hours you want to give fit into your hectic life, so that you don't frustrate your family, exhaust yourself, short-change the organization you're trying to help or neglect your day job. Do you want a long-term assignment or something temporary? If you are unsure about your availability, or want to see how the work suits you before making an extensive commitment, see if the organization will start you out on a limited number of hours until you get the feel of things. Better to start out slowly than to commit yourself to a schedule you can't or don't want to fulfill.

In the next issue we will feature the remaining five tips for wise volunteering.

Among Friends

Grant Application Opportunity

A total of \$19,499.58 was awarded to local Alumni affiliates in 2002 for various projects as part of the Chapter Grant Program. The deadline for submitting applications for the 2003 Chapter Grant Program is **September 15**. Applications are available online at www.ffa.org or from the National FFA Alumni office by phoning 317-802-4293.

Ideas, Promising Practices Needed

New Visions staff are looking for ideas, activities, and tips that you have used to build success for your agricultural education program. Please send them c/o National FFA Alumni Association 6060 FFA Drive, P.O. Box 68960 Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960 or fax them to 317-802-5292 or send them via e-mail to fsaldana@ffa.org.

Every Member Welcome to Attend State Leaders Conference

The National FFA Alumni Association invites all members to attend the 2003 State Leaders Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Airport & Conference Center beginning on Tuesday, July 22 with departure set for Sunday, July 27.

Additional state representa-

tives and Alumni members are encouraged to attend. Spouses and children are welcome and may attend the conference as "non-participants." State FFA Alumni leaders have received a fee schedule and other pertinent information. For additional information, visit our website at www.ffa.org and click on supporters.



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NEWSLETTER

Local Proven Success
Building quality programs and putting school to work in action

7 Keys to Success in Agricultural Education

Program Planning

3 Components	3 Strategies
Instruction	Partnerships
SAE	Marketing
FFA	Professional Growth

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GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS



THERE'S ALWAYS THAT ONE ANIMAL THAT PRODUCES MORE THAN THE REST.

