

# New VISIONS



The Official Newsletter of the National FFA Alumni Association

Volume 14, Issue 3 • Fall 2009

## National Convention Promotes Personal Involvement of Members

Theme encourages members to "Say It, Do It, Live It!"

Convention is just around the corner. The theme of the 2009 National FFA Alumni Convention encourages members to "Say It, Do It, Live It!" for agricultural education. Alumni members from across the nation will travel to Indianapolis, Ind., to attend workshops, receive awards, select their national Alumni leaders, and receive updates about their association.



Bob Ash

found his company, Life Lessons in 1995, Bob has provided training and education to more than 1,200 organizations and businesses, numbering more than 320,000 people. Prior to launching his company, he served in various public education positions: as a teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools. During this time, Bob gained notable recognition as a speaker, leading him to create his company. Bob also played a few years of professional baseball with the Cleveland Indians. To learn more about Bob, visit <http://www.bobash.com/index.html>.

All convention attendees are encouraged to visit the FFA Alumni Fun in Ag Ed Room for games, information, and much more. The room is open from Wednesday through Friday and located in the Indiana Convention Center 500 Reception Room.

Details on times and meetings at the 2009 National FFA Alumni Convention are available at [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni).

### Speaker an Educator at Heart

This year's keynote speaker is Bob Ash. Since

SAY IT. DO IT. *Live It!*  
NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## 2009 National FFA Alumni Association Convention

### Thursday, October 22

4-6 p.m. FFA Alumni Awards Session 205-207\*

### Friday, October 23

8-9:30 a.m. FFA Alumni Delegate Check-In *Outside* 205-207

9:30 a.m.-Noon FFA Alumni Business Session 205-207

2009 registration will be completed online in advance of convention. Last minute substitutions can be made during delegate check-in.

\* All activities will be held in the ICC (Indiana Convention Center) unless noted.

### Benefit Auctions

#### Wednesday, October 21

1-6 p.m. Silent Auction Open for Bidding 500 Ballroom

1-6 p.m. Live Auction Items on Display 500 Ballroom

#### Thursday, October 22

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Silent Auction Open for Bidding 500 Ballroom

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Live Auction Items on Display 500 Ballroom

#### Friday, October 23

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Silent Auction Open for Bidding 500 Ballroom

4-10 p.m. Silent Auction Payment/Pickup 500 Ballroom

5-6 p.m. Live Auction Social 500 Ballroom

6 p.m. Live Auction Begins 500 Ballroom

#### Saturday, October 24

8-10 a.m. Auction Payment/Pickup 500 Ballroom

10 a.m. Mini-Auction for Unclaimed Items 500 Ballroom

### Workshops\*\*

#### Thursday, October 22

10-11 a.m. FFA Alumni Workshop 205-207

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. FFA Alumni Workshop 205-207

1:30-2:30 p.m. FFA Alumni Workshop 205-207

10:30-11:30 a.m. Student Workshop Wabash 3

#### Friday, October 23

Noon-1:00 p.m.\*\*\* FFA Alumni Workshop 205-207

\*\*See page 3 for details on these workshop (descriptions, etc.).

\*\*\*This workshop immediately follows the closing of the Alumni Business Session.

Proceeds from the following events benefit the National FFA Alumni Association. Encourage your chapter to attend, enjoy, and support the FFA Alumni!

### Hypnotist Shows

#### Wednesday, October 21

Show #1: 6-7:30 p.m. Sagamore Ballroom 3-5

Show #2: 8-9:30 p.m. Sagamore Ballroom 3-5

#### Thursday, October 22

Show #3: 6-7:30 p.m. Sagamore Ballroom 3-5

Show #4: 8-9:30 p.m. Sagamore Ballroom 3-5

Show #5: 10-11:30 p.m. Sagamore Ballroom 3-5

#### Friday, October 23

Show #6: 4-5:30 p.m. Hyatt, Cosmopolitan Ballroom

Show #7: 8:30-10 p.m. Westin Hotel, Grand IV-V

# ROUND TABLE

## Be Sure You Live It!

**Become an FFA Alumni cheerleader at this year's convention and in your daily lives!**

I wish to extend a hearty note of thanks to the Colorado FFA Alumni Association for conducting such a productive State Leaders Conference (SLC) set in majestic Montrose, Colo. The conference taught 125 energetic participants from 28 states to “live” their lives as advocates for FFA and showed them how other members in the western portions of the U.S. “live it” daily. This was my first trip to western Colorado and the beautiful Rocky Mountains. SLC workshops were right on target! One helped members and leaders assess their personality types and make the most of their volunteer experiences. Another training workshop conducted by Oregon FFA Alumni members taught participants the secrets of running and being a successful affiliate.



Sam Atherton

Participants also raised enough funds to provide 13 Washington Leadership Conference scholarships for FFA members. Thank you for your generosity.

At this year's conference, I met scores of Alumni who have the same calling as I do of helping our youth become the leaders of tomorrow. FFA students need to see that adults care. By showing we care for our students and each other, we are leading by example and **living** our mission through our actions, not just our words. Each person I met at the conference lives the Alumni vision and mission through their daily service in their local community.

As I come to the end of my term as your National FFA Alumni President, I reflect on, with great pride, the many amazing leaders and inspiring volunteers that I have met on my travels. Their examples refresh me for the final event of my term—the national convention. I envision a great convention and Alumni benefit auctions in Indianapolis this October, where first-time attendees and veterans can witness the opportunities Alumni provide students throughout the nation. Convention participants will see many awards presented and learn from the educational workshops. With strong leadership and teamwork, Alumni can make a difference in the lives of FFA members.

I have been called the “FFA Alumni Cheerleader” by some because I get excited seeing people support the Blue and Gold—FFA. I hope you will become excited by what we do for FFA members and pledge to become Alumni cheerleaders after this year's convention, continuing to daily support the FFA Alumni for the next year.

I have only one goal for my grandchildren and your grandchildren: To have the same FFA experience and opportunities that I had. I thank you for the many life-changing experiences and friendships throughout this past year, which I will cherish forever. Let's lead out loud and “Say it, Do it, and **LIVE IT!**”

Sam Atherton  
National FFA Alumni President

## 2009 National Council Candidates



The following FFA Alumni members are listed on the ballot for National FFA Council positions. Their biographies can be viewed online at [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) under the Alumni Council tab. Delegates will cast their votes at this year's convention business session on October 23.

Members are encouraged to contact their state FFA Alumni leaders to express their preferences.

### President-Elect

Bob Barton, Oregon  
Joy Carter, Georgia  
David A. Miller, Maryland

### Southern Region

Richard Daniel, North Carolina  
Enoch Gonzalez, Puerto Rico  
Johnny F. Jones, Georgia  
Michael Vestal, Tennessee

### Eastern Region

Jim McCray, Illinois

### Central Region

Daniel R. Classen, Iowa



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FFA Alumni *New Visions* is prepared and published quarterly by the National FFA Alumni Association as an affiliate of the Future Farmers of America in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

### Vision

The vision of the National FFA Alumni Association is a world where people and communities grow and develop to their fullest potential.

### Mission

The mission of the National FFA Alumni Association is to secure the promise of FFA and agricultural education by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.**

### Shipping Address

National FFA Alumni Association  
6060 FFA Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46278-1370

### Mailing Address

National FFA Alumni Association  
P. O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960

### National FFA Alumni Executive Council

**President**, Sam Atherton, *Kansas*

250 19000 Road, Cherryvale, KS 67335

**President-Elect**, Diane Amera, *Virginia*

1200 First Street #1528, Alexandria, VA 22314

**Past President**, Ronnie Ansley, *North Carolina*

4509 Burlington Mills Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587

Visit [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) for more Council information.

### Ex-officio Members

**National FFA Advisor**, Dr. Larry Case

**National FFA Alumni Executive Director**,

J. Frank Saldaña

### National FFA Alumni Staff

J. Frank Saldaña, 317-802-4292 • [fsaldana@ffa.org](mailto:fsaldana@ffa.org)

Phyllis McDonald, 317-802-4332 • [pmcdonald@ffa.org](mailto:pmcdonald@ffa.org)

Amber Smyer, 317-802-4292 • [asmyer@ffa.org](mailto:asmyer@ffa.org)

Lucy Whitehead, 317-802-4420 • [lwhitehead@ffa.org](mailto:lwhitehead@ffa.org)

Contact [alumni@ffa.org](mailto:alumni@ffa.org) with requests and questions.

Visit [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) for more National FFA Alumni Association information.

Visit <http://ffaalumni.wordpress.com/> for the National FFA Alumni Association weblog.

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Editorial and Production Consultant  
Petra Communications

## Forever Blue—Join the Circle of Support

The expression “Forever Blue” represents those individuals who value the hopeful spirit, generosity, enthusiasm, and high ideals embodied by the blue FFA jacket. It also represents the common connection between

**The ongoing support of individuals like you is critical to keeping FFA viable and relevant to a new generation.**

the thousands of people who recognize the necessity of FFA and agricultural education in strengthening people, communities, and the agricultural industry.

The first recorded planned gift was made in 1979 by a member of the first national FFA officer team, Lawrence (Larry) L. Augenstein. Larry was a humble man and made the gift in memory of his father, Robert William Augenstein. Since that time, many supporters have made gifts or established endowments as a way to honor or remember those who were close to them.

National FFA Foundation staff are grateful for the many gifts from friends or loved ones in memory of those leaders who paved our way. The Forever Blue Circle is one way to recognize that generosity. If you have made provisions for FFA through a deferred gift or have established an endowment with us, foundation staff invite you to become a charter member of the Forever Blue Circle. Members will be invited to a celebration in Indianapolis during the 82nd National FFA Convention. This special event will give us an opportunity to more fully express our appreciation to you in person! For more information on this convention celebration, contact 317-802-4297 or [bdonahue@ffa.org](mailto:bdonahue@ffa.org).

The ongoing support of individuals like you is critical to keeping FFA viable and relevant to a new generation—a generation whose expectations have changed dramatically. In these uncertain economic times, you can show your support through an estate or planned gift or by creating an endowment, a gift that keeps on giving.

To learn more about the benefits of planned giving, visit [www.ffa.plannedgifts.org](http://www.ffa.plannedgifts.org).

NATIONAL FFA FOUNDATION

## Support Needed for the National FFA Commemorative Coin Act

The National FFA Commemorative Coin Act (U.S. Senate Bill #1553 and U.S. House of Representatives Bill #3464) will seek a U.S. minted commemorative coin honoring the 85th anniversary of the National FFA Organization in 2012. The FFA is working with key leaders in Congress to promote and gain co-sponsors of the bill. In order for the bill to emerge from committee, FFA organizers must list 67 Senate and 290 House co-sponsors.



### Alumni Support Needed

How can Alumni become involved? The most immediate way is by contacting your senators and congressional representatives and urging them to co-sponsor this bill. (See sidebar for more instructions.)

This commemorative coin act will honor a venerable national organization with a wide impact. If you would like to see FFA immortalized and honored on a U.S. coin, you are encouraged to contact your legislators. Senators' contact information is available at the U.S. Senate website at [www.senate.gov/index.htm](http://www.senate.gov/index.htm). Congressional representatives' contact information is available at [www.house.gov/](http://www.house.gov/).

### Monitoring the Legislative Process and Contacting your Congressional Representatives

The easiest way to remain informed about the various bills and to contact your Congressional representatives is to:

1. Visit the NAAE Legislative Action Center website sponsored by National FFA Alumni Association, <http://capwiz.com/naae/home/>. Then click on the category “Issues and Legislation.”
2. Select “The National FFA Commemorative Coin Act” option (under Current Action Alerts listing).
3. Read the action alert.
4. Complete the editable message.
5. Send it to your two senators and representative.

## Convention Workshop Descriptions and Schedule

### Alumni Workshops

Alumni workshops are back by popular demand with several new, high-impact presentations held Thursday, October 22 and Friday, October 23 in Rooms 205-207 of the Indiana Convention Center (ICC):

#### Thursday, October 22

- 10-11 a.m.—“Social Media: Tools to Grow Your Alumni Affiliate” by Joy Carter and Kimberly Henderson. This workshop will teach you everything you need to know about using social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to support your affiliate.
- 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—“Driving Membership: You Make it Happen!” by Diane Amera. This workshop evaluates your current membership plan and tells you how to share it with others.
- 1:30-2:30 p.m.—“Membership, Awards, and Applications: Oh My!” Panel led by Phyllis McDonald. This workshop allows members to ask

questions about membership forms, awards, and applications, and learn tips from experts on how to make the process easier.

#### Friday, October 23

- Noon-1 p.m.\*—“Inside Look at the Alumni Council: Is it for You?” by Dale Beaty, Ronnie Ansley, and more. Learn about the responsibilities of National FFA Alumni Council members and if you are suited for this role.

\*Immediately follows the business session at Noon

### Student Workshop

#### Thursday, October 22 in the ICC Wabash 3 room

- 10:30-11:30 a.m.—“Discover How You Can ‘Go Blue’ for a Lifetime” by Jamie Cecil and Brady Revels. The workshop focuses on the FFA mission and how joining the FFA Alumni can allow FFA members and volunteers to support FFA for a lifetime. Encourage your students to attend!

# 2009 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions

**Mission: Possible! Help generate scholarship funds for FFA members!**

**Y**ou can become a special agent and assist the National FFA Alumni Association with its mission to raise funds for Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) and collegiate scholarships! The success of the 2008 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions provided 154 scholarships for FFA members to attend WLC and five collegiate scholarships for students to study agricultural education. This achievement was made possible through the generous donations and participation of FFA Alumni members, supporters, and donors. National FFA Alumni leaders have set a goal of raising \$170,000 this year. You can be an FFA special agent and ensure that FFA members have this same opportunity in 2010!

**Auction Items:** Show your support for the FFA and this rewarding activity by donating to

The benefit auctions conducted by

**United Country**  
Auction Services



the 2009 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions. Donated products, gift certificates, travel packages, and gift baskets are needed to reach the above goal.

**Student Involvement:** Local agricultural education programs can assist the auction fundraising efforts by donating outstanding student projects. Projects can include welding, woodworking, floral design, supervised agricultural experience program products, and everything in between!

## Montana FFA Member Steps into Role of Special Agent by Donating to Auction!

Samuel Cornthwaite, a Shields Valley, Mont., FFA member, attended the benefit auctions in 2007 and realized he had something to contribute. For the past two years, he has donated a custom fly-fishing rod he has built. This year, Samuel has increased his donation. He added a three-day/four-night Montana adventure (see catalog insert). This trip includes a fly-fishing excursion and a tour of Yellowstone National Park for two (travel to/from Montana not included). Samuel saw the significance of raising funds for scholarships and identified how he could participate. What skills, resources, or talents do you have to donate to ensure your spot on the FFA Special Agents Force?

To donate to the benefit auctions, visit [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) and complete a donation form, or contact [alumni@ffa.org](mailto:alumni@ffa.org) or 317-802-4294 for more information.

## State Basket Contest

As part of the benefit auctions, a state basket contest is held for all state FFA and state FFA Alumni associations to enter. What does the term "basket" mean in your state? Create a fun and inventive basket filled with your state's products and specialties! All baskets will be judged on October 22 to determine the best overall basket, which will be sold in the live auction. The contest offers an opportunity to show state pride and support FFA! Visit [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni) and click on the "Auction" tab to view contest rules!

## Award Categories and Prizes

**Best Overall**—\$550 WLC scholarship  
**People's Choice**—\$250 WLC scholarship  
**President's Choice**—\$200 registration fee to the National FFA Alumni State Leaders Conference

Your benefit auction catalog (see insert between pages 4-5) has all the information you need!



## 2009 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions Mission: Possible!

Help generate scholarship funds for current FFA members!

At the auctions, you can lend your support to FFA members and bid on some exciting items such as:

A 2010 Ford F-150 XLT, New Holland Boomer 8N, trip for two to Germany with CLAAS, 46" Cub Cadet lawn mower, Carhartt jackets, Delta toolboxes, Lincoln welders, Oster, Schleich and Tractor Supply Company products, restaurant and attraction gift certificates, FFA collectibles, state baskets, celebrity items and much, much more!

**Auction Schedule:** Indiana Convention Center, 500 Ballroom

### Silent Auction:

Wed., October 21, 1 – 6 p.m.  
Thurs., October 22, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Fri., Oct. 23, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### Live Auction Social:

Fri., October 23, 5 – 6 p.m.

### Live Auction Starts:

Fri., October 23, 6 p.m.

### Payment/Pickup:

Fri., October 23, 4 – 9 p.m.  
Sat., October 24, 8 – 10 a.m.

### Mini Auction for Unclaimed Items:

Sat., October 24, 10 a.m.



Auction conducted by:

**United Country**  
Auction Services

Know anyone not coming to convention?

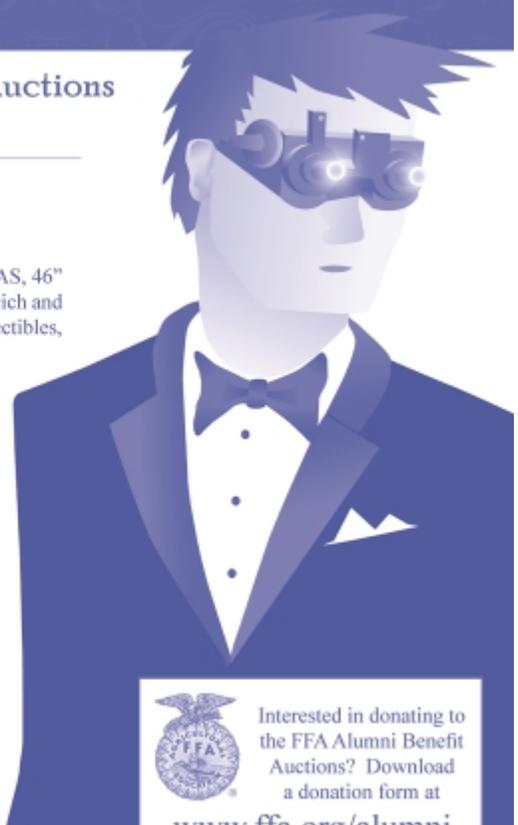
Let them know they can still participate in our:

- Live Auction broadcast via the Internet on Friday, Oct. 23 at 6 pm (EDT)

Visit

[www.unitedcountry.com/ffauction](http://www.unitedcountry.com/ffauction)

Register, view auction catalog, and bid from home!



Interested in donating to the FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions? Download a donation form at

[www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni)

## Alumni Reviving of American Icons (Barns) is a Huge Success



The National FFA Alumni Association and Campbell's Barn Reviving Project has provided a great service to production agriculture, educational facilities, FFA members, and FFA Alumni throughout the nation. The five barns revived in Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, Oregon, and New York have been reenergized with Campbell's famous red paint, white trim, new fixtures, and other features. They are now shining examples of how FFA and FFA Alumni members continue to "live to serve." Each of the five transformations can be seen on the [HelpGrowYourSoup.com](http://HelpGrowYourSoup.com) website. To view footage of the work days provided by Tennessee Farm Bureau, visit [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni).



FFA members, Alumni, and community leaders pose in front of the latest renovation in New York.

### Next Phase of Project Set to Begin

The project is not just a one hit wonder. Coming this fall, the National FFA Alumni Association and Campbell Soup Company will invite individuals from across the United States to visit the [HelpGrowYourSoup.com](http://HelpGrowYourSoup.com) website

daily to vote for one of the 10 barns in need of preservation. For each vote on the site, Campbell's will donate \$1 to FFA, up to \$250,000, on the consumer's behalf for agricultural education. As a token of appreciation, consumers who vote can sign up to receive a free Campbell's tomato seed packet in the mail (while supplies last).

The five barns that receive the most votes will be awarded participation in this year's Help Grow Your Soup Barn Reviving Program. Once the five winning barns are announced, FFA members, FFA Alumni, and local community leaders will work together to revive the selected barns.

## National Food Drive Program Revitalized for Greater Impact

The National FFA Alumni Association is proud to announce a new campaign to collect food for the benefit of those who are hungry in your local community and to build strong, lasting relationships between FFA members, FFA Alumni, Tractor Supply Company, and Carhartt. Harvest for America (HFA), formerly known as the "Can Hunger Million Can Challenge," has a new twist and the ability to have an even greater national impact. As with any new program, a test pilot needs to be conducted. In 2009, five state associations will participate in this pilot program: Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.



HFA is a food drive to collect all types of food, perishable or non-perishable. The food that is collected is delivered to the location decided on by each chapter or state association. Every FFA chapter and Alumni affiliate in each of the pilot

states will have the opportunity to participate in this amazing community service project. The National FFA Alumni Association, along with the work of Tractor Supply and Carhartt, has made this opportunity an easy endeavor for both local agriculture instructors and their students.

Each chapter in the five participating states is encouraged to engage and build a solid relationship with its local Tractor Supply store manager. September 26, 2009, marks the date for the launch of the food drive during Tractor Supply's Harvest Days. Chapters and affiliates will collect food through the end of National FFA Week, February 26, 2010. A how-to guide and other resources for HFA can be found at [www.tractorsupply.com/HarvestForAmerica](http://www.tractorsupply.com/HarvestForAmerica).

## Recap: State Leaders Conference Offers Majestic Scenery and Ideas Exchange

The 2009 State Leaders Conference (SLC) held July 15-19 in Montrose, Colo., provided the perfect venue for participants to meet and interact with other Alumni members from 28 states. An exchange of affiliate activities and ideas occurred throughout the week as participants shared with one another the challenges and triumphs in each of their communities and states.

Participants engaged in a variety of workshops related to advocacy, affiliate development, corporate partnership, and membership development. Each also found time to enjoy breathtaking views of the Colorado landscape during local tours of the High Wire Bison and Elk Ranch, Grand Mesa Alpaca Farms, along with one conducted by Switzerland of America Jeep.

By the end of the conference, participants

raised \$8,800 for special one-time Washington Leadership Conference scholarships awarded to local affiliates and states in attendance.

Conference workshops were video webcasted live this year by Brian Allmer of the Barn Media. To order DVDs of the workshops or to obtain 2009 SLC resources, visit the Alumni website, [www.ffa.org/alumni](http://www.ffa.org/alumni).

The 2009 SLC was a huge success; begin planning now for the July 14-18, 2010, conference in Illinois!

A special note of thanks is extended to the conference sponsors—Tractor Supply Company and Farm Credit—and to local organizations for sponsoring and/or hosting conference meals.



Top photo: SLC participants take a scenic tour of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. Bottom photo: Acting FFA COO, Bill Fleet, enjoys a workshop with Jill Goedeken of Nebraska.

# Social Media Offers Effective and Efficient Outreach Options

## Part 2: Using social media tools to promote Alumni and agricultural education

By Joy Carter, Southern Region Representative, Georgia FFA Alumni Association president, and Georgia Peanut Commission director of communications

Social media is the latest trend in communication. More and more people, organizations, and businesses are finding ways to promote their products or services through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and more. In fact, there are more than 80 types of social media applications available for anyone who wishes to promote his or her organization, including the National FFA Alumni Association.

### Social Media an Easy Tool for Alumni

Many easy-to-use social media applications are available for FFA Alumni to promote the association's mission, FFA, and agricultural education.

#### Blogs

A blog (short for weblog) is a frequently-updated personal online journal submitted or posted on a webpage. Blogs involve a series of entries submitted by the blog's author, known as a "blogger."

Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject. Others function as personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, webpages and media related to its topic. Readers can leave their own comments about the blog. Imagine having a back porch conversation with a few thousand of your friends. Blogs are excellent ways to inform other Alumni members, supporters, and volunteers about important issues. You can ask for—and receive—great ideas on everything from fundraising to advocacy. Blogs provide an opportunity to express views and create conversations that can lead to a sense of community among Alumni and supporters. Establishing a blog is very simple; you can set one up within a few minutes. Most importantly, blogging is free! See the sidebar on page 7 for recommended website resources.

National FFA Alumni staff created a blog at the 2009 State Leaders Conference (SLC) in Montrose, Colo. It highlights the week-long event and provides Alumni members access to an overview of the activities and a photo gallery of events. Staff have continued the blog to highlight the national FFA convention and additional SLC events. To access the blog, visit <http://ffaalumni.wordpress.com>.

#### Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that helps users to connect and share information with other people or, in our case, with members of our Alumni affiliates. On Facebook, one can create a webpage with a "profile" that lets the user share as much information as he or she wishes. Photos, videos, text, and applications can be uploaded, submitted, and posted to a profile, and the user can control who gets to see what.

Users of Facebook can create or join groups on the site organized around specific topics of interest. They can upload photos, videos, or information that may be of interest to people who join a group. For example, your Alumni affiliate can post events, share information, enlist supporters, advocate on behalf of the local FFA chapter, and build a strong community of committed supporters. Best of all, Facebook is free!

Organizations and businesses can create groups or pages on Facebook where people become "fans" of their products and services. By establishing a group or page, FFA Alumni have the ability to message all of their members, and add photos and video to their Facebook page. The National FFA Alumni Association and several state FFA Alumni associations have created Facebook pages, which attract many Alumni members. Currently, there is a question on the National FFA Alumni webpage asking, "What social media outlets do you currently use with your state or local FFA Alumni affiliate?" I encourage you to visit the site and post a response.

#### Twitter

Twitter is a service that allows users to send short text messages from their cell phones or computers to a group of people. Twitter was designed to keep friends and colleagues informed about daily activities. However, Twitter has increasingly been used for commercial purposes, such as companies using it to inform customers of new products. In addition, Alumni affiliates can use Twitter to keep their members and friends informed of time-sensitive items.

Twitter messages (known as "tweets") are sent discriminately; they are only distributed to recipients who have elected to become followers. Messages can also be sent via instant messaging, the Twitter website, or a third-party Twitter application. People who write tweets are called "tweeters" or "tweeple." A gathering of tweeters is a "tweetup."

Twitter has become increasingly popular and provides an avenue for Alumni members to send comments that would encourage people to visit their Alumni website. To create a Twitter account, visit the link in the sidebar on page 7.

#### YouTube

YouTube is an online video website, which allows Internet users to make, upload, and share their videos with others. These homemade videos are made by everyday individuals and share a variety of information. By simply entering a keyword search, one can find a video. A video-sharing program is available online. This service is also free and allows users to interact with others.

### Alumni Social Media Workshop

On October 22, Joy Carter and Kimberly Henderson will be presenting a convention workshop on the social media tools available to help Alumni members grow their affiliates. They will teach participants everything they need to know about using the various applications. See page 3 for the time and location of this workshop.

*Social Media tips and links continued on page 7*

The two entries that follow are from affiliates that submitted “best practices” at the 2008 Convention.

## Florida: Beef ‘O’ Brady Fundraiser

The Coral Reef, Fla., FFA Alumni affiliate has been partnering with the local Beef ‘O’ Brady restaurant since October 2008 to raise funds to support the local affiliate and FFA chapter. Flyers are given to all FFA members, inviting their families and friends to a family night at the area franchise. Upon leaving the restaurant, patrons pay for their meals, write the letters “FFA” on the back of their receipts, and place them in a box by the door. Restaurant owners tally the amount spent by the group and send the affiliate a check based on 15 percent of the receipt totals. The affiliate tries to hold a monthly family night and is allowed to promote the Alumni organization and encourage other patrons to donate their receipts to the cause. It now has expanded its family nights to another ‘O’ Brady franchise in nearby Hammocks and alternates between the two locations. The events average 40-45 participants per month. Beef ‘O’ Brady owners have been very supportive of the fundraiser and more people are aware of FFA and the FFA Alumni due to this fundraiser. The event has increased camaraderie and networking among parents, community residents, and Alumni members. In fact, other restaurant own-

ers have asked about initiating a similar fundraiser with the affiliate, which has begun saving funds for a laptop computer and projection unit that could be used solely by FFA members for competitions and meetings. Contact Debbie Murphy, [murphydjl@aol.com](mailto:murphydjl@aol.com).

## Georgia: Western Night and Steak Dinner

The Jackson County FFA Alumni affiliate in Jefferson, Ga., held a western and steak dinner night about four years ago. The affiliate advertised the event in the local newspaper and sold tickets to the event, which was held in the Jackson County High School dining area. Affiliate members decorated the school with bales of hay and other western items. Participants were encouraged to dress in their western paraphernalia. More than 150 people bought tickets for the dinner, which consisted of steak with all the trimmings (potatoes, salad, etc.). The activity generated several thousand dollars in profit, especially since the only real expenses were food and the printing of tickets. Alumni and FFA members made the desserts for the events, which helped reduce expenses. A silent auction was also held to raise additional funds, which were used by the affiliate to sponsor chapter trips. Contact Luther Wilkes, 706-367-3631.

*Social Media tips and links continued from page 6*

## Tips for Using Applications

The options are endless when it comes to social networking. When social media applications are handled correctly, you will enjoy posting new information and seeing what other FFA Alumni affiliates are doing across the nation. While the applications might seem overwhelming at first, the best rules of thumb for using them include:

- Sign up for only those applications and outlets you can use at this time—the ones that serve your affiliate’s needs and goals.
- Do not let the social media outlets consume your life, because they can and will if you are not careful.
- Use these tools to post dates of upcoming events, photos or videos from events, and special announcements congratulating local FFA members.
- Do not feel you have to post a new message everyday or every hour just for the sake of posting something new. Post relevant and new information based on your affiliate’s goals.
- People will lose interest or stop being your friend, your fan, or subscribing to your videos, if you post too much information.

## Social Media Links

Here is a listing of the homepages for each of the social media applications discussed in the article on page 6:

[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)  
[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

## National FFA Delegates Select Alumni Topic for Discussion at Convention

At the 2009 State President’s Conference held in Washington, D.C., in mid-July, state FFA officers voted on 17 potential delegate issues for the 2009 convention to provide national FFA officers direction on what issues and committees should be appointed.

In addition to the three constitutional issues that are moving forward at this time, national officers decided to form six specific delegate issue committees for the convention. The major topic areas include global education engagement, engagement and inclusion of all students, delivery options for *FFA New Horizons*, **roles for National FFA Alumni in assisting chapters**, retention and recruitment of collegiate members, and expanding the program affiliation model beyond pilot stages. These committees will hold in-depth hearings at convention that might also require staff testimony. These committees are charged with forming recommendations on these issues to the overall delegate body.



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**Complete convention coverage: See pages 1 (preview and schedule), 2 (Council nominations), 3 (workshops), 4 (benefit auctions), and auction catalog.**



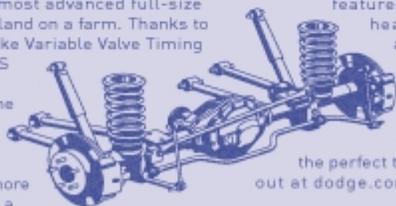
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<sup>(1)</sup>Based on 14 city to 20 highway EPA est. mpg. Results depend on driving habits and conditions. <sup>(2)</sup>Comparison based on 2009 MY full-size pickup competitive data versus the 2009 MY Ram 1500. <sup>(3)</sup>Based on Automotive News segmentation. <sup>(4)</sup>AMCI-Certified testing, 2009 Dodge Ram Crew 1500 4x4 5.7L vs. comparably equipped Ford pickup; smooth-pavement ride quality at 55 mph; details at [dodge.com](http://dodge.com). <sup>(5)</sup>No deductible. See dealer for a copy of Limited Warranty details. Non-Transferable. Not available on SRT<sup>®</sup> diesel, Sprinter, Ram Chassis Cab, Hybrid System Components including transmission, and certain fleet vehicles. <sup>(6)</sup>Contact your local Dodge dealer for details. Dodge, HEMI and SRT are registered trademarks of Chrysler Group LLC.