

Proceedings



FFA members from across the United States, traveled to Louisville, Ky. to celebrate 75 years of premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.



Proceedings



FFA advisors eagerly wait in line to register their members for the convention.



The 2003 National FFA Convention *Proceedings* is published by the National FFA Organization as a record of its annual convention held in Louisville, Ky., October 29-November 1, 2003.

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Living the Legacy

An all-time record 51,338 teachers, students and guests poured into Freedom Hall in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 29-Nov. 1, to take part in the 75th anniversary celebration of the nation's premier youth leadership organization. FFA members from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands attended the 2003 National FFA Convention to celebrate the FFA legacy of student success.

"It's absolutely awesome to see the tens of thousands of FFA members here," said Audra Usdowski of the Lake Hamilton FFA Chapter in Arkansas.

FFA members attended convention sessions, listened to motivational speakers, participated in career development events (CDEs) and toured the career show. Through different activities and events, members were constantly challenged to draw on past FFA successes while building a legacy of their own.

Before the convention began, 37 national officer candidates arrived in Louisville to start the long-awaited screening process that would determine the next six national officers who would lead the FFA. Along with the officer candidates, 475 delegates



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Patriotism was strong at this year's convention, as members made new friends from all regions of the country.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Members were entertained and inspired at each convention session.

Living the Legacy



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Roller coasters, music, food and fun awaited those who took advantage of the FFA at Six Flags event.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Hey, batter, batter! Louisville offers many exciting attractions to tour during convention, one of which is the famous Louisville Slugger Museum.

representing all 52 associations were on the scene early to discuss possible changes to the FFA constitution.

In celebration of 75 years of success, FFA released a book at convention called *Blue Jackets, Gold Standards – 75 years of living the FFA legacy*. The book, written by Paul Miner, outlines FFA origins and history and explains the programs that have enabled FFA to build such a strong heritage.

National convention officially kicked off Wednesday afternoon with two Reflections sessions, emphasizing the FFA legacies of the past and hopes for the future. National FFA Advisor Larry Case told students that FFA principles—premier leadership, personal growth and career success—are timeless and will always be part of the lives of FFA members. “It is time to live the legacy that has been handed down to us,” Case said.

Living the Legacy

FFA members embraced that legacy as they competed in a vast field of CDEs. Public speaking, parliamentary procedure, judging competitions and many other events gave students the opportunity to display skills and knowledge gained from the agriculture classroom.

Convention sessions were full of action and excitement as FFA members packed the seats of Freedom Hall. Session themes revolved around specific legacies that are integral to the past and future of FFA, including progress, innovation, partnership, service, leadership and career success. The opening laser show, accompanied by a video highlighting FFA legacies, was a hit with members and pumped them up for each session.

Top FFA members were recognized onstage for their achievements, honoring the rich tradition of FFA leadership and accomplishments. The Stars Over America Pageant featured this year's American Star Farmer, American Star in Agribusiness, American Star in Agricultural Placement and American Star in Agriscience. National award winners for each of the 48 proficiency areas were presented with plaques and scholarships, and winners of the 23 individual and team CDEs were recognized.

FFA members also took part in a variety of leadership and



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

A year of preparation and hard work came to fruition for members participating in career development events.



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

One of the best things about convention, are the shared memories.

Living the Legacy



Convention-goers found some great gifts and souvenirs at the Shopping Mall.



These FFA members are aiming to become great leaders at an experiential training session sponsored by Cargill as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

personal development workshops. Hosted by former national officers, FFA members and other presenters, the workshops gave attendees the chance to build leadership skills and take new ideas back to their chapters.

During the week, guest speakers provided students with thought-provoking words of encouragement and motivation.

“Listening to the motivational speakers is what I look forward to the most at national convention,” said Jed Michal of the Flagler FFA Chapter in Colorado. “The speakers offer great advice, tell funny stories and relate their experience to FFA.”

Lowell Catlett, a professor at New Mexico State University, entertained students with a message on how

technology is changing the way society lives and works. Former basketball player Chad Varga shared details of his troubled past and encouraged FFA members to overcome obstacles. Robin Roberts, an anchor for ABC’s “Good Morning America,” reflected on her experiences as an athlete and reporter and how she was able to rise to success. National Guard Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone inspired students with a story of survival and patriotism as he recounted the days he spent as a prisoner of war in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Outside the sessions, one of the most popular convention spots was the career show. With more than 340 organizations represented, the South Wing of Freedom Hall was packed with displays from

Living the Legacy

businesses, universities and other organizations. FFA members filled the building as they mingled in the aisles, talking to representatives and participating in different games and activities.

Students once again proved that talent runs deep in the FFA. The National FFA Band and Chorus entertained members during sessions and presented a special concert Friday night. The band opened several sessions with a powerful rendition of the national anthem, and the chorus enthusiastically sang new songs and old favorites such as “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” At the talent show, members showcased individual talents with acts that included piano tunes, country music songs and dances.

After 75 years of establishing legacies, FFA members showed they still know how to have fun. Looking to add adventure to the national convention experience, some students headed over to Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom to enjoy roller coasters and other thrill rides, while others had a ball at dances on Thursday and Friday nights.

To conclude convention, FFA repeated a time-honored tradition by selecting a new national officer team to lead the organization in the coming year. From start to finish, the 2003 National FFA Convention reminded members of past FFA achievements and challenged them to embrace opportunities of the future—truly living the legacy.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Jimmie Lea Black accompanied the National FFA Band with a beautiful sign language interpretation of the “Star Spangled Banner.”



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Members cheered the daring feats of the bull riders at the Bull Bash, one of convention’s most popular attractions.

Stars Over America

They are considered the best of the best. On Friday evening, 16 members were recognized as finalists for the Stars Over America awards for outstanding achievements in their respective supervised agricultural experience programs (SAEs). The Star awards recognize students who have developed outstanding agricultural skills and competencies through their career development programs, demonstrated outstanding management skills, earned the American FFA Degree and met other agricultural education, scholarship and leadership requirements.

Each finalist receives \$1,000 from the National FFA Foundation and has the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica as part of an international experience tour. While all of the finalists excel in their area



Orrin Holle
Atwood FFA
Oberlin, Kansas

It may sound strange, but the winner of the 2003 American Star Farmer award has never purchased a cow. Rather, Holle has found it cheaper to purchase and breed yearling heifers, watching a cow's value increase to \$1,100, with the cost of raising the cow totaling only \$650. Holle's operation now consists of more than 100 feeder calves and 900 acres of farm ground, an outstanding growth from only two calves he purchased when he was 12.



Chad V. Ledbetter
Morris FFA
Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Instead of the traditional birthday presents, Ledbetter's grandfather gave him cows and cow-calf pairs. By the time Ledbetter entered high school, his herd numbered more than 60 head. Today, he operates a diversified farm with more than 1,000 cattle and thousands of acres of cropland.

In a farming partnership with his father, he retains his own trucks, trailers, combine, tractor and grain equipment. The farm yields 105,000 bushels of corn, 35,000 bushels of soybeans and 42,000 bushels of wheat yearly.



Michael N. Brooks
Woodstown FFA
Elmer, New Jersey

As an eighth-generation farmer, Brooks is able to draw experience from his family farming operation and membership in FFA to turn an ordinary job into an entrepreneurial project.

Brooks' skills and knowledge have given him the ability to raise vegetable crops for a profit while expanding his acreage in an area of the country known for urban encroachment and high land values. He used the proceeds from his vegetable operation to establish an agricultural trucking company to transport farm products.



Michael Wellens
Chaska FFA
Carver, Minnesota

Wellens quickly learned that education plays a large role in the success of a farming operation after he watched his own enterprise grow from seven soybean acres at the time he entered high school to more than 600 acres last year. Not only did his acreage increase, but Wellens' agricultural efficiencies grew as well. He has learned to market commodities and recognize the importance of analyzing records to make future decisions.

PHOTOS BY ED ZURGA

of expertise, only one in each of four areas emerges from the interviews as a Star: Star Farmer, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Agricultural Placement and Star in Agriscience.

Star Farmer

Stars Over America

Star in Agribusiness

Members receiving their American FFA Degree may be eligible to compete for the American Star in Agribusiness award. The award winner should possess a successful agribusiness career and outstanding leadership skills.

Joshua Alan Zeithamer of Alexandria, Minn. was recognized as this year's American Star in Agribusiness.



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Joshua Alan Zeithamer
Alexandria FFA
Alexandria, Minnesota



Because a large number of communities have banned fertilizers containing phosphorus, Zeithamer found a niche market in Minnesota. Today, Bio Builder Inc. manufactures and distributes specialty phosphorus-free fertilizers and performs other agronomic services.

In 2001, he used his fertilizer concept to begin creating mixtures that provide outstanding growing results for his professional customers. Zeithamer took the fertilizer concept one step further by formulating the mixture completely out of renewable resources from Minnesota. His company also offers wholesale grass seed and erosion control products to complement its fertilizer sales.



Jay Henricks
Laverne FFA
Laverne, Oklahoma

Henricks has made great achievements as a custom cattle buyer and the operator of a fence building and farm services business. As a cattle buyer for numerous clients, Henricks has watched his volume grow from \$100,000 to nearly \$2 million. His 2002 volume reached almost 14,000 head of cattle purchased for his clients and 2,800 hours processing the animals. Henricks has learned that reputation is the best advertisement, and he believes that his foundation of reputation and trust stems from his involvement in FFA.



Travis E. Wolf
Spencer FFA
Marshfield, Wisconsin

As the co-owner of T&T Quality Cutting, a sawmill partnership with his brother, Wolf is living his dream of running a business taught to him by his father.

He has seen his clientele grow from just 10 in the first year to more than 35 today. In addition, his productivity has increased from 4,000 cut board feet the first year to more than 20,000 board feet annually.

"I know that in the future, all my hard work and dedication will pay off and help me in life," Wolf said.



Mark Haseley
Bremen FFA
Bremen, Indiana

When Haseley began researching sales and service opportunities in his community, he had to look no further than skills he learned on his own farm. After recognizing a need, he formed a partnership to provide ditching and drainage services.

The business has steadily grown with 60 jobs completed last year, and the success of the partnership has led him to make plans to buy out his partners' shares so he can operate the business full-time.



Stars Over America



Star in Agricultural Placement

The Star in Agricultural Placement award recognizes a student who has an outstanding SAE in placement in the agricultural industry and is active in FFA.

This year's Star in Agricultural Placement winner is Erik Blaser of Gillett, Wis.



Erik Blaser
Oconto Falls FFA
Gillett, Wisconsin

Blaser knows that life as a dairy farmer is hard work—he's been performing those responsibilities since he was a young boy. Today, the 22-year-old has logged more than 10,000 hours of career placement work since he began keeping FFA records four years ago. Blaser works side by side with dairy industry professionals such as the farm's veterinarian to increase productivity on the family farm.

"Having the opportunity to work with them to help our farm succeed allowed me to question them on what dairy farming and agriculture were beyond the boundaries of our farm," Blaser commented.



Chelsea Daniel
Tolles Technical Center FFA
Hillard, Ohio

A passing interest in pet care soon turned into a career track for Daniel, who has logged thousands of hours in her experience program since beginning her work in pet styling. Her skills and knowledge have given her the ability to build a base of clients and manage their expectations. With 90 percent of Daniels' clients being repeat business, she has surpassed her growth goal of 50 regular clients with more than 130 clients, a 260 percent growth.



Jordan Parsons
Porterville FFA
Ducor, California

Upon entering high school, Parsons met with his father and agriculture instructor to draw up formal plans that laid the groundwork for his project of managing the harvesting operations and client interaction for Parsons Farm Service, which harvests nearly 15,000 acres of grain and seed crops each year, and Knuckles Ranch.

During peak harvesting season, Parsons works up to 100 hours per week and can be found on harvesting equipment or routinely performing maintenance in the field. He is also sprayer certified after completing required pesticide applicator courses.



Josh St. Peters
Greenville FFA
Greenville, Illinois

A college junior, St. Peters has already begun to make a name for himself by logging hundreds of hours as a communications professional for prestigious outlets such as WGN of Chicago, through which his voice has been broadcast to thousands of listeners across the United States. St. Peters used his work experience to build media contacts in the industry. "These people aided me in pursuing bigger opportunities that led to my college education in agricultural communications and my decision to make this agricultural experience into a professional career," he said.

Stars Over America

Star in Agriscience

An outstanding agriscience-based SAE, relating to natural resources, research/experimentation or science-based directed labs, is essential for the Star in Agriscience award winner. The recipient should also have an active FFA career.

This year's Star in Agriscience award went to Amanda Beyer of Waupaca, Wis.



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Amanda Beyer
Waupaca FFA
Waupaca, Wisconsin

Alarmed by the decline of many animal species, Beyer was motivated to research and educate others about animal conservation. Her desire to protect native habitats has taken her across the globe, with trips to Central America and New Zealand.

The University of Wisconsin student currently serves as county coordinator for the Waupaca County Bluebird Restoration Association. Beyer's skills and knowledge have given her the ability to read the signs that aid in scientific research as she observes animals in their natural environment.



Alison Wohlgemuth
Kingsburg FFA
Kingsburg, California

While most undergraduate research positions are reserved for students in their junior and senior years, that didn't deter underclassman Wohlgemuth from applying and being accepted for a job at the University of California, where she is majoring in agricultural education.

Her skills and knowledge have given her the ability to perform genetic transfers with a variety of citrus fruits. She is responsible for entire experiment sections at the UC-Davis Pomology Lab and has seen accountability grow in her job.



Melinda K. Swanson
Stillwater FFA
Stillwater, Minnesota

A high school agriscience project and a volunteer study program were all that Swanson needed to prompt her to enter natural resources as a career path.

Although many students at her high school had tried to repair a dysfunctional 500-gallon aquatic tank system, only Swanson overcame the challenge. The endeavor lit a fire that led her to major in biology and chemistry in college.

Swanson now performs university research at the Lake Superior Research Institute and the Caribbean Coral Reef Studies program sponsored by the government of Belize.



Ryan Brunner
Newell FFA
Nisland, North Dakota

During four years of high school, Brunner logged nearly 600 hours of directed laboratory experiments on plant growth and health projects on global positioning system (GPS) operations.

Growing up on his family farm also gave him the background to determine the effects of fertilizer leaching on soil, and he has incorporated correct handling of agricultural chemicals, which aids in accurate experimental measurements. Brunner also mastered operation of GPS equipment and created a classroom curriculum for his agriscience instructor.

Agri-Entrepreneurship Awards

Sponsored by and in partnership with the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

National Agri-Entrepreneurship finalist Lindsey Towson was honored with a \$1,000 scholarship.

The Agri-Entrepreneurship Award Program gives FFA members a head start in developing business skills as they create their own agricultural enterprises involving production agriculture, food, fiber, the environment and natural resources. The program emphasizes innovation and encourages members to be creative in their business endeavors. From the state finalists, 10 national finalists are selected, and each receives a \$1,000 scholarship. Recipients of the award either have started their own business or have plans to start one soon. The enterprises of this year's award recipients, ranging from a corn maze to an exotic petting zoo, are excellent examples of diversity and creativity in the agricultural industry. The program is a joint project between the National FFA Organization and the U.S. Department of Education.

Michael Biel of Randolph, Wis., owns and operates Biel's Trapping and Wildlife Service. Biel decided to build a business on activities that he had always enjoyed – hunting and trapping. Biel offers his services to local landowners. These services include removing muskrats, raccoons, squirrels and other wildlife from private property. In addition to the income generated from the landowners, Biel has developed a second income stream by processing and selling the pelts of the animals he traps.

Kelsey Deaton of Troy, Ohio, owns and operates Deaton's Corn Maze. Deaton launched the business after visiting a maze in the fall of 2001. She researched the possibilities and rented land from her parents to start her project. In addition to the eight-acre maze, Deaton's customers are also offered tractor-pulled hayrides and a visit to a farmer's market, which offers pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn and fall flowers. Deaton also provides a campfire for guests to relax around, adding further enjoyment to their evenings. In her first season, Deaton hosted approximately 1,200 guests.

Travis Gottschalk of Kimball, Minn., owns and operates T 'N T Restoration in partnership with his brother, Trevor. Together, the brothers restore antique tractors. Both have exceptional mechanical and restoration skills that have allowed them to be successful in their partnership. Gottschalk completed his first tractor restoration at the tender age of 11. By the time he was 14, he and his brother were in business. Because of his skills and knowledge base, Travis has been invited to speak at tractor restoration seminars throughout the country.

Tyler Holder of Childress, Texas, owns and operates Holder Wildlife Management Services, a business that removes wild hogs and other pests from farmers' and ranchers' fields. The idea for developing this business came when wild hogs rooting around in the soil and uprooting the plants damaged a neighbor's crop. Holder devised a live trap and launched the business. He charges property owners for wildlife removal, and then markets the animals through a local buyer.

Megan McElfresh of Sutton, Neb., owns and manages McElfresh Weimaraners. After brainstorming ways to pay for college, McElfresh settled on producing and marketing purebred puppies. She purchased two females and began a breeding program. Initially, she advertised her puppies locally and by taking them to area ball games. With the help of the Internet and regional newspaper advertising, McElfresh has expanded her business and now sells to customers throughout the United States.

Wravenna Phipps of Kearney, Neb., owns and operates Shear Madness, a business that specializes in grooming exotic animals such as llamas and alpacas. Prior to launching this business, Phipps worked for a similar business to develop her skills and understanding of the industry. Phipps concentrates her marketing efforts at exotic animal sales, shows and fairs. She takes great pride in grooming an animal before a show or sale and helping its owners show each animal to its greatest advantage.

Cole Reeves of Salado, Texas, owns and manages Noah's Way Exotic Petting Zoo. When Reeves entered the agriculture program, he had a few exotic animals along with some goats and sheep. Reeves' operation began when his father was asked to provide some animals for a Texas theme day at a local school. Within a week, Reeves had received numerous requests and decided to develop a mobile petting zoo. Over time, Reeves has grown his business by marketing the services he provides to fairs and shows as well as other event organizers. He is a member of the Louisiana and Texas Fairs and Festivals Association and attends their annual trade shows. In addition, he sends information to area chambers of commerce, schools and churches offering his mobile petting zoo service.

Eric Schroeder of Cambridge, Wis., owns and operates Schroeder Fur Processing. Prior to starting this business, Schroeder worked for North American Fur Auctions (NAFA), one of the largest fur auction houses in the world. Schroeder recognized an opportunity when he became aware of individuals who had pelts in need of processing. Since NAFA only accepted processed furs, Schroeder took on the challenge of providing fur-processing services. Schroeder removes the hides from the carcasses, and then combs them out to remove any foreign material that might be present in the fur. Once this is accomplished, each pelt is stretched and dried. Schroeder prices his services by species and whether or not the hide has been removed from the animal prior to delivery.

Matthew Sloan of Mabel, Minn., owns and manages Carpo Diem Fitting, a business that provides fitting and grooming services for the dairy cattle industry. Sloan works with cattle at a variety of different levels, varying from county fairs to national and world shows. His primary task is clipping the animals to camouflage any flaws and present the animal in its most ideal state. Sloan also serves as a herdsman while traveling with the cattle and is responsible for their nutritional needs, comfort, handling, milking, medical concerns, hygiene and exercise.

Lindsey Towson of Tifton, Ga., owns and operates Musings and Things, a business focused on providing educational games to teachers. Her first product is an agricultural education game called Wordbinder. Based on the game Taboo, Wordbinder is designed for use in conjunction with the Georgia Agricultural Education Curriculum. The words used in the game have been taken from the curriculum as well as textbooks used to support the curriculum. Teachers can use the game as a whole-class activity to reinforce a lesson, unit or a series of units. Towson markets her games by attending and exhibiting at teacher conferences.

Prepared Public Speaking CDE

Sponsored by Rosen's Diversified Inc. and the National FFA Foundation.

The poised and polished group of speakers who compete in the National FFA Prepared Public Speaking CDE spend countless hours researching, writing and memorizing. To these FFA members, such efforts are an opportunity to develop strong written and oral communication skills that will be used throughout the rest of their lives. Contestants begin honing their abilities almost a year before national convention, as they advance through local, regional and state competitions.

After much preparation and rehearsal, finalists arrive ready to present their speeches, structured according to guidelines set by the National FFA Organization. All contestants are required to speak on agriculture-related topics and present a six- to eight-minute speech before a panel of judges. Along with scoring the actual manuscripts, judges grade the speakers on factors such as voice quality, articulation and confidence. At the end, each speaker has five minutes to respond to questions from the judges.



Abby Kirkbride was named the national prepared public speaking winner on stage during the seventh general session.

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X
X

Abby Kirkbride won the 2003 National FFA Prepared Public Speaking CDE. Kirkbride competed against four finalists for the title. Her speech, “A Paradise Desert—The Challenge of Water in the West” describes the role agriculture plays in conserving water and the environment. Below is an excerpt of her speech.

“Pristine, Untouched, life giving and stunning are all words that come to my mind when I think of our family hike to the headwaters of the Green River several years ago on vacation in Wyoming’s Wind River mountain range. Never in my life have I seen an area of such natural beauty and riches. Yet almost 200 years ago, Major Stephen H. Long described the same area of the country as, “almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of

course uninhabitable by a people depending on agriculture for subsistence.” So, whose perception is correct? Are we living in a paradise or a desert? The answer is both. Although the West is an area of unsurpassed uniqueness, we are beginning to realize that we are at the mercy of the one substance that allows us to thrive in this part of the country: water. In a changing world we are faced with some serious questions about the future of water in the west, and how agriculture fits into this altering picture....”

“With such adverse conditions facing water in the west, what can be done to achieve stability? I see there being three steps to begin correcting our situation....” “None of these steps, however, need to be taken at the expense of agriculture. The gen-

eral public often forgets the genuine claim agriculture has on water, and instead see the industry as water-greedy and conservation-shy. As agriculturalists, it is up to us to change this perception, and ensure we have water in the years to come....”

A full copy of Kirkbride’s speech will be available through the Agricultural Education Resources Catalog after February 1, 2004.

Creed Speaking CDE



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Emily Eddy won the National FFA Creed Speaking CDE for her presentation and knowledge of the FFA Creed.

Sponsored by CHS and Papa John’s International Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

“I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds...”

This powerful phrase begins the FFA Creed, which has been read and recited by countless FFA members spanning generations since its adoption 73 years ago. The creed speaking CDE provides new members in grades seven through nine with the opportunity to gain experience in public speaking, as well as develop a richer understanding of the creed itself and its importance to the organization.

This year’s winner was Emily Eddy of Tulare, Calif. She was one of 46 members who competed in the event.

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Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE

Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

In the extemporaneous public speaking competition, students are given 30 minutes to prepare a four- to six-minute speech on an agricultural topic and then are asked to answer a series of questions from judges. The 2003 National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE winner was Hailey Wilmer, of the Park FFA Chapter in Livingston, Mont., whose topic was, “Designer Crops: Sowing Seeds for Specific End Uses.”

In her speech, Wilmer stated, “As we plant the seeds of the future—these soybeans, which have been modified, and other crops, such as golden rice—we are planting the seeds of change. We are changing our minds. We are using our imagination to improve our existence. We are stepping into the future with optimism.”



PHOTO BY TED ZURIGA

Hailey Wilmer’s knowledge of the agricultural industry and her presentation skills earned her the title of national extemporaneous public speaking winner.

Hailey Wilmer Park FFA Chapter Montana

Through FFA, students have the opportunity to strengthen their communication skills and present themselves in a professional manner. FFA provides a variety of career development events (CDEs) that offer members this experience.

In the extemporaneous public speaking CDE, members select a speech topic from three randomly picked topics. These topics are selected from 12 possible issues in the areas of agriscience and technology; agrimarketing and international agricultural relations; food and fiber systems; and urban agriculture. Members are then given 30 minutes to prepare a four- to six-minute speech. A panel of judges asks them a series of questions related to the topic as well.

Through this speaking event, students are challenged to demonstrate their knowledge on a given topic with little preparation or practice. Members show their ability to persuasively, efficiently and effectively present their message.

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Agriscience Student Recognition Program



Grant Lewis was thrilled when he was named the 2003 Agriscience Student of the Year.

Sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Grant A. Lewis' interest in alternative fossil fuels paid off at national convention. Lewis, from the Delavan FFA Chapter in Illinois, was named the 2003 Agriscience Student of the Year. This award goes to students who demonstrate exceptional research skills through projects involving agriscience and the application of knowledge gained from agriculture classes.

Lewis focused his project on the effect of ethanol in small engines and the most efficient way to use the substance. He found that using ethanol in small engines improves their efficiency. Lewis has presented his findings to many organizations.

This research is just one example of how FFA members practice real-world career skills through integrated agricultural education. Students are also evaluated on academic achievement and involvement in school and community activities.

National Winner

Grant Lewis
Delavan FFA Chapter
Illinois
Advisor: Richard Lessen

Runner-up

Megan Robblee
Mt. Vernon FFA Chapter
Washington
Advisors: Tim Knue, Randy Brown, Rick Kannely & Ricky Knue

National Finalists

Laura Ayala
Galt FFA Chapter
California
Advisors: Hugh Mooney, Cheryl Reese, Chantell Albiani, Carl Wright & Mark Feurbach

Whitney Beck
Pettisville FFA Chapter
Ohio
Advisor: John Poulson

Julie Chelewski
Rifle FFA Chapter
Colorado
Advisor: Leon Hanhardt

Amy Garrison
Lenawee Vo-Tech FFA Chapter
Michigan
Advisor: Ken Bollinger

Mateusz Tomkowiak
Chicago High School for
Agricultural Sciences FFA
Chapter
Illinois
Advisors: Lucille Shaw, Cynthia Sajid & Julie Reynolds

Shalyne Van Worth
North High Bakersfield FFA
Chapter
California
Advisor: Chris Dickson

Agriscience Teacher of the Year

Sponsored by Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Owen Mark Thomason, advisor of the Franklin County FFA Chapter in Carnesville, Ga., was named the 2003 Agriscience Teacher of the Year. This award was designed to recognize teachers who integrate applied science into their curriculum with exciting approaches. Finalists have developed innovative programs in food, environmental, animal, plant, soil and mechanical and engineering sciences.

When Thomason noticed that the local community was changing from traditional production agriculture to hobby farms, he looked for a new way to attract students to agricultural education. As part of his aquaculture program and with funding from a school-to-work grant, he now maintains a 30x60-foot greenhouse that can handle 12,000 fish. This opportunity attracts nontraditional students with diverse perspectives to his classroom.

"Students enter my class expecting the traditional cow, pig and crops curriculum," Thomason stated. "They leave knowing that experimentation, current events and analytical thinking are part of our progressive agricultural department."

Thomason's dedication and teaching initiative earned him this honor, which was announced during an onstage presentation at convention.

National Winner

Owen Thomason
Franklin County High School
Carnesville, Georgia
Administrator: William Howe

National Finalists

Carl Aakre
Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy
Little Canada, Minnesota
Administrator: Becky Meyer

Russell Graves
Childress High School
Childress, Texas
Administrator: John Wilson

Alan Taylor
Owsley County High School
Booneville, Kentucky
Administrator: Earl Shuler



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

The commitment, dedication and ingenuity Owen Thomason displayed while teaching in an agriscience classroom earned him recognition as the 2003 Agriscience Teacher of the Year.

Agriscience Fair

Sponsored by Ford Motor Company Fund.

Scholarships sponsored by Ford Motor Company Fund as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

New ideas, modern technology and agriculture abounded at the agriscience fair. FFA members put their minds in gear to develop agriscience projects and experiments in one of five categories: botany, engineering, environmental sciences, zoology or biochemistry/microbiology/food science. Projects focused on scientific principles and emerging technologies in agricultural enterprises.

Members began working on their projects many months before convention and won their respective state competitions. Through the fair, students often take their understanding and experience of agriscience to a higher level. With a mix of excitement and nerves, contestants responded to questions from judges who circled the room.

"The agriscience fair gives you more opportunities to expand your knowledge," said Laura Hulman of the Navasota FFA Chapter in Texas. "It gives you problem-solving skills, too."

Winners in each division received plaques and are eligible for scholarships.

Category: Biochemistry/Microbiology/Food Science
Division 1: Adam Judy - Moorfield Middle, WV
Division 2: Nikki Schneider - West Central, IA
Division 3: Weston Meeter and Tyler Babbs - Taylorville, IL
Division 4: Lindsey Doyle and Tiffany Herrera - Samuel Clemens, TX

Category: Botany
Division 1: Rachel Sutter - Plymouth, OH
Division 2: Janelle Williams - Bakersfield, CA
Division 3: Amanda Browning and Alayna Siebman - Childress, TX
Division 4: Krista Brown and Bridget Sloan - Delavan, IL

Category: Engineering
Division 1: Tyler Treptow - Weimar, TX
Division 2: Grant Lewis - Delavan, IL
Division 3: Jenna Davis and Samantha Greathouse - Judson, TX
Division 4: Dustin Crittenden and Kyle Baker - Winfield, KS

Category: Environmental Sciences
Division 1: Erin McFarland - Sumner, WA
Division 2: Courtney Timmons - Byng, OK
Division 3: Andrew McNair and Marisa Zozaya - Judson, TX
Division 4: Rocky Latham and Heather Gardner - Gilmer, TX

Category: Zoology
Division 1: Catherine Kuber - Clovis East, CA
Division 2: Drew Sanning - Eldon, MO
Division 3: Bethany Baird and Branan Weade - Miami Trace, OH
Division 4: Christina Bernal-Rigoli and Ed Carr - Amphitheater, AZ

H.O. Sargent Awards

Sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

As the National FFA Organization continues into the next 75 years, the H.O. Sargent Award is given to individuals who are “living the legacy” by developing ways to reach underrepresented groups who have not yet been able to experience agricultural education or the FFA. The award was reestablished in 1995 to recognize the New



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Jamie Cano was one of two adults recognized with the H.O. Sargent award for their active support and recognition of cultural diversity within their communities and agricultural education.

Farmers of America (NFA) and their place in FFA history. The NFA was founded in 1928 by Dr. H.O. Sargent, who believed the time was right for an organization for African-American agriculture students.

Jennifer Ann Woodward, of the South Rowan FFA Chapter in China Grove, N.C., was this year’s member award winner. Woodward took action after discovering a group of students in her high school was being left

out. Adjacent to an agriculture classroom was a room for mentally and physically disabled students. Wanting to get these students more involved, Woodward recruited fellow FFA members to serve as tutors and shared weekly agriculture lessons with them. Her commitment to include other FFA members in these efforts is breaking down barriers and misconceptions among her peers.

Nonmembers who work to promote the ideals Sargent believed in are also eligible for recognition. Nonmember awards this year went to Jamie Cano, Russell Graves and Donald Lewis Reid.

Cano, of Hillard, Ohio, was denied the opportunity to enroll in agricultural education in high school due to his ethnic background, but that didn’t diminish his love for the subject or his belief in the importance of inclusion. Through his dedication, the associate professor at The Ohio State University began the Hispanic Action Plan.

While teaching agricultural education at Childress High School in Texas, Graves revised the curriculum to center around communication and leadership skills. As a result, the program has grown from having only one female enrolled in 1993 to having full gender equity in the program today. The ethnic composition of the program has also grown, and now the diversity of the agriscience program mirrors that of the general school population.

Reid, of Louisville, Ky., wanted to develop strategies to improve academic achievement of minorities. Agricultural education gave him the tools he needed to make this goal a reality. He designed a hands-on learning program to introduce students to agricultural education and agricultural careers.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Jennifer Ann Woodward’s service to others and commitment to diversity were recognized when she was named 2003 H.O. Sargent Award winner.

H.O. Sargent Member Winner

Jennifer Ann Woodward
South Rowan FFA Chapter
North Carolina

National Finalists

Amber Adams
Tri-County FFA Chapter
Wisconsin

Cierra C. Alexander
Coral Reef Senior FFA Chapter
Florida

Brantrell Pastor
Lincoln Secondary Alternative
FFA Chapter
Louisiana

Non-Member National Recipients

Jamie Cano
Ohio

Russell Graves
Texas

Donald L. Reid
Kentucky

Reliving the FFA Legacy

Upon hearing the theme of the 2003 National FFA Convention, “Living the Legacy,” many students may think of their parents or some other former member who has a faded blue corduroy jacket adorned with an emblem bearing the words “Vocational Agriculture” gently curving around its perimeter, rather than “Agricultural Education” as they read today. In fact, the FFA

anniversary, the organization has released the book *Blue Jackets, Gold Standards*, a chronicle of the FFA legacy. Author Paul Miner writes, “*Blue Jackets, Gold Standards* is not a history of the FFA; rather, it attempts to capture the organization’s spirit through remarks from the past, and through photos.”

Miner was never an FFA member; his first experience with FFA came while publicizing the

Indiana State Fair. Later, when covering agricultural events for a farm paper, Miner and the FFA again crossed paths. On each occasion, he was impressed by the poise and confidence of the young leaders he met.

The book was available for sale during convention in the shopping mall. Download an order form at www.mtpublishing.com or call 1-888-263-4702 to purchase copies.



FFA introduced a new commemorative book at this year's convention, *Blue Jackets Gold Standards*



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Members explore the organization's history at the FFA museum, located in the Agricultural Career Show.

legacy incorporates both phrases, the old and the new.

The National FFA Organization is constantly changing to reflect developments in the agricultural industry, which has grown to encompass all aspects of agriculture, from production farming, agribusiness and forestry to biotechnology, marketing and food processing. As the field of agriculture continues to thrive, those who wear the blue jacket have a strong sense of what FFA is and where it is going, but many others have not been exposed to the organization's rich history. A new book will help tell the FFA story. As FFA celebrates its 75th



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Career Development Events

Career development events (CDEs) provide FFA members with an opportunity to apply knowledge acquired in the classroom to real-life scenarios.

CDEs help members develop critical thinking, clear communication and effective performance, and are one of the best ways for students to build leadership skills while learning about the agricultural industry. Throughout the week, FFA members participated in a wide variety of events, ranging from public speaking to poultry evaluation. Results were announced at the end of the week and members were honored at award banquets. During the Saturday session, winning teams and individuals were recognized on stage for their efforts and accomplishments.



The environmental and natural resources CDE asks members to tackle national and international environmental issues.

PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Agricultural Communications

Sponsored by Successful Farming

Winning Team: James Madison HS FFA, Texas—Joshua Anderson (advisor), Lauren Brown, Adam Wetz, Noelle Parris and Gina Munch

High Individual: Fairbury Jr/Sr. HS FFA, Nebraska—Jennafer Glaesemann

Agricultural Issues Forum

Sponsored by Elanco Animal Health, A Division of Eli Lilly & Co.

Winning Team: James Madison HS FFA, Texas—Doak Stewart (advisor), Keri Bagley, Megan Walsh, Ashley Green, Erica Hawks, Joy Holland and Deanne Weinheimer

Agricultural Mechanics

Sponsored by Firestone Agricultural Tire Company/Bridgestone Firestone Trust Fund

Winning Team: North Shelby HS FFA, Missouri—Harold Eckler (advisor), Gina Eckler, Andrew Mann and Jordan Yoder

High Individual: Russell-Tyler-Ruthton HS FFA, Minnesota—Cody Nelson

Agricultural Sales

Sponsored by Monsanto Company

Winning Team: Troy HS FFA, Missouri—Doyle Justus (advisor), Megan Fox, Jenna Van Beek, Michelle Schisler and Jamie Nichols

High Individual: Branch Area Career Ctr FFA, Michigan—Doug Albright

Agronomy

Sponsored by Bayer CropScience

Winning Team: Pleasant Hope HS FFA, Missouri—Jeff Voris (advisor), Joey Stokes, Jordan Richner, Brad Young and Dustin Cox

High Individual: Pleasant Hope HS FFA, Missouri—Joey Stokes

Creed Speaking

Sponsored by CHS and Papa John's International Inc.

High Individual: Western HS FFA, California—Emily Eddy

Dairy Cattle Evaluation

*Sponsored by Associated Milk Producers Inc., Westfalia*Surge*

Winning Team: Owatonna HS FFA, Minnesota—Liz Tinaglia (advisor), Bridgette Hemmesch, Liz Kern, Brian Paulson and Melissa Mussman

High Individual: Southern Door HS FFA, Wisconsin—Tony Brey

Dairy Foods

Sponsored by National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Milbank Sr. HS FFA, South Dakota—Jerry Janisch (advisor), Tana Bonnet, Kyra Tietjen, Amber VanHout and Andrea Gorden

High Individual: Milbank Sr. HS FFA, South Dakota—Amber VanHout

Environmental/Natural Resources

Sponsored by Ford Division, Michelin Ag Tires, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Junction City HS FFA, Oregon—Reynold Gardner (advisor), Chauncey Freeman, Emily Wintch, Collin Kayser and Ryan Burks

High Individual: Junction City HS FFA, Oregon—Chauncey Freeman

Extemporaneous Public Speaking

Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation

High Individual: Park HS-Park FFA, Montana—Hailey Wilmer

Farm Business Management

Sponsored by John Deere

Winning Team: North Callaway R-I HS FFA, Missouri—Jim Graham (advisor), Rebecca Railton, Brian Wenzel, Abby Ladlie and Sally Casteel

High Individual: North Callaway R-I HS FFA, Missouri—Rebecca Railton

Floriculture

Sponsored by American Floral Endowment, Ball Horticultural Company, Uniroyal Chemical Company, National FFA Foundation

Winning Team: Franklin Co. HS FFA, Georgia—Gary Minyard (advisor), Jessica Harper, Taylor Ginn, Camilla Beasley and Joanne Bennett

High Individual: Christiana HS FFA, Delaware—Jennifer Ibanez

Food Science And Technology

Sponsored by ConAgra Foods Inc., Dairy Farmers of America, The Coca-Cola Company, Ventura Foods LLC

Winning Team: Dassel-Cokato HS FFA, Minnesota—Seena Larson (advisor), Maggie Hedlund, Amanda Carlson, Amanda Evenski and Brittany Bayuk

High Individual: Dassel-Cokato HS FFA, Minnesota—Maggie Hedlund

Forestry

Sponsored by BASF, Husqvarna Forest and Garden Company, International Paper Inc.

Winning Team: Brantley Co HS FFA, Georgia—Richard Gill (advisor), Erin Vickers, Hampton Ammons, Buck Taylor, Jerrin Flowers and Michael Gilbert

High Individual: Brantley Co HS FFA, Georgia—Michael Gilbert

Horse Evaluation

Sponsored by Dodge Division DaimlerChrysler Corporation, Evergreen Mills Inc., KENT Feeds Inc., Roper Apparel and Footwear

Winning Team: Arroyo Grande HS FFA, California—Pete Agalos (advisor), Chelsey Miles, Jessica Darway, Jessie Gilbert and Jenna Mann

High Individual: Winfield HS FFA, Kansas—Katlyn Crow

Job Interview

Sponsored by Tractor Supply Company

High Individual: Moses Lake HS FFA, Washington—Julie Sackmann

Livestock Evaluation

Sponsored by Akey/Sunglo, Alpharma, Merial Ltd., Performance Awards Center

Winning Team: Crater HS FFA, Oregon—Jeremy Kennedy (advisor), Amanda Criswell, Lacie Hoffman, Jennifer Lyle and Sarah North

High Individual: Crater HS FFA, Oregon—Jennifer Lyle

Marketing Plan

Sponsored by Data Transmission Network, DeBruce Grain Inc., DuPont Company

Winning Team: Walla Walla HS FFA, Washington—Mike Martin (advisor), Danielle Gray, Kyle Williams and Mitch Frazier

Meats Evaluation And Technology

Sponsored by Excel Corporation, Hormel Foods Corporation, Oscar Mayer Foods Corporation, Premium Standard Farms, Tyson Foods Inc.

Winning Team: East Central HS FFA, Texas—Ray Pieniasek (advisor), Jessica Doege, Brandon Strey, Nichole Sullivan, Jennifer Tuttle and Jon Miller

High Individual: East Central HS FFA, Texas—Jon Miller

Nursery And Landscape

Sponsored by Arvesta Corporation, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Stihl Inc.

Winning Team: Southwest Star Concept FFA, Minnesota—Louise Worm (advisor), Whitney Place, Jenna Pomeranke and Susan Volk

High Individual: Southwest Star Concept FFA, Minnesota—Jenna Pomeranke



Members demonstrated their reporting and broadcasting skills during the agricultural communications CDE.

Parliamentary Procedure

Sponsored by Syngenta

Winning Team: Bear River HS FFA, California—Steve Paasch (advisor), Ron Angold, Elisabeth Guerra, Taraleigh Hoer, Nicole Kelly, David Payne and April Saltenberger

Poultry Evaluation

Sponsored by Adisseo and Tyson Foods Inc.

Winning Team: Springdale HS FFA, Arkansas—Dennis Mason (advisor), Samantha Blair, Eric Bakker, Heather Artripe and Dale Downum

High Individual: Springdale HS FFA, Arkansas—Dale Downum

Prepared Public Speaking

Sponsored by FMC Corporation, Agricultural Products Group

High Individual: Chugwater HS FFA, Wyoming—Abby Kirkbride

National Officer Candidates

National Officer Candidates reception sponsored by Agri Business Group Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

The talents of 37 national officer candidates shone through during intense interviews, small group situations and a written exam. Only six would be elected to the 2003-2004 team, but each displayed the making of a true leader.

On Saturday afternoon, a lifetime of preparation and study reached its culmination for 37 members, each hoping to hear their name called as a member of the 2003-2004 National FFA Officer Team.

Throughout the week, nine delegates from across the country evaluated the candidates as they made their way through a written test, a demonstration of writing skill and a rigorous series of interviews. The long hours of intense discussion and deliberation resulted in the nominating committee report.

Upon election, the national officers take a leave of absence from their university studies so they may fully dedicate themselves to their role as ambassadors for agricultural education and FFA. During their year of service, each national officer travels more than 300 days and a distance of over 100,000 miles, both in the United States and abroad.

While only six would make up this team of president, secretary and four vice presidents from their respective regions, each candidate left Louisville with a sense of pride in representing their state association for one of the greatest responsibilities the National FFA Organization can bestow upon a member.

- Alabama:** Devin Dotson, Red Bay
- Arizona:** Brian Hogue, Willcox
- Arkansas:** Tory Hodges, Alpena
- California:** Jeff Alves, Galt
- Colorado:** Kaki Little, Weld Central
- Florida:** Emily Hand, Blountstown
- Georgia:** Bo Dotson, Stephens County
- Idaho:** Angeana Little, Sugar-Salem
- Indiana:** Amanda Vore, Hamilton Southeastern
- Iowa:** Stefan Knudsen, Harlan
- Kansas:** Michael Burns, Jetmore
- Kentucky:** Lindsey Mayse, Henry County
- Louisiana:** Leanna Becnel, Thibodaux
- Michigan:** Scott Smalley, Ubly
- Minnesota:** Beth Lauwagie, GFW Pioneer Express
- Mississippi:** Christy Windham, Northeast Jones
- Missouri:** Crystal Mathews, Carthage
- Montana:** Austin Mapston, Denton
- Nebraska:** Amy Rasmussen, Mead
- Nevada:** Cassie Wyllie, Silver Sage
- New Mexico:** Quentin Ray, Grady
- New York:** Victor Rodriguez, John Bowne
- North Carolina:** Tasha Schmidt, South Rowan
- Ohio:** Anne Knapke, Talawanda-Butler Tech
- Oklahoma:** Tracy Smith, Guthrie
- Oregon:** Mike Folin, Crater
- Pennsylvania:** David Bittner, Brothersvalley
- Puerto Rico:** Javier Moreno, S.U. Antonia Serrano
- South Carolina:** Ashley Granata, BJ Skelton Career Center
- South Dakota:** Micah Hansen, Philip
- Tennessee:** Melissa Burniston, Johnson County
- Texas:** Casey Hogan, Arlington-Martin
- Virginia:** Abram McConnell, Holston
- Washington:** Marissa Wilkie, Medical Lake
- West Virginia:** Nathan Taylor, Ravenswood
- Wisconsin:** Beth Porior, Oconto Falls
- Wyoming:** Stacia Berry, Cheyenne

National FFA Band

Sponsored by the National FFA Foundation.

Arizona: Christina Turk, Parker

Arkansas: Joshua Kuykendall, Prairie Grove; Jared Sparks, Nashville

California: Michael Croxen, Madera; Becky Pfannmuller, Kelseyville; Courtney Stevens, Sutter Creek; Samantha Verdegall, Lodi M.I

Connecticut: Tiana Holder, Bloomfield

Illinois: Angela Dudley, Pleasant Plains; Jessica Hanson, Williamsville; Jeff Potthoff, Williamsville

Iowa: Mark Boatwright, Southeast Polk; Ann Gevoek, Fairfield; Ryan Koch, Akron-Westfield; Kaylin Schuetz, Sheldon Golden Corn

Kansas: KaCee Thompson, Central Heights

Kentucky: John Bell, LaRue County; Tia Chambers, Christian County; Stephanie Fraley, Montgomery; Kristen Goodin, Adair County

Maryland: Catherine Dietz, Linganore

Michigan: Paul Mellgren, Stephenson

Minnesota: Jenna Portner, GFW Pioneer Express; Kellie Pulford, Perham

Mississippi: Leslie Edwards, Columbus-McKellar

Missouri: Joshua Brookhart, Clark County; Gregory Gholson, Jackson; Lindsay Grotjan, Keytesville; Amie Harris, Belle; Thomas Higgins, Linn; Jacob Kallash, Bowling Green; Kristen Kallash, Bowling Green; Derek Lorence, Green City; Brian Martin, Centralia; Scott Ray, Paris; Hannah Robinson, Carthage; Sean Silkwood, Trenton; James Trvrdy, Cameron; Megan Wyant, Trenton

Montana: Sara Begger, Wibaux; Cassie Keogh, Stillwater; Anne Marek, Missoula

Nebraska: Jeana Bulling, Waverly; Savannah Dorn, Franklin; Alicia Dreyer, Rushville; Melissa Dreyer, Rushville; Rebecca Dreyer, Rushville; Sarah Hoffman, Bayard; Abby Knobbe, West Point; Jennifer Meter, Bayard;

Timothy Nieveen, Freeman; Brent Nollette, Cody-Kilgore; Kim Snyder, Bayard; Cassandra Thomas, Lyons-Decatur; Jill Witkowski, Freeman

New Mexico: Valerie Onsurez, Loving

New York: Laura Walter, Springville

North Dakota: Elisa Buehler, Maddock A. S. Gibbens; Jill Peterson, Berthold

Ohio: David King, Blanchester; Kelly Litzenberg, Kenton; Emily Lockwood, Benjamin Logan; Justin Nau, Caldwell; Michael Pizzino, Riverview; Jason Shreyer, Liberty Union; Nicholas Waggamon, Elida

Oklahoma: Sara Smallwood, Clayton; Sarah Smith, Newcastle

Oregon: Sarah Roth, Scio

South Dakota: Jenna Carlson, Milbank; Megan Whitney, Harrisburg

Texas: Whitney Allen, Coronado-El Paso; Lauren Gillespie, Liberty Hill; Caleb Higgins, Weatherford; Lindsey Lott, Coronado-El Paso; Katherine Wohl, James Madison

Utah: Benjamin Smith, Box Elder

Washington: Amy Clark, Mount Vernon; Justin Garrison, Cathlamet; Angela Jeffries, St. John; Graham Logen, Stanwood; Andrew Stevens, Stanwood

Wisconsin: Christopher Alderman, Kickapoo; Michaela Deno, Oconto Falls; Timothy Ecklor, Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah; Jaimi Garner, Cadott; Katie Gerlach, Marshfield; Christina Huth, Johnson Creek; Anthony Janicki, Gilman; Brian Rieth, Oconto Falls; Nichole Skroch, Whitehall; Craig Stiemke, DeForest; Cheree Webster, Gilman; Meagan Weed, Kickapoo; Chad Wozniak, Auburndale

Long before members gathered from across the country to celebrate the 75th anniversary of FFA, music echoed through the convention halls as 96 students representing 26 states came together to celebrate their musical talents. Under the direction of Joe LaJoye, the National FFA Band performed at general sessions and entertained delegates at the National FFA Band and Chorus concert Friday night.

Part of the selection process for this honor includes the submission of an audition tape, which demonstrates the musician's level of talent and ability. To ensure the highest possible number of FFA members can take part in this opportunity, students may only participate in the band at two conventions. In addition to entertaining the thousands who come to Louisville, the new friendships and treasured memories stay with members of the National FFA Band long after convention.



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Above: Though they only came together a few days before convention to practice, the FFA Band hit all the right notes.

Left: Joe LaJoye led the band as it entertained members and guests during convention sessions, lunch functions and at various events in and around KFEC.

National FFA Chorus

Sponsored by the National FFA Foundation.

While students who attend national convention as members of competing career development event teams certainly put in a great deal of practice and preparation, members of the National FFA Chorus should not be overlooked.

After arriving Saturday, 97 students from 28 states began a series of long rehearsals under the direction of Patti LaJoye to prepare them for the week ahead. Their hard work was evident, as they delighted listeners with an array of songs during sessions, as well as at the band and chorus concert Friday night.

Coltan Bohman of the Alaska FFA Association was a member of the chorus this year. He commented, “It was so cool to meet people from other states! This week was such a great experience, as everyone was so accepting of each other and excited to make new friends. Singing music brings people together and creates such a bond—it’s like we’ve become a whole new family.”



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Alaska: Coltan Bohman, Palmer; Fredrick Kenley, Palmer

California: Felicia Flud, Grass Valley; Alyssa Thornton, Visalia-Golden West; Shane Tinker, Kelseyville

Colorado: Ceri Parker, Limon; Morgan Parker, Limon

Delaware: Mackenzie Phinnessee, Dover; Jessica Wilkerson Caesar, Rodney

Florida: Jeremy Hatcher, Umatilla; Amber Jackson, Sebring

Georgia: Brandi Saxon, Elbert County; Kristi Sommer Vanoy, Clinch County

Illinois: Timothy Basham, Central of Clifton; Thaddeus Sharp, Roseville

Indiana: Jessica Pursell, Owen Valley; Rachel Rea, Scottsburg; Troy Walker, Clinton Central

Iowa: Jordanne Blair, Lake City; Chazse Goddard, Central DeWitt; Afton Holt, Jewell; Karissa Muller, Monticello; Heidi Parsons, Fairfield

Kansas: Thomas Kimbrel, Hillsboro; Kurt Krupp, Ellsworth

Kentucky: Megan Elizabeth Stout, Spencer County

Maine: Brittany McLaughlin, Fort Fairfield; Stephen Smith, Mars Hill

Minnesota: Karin Haase, AFSA; Christian Lilienthal, Sibley East; Brenna Price, Princeton

Missouri: Joanna Bellis, Mount Vernon; Logan Campbell, Trenton; Todd Davis, Kahoka; Whitney Mudd, Monroe City; Meagan Perry, Bowling Green; Laura Puchbauer, Jackson; William Sundwall, Urbana; Sterling Sutton, Smithville; Katie Anne Voelker, Perryville

Montana: Robert Orednick, Park City; Clayton Unruh, Richey; Wyn Walker, Richey

Nebraska: Tertia Allen, Christine Spath; Richard James, Dailey Bayard; Lance Heron, Lakeview; Rachel Johnson, Sutton; Alan Martin Kreifels, Falls City; Drew Marty, Lakeview; Sapphire Munford, Falls City; Carrie Rice, Imperial; Tanya Tvrdy, Waverly; Timothy Varilek, Imperial

New Hampshire: William Farris, Winnisquam

New Mexico: Chris Arrigo, Aztec; Deonna Neel, Artesia

New York: Brenna Therrien, Greenville

North Carolina: Issac Davenport, Plymouth

North Dakota: Kyle DeWitt, Park River; Marly Simmons, Park River

Ohio: Nathan Davis, Wellington

Oklahoma: Jessica Allen, Holdenville; Matt Catlett, Collinsville; Carissa Dominguez, Cushing; Christopher James, Morrison; Charity Jantz, Woodward; Joshua Seals, Skiatook; Myles Simpson, Thomas-Fay-Custer

South Dakota: Marilee Aklund, Beresford; Mallory Larson, De Smet; Christopher Odden, Miller; Elizabeth Anne Sinclair, Milbank; JoAnna Clare Strom, Beresford

Texas: Deondra Akin, Cedar Park; Stephanie Bonner, Sinton; Sarah Carpenter, Snyder; Cassandra Darlin, Snyder; Ricky Early, Snyder; Brittany Glazner, Grapeland; Felicia Ibarra, Snyder; Landin Mathison, Cy-Fair; Jacob Muller, Bryan; Lacey Nixon, Uvalde; Elizabeth Anne Parsley, Snyder; Randi Roanhaus, Henrietta; Tommy Stanley, Kirbyville; Gwenn Winsauer, Dayton; Michelle Wise, Kirbyville

Washington: Darren Larsen, North Kitsap

Wisconsin: Breann Diefenthaler, Waupaca; Amber Harker, Shullsburg; Britta Hegge, Evansville; Elena Lahti, Evansville; LeeAnn Nolte, Winneconne; Bryan Odeen, Loyal; Danielle Russell, Shullsburg

Wyoming: Jacob Gantz, Devils Tower

National FFA Talent



Sponsored by the National FFA Foundation.

Every year at convention, there is an abundance of talented FFA members. This year was no exception, as students turned in rousing performances throughout the week. Before and during sessions, the audience was entertained with a variety of musical tunes. At the National FFA Talent Show Thursday night, members performed songs, dances and instrumental numbers. FFA talent was also seen in the shopping mall and other places around convention.



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

Alabama: Dean Bass, Enterprise; Aaron Brown, Enterprise; Jerad Dyess, Enterprise; Robert Foy, Enterprise; Magen Green, Enterprise; Bradley Griffith, Enterprise; Taylor Heaton, Enterprise; Brent Hudgens, Enterprise; Tyler Mills, Enterprise; Brandon Nelson, Enterprise; Allison Norris, Enterprise; Max Oden, Enterprise; Vanessa Vega, Enterprise; Joseph Waters, Enterprise; Matthew Cole, Montevallo; Chris Davis, Montevallo; Tyler Hall, Montevallo; Cody Horton, Montevallo; Lee Berry, Red Bay; Derek Cole, Red Bay; Maria Humphries, Red Bay; Melanie Montgomery, Red Bay; Henry Kent, Tallassee; Jeremy Kilpatrick, Tallassee; Kayla Patterson, Tallassee; Alicea Porterfield, Tallassee; Joshua Drummond, West Point; William Johnson, West Point; Justin Kelly, West Point; Randy McBrayer, West Point; Dustin New, West Point

Arizona: Megan Holt, Millennium

Arkansas: Tera Turner, Lincoln; Corey Davis, South Side Bee Branch

California: Katie Cisneros, Selma

Florida: Hannah Leach, Pine Ridge; Wayne Lively Jr., Umatilla

Georgia: Rory Edge, Sumter Co.

Idaho: Stetson Wilson, Highland

Iowa: Sarah Kleihauer, Akron-Westfield; Amanda Achenbach, Rockford; Elizabeth Campbell, Rockford; Tarah Engelhardt, Rockford; Danielle Fullerton, Rockford; Brianna Kelly, Rockford; Jennifer Paulus, Rockford; Nicole Shook, Rockford; Ashley Smith, Rockford; Stephanie Staudt, Rockford; Brittney Wenzel, Rockford

Illinois: Cari Ingle, Williamsfield

Indiana: Kelli Hoffman, Columbia City; Mindi Hoffman, Columbia City; Jill Brinker, Hope; Rachel Rea, Scottsburg

Kentucky: Susan Kuegel, Apollo

Michigan: Kylee Zdunic, Corunna; Jennifer Green, Hopkins/Webberville; Patrick Shanabrook, Hopkins/Webberville; Kaleb Wakeman, Hopkins/Webberville; Tony Zapolnik, Hopkins/Webberville

Minnesota: Ksana Harrison, AFSA

Mississippi: Sabrina Griffith, Enterprise Lincoln; Kayla Boyte, Sumrall

Missouri: Karyssa Krutsinger, Branson; Jennings Matney, Branson; Mallory Matney, Branson; Danielle Albertson, Eldon; Jason Comer, Eldon; Jennifer Lawrence, Eldon; Leah McConkey, Galena; Miranda Leppin, Milan

Montana: Danette Deichmann, Hobson

Nebraska: Brianna Gulbrandson, Central City; Kyle Perry, Kimball

New Mexico: Steven Chavez, Hondo; Alicia Gallegos, Hondo; Jamie Garcia, Hondo; Samantha Gomez, Hondo; Derek McTeigue, Hondo; Maegan Parmley, Hondo; Teka Salcido, Hondo; E.J. Sanchez, Hondo; J.C. Yocum, Hondo

North Carolina: Maegan Wolfe, Ayden-Grifton

North Dakota: Tiffany Krinke, Scranton

Ohio: Jeremy Hupman, Greenville

Oklahoma: Ashley Ballou, Elgin; Lisha Stasser, Kingfisher; Jennica Kinney, Mooreland; Rachel Smith, Rattan; Joshua Seals, Skiatook; Haylee Sanders, Sterling; Brandi Morris, Taloga

Pennsylvania: Carissa Ebersole, Northern Bedford

Rhode Island: Michael Wodecki, Exeter-West Greenwich

South Carolina: Steve "Doug" McCormick, McBee; Andre Lemon, Manning

South Dakota: Tara Trask, Wall

Tennessee: Amanda Hendrix, Dyersburg

Utah: Shayla Osborn, Dixie

Washington: Katie Webster, North Kitsap

Wisconsin: Haylee Hall, Shell Lake; Kodey Feiner, Sun Prairie; Lukas Hallmark, Sun Prairie; Thomas Kazmerzak, Sun Prairie; James Kzalheim, Sun Prairie; Michael Kzalheim, Sun Prairie; Paul St. Louis, Sun Prairie; Kirsten Fritz, Verona

Proficiency Awards



PHOTO BY SAMI HARRREL

PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

The agricultural proficiency award program recognizes members for their achievements as they gain skills that help them set and reach goals, and provides them with an outlet to apply these skills in real-life situations.

FFA members are rewarded at local, state and national levels for excellence in their supervised agricultural experience programs (SAEs). A student's SAE serves as the primary opportunity for hands-on application of what is learned in the classroom. Members can work in the agricultural industry and apply for a placement proficiency award, or they can start their own business and apply for an entrepreneurship proficiency award. Applications were submitted from all 52 associations, representing each of the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Sponsored by Farm Progress Companies Inc.; R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company; Trone Advertising; National FFA Foundation

Kansas: Philip B. White
Kentucky: Amanda JoAnn Barger
Nebraska: Wravenna Nadyne Phipps
Ohio: Priscilla L. Powers

AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS DESIGN AND FABRICATION

Sponsored by Carry-on Trailer Corporation; DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; Dodge Division DaimlerChrysler Corporation

Missouri: Colin M. Woodworth
Nebraska: Christopher E. Fiorelli
Oklahoma: Jared Dyke Huey
South Dakota: Chad Kaiser

AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS ENERGY SYSTEMS

Sponsored by New Holland

Arkansas: Corey Wilson
Iowa: Nick Dodson
Kentucky: Chad Benham
Utah: Joshua Provost

AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

Sponsored by CARQUEST Corporation, CARQUEST Filters/CARQUEST Gaskets

Illinois: Tim Tygrett
Iowa: Matthew Bailey
Minnesota: Travis S. Gottschalk
Wisconsin: Jason J. Cerven

AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING

Sponsored by Archer Daniels Midland Company; CHS; Ralcorp Holdings Inc.; National FFA Foundation

Louisiana: Timothy Wayne Clement Jr.
Nebraska: Neal A. Ely
South Dakota: James Edward Haas
Wisconsin: Michelle L. Backhaus

AGRICULTURAL SALES - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Chevy Trucks; GMAC

California: Viktoria Ashley Vanderhoof
Colorado: Devin J. Varner
Missouri: Jana LeAnn Thies
Wisconsin: Anthony N. Wolf

AGRICULTURAL SALES - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Tractor Supply Company; Vigortone Ag Products; The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company

Florida: Joshua Paul Schneider
Iowa: Clay Koenig
Ohio: Brian Pohlman
Wisconsin: David John Westphal

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Sponsored by Chevy Trucks; New Holland; GMAC

Connecticut: Ashley B. Porter
Georgia: Michael Chafin
South Dakota: Katie Marie Tornberg
Wisconsin: Brady David Quam

BEEF PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Nasco Division/Nasco International Inc.; Schering-Plough Animal Health

California: Casey Bennett
Idaho: Remington Roland Kendall
Kentucky: Andrew Moore Bell
Texas: Daniel Deweber

Proficiencies are sponsored as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Proficiency Awards

BEEF PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Fort Dodge Animal Health; ContiBeef LLC; Pfizer Animal Health; Texas Cattle Feeders Association

Illinois: Megan R. Quaka
Missouri: Jamie Dawn Bellis
Utah: Brandon John Tinker
Wisconsin: Adam Freis

DAIRY PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by DeLaval Inc.; Pfizer Animal Health

California: Robert Joseph Teixeira
Michigan: Joshua Crambell
Washington: Melissa Randi Kortus
Wisconsin: Colby N. O'Malley

DAIRY PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Monsanto Animal Agricultural Group

Connecticut: Sarah Jeanne Baker
Georgia: Josh Stewart
North Dakota: Dustin Heitkamp
Wisconsin: Troy Sellen

DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Sponsored by PotashCorp

Alabama: Gary Carr
Kansas: Chase Bontrager
Ohio: Jason Rufenacht
Wisconsin: Kevin James Konkol

DIVERSIFIED CROP PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by CHS

Indiana: Shane Steven Hageman
Minnesota: Jacob Sellner
North Dakota: Kevin J. Teigen
Ohio: Nicholas A. Arnold

DIVERSIFIED CROP PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by National Crop Insurance Services; Rain and Hail LLC; American Farm Bureau Insurance Services Inc.

Illinois: Brandon Cole Smith
Nebraska: Michael William Zmek
Texas: Rowdy Cubie
Wisconsin: Matthew Todd Repinski

DIVERSIFIED HORTICULTURE - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Farmland Insurance Nationwide Agribusiness; Nationwide Foundation

California: Kristin Ann Avinelis
Indiana: Drew Carter
Kansas: Rebecca Joann Corn
Wisconsin: Benjamin J. Lindner

DIVERSIFIED HORTICULTURE - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science; Arvesta Corporation; Gowan Gowan

Minnesota: Charlie Peterson
Ohio: Mark R. Thomas
Tennessee: Dustin Wallace
Wisconsin: Nicole Lynn Skroch

DIVERSIFIED LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by ContiBeef LLC; Intervet Inc.; Tractor Supply Company

California: Kim Forsythe
Missouri: Cody M. Brock
Oklahoma: Ruth I. Bobbitt
Utah: Dusty Ercanbrack



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

DIVERSIFIED LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Premium Standard Farms; Agri Beef Company; Zareba Systems

Connecticut: Jenna Nicol
Georgia: Michael James Certain
North Dakota: Nathan Thomas Horner
Wisconsin: Julie Eibergen

EMERGING AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

Sponsored by Chevy Trucks & GM Vortec Engines; ISK Biosciences Corporation; Micro Flo Company

Kansas: Zane Wesley Unrau
Oregon: Kindra Nelson
South Dakota: Megan Marie Chilson
Wisconsin: Michael G. Biel

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Sponsored by IMC Global Inc.

Iowa: Michael Dominic Hilger
Kansas: Derrick D. Fagg
Nebraska: Katie Ann Jenkins
South Dakota: Ryan Brunner

EQUINE SCIENCE - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Purina Mills Inc; Red Brand Non-Climb Horse Fence/Made by Keystone Steel and Wire Company; National FFA Foundation

Illinois: Fahrhan Kathaleen JayRobb
Michigan: Kirk Johnson
Missouri: Scott Hill
Utah: Amy Pallesen

EQUINE SCIENCE - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Tractor Supply Company

Georgia: Merideth Bryans
South Dakota: Wayne Mark Robison
Tennessee: Heather J. Olsen
Utah: Tiffany Clegg

FIBER AND OIL CROP PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Syngenta Seeds Inc.; United Soybean Board

Kentucky: Pamela K. Coffey
Missouri: Alesa Ann Raasch
Nebraska: Chris Marsh
South Dakota: Jason Edward Biel

Proficiency Awards



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

GRAIN PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.

New Mexico: Quentin Paul Ray
Oklahoma: Nathan W. Johnson
Texas: Rex E. Brandon
Wisconsin: James Pagel

HOME AND/OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sponsored by Carhartt Inc.

Nebraska: Ryan James Becker
Oregon: Allen Bodeen
Utah: Loral W. Godfrey
Wisconsin: Kristine H. Zickert

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Sponsored by Bayer, Environmental Science

Nebraska: Matt Bland
Oklahoma: Blake Talley
Oregon: Donovan Tyson Stevahn
Wisconsin: Andy McWilliams

NURSERY OPERATIONS

Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; John Deere

Indiana: Neil Mylet
Ohio: Justin J. Armintrout
Oregon: Sean Robert Snodgrass
Virginia: Brittany R. Stansberry



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Sponsored by Chevy Trucks; Cabelas Inc.; Justin Brands Inc.

Florida: Waylon Sean Lewis
Georgia: Melody Bryans
Kansas: Matt Clark
Missouri: Benjamin Thomas French

POULTRY PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Wayne Farms LLC; United Soybean Board; Chore-Time Equipment Division of CTB Incorporated

Florida: Ryan Ean Smith
Georgia: Nicole Leigh Cisson
Michigan: Anthony David Karhoff
Washington: Alexis Rose Leonard

SHEEP PRODUCTION

Sponsored by LA-CO All Weather Paintstik Markers; Wrangler

Iowa: Matt Owens
Kentucky: Laura Kay Comer
Nebraska: Shelly R. Kubicek
Washington: Jason Dockter

FLORICULTURE

Sponsored by Home Depot Inc.

Michigan: Kimberly S. Leonard
Nebraska: Matt Vlasin
North Carolina: Justin Hunter Lowe
Texas: Callie Nichole Gilbreath

FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Sponsored by Seneca Foods Corporation; CHS; National FFA Foundation

Kentucky: Trey Webb
Nebraska: Sara Elizabeth Morrissey
Texas: Jamie Lee Callahan
Wisconsin: April Lynn Gnadt

FORAGE PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Gehl Company; National FFA Foundation

Kentucky: Richard Wayne Medley
Missouri: Blake A. Wilson
Oklahoma: Chance Simpson
Wisconsin: Ryan M. Franz

FOREST MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTS

Sponsored by DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; Timberjack, a John Deere Company

Florida: Mike W. Adams
Georgia: Amanda Kate Hamsley
Illinois: Bruce P. Frank
Texas: Michael Parsley

FRUIT PRODUCTION

Sponsored by DuPont Company

California: Mike Shoffner
North Carolina: Jeremy Ponce
Utah: Marc A. Rowley
Wisconsin: Ryan Rezin

GRAIN PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.

Nebraska: Timothy Brovont
Ohio: Brian Wayne Deaton
Tennessee: Justin Lee Humphrey
Washington: Anne Christine Meyer

Proficiency Awards

SMALL ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND CARE - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Novartis Animal Health US Inc.

Indiana: Bradley Eugene Clayton
 Kansas: Michelle Lea Sullivan
 Kentucky: Charlee Nicole Doom
 Wisconsin: Melissa Mateske

SMALL ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND CARE - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Iams

Kansas: Sarah J. Oestmann
 Nebraska: Cherish J. Williams
 North Carolina: Chelsea Brittain
 Bradshaw
 Texas: Laci Hackfeld



SPECIALTY ANIMAL PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Land O' Lakes Farmland Feed LLC

Florida: Matthew James Moody
 Illinois: Bethany Marie Wilson
 Louisiana: Kasye Bourn
 Texas: Brandi Kneupper

SPECIALTY CROP PRODUCTION

Sponsored by BASF; Cerexagri

Kentucky: Michael Thomas
 Cambron
 Missouri: Bradley L. Anderson
 Ohio: Stacy Marie Burkholder
 Tennessee: Paul White

SWINE PRODUCTION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health

Florida: Victoria Louisa Lyons
 Missouri: Jenny L. Smith
 Ohio: Kisha Lynell Bodey
 Wisconsin: Barbara Elizabeth
 Jarek

SWINE PRODUCTION - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Phibro Animal Health; Akey/Sunglo

Georgia: Thomas M. Walraven
 Minnesota: Andrew Allan Kamm
 Missouri: Steve J. Brandt
 South Dakota: Josh Jerrold
 Blindert

TURF GRASS MANAGEMENT - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by The Scotts Company

Georgia: James William Thaxton
 Kansas: Chad Ebbert
 Minnesota: John N. Heise
 Utah: Jeremy Catron

TURF GRASS MANAGEMENT - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by Bayer Environmental Science

Connecticut: David Robert
 Golembeski
 Indiana: Paul Joseph Hellmich
 Nebraska: Cody Osten
 Utah: David Robbins

VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Briggs & Stratton Corporation Foundation Inc.

Colorado: Richard Bradley
 Lindenmayer
 Nebraska: C. J. Swanson
 Ohio: Chris Shaw
 Wisconsin: Cindy S. Lulich

WILDLIFE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT - ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sponsored by Bass Pro Shops Inc.; Land O' Lakes Farmland Feed LLC

Illinois: John E. Schamberger
 Nebraska: Jared LeRoy Fullerton
 Utah: Chase Brereton
 Wisconsin: Eric Schroeder

WILDLIFE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT - PLACEMENT

Sponsored by National FFA Foundation

Georgia: Clint Edward Collins
 Iowa: Cody Jon McKinley
 Minnesota: Jena Marie Sazama
 Missouri: James M. Baker

American FFA Degree

Sponsored by BASF Corporation, Case IH, Farm Credit System Foundation and Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The American FFA Degree is the highest level of membership an FFA member can achieve. This year, 2,789 young men and women received the degree. To qualify, members must have their greenhand, chapter and state degrees.

In order to receive this honor, other requirements must also be met. Members must have achieved a C average in high school and they must have graduated at least one year prior to receiving the degree. Students need three years of agricultural education and an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program (SAE). In addition, members must demonstrate leadership abilities and community involvement. Less than 0.5 percent of all members earn the American FFA Degree.

This prestigious degree encourages members to grow personally while establishing a foundation for a successful career in the agricultural industry. Degree recipients were recognized on stage and honored at an award banquet.

Alabama: William W. Blanton, Fort Payne; Nick Corley, Beulah; James Simon Davis, Gaston; Devin Dotson, Red Bay; George Wesley Evans Jr., Smiths Station; Kristin Holland, Red Bay; Jason Knight, Southside; Christopher Paul Kuszniak, Jacksonville; Elizabeth Newby, Ardmore; Robert Benjamin Noblett, Eufaula; Gannon Nunley, Red Bay; Matthew Evan O'Neal, Douglas; Justin Heath Roberts, White Plains; Jessica Brooke Rush, Lineville; Daniel Sewell, Southside; Barrett D. Stephenson, Eufaula; Jessica Elizabeth Stiefel, White Plains; Dustin Wood, Eufaula

Arizona: Michael Anspach, Parker; Stephani Austin, Westwood; Patrick Bray, Tolleson; Robert H. Bray, Benson; Ginnie Catherine Bushong, Gilbert; Dana Ann Crosbie, Yuma; Abigail Dambeck, Yuma; Johnathan Dees, Yuma; Brian Dykman, Benson; Amanda Lynn Gapen, Highland; Jess A. Gillum, Peoria; Kristine Hammar, Westwood; Erika Hernandez, Amphitheater; Brian Hogue, Willcox; Patricia Danielle Johnson, San Simon; Jacob Lee, Benson; Brandon Joseph Martin, Benson; Cassandra Jo Moore, Willcox; Nicolas Joel Morando, Amphitheater; Aubrey Mortensen, Duncan; Amber Rayl, Amphitheater; Todd Rovey, Buckeye; Holly Renee Schindler, Buckeye; Jamie Leigh Wade, Young; Carson White, Safford; Raymond E. Woodbury, Millennium; Michael Wayne Zamudio, Benson; Lauren Zbyszinski, Peoria

Arkansas: Pamela June Burkett, Springdale; Caroline Carpenter, Cabot; Justin Andrew Cason, Valley Springs; Jessica Dale Catlett, Danville;

Joanna Chambers, Camden-Fairview; Craig Dewey, Farmington; Bethany Deann Dunn, Mountain Home; Matthew Lee Fryar, Lake Hamilton; Josh Garner, Melbourne; Josh Gordon, Mansfield; Rachel Green, Valley Springs; Robert Seth Harper, Danville; Tory Beth Hodges, Alpena; Dusty Key, Cabot; Shannon Lewis, Harmony Grove; Shelly Reynolds, Fairview; Gannon W. Roberts, Valley Springs; Aaron Rae Thompson, Fouke; Jason Thompson, Mansfield; James Parks Tullis, Mountain Home; Jamie Turnbo, Mountain Home

California: Meghan Abatti, Paso Robles; Charles Abee, Strathmore; Mark Aguiar, Tulare Union; Erin Ahlem, Hilmar; Robert Alvarado, Fresno-Pershing; Lacey Amarante, Gustine; Jennifer Arnall, Grass Valley-Bear River; Tara Ascroft, Lakeside-El Capitan; Rose Atherton, Porterville; Charles Avila, Lemoore; Jessica Avila, Lemoore; Trey Avila, Visalia-Golden West; Crystal Balderama, Porterville; Cory Balis, Sanger; Elvis Barcellos, Lemoore; Arthur Bard, Riverside-La Sierra; Phillip D. Bass, Ferndale; Brandon Bedrosian, Sanger; Niklaus Beglinger Jr., Hamilton City; Casey Bennett, Porterville; Melissa Bettencourt, Turlock; Garrett Bishop, El Centro-Southwest; Dennis Dean Blackman, Riverside-Norte Vista; Tyler Blogg, Grass Valley-Bear River; Josh Blair, Kerman; Daniel Bledsoe, Woodland; Ashley Marie Blount, Turlock; Matthew Bono, Tulare Western; Cheyanna Bosio, Coalinga; Sherry A. Bosworth, Burney; Alicia Bowen, Bakersfield-North; Leoma Box, Tollhouse-Sierra; Kimberly Boyd,

Santa Maria-Righetti; Malinda Bragg, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa; Scott William Brown, Rio Vista; Angela Buckley, Tulelake; Melissa Burrow, Lemoore; John Bush, Lemoore; A. J. Camozzi, Santa Rosa-Elsie Allen; Jose L. Cardenas, Calipatria; Sergio Cardosa, Corcoran; Thomas Carver, Bakersfield-North; Chris Chave, Dixon; Corey Christison, Lucerne Valley; Amber Cleaver, Bakersfield-Ridgeview; Scott Cocke, Norco; Ashley Cockrell, Cedarville-Surprise

Hanford; Heath Duinkerkin, Lemoore; Aaron Echavarria, Corcoran; Heather Ephraim, Quartz Hill; Andrew Ernst, Indio; Mike Escola, Lemoore; Darrell Espindula, Hilmar; Jeff Evangelo, Lemoore; Justin Patrick Ferrell, Atascadero; Hatti Fleming, Rio Vista; Kimberley Fletcher, Tulare Union; Erica Jane Flores, Santa Ynez; Kim Forsythe, Mariposa; Laura Jayne Fortman, Atascadero; Jordan Freitas, Lemoore; Cassandra French, Fresno-Central; Raymond Gamez, Corcoran;



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Valley; Cassie Cockrell, Cedarville-Surprise Valley; Jeanelle Colburn, Fallbrook; Winston Alexander Colgan, Chico; James Jason Corbett, Tulare Western; Lauren Corkins, Porterville; Daniel Costa, Hanford; Amanda Courtney, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Michael Courtright, Newman-Orestimba; Brian Keith Davis, Madera; Nicholas Ray Davis, Madera; Wade DeCesare, Tulare Western; Melissa Deitz, Hamilton City; Martha Delgadillo, Calipatria; Dustin DeMello, Lemoore; Audrey Denney, Paso Robles; Kate DeSchryver, Santa Ynez; Angie Dettamanti, Lompoc; Kasey deVries, Laton; Anne Marie Diener, Riverdale; Bryan Dodson, Chico; Megan Doherty, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Tessa Domenichelli, Healdsburg; Kelly Brandon Douglass, Hamilton City; Frank Duarte, Newman-Orestimba; Jeremy Duarte,

Jennifer Garcia, Lemoore; Christopher Garmon, Santa Paula; Emily Gay, Lakeside-El Capitan; Amanda Gipe, Merced-Golden Valley; Roger Manuel Gonsalves II, Hilmar; Anna Good, Ramona; Preston Gravance, Laton; Trevor Green, Morro Bay; Andrew Joseph Groppetti, Kerman; Jose Guillen, Santa Maria-Righetti; Anthony Haley, Lemoore; Amber Renee Hallsten, Kingsburg; Bobbi Harmony, Nicolaus-East Nicolaus; Sara Harper, Lincoln; Daniel Hart, Lompoc; John Herger, Patterson; Nick Heuer, Elk Grove; Kyle Hibbs, Sacramento-Florin; Lisa Hill, Porterville-Monache; Justen M. Hindle, Santa Maria; Heather Holland, Lemoore; Benjamin Tyler Hone, Escondido; Tamara Hoskins, Middletown; Casey Howard, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Elizabeth Howard, Lemoore; Manuel Huerta,

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Delano; Johnnie Irvin, Visalia-Golden West; Amanda Irwin, Dixon; Nicole Crystal Jansen, Woodland; Hector Jimenez Jr., Santa Maria-Righetti; Kayla Johnson, Santa Maria-Righetti; Jessica Jopson, Nicolaus-East Nicolaus; Jenee Jue, Lemoore; Dan Junk, Lakeside-El Capitan; Jay M. Kimbler, Tollhouse-Sierra; Lauren P. King, Petaluma; Clayton William Koopmann, Livermore; Heidi Kooyman, Fallbrook; Andrea Lynn Krout, Petaluma; Lisa Krpan, Elk Grove; Heath Krug, Colusa; Jessica Lawrence, Tulare Western; Shelena Dawn Laws, Loomis-Del Oro; Shaina Leach, Oceanside-El Camino; Matthew Thomas Llewellyn, Reedley; Bridget L. Luscombe, Tulelake; Katie Jolane Lyon, Escondido; Jose Maldonado, Santa Maria; Matthew L. Manes, Orangevale-Casa Roble; Eric Martin, Coalinga; Isaias Martinez, Fresno-Pershing; Carrie Massie, Riverside-Rubidoux; Shamberlee McCarter, Sacramento-Florin; Morgan McCoy, San Marcos; Laura Del Bianco McGee, Madera; Bradley Webster McLean, Lindsay; Justin Mebane, Bakersfield-North; Albert Manuel Mendes Jr., Turlock; John Menezes, Laton; Joseph Richard Merritt, Granite Hills; Gary Miles, Grass Valley-Bear River; Sandra Lynn Mitchell, Escondido; Tom Monk, Dixon; David Moon, Fresno-Central; Amber Neal, Lemoore; Kelly Neal, Riverside-Norte Vista; Heather Nielsen, Phelan-Serrano; Daniel J. Odom, Reedley; Nichole O'Quinn, Coalinga; Martina Otterbeck, Sanger; Lisa M. Otto, Orland; Shauna Jean Owens, Santa Rosa-Elsie Allen; Jordan Lee Parsons, Porterville; Joshua Pedrozo, Merced-Golden Valley; Jason Perry, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa; Kevin Pharis, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Rocio Pineda, Bakersfield-North; Mike Pires, Lemoore; Jacob H. Poganski, Auburn-Placer; Jonathan D. Poganski, Auburn-Placer; Mark Powell, Santa Maria; Nicolina Prestininzi, Fallbrook; Cody Preston, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Justin D. Pritchard, El Centro-Southwest; Alice Anne Purdy, Sacramento-Florin; Amber Quatacker, Porterville; Phillip Rafanan, Fresno-Washington; David Ramirez, Calipatria; Ernesto Ramos, Dixon; Megan Renker, Kelseyville; Allan Rios, Merced-Golden Valley; Stacy Robinson, Newman-Orestimba; Katherine E. Roche, Chico; Megan Renee Rogers, Campbell-Westmont; Megan Roland, Porterville; Joe Rosa, Modesto; Mary Calla Rowan, Healdsburg; Michelle Rudnick, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Monte Rudnick, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Chad Allen Russell, Turlock; Jared Samarin, Kerman; Erica Samons, Orland; Sarrah G. Samson, Healdsburg; Justin Sandlin, Chowchilla; Devon Rachel Sandrock, Anderson; Craig Santos,

Tulare Western; Joshua Schaubsluger, Clovis; Jason Schoonhoven, Chowchilla; Krysten Michelle Schott, Valley Center; Kari Schroeder, Coalinga; Mark Scott, Mariposa; Brandon Serafin, Tulare; Loriann Sesock, Madera; Sierra Shew, Porterville; Alicia Shuck, Bakersfield-Highland; Steve Signorelli, Lompoc; Ashley Smith, Porterville-Monache; Ashley Smith, Shingle Springs-Ponderosa; Lexey Smith, Orland; Lisa Smith, Lake Isabella-Kern Valley; Meghan Anne Soderstrom, San Luis Obispo; Matthew Soto, Santa Maria-Righetti; Aaron Souza, Newman-Orestimba; Adam Souza, Santa Maria-Righetti; Chris Souza, Lemoore; Christine St. Pierre, Chowchilla; Kimberly Stackhouse, Palo Cedro-Foothill; Kenneth Stafford, Santa Maria; Chad Everett Steinmetz, Rio Vista; Alan Stickles, Mariposa; Lacyanne Sullivan, Lemoore; Julie Swartzbaugh, Lemoore; Jarrod Takemoto, Sanger; Robert Teixeira, Hilmar; Adam Terry, Dinuba; Randy Threadgill, Merced-Golden Valley; Alyson Tulloch, Pine Valley-Mountain Empire; Todd Uchita, Tulare Union; Amy Valente, Lodi-Tokay; Robert Vallejo, Porterville; Juliana Van Egmond, Galt; Jason Verdegaal, Hanford; Christina Vieira, Merced-Golden Valley; Martin Vivenzi, Fresno-Central; Kevin Wagster, Atascadero; Jason Wara, Madera; Tammara Warmuth, Auburn-Placer; Jolyn Wells, Maxwell; Jordan Whaley, Visalia-Golden West; Jennifer Wickstrom, Hilmar; John S. Williams, Santa Maria-Righetti; Raymond E. A. Williams, Santa Maria-Righetti; Stacy Wills, El Centro-Southwest; Gregory Gordon Wilmot, Etna; Matthew R. Wilterding, Fallbrook; Norman Winn, Grass Valley-Nevada Union; Alison Nicole Wohlgemuth, Kingsburg; Lance James Wright, Rio Vista; Travis Wyrick, Lemoore; Jeremy Yarbrough, Coalinga; Christina C. Young, Fresno-Central; Tory Zellick, Chico; Katrina Zimmer, Weaverville-Trinity

Colorado: Nate I. Adam, Hotchkiss; Trevor Amen, Fort Morgan; Kendal W. Bauman, Grover; Robert Lee Beal, Hi-Plains; Brian Berry, Custer County; Jessica R. Borns, Eads; Ryan Britten, Karval; Heidi Carbaugh, Pritchett; Kyle Carbaugh, Greeley West; Chase Carlin, Burlington; Nikki Carpenter, Hotchkiss; Cari Chelewski, Rifle; John E. Crockett, North Park; Jonathan Davis, Burlington; Donald Edson, Fort Morgan; Cory Franz, Burlington; Melinda Fury, Dove Creek; Levi Garchar, Dolores County; Jimmy Joe Gebauer, Akron; Benton Hendrix, Wray; Anthony S. Ingo Jr., Pueblo County; Justin Jameson, LaVeta; Katherine Lynn Johnson, Platte Valley; Tyler Kuntz, Hotchkiss; Zac Langston, Custer County; Sara Lewton, Weld Central; Kelli A.

Loutzenhiser, Flagler; Michael Marsh, Fort Lupton; Brandon Mason, Merino; Cassie M. McMillan, Weld Central; Anthony Megel, Hi-Plains; Andrew R. Mills, Hi-Plains; Kathleen Renae Paintin, Kit Carson; Kameron Peschel, Valley; Jani Phillips, North Park; Seandale Poe, Fort Morgan; Shawna Potter, Pueblo County; Adam Sandefur, Custer County; Dallas James Schleining, McClave; Stacey Thomas, Valley; Duke Webb, Valley; Ben Weber, McClave; Daniel Ray Weber, McClave; Skyler Weeks, Eads; Jason Weirich, Eads; Steven Winters, Valley; Amanda J. Wofford, North Park; Ray Wudtke, Idalia

Connecticut: Amy Augur, Lyman Hall; Vincent L. Bernardo, Lyman Hall; Cheryl Danton, Lyman Hall; Tiffany A. Duncan, Woodbury; Courtney L. Johnson, Woodbury; Stacy Lynn Kish, Northwestern Regional; Jessica Kukielka, Southington; Michael F. Lavoie, Lyman; Stephen Russell, Housatonic Valley; Sharon E. Sugrue, Woodbury; Martin Alfonso Vito, Mattabesett; Michelle Warner, Lyman Hall

Delaware: Philip Busker, Lake Forest; John Curtis, Lake Forest; Christy N. Gustafson, Lake Forest; James Andrew Powell, Caesar Rodney; Phillip Sylvester, Lake Forest

Florida: Leanne E. Bailey, Columbia Sr.; Ben Barthle, Dade City Sr.; Jessica

Dobbins, Riverview; Wade William Dye, Suwannee Sr.; Rudy Espinoza, Miami Sr.; Jeffrey Ray Everett, Sneads; Leigh Anne Hamilton, Riverview; Emily Dianna Hand, Blountstown; Robert Herrington, South Lake; Hannah Jackson, Suwannee Sr.; Gregory Scott Johnson, Plant City Sr.; Emily Danielle Land, Lafayette Sr.; Tanya Larman, Miami Sr.; Rebecca McDavid, Bell Sr.; John Tate Mikell, Williston Sr.; Brad Muse, Bradford Senior; Brandon Perdue, Northview; Knox Phillips, Miami Sr.; Joshua Steven Reynolds, DeLand; James Aaron Shuler, Sneads; Melissa May Stanley, North Marion Sr.; Natalie Ann Sullivan, Keystone Heights Sr.; Tommy Taylor, Suwannee Sr.; Kelli E. Veal, South Sumter Sr.; Barton James Wilder, Plant City Sr.; Joel Heath Williams, Williston Sr.; Justin Ryan Williams, Bonifay Sr.

Georgia: David Adams, Central of Carroll; Alan Amos, Upson-Lee; Ben Brooks, Upson-Lee; Melissa Marie Cleary, Tift County; Stephanie Michelle Cleary, Tift County; Caci Evette Cook, Johnson County; Joey Crapps III, Swainsboro; Lee Davis, Cook; Joseph Bo Dotson, Stephens County; Molly Caroline Freeman, Eagle's Landing; Chet Hite, Gordon Central; Matt Isbell, Franklin County; Jason Douglas Morris, Eagle's Landing; Jay Murray, Colquitt County; Larry Michael Muse, Central of Carroll;



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Behrens, Durant Senior; Elizabeth Michelle Bell, Lake Butler Sr.; William Isaac Bender, Plant City Sr.; Mindy Bielling, Lake Butler Sr.; Leon Creig Blackburn II, Lake Region; Herbert E. Brown III, Bell Sr.; Courtney Brooke Davis, Lake Butler Sr.; Shannon Leigh Davis, Durant Sr.; Lindsey Regina Davison, Lake Butler Sr.; Lauren Dillard, Dade City Sr.; Kia

Craig Patrick Pace, Effingham County; Kristopher Wallace Pope, Jefferson City; Kyle Franklin Presley, Jackson County; Scott Register, Putnam County; William Crane Ross II, Oconee County; Christine Sheppard, Putnam County; Abby Elizabeth Spruill, Jackson County; Trisha Rae Stephens, Tift County; Chad Andrew Till, Oconee County; Jonathan Willis,

American FFA Degree

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South Dakota: Nicholas B. Abbas, Lennox Sundstrom; Sarah E. Arnold, De Smet; Jessica M. Beal, Harrisburg; Aaron Gene Beisch, Webster; Steven Thomas Bly, Garretson; Ryan L. Brunner, Newell; Steven Bucholz, Harrisburg; Renee J. Burns, Harrisburg; Brian Butler, Waubay; Mindy Carroll, De Smet; Ramie Ralene Coughlin, De Smet; Mandy Jo Erichsen, West Central; Revel Sandrel Fink, Harrisburg; Chad Ford, Sioux Valley-Volga; James Edward Haas, Harrisburg; Derick D. Hofer, Willow Lake; William Daniel Huston, Sturgis; Jared Knock, Willow Lake; Angela Emma Kopriva, Clark; Mary Kurtz, Elkton; Jesse Larson, De Smet; Melissa Maag, Florence; Marsha Meyer, West Central; Crystal Nielson, Woonsocket; Kelly Jo O'Donnell, Lemmon; Tony Peckenpugh, De Smet; Chris Plamp, Mitchell; Justin Ploof, Florence; Clinton Powell, Chamberlain; Darin Rislov, Florence; Matt Rogers, Miller; Kelly Jane Sanderson, Lake Preston; Ashley Schaack, Florence; Greta Lynn Schanning, Clear Lake; Jennifer Laura Schock, McCook Central; Casey Schwinger, Florence; Jessica Smit, Lennox Sundstrom; Duane Snaza, Webster; Sarah Stratmeyer, Lennox Sundstrom; Jamie Swan, Newell; Mitchell Swanson, Chamberlain; Wayne Walters, Wagner; Lavyne L. Wieting, Milbank; Joshua James Woledge, Sturgis; Andrea Zirbel, Florence

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Rachael Lynn Klamer, Munford "Big Boll"; James Knight, South Greene; Seth Krantz, Cheatham County; April Dawn LaFollette, Cocke County; Marcy Lance, Warren County; Rebekah Lemley, East Robertson; Landon Loveall, Portland; Justin Lovelace, Jackson North Side; Jared Major, Lebanon; Joseph Allen Bryant Mathias, South Fulton; Beth May, White House; Leanna June McAlister, Lincoln County; Jason Miller, White County; Ryan Edward Moore, Jackson North Side; Josh Morgan, White House; Ashley L. Morris, South Fulton; Brandon Morris, Portland; Sarah Jane Myracle, Riverside; Jessica Pearson, East Robertson; John Michael Poss, White House; Ronald Alexander Proctor, Munford "Big Boll"; David Pruett, Loretto; Crystal Leann Quinn, Riverside; Brian Reed, Loretto; Travis Roberson, Dyer County; Patrick Thomas Robinson, Warren County; Jill Rogers, Lexington; Clint Ross, Dyer County; Clint Sanders, Lexington; Robert W. Sands, Richland; Joseph Schultz, Dyersburg; Mark Alton Scott, Munford "Big Boll"; Matt Lee Scott, Munford "Big Boll"; Daniel Chance Simmons, Westmoreland; Guy Spence, Crockett County; Michael Stanford, Lexington; Willie Clifford Taylor, Warren County; James Travis Thaxton, Warren County; Valerie Tillman, Crockett County; Adam True, East Robertson; Ashlea Sorrell Turner, Dyersburg; Holli Denise Turner, Covington; Russ Underwood, Richland; Chris Vessell, Lincoln County; Ryan Louis Walker, Warren County; Clint Walton, Covington; Blake Wolaver, Richland; Will Wright, Halls

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Shepherd; Tamra Crum, Mayde Creek; Jennifer Nicole Crump, Hardin; Blakely Davis, Tilden; Cassi Lynette Davis, Galena Park; Hannah Dawson, Simms; James M. Decker, Stamford; Jason Demel, Schulenburg; Chris Denny, Lancaster; Andrew Derington, Florence; Saxon Dittter, Schulenburg; Tammy Ettredge, Pilot Point; Christi Evans, Pilot Point; Johnna Ferris, Snyder; Tony Franklin, Tilden; Stephanie Lynea Franzen, Palacios; Austin Fullingim, Petersburg; Chris Gilbreath, Winnsboro; Garrett Gilliam, Quanah; Tiffany Angeline Green, Cleveland; Richard Hahn, Tilden; Meghan Hancock, Cotulla; Ryan Scott Hanel, Cameron Yoe; Seth Hansen, Troy; Jason Harris, Tilden; Leslie Sue Harris, John Foster Dulles; Lance Hausenfluck, Bryan; John Hilliard, Academy; Benita F. Hodge, A & M Consolidated; Heidi Hoffman-Bryan, Charlotte; Lindy Holub, James E. Taylor; Amy Hughes, Franklin; Ross Jackson, Henrietta; Jaci Jagers, Sulphur Bluff; Amy Janicek, Sealy; Stephanie Jeter, Troy; Justinn Jones, Mary Carroll; Roger Jones, Gilmer; Colby Allen Kelch, Humble; Jessica Kempen, Somerset; Jordan Kiker, East Chambers; James Kimmey, Ross S. Sterling; Cody Kosub, East Central; Kristal Kunkel, Grandview; Katherine Lindsey Kurtz, Palacios; Catherine Lawless, Big Sandy; Hugh Anthony Leland, Lovelady; Bradley Lindsey, Covington; Josh Little, Gilmer; Austin Lowder, South Garland; Matthew Luensmann, East Central; Reagan L. Machac, Waller; Shayne Markwardt, Round Top-Carmine; Bradley Martin, East Central; Randi Lauren McBroom, Prairie Valley; Kaci McClintone, Aledo; Jeremy Todd McFerrin, Cotton Center; Misty McGinnis, Harmony; Kenan McGuffey, Garland; Alex McIntosh, James E. Taylor; Meredith McLeroy, Commerce; Andrew Wade Miller, Hartley; Charles Mock, East Central;

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Simonson, Cashton; Terri Sorg, Sauk Prairie; Justin Charles Staubli, Cambridge; Stephen William Steinhoff, Cuba City; Ryan Sterry, Osseo-Fairchild; Adam Robert Stiemke, DeForest; Helen Stubrud, Black River Falls; Brenda Sue Thimmig, Sheboygan Falls; Bryon Traaseth, New Auburn; Dawn Michelle Traynor, Plum City; Ross L. Trentadue, Lake Mills; Judy Turpin, Hillsboro; Francis Ubersox, Shullsburg; Bruce Vine, Granton; Jamie Vine, Granton; Derek Waldera, Independence; Philip Waldera, Independence; Joanna I. Waldron, Waterford; Daniel E. Wegmueller, Monroe; Ryan John Weinberger, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland; Becky Wellnitz, Brodhead; David Westphal, Mayville; Shane Westphal, Big Foot; Ashley Williams, Brodhead; Jenalee Winkler, Gillett; Travis Edward Wolf, Spencer; Kayla Woolever, Bloomer; John J. Woychik, Independence; David A. Zietlow, Berlin; Bill Zillmer, Unity

Wyoming: Kristina D. Barkhurst, Stewart McPhail; Zach Bennett, Wheatland; Stacia Christine Berry, Cheyenne; Samantha Bischoff, Devils

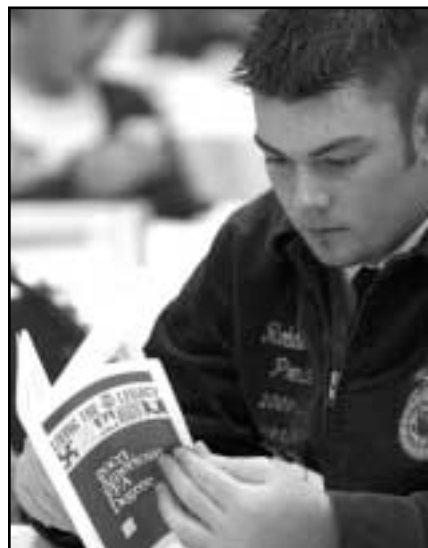


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Tower; Brandi L. Burry, Pine Bluffs; Brian Cox, Burns Chapter; Cole Coxbil, Southeast Goshen; Stefanie Crozier, Whitcomb; Andrea Lee Driskill, Devils Tower; Pamela Jean Eberhart, Snowy Range; Joshua D. Flitner, Lyman; Travis Freeburg, Pine Bluffs; David Garrelts, Southeast Goshen; Bryan Gillies, Lyman; Cole Helm, Star Valley; James W. Hendry, Shoshoni; Brenda Jean Herbst, Shoshoni; Emily Horton, Shoshoni; Deena Iorg, Jim Bridger; Toby Lynde, Gillette; Laura McCormick, Glendo; Scott McDonald, Riverton; Zach Paxton, Paintrock; Alicia Randall, Pine Bluffs; Cassie Michele Scott,

Retiring Address

I love the end of the day. I come home from a long day, change into my favorite pair of shorts or sweat-pants, sit down with my guitar and just strum and think.

What did I do today? Where did I go? Did I do anything productive? How was my day at school? How was work? What will tomorrow look like? What am I doing this weekend? Do people like me? Am I cool? Where am I going with my life?

Tim Hammerich **National FFA President** **General Session Ten** **OUR World**

These are all very common thoughts that fill my head as I sit picking and thinking in my own little world. Then someone will call or enter the room or I will get a thought that will cause me to put down my guitar and leave my little world for something else.

But do I ever REALLY leave my world? I mean, with my mind constantly set on what I'm doing, where I'm going, how wonderful or horrible I am and what I want, I pretty much manage to stay in MY WORLD for most of my day.

What about OUR world? We don't think about that one too often. It's the whole rest of the world that's filled with people in need who are searching for a friend or some help. A world that's bigger than you, your family, your friends, your school. This world is in need of people willing to not only stick up for themselves, but stick up for a cause. The only people who make a difference in OUR world are those who can recognize, embrace and relish the differences that so often divide us.

What divisions? one may ask. Something tells me you may have even experienced them yourself. Exclusion, cliques and gossip in our schools; misunderstanding, anger and hatred in our communities; and

unwillingness to understand others' backgrounds, cultures and perspectives. Perhaps you've witnessed this. Perhaps you didn't do anything. Perhaps it was none of your business. Perhaps you would have taken action if it was "part of your world." These same thoughts have run through my head many times before.

Part of my world was my high school. Elsie Allen High School sat in the less fortunate part of Santa Rosa on the southeast side. When I was in school, the campus sat in the middle of old, underdeveloped roads with no sidewalks. If you had to walk to school, you did so in a ditch or in someone else's field.

Fortunately, I was not in the position that I had to walk to school. But a young man in the class ahead of me, Patrick Scott, was. Patrick lived off of Wright Road, nearly five miles from campus. I passed him many times as he walked or rode his bike every day.

I had met Patrick once. When we were both younger, he bought some sheep from my dad. However, that seemed like a long time ago—I was now a junior and he was a senior. So I didn't bother approaching him to see if he remembered me. I noticed he didn't hang out with very many people, just a couple of close friends. I thought nothing of it, assuming he wanted it that way.

Winter came, and while we don't get snow in Santa Rosa, we get our fair share of rain. Like most other winters, the rains came, the ditches filled and the fields turned to mud. I went about my routine, stuck in MY world, not noticing the individuals walking in mud or on the road as I passed them in my truck on the way to and from school.

One day I came to school to a



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

solemn first period teacher. Mr. Blake quieted the class and I knew something horrible must have happened by the tears streaming down his face. He forced out the words as he sobbed, "We lost someone yesterday..." Who? I looked around the class desperately trying to make sure it wasn't a classmate. He continued, "A senior, one of my students." I began listing off the seniors I knew in my head, not able to wait for him to continue. "Patrick Scott was his name. Some of you may have known him. He was struck by a van as he was walking home from school last night."

That's when it hit me. I saw in my head the times I had passed him riding his bike or walking down the road with his friends. I remembered him coming to my house when we were younger. I remember wanting to talk to him. I remembered wondering if he remembered me. Now I would never find out.

The next night, there was a meeting to talk about the dangerous situation of the roads leading to and from school. The meeting was filled with blaming, name calling, accusations and frustrations. Then one man stood up at the microphone. He said, "I've got an unlimited supply of pallets and permission to make a walkway through the fields leading up to the school. Once this meeting is done, I don't care who

you are, if you'd like to help out you're welcome to. We'll be out there all night."

Thanks to that man's actions, the problem was fixed before anyone else could be harmed. But what wasn't fixed was my guilt for not reaching out to Patrick. We had plenty of similarities. Both interested in ag class, we were about the same age, students at the same school. But because of the differences in where we lived, our background and what grade we were in, I didn't know Patrick very well—all because I was in MY world.

Why do we so often think different has to mean separate? Why can't we avoid these divisions and the horrific consequences that come with them?

I happen to think it's because we're all just unwilling—unwilling to sacrifice our time, interests and energy to invest it in people who are unlike ourselves. I'm not just talking about people of a different culture, but anyone outside of your family, your ring of friends, your "clique," your chapter, your community, maybe even your state.

Exploring our differences just doesn't seem worth it. If we waste our time investing in others outside our comfort zone, our future careers might suffer, we may be in an awkward situation, we won't have enough time left for ourselves or we might have to do something we're not used to.

All of these are valid concerns, but also good excuses. I strongly believe it is vital, first of all, for your success, and secondly, for the success of our nation and world, that we not only tolerate differences in people but embrace and explore them entirely.

FFA members, with nothing more than a listening ear, watchful eye and caring heart, you can pick out someone who is on the outside and change their life forever.

That is one of my favorite aspects of this organization. It gave me and many others a place to belong. I have pondered many times if everyone feels its welcoming nature as much as I have. But when I think about it, it wasn't just the national FFA or a state activity that made me feel welcome. It was the members of my local chapter; people like Trevyn

Close, Samantha Harmon and Franky Miller.

I saw the power of FFA at work many times this year. One in particular was when I was teaching a team-building workshop. I led a group through a series of team challenges.

After the activities were over, I noticed that one of the girls, Mindy, was hanging back from the rest of the group. I asked her what was up, and she looked at me with tears in her eyes. My first thought was, "Oh no. Either I've hurt this girl's feelings somehow or she's having trouble with the other team members. What am I going to do?"

Just by acknowledging her, I made her cry even harder, so I took her aside. Not being the most comforting person in the world, I tried to help by patting her on the back and giving her the old "There, there, it will be all right." But she was full out crying now and it wasn't until she could catch her breath that she told me what was going on.

"I'm sorry," she said. "It's just that today was the first time...that I've ever been on a real team before. I mean a team where I was one of them and good and they liked me and stuff." Wow! I spent the next several minutes talking to her and discovering this organization's power of inclusion. That day changed not just Mindy's life, but mine as well.

Even with the amazing inclusionary power of the FFA backing us, we clearly still have barriers. We don't talk to that person because they don't talk to us. We haven't met that person because they don't eat lunch at the same table we do. We've never eaten dinner at her house because her family speaks a different language or lives in a different part of town. We don't invite him to the FFA meeting because he's not an "aggie." We don't hang out with that group because they listen to rap, or rock, or country, or classical, or whatever. We form divisions on even the simplest things and we give them names like jocks, hicks, Goths and nerds.

We find differences to divide us in just about everything, and it becomes necessary to confine ourselves to living in our own little

world. What type of people are you excluding? I didn't do my job in making sure Patrick Scott felt included in Elsie Allen FFA. I am saddened and disappointed every time I see cliques form in chapters and opportunities taken from those who feel excluded.

If this is the case, then what does the process of acceptance look like? What does it feel like? It can be as simple as you walking with your head up and saying "hi" to those around you, whether they notice you or not. Smiling, starting a conversation just to let someone know you value their companionship. It's learning to speak a new language, exploring what other people believe, listening to "old people" music, eating food you've never eaten, doing something nobody does, addressing the "unspoken issues" and making someone feel accepted even when you don't necessarily agree with them.

Find Patrick Scott. That person who you've always known but never REALLY talked to. Identify and acknowledge your similarities and differences. Listen to what that person has to say. Accept him or her for who they are.

To be honest, I'm scared. I'm scared to live in a world where people aren't willing to be different. I'm scared to live in a world in which folks don't understand each other and aren't really all that interested in ever understanding each other. I'm afraid to have people hate me because of my race, religion, background or beliefs. I'm terrified to live in a country where millions of people co-exist together without talking, without helping, without loving.

The words I say here on this stage will most likely be forgotten. But if you—you sitting right there in that seat, in this arena at this convention right now—if you choose to start living in OUR world by embracing differences, listening to others and accepting everyone around you, that won't be forgotten — not by anyone who sees the way you conduct yourself and is influenced by it. It's up to you. We're counting on you for a world that we all want to live in in the future. FFA members, please join me in OUR WORLD.

Convention Speakers

Dr. Lowell Catlett

Catlett, a professor, agriculture futurist, and former national FFA officer shared his many insights about the emerging trends and technologies in agriculture. His message left FFA members contemplating their roles in the agriculture industry of tomorrow.



PHOTO BY SAM HAREL

Chad Varga

Varga shared his story about overcoming obstacles to achieve goals. Emerging from an abusive childhood to become a professional basketball player in Europe, he walked away from a lucrative athletic career to serve another purpose: to share a message about success with students across the nation, helping them understand how to reach their dreams and find purpose in life.



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Convention Speakers



Robin Roberts

“FFA members rock!” This was the beginning of Roberts’ address to the Friday night audience, as she talked about looking at the “big picture” when striving to achieve goals. Roberts overcame stereotypes to become the first female sportscaster for ESPN’s “Sports Center.” She is now a newscaster for ABC’s “Good Morning America.”



Christopher Stone

Staff Sergeant Stone inspired members with his story of being a prisoner of war in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. After more than a month in captivity, Stone was released by his captors. During his powerful message, he spoke of remembering his family, faith and country.

PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Retiring Address

We've all seen it before. It's the first class of the morning and homework is due. However, yours isn't quite finished. So, do we copy and get the good grade, or do we take what we deserve? Or, you get your change back from the store

Seth Heinert **National FFA Secretary** **General Session Three** **Constructing a Life**

clerk and they counted it back wrong—in your favor. So, do you keep it or return the money? You just got pulled over for speeding! A big ticket is coming your way—that is, unless you can think of a “little white lie” to excuse your actions.

Temptation, pressures, fear, envy, pride, jealousy—all pulling at us, urging us to bend, to give in. Oh, it may seem subtle, but it's an all-out attack—an attack on our character.

I have never been exactly what you might call a perfect angel, but who is? I felt it was all right for me to stretch the truth every now and then or sling insults at my sisters. Hey! I was just being a kid, right? One day, my mother told me what my actions were doing to myself and everyone around me. She said, “A life filled with character is a lot like a house. Each good deed, wise decision or simply living a healthy lifestyle puts boards on your character house. On the other hand, telling lies, cheating or torturing your sisters tears boards off of your house. Your actions serve as an example, Seth, to everyone around you. Your house of character is always under construction, so it's up to you if you want to add boards on every day and live in a character mansion or tear boards off and just live in a shack.”

The concept of that character house stuck with me. Years later, in high school, I found out keeping boards on my character house

was a challenge. I thought I was doing things to add boards left and right. Tap, tap, tap, a board goes up: “Hi there, Mrs. Johnson. Can I help you across the street today?” Tap, tap, tap, a board goes up: “Well sure, I'll stay after school and help you weigh pigs, Mr. Kennah.” Tap, tap, tap, a board goes on: “No, thank you. I don't think I'll go to that party. You know I don't drink.”

And then things happened, things that happen to all of us, that challenged my character a bit. “Yeah, Dad, I realize I was supposed to pick feed up for my steers, but I didn't feel like getting any. Besides, you were the one who wanted me to do this in the first place.” Riiip, there goes a board. No big deal, it was just a little one. “Hey, did you hear the dirty joke about the duck? Well, I really shouldn't repeat it, but...” Riiip, there goes a board, a little bigger this time. “So, um, will your parents mind if we stay out a little after curfew?” Riiip, there went a whole lumber yard!

What are we doing? All of this—the little white lies, shifting blame, half-truths and put-downs—slowly erodes the structure of our little character houses. If I am to live a life of trust, of respect, of honor and dignity, then it would have to begin with my character. But I was just about one board away from the whole thing falling down around my feet

It's time we, as leaders, heroes and role models, get back to the basics of life. It's time we live lives that model our beliefs — beliefs that are based on a solid foundation. It's time we stop tearing down and start building up the character house of our lives. It begins with looking at the blueprints of our heroes, developing a foundation from which to work and then choosing daily to build on, and never tear down, the walls of your character house.

A house of character requires good blueprints. Blueprints come from our role models, our exam-



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

ples, our heroes. It's easy to try and find them from a far-off land. My heroes were movie stars and rock stars and TV stars. I could model my life after each and every move they made. Hey, if we are talking about character houses, all famous people must live in the character mansions on the hill, right? Growing up, Garth Brooks was that hero for me. I sang his songs, I knew his history, I even tried to match my wardrobe to those flashy shirts he wore. To me, he stood not only as a leader in music, but he was also a devoted family man and a dreamer. Sure, we had never met, but I wanted to live my life a lot like his! That is partly why it was so tragic when the other relationships in his life were exposed. Sometimes, we forget our “Hollywood heroes” are just people too. Every person, no matter how famous or seemingly inconspicuous, serves as an example to someone—good or bad.

We don't have to look very far away! Role models we can use as blueprints for our lives surround us. I believe it's nice to have movie star heroes, but it's necessary to have real-life heroes that you can look to for examples of strength in your own life. They are real people we can look to, or better yet, talk to on a daily basis for guidance. We can ask them for suggestions during difficult times or when we need

advice on life. When you look at their character house, it might not be the flashiest, but it will be big. The reason? They daily live lives of character. These heroes show strength daily, not just when everyone is watching.

I am surrounded by real-life examples of character role models. It's the work ethic I see in my grandfather. It's the faith I see in my mother. It's the steadiness I see in my father. It's the loyalty I see in my friends.

This year, it was business leaders we visited who spoke of choosing integrity over a quick buck. It was teachers who selflessly taught, trained and brought you to conventions. It was hunger in the eyes of state officers at our training in Mississippi, Indiana and Idaho who stayed after hours, just to make sure their work was ready for the next day. Ladies and gentlemen, they're all over the place! You are one of them! The question is, do we live our lives in such a way as to be a good blueprint for those who are looking? Go home and find one person you can use as your role model. Hey, maybe you can be one for someone else.

A good blueprint leads to a solid foundation. All character houses must begin with one. Often we may find ourselves saying, "I just don't know what I should do." However, if we truly evaluate our values, what we struggle with is what we want to do rather than what we should do. Therefore, we must have a foundation to base our character on. A philosophy that will stand solid forever. A solid foundation is based on the three most important F's you can get in school—family, faith, and friends.

Family helps to form our character; it doesn't decide it. We can either blame our families for all of the challenges we have because of them, or we can be thankful for the strengths, few or many, they have passed on to us and grow in the areas we need. This year, I have been especially thankful for the solid foundation of family I could always find strength in. Our family helps form our foundation, so stand strong for the values they represent.

Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." There is a need in each of us to find some form of spirituality in our lives. Studies have shown that people who develop their personal faith live longer, have less stress and lead happier lives. We have a deep connection with a place we can take our life's challenges to. I am thankful I was raised in a Christian home and find that to be the single most important compo-

nent of my life. Once you find your faith, run deep with it. Find time daily to reflect on areas of growth in your life and on the good things that are happening.

Be kind to all, but choose your friends wisely. Friends have an unmistakable amount of influence in our lives. Choose friends that serve to build on your strengths. Once you find them, have them help keep you accountable for the person you can't hold yourself to be. Then, be willing to do the same for them. This year, I have found friends of unshakable character all over the nation! From hay stacking contests in East Nicolaus, Calif., to ag olympics in Jackson, Miss., I have been so filled with the strength of character that my friends represent.

Once we have established our foundation of character, the daily construction of character in our lives begins. Imagine living in a house that was always under construction. All day and all night, hammers would be banging, saws would be sawing. There would be a few things about this house you would notice. First and most obviously, it would continue to grow. Upward, outward, but never backward. But the taller and heavier it gets, the more the foundation must be supported. Our lives are like this house. We are constantly growing, pursuing excellence, but never quite arriving at our destination. We can grow our house of character through making solid choices based on our foundation. The more we grow, the stronger our foundation becomes.

When faced with an ethical choice or temptation, consider the example you set for others. Once, at a friend's house, I phoned my mother. I was not supposed to be there, but I lied and told her I was at another house and just running a little late. Too bad my lie was exposed when I found out we had just got caller ID! That single action corroded some of the trust between us, and I had to work to regain it. You see, it's not just one piece of our lives that needs good character but all parts. Think about how many eyes are on you when you go home. Most of us in here are brothers or sisters, aunts or uncles. We are students and we are teachers. We are members of churches, members of sports teams, members of school clubs. We dance, we sing, we do all sorts of crazy stuff. And the whole time, people are watching every move we make. So choose your actions and your words carefully. While most of us have never been on a reality TV show, imagine what it would be like to have every move you make broadcast for the whole world to see. Picture that! What areas of your life would you not want seen? We

have to approach adding boards fully. If there is one area in trouble, that is the area to box up and pack out of your character house. Eliminate it.

You can add boards through your words. Use your words as a tool of support, of praise, and let your words be guided by truth. People will remember you for your kept promises and honesty. The character of your word is your greatest asset, and honesty is your best virtue. Every day we make solid choices based on our values is a day we can add boards to our character house.

Before I left for college, my family gave me a gift. It was a simple poem to hang on my wall. It was entitled, "The Man in the Glass."

It reads, "When you get what you want in your struggle for self, and the world makes you king for a day, just go to a mirror and look at yourself, and see what that man has to say. For it isn't your father or mother or wife, who judgment upon you must pass; the fellow whose verdict counts most in your life is the one staring back from the glass. He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest, for he's with you clear up to the end, and you've passed the most dangerous, difficult test if the man in the glass is your friend. You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years, and get pats on the back as you pass, but your final reward will be heartaches and tears if you've cheated the man in the glass."

The house of character we build for ourselves is constantly under construction. When we begin with the blueprints of solid role model and add an unshakable foundation based on our family, friends and faith, we have something we can always refer back to when times grow difficult. With every promise kept, every helpful hand offered and every sincere word we offer, we put boards on the side of our house. Choosing to live with character is not a quick fix, but rather making a conscious effort to live a better life. It is written "It is not in life's changes but in life's choices that happiness comes." FFA members, our lives are like houses of character. Begin today to add boards with your actions.

It's the simple things of your life that can do it, really. It's simply choosing to hold who needs holding, mend what needs mending, walk what needs walking, though it means an extra mile.

Pray what needs praying, say what needs saying, cause we're only here for a little while.

FFA members, it's up to you. At this time next year, what will your character house look like?

Retiring Address

Today the popular thing is reality TV. Shows like “Fear Factor,” “Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?,” “Reality Wedding,” “Trading Spaces,” “Who Wants to Marry My Father?...Mother?...Brother?...Sister?...Cousin Twice Removed?”...the list goes on and on and on. Heck, I even submit-

J.J. Jones

Central Region Vice President

**Ninth General Session
Requesting Reality, Please**

ted an idea for a show called “Who Wants to Marry the Central Region Vice President?” Can you believe the gall of the networks? They turned me down!

Well, it’s time for a Reality Retiring Address. No, there won’t be any weird creatures to eat, remodeling projects to complete and, for goodness sakes, no wedding bells to ring after two hours of courtship. I mean, really, whose reality is this? I know it’s not mine and hope it’s not yours. We’re faced with much more difficult decisions that are real on a daily basis—decisions that not only affect us, but our family, friends, community, country and the world in which we live. But unfortunately, certain ones have been deemed socially unacceptable, politically incorrect or flat-out things that we shouldn’t bring up but instead sweep under the rug.

I believe there are two main reasons we do this. The first reason is that it’s simply easier to shove certain topics away and go about our daily lives without addressing them. We do this because of the hurt and pain that it may cause. Here are a few examples:

In my family, we never bring up the issue of why my great-grandparents’ house wasn’t passed

down in the family as it had been for generations before due to a family member mortgaging it and then having it repossessed. Or maybe you go to a family event and a relative has gained a little too much weight to be healthy, but your mentioning it would cause more pain than the risk they are in. Maybe there is a scandal at school you don’t condone, but it is easier to let it play out on its own. Perfect examples of issues that can be left unspoken in order to spare others’ feelings.

But I believe the second reason is much more damaging. I believe there are issues that we’re afraid to bring up—many we hear about every day. Issues that range from our family to our friends. Issues that impact us from our kitchen tables to the House of Representatives. We often don’t bring these issues up because people get emotional or passionate about them and we just want to avoid an argument. Sometimes we avoid these issues because we don’t know enough information on the subject to discuss it intelligently. These issues are so large in size and scope that it is easier to ignore them—but they are real and can’t be ignored.

Let’s try something really quickly.

- Abortion
- Death penalty
- Premarital sex
- Religion
- Republicans
- Democrats
- Bill Clinton
- George Bush

Now, I know that as I said each of those, you had a thought running through your mind. You had an opinion—it’s human nature. As soon as each of us hears a rule, law, comment or



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

even a person’s name, we contemplate our view of the issue.

Depending on our level of passion about that issue, we may have a definite, closed-minded opinion, or we may have a loose opinion but are willing to listen and learn due to the fact that we desire to learn more about the subject. So often, though, no matter how strong our opinion, we aren’t willing to share it or stand up for what we feel.

No one can tell you what you feel is right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust. Nobody except you. Others can help form or modify your thoughts and opinions, and at times their arguments may even convince you to change your mind, but the key is this—each of us has an opinion that is important and we need to at least be knowledgeable enough to share our thoughts and ideas.

Being knowledgeable on a subject doesn’t mean you have to be an expert. It’s as simple as reading the school newspaper to see what issues face your school, listening to the local radio station to hear what topics are being discussed in your community, watching the news to see what is going on in our country and world or taking an hour each week to learn more about a subject.

Now, you may be asking, “But J.J., why is it important that I learn about these issues and form an opinion—why should I care?”

Well, let’s look at how just one person can bring about change. If in 1969 Paul Bankhead hadn’t expressed his opinion that anyone could contribute to agriculture, half of you might not be in this room. Yes, ladies, I’m referring to when the Future Farmers of America decided to allow women into the organization.

Speaking of the Future Farmers of America, if in 1988 a delegate hadn’t made a motion to change the name of the organization, many of us may have never joined.

We can even take this idea of one person’s influence up to the next level. What if Martin Luther King Jr. hadn’t stood up for civil rights? What if Abraham Lincoln hadn’t stood up for the freedom of all men? What if George Washington hadn’t helped shape this great nation? What if Christopher Columbus hadn’t tried to sail around the world? What if Sandra Day O’Connor hadn’t broken the stereotype that all Supreme Court justices are men? All real issues in the real world.

These individuals stood up for their beliefs because they cared enough about a topic to learn about it and develop confidence in their opinion. In order for each of us to take a stand on issues that are important in our lives, we must first educate ourselves. We don’t have to become an expert on everything, but we shouldn’t be afraid to learn about the issues that affect our society. If we don’t know the facts, we should be ready to ask questions so that we can learn before forming an opinion.

Oh, but once we have an educated opinion, we must use it—we must be ready to share it. Growing up, though, I wasn’t always likely to share my opinion. Many who have gotten to know me this year know that I am extremely proud to be from north-west Kansas. I love the small-town atmosphere—the fact that everyone knows everyone by name, who drives what car and who owns every dog in town. The

fact that we never lock our car doors—except during zucchini season because if you don’t lock your doors then, well, your back-seat will overflow with Margaret Pinalto’s bumper crop—and a neighbor is always willing to give a helping hand even when they are running late. But when I was a kid, it always bothered me that many people in my part of Kansas wouldn’t express their opinion because they feared what the neighbors would think. I honestly thought it was just a northwest Kansas thing, but this year, as I have traveled, I have found it to be true in many places throughout our country.

In almost every chapter, community or state, there are those “sacred cows” that we don’t talk about because they lead to heated arguments. At times we don’t act on them because others may make fun of us. Even when we are educated and sure of our opinions, we sometimes hesitate. I think back...what if 33 farm boys had hesitated in 1928 to form this organization? What if the founding fathers of our country had stood by quietly rather than speaking out for our freedom?

How many of you recognize the following few lines?

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness....” Yes, it is part of the Declaration of Independence that ensures so much of what you and I cherish.

What about these lines?

“The National FFA Organization is the organization of, by, and for students enrolled in agricultural education programs.”

That is part of the FFA constitution. Over 4 million members have shaped the FFA legacy. Each and every day, you and I have the responsibility to share our opinions so that we continue to build upon what so many have believed in. That is why the FFA and our country are a living legacy—because they are both still growing and changing while honoring the forefathers who believed in them enough to struggle for their creation and growth.

Today, our country still needs leaders like Paul Bankhead, Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln and Sandra Day O’Connor. Not people who know who’s dating who in Hollywood or who can alphabetically list every Xbox game. We need people, LEADERS, who are prepared to deal in the real world. Leaders who will hold honest and forth-right discussions about those very important society-impacting issues, even when it seems as if the rest of the world is scared to face reality.

FFA members, more than ever, this is the moment to become educated on topics and voice your opinions for your well-being and the good of those around you. My friends, this is the moment. Begin living reality. Become a real leader for the real world.

We need people, LEADERS, who are prepared to deal in the real world.

“This is the moment! This is the day

When I send all my doubts and demons on their way!

Ev’ry endeavor I have made ever...

Is coming into play,
Is here and now today!

“This is the moment! This is the time

When the momentum and the moment are in rhyme.

Give me this moment, this precious chance.

I’ll gather up my past, and make some sense at last!

“This is the moment when all I’ve done,

All the dreaming, scheming and screaming become one!

This is the day, see it sparkle and shine,

When all I’ve lived for becomes mine.”

Retiring Address

Narrator:

In the darkest part of the night, a captain cautiously piloted his warship through the fog-shrouded waters. With straining eyes, he scanned the hazy darkness, searching for dangers lurking just out of sight. His worst fears were

Julie Tyson **Eastern Region Vice President** **Session Five** **Traveling Light**

realized when he saw a bright light straight ahead. It appeared to be a vessel on a collision course with his ship. To avert disaster, he quickly radioed the oncoming vessel.

Voice 1:

“This is Captain Jeremiah Smith,” his voice cracked over the radio. “Please alter your course 10 degrees south! Over.”

Voice 2:

“Captain Smith. This is Private Thomas Johnson. Please alter your course 10 degrees north! Over.”

Voice 1:

“Private Johnson, this is Captain Smith, and I order you to immediately alter your course 10 degrees south! Over.”

Voice 2:

“With all due respect Captain Smith, I order you to alter your course immediately 10 degrees north! Over.”

Voice 1:

The captain growled back over the radio, “Private Johnson. I can have you court-martialed for this! For the last time, I command you on the authority of the United States government to alter your course 10 degrees to the south! I am a battleship!”

Voice 2:

“Captain Smith, sir. Once again with all due respect, I command you to alter your course 10 degrees to the north! I am a lighthouse!”

I’ve never piloted a warship through fog-shrouded waters, but over the past 12 months, I have traveled in a variety of different ways: by car through the cornfields and the hills of West Virginia...by bullet train past Mt. Fuji in Japan...by ship on the Potomac River at the State Presidents’ Conference...by van to Pike’s Peak in Colo....by plane to Phoenix, Ariz.; Spokane, Wash.; Minneapolis, Minn. and Tulsa, Okla....and by van to this, the 2003 National FFA Convention!

Even when getting on a plane was a pretty regular part of the job, this year has never taken me far from thoughts of home. The family that welcomed me home with loving arms was always with me. No matter the destination or mode of transportation, my focus was the same. The same beacon that has been with me all of my life, the one that will shine for all that is to come, cast rays that guide our path. Rays like those of a lighthouse. A lighthouse: steady, unmoved and visible no matter what the weather conditions.

This year, more than ever before, I realized what great beacons my family and friends are to me. Like the rays of a lighthouse, their example has shone brightly in my life, casting rays of light that guide my path. They’re leaders who chart a clear course in rough waters and through foggy nights.

What is it about leaders that draws us to them and compels us to follow?



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

The people I’ve always admired are honest and hardworking! Individuals who live their values and enjoy the lives they lead. People who laugh often and display passion, joyfully experiencing each and every day!

When I was in the eighth grade, I tutored students in a fifth grade math class. Whether we were working on word problems, fractions or long division, I can still hear the students saying, “Hey Julie! How do you solve number 10? I don’t understand.”

Some of the greatest moments of joy that year came as I sat with the students in Mrs. Brown’s class...as I saw the light of understanding turn on behind their eyes...when they smiled and proudly shared the results of their most recent test with me...when I saw them after school and we talked about the other events in their lives.

We never quite understand why we’re blessed with certain experiences, but when I look back, I realize it was then I decided that if people were going to look to me for guidance, then I ought to be the sort of person who’s worth following, who’s worth looking up to.

The decision to be a leader seems like an easy one to make, but how do we actually become a person who can be a light for

others to follow? What steps do we take to get there? Is it a step-by-step process like those word problems I helped Mrs. Brown's fifth graders solve? Do we have to make major changes? Or is it more simple?

Becoming a leader isn't a problem-solving activity and doesn't involve major changes to our personality. We can become influential leaders by turning our steering wheel slightly, by changing our course just a few degrees. For me, it's as simple as turning to my family and closest friends for some help, for a gentle reminder about the joys in life.

What are the joys that guide us? Do you remember the last time you laughed so hard you cried? Some of us are still laughing!

Different types of laughter escape our lips every day: from the sarcastic laugh and genuine chuckle to the belly-aching, full-hearted laugh.

The average adult laughs 15 times a day. A child, 435! Humor is a universal language. It's a contagious emotion and a natural diversion. Laughing boosts the immune system. It brings other people in and breaks down barriers. Best of all, it is free.

We've heard that:

"Instead of rolling with the punches — duck!"

"Happiness happens...one smile at a time."

"We will make a world of difference — one act of kindness at a time."

Those times when we laugh with our whole being, our smile stretches wide across our face and we're filled with joy. If we could just laugh a few more times each day, a small change, think of the difference it would make. Those moments are worth experiencing daily. They're worth cherishing and remembering.

Joy is such a precious gift. It's not as spontaneous as some may think. The source of our joy is found in beliefs, values and relationships developed over time.

One of the greatest joys of this year was developing relationships with FFA members from across the country. At the end of February, which was about a month and a half after the Ohio

State Buckeyes won the national football championship, I found myself on a flight to Arizona. One afternoon, I had traveled with their state president, Brian, to Yuma, Ariz., the winter salad bowl capital of the world. After visiting the three schools in the area, we spent the afternoon driving around. Now, whether you're a fan of Ford, Dodge or Chevy...driving down the road in a pickup truck with the windows rolled down and the radio turned up is one of the greatest feelings! On this warm afternoon we stopped to visit two FFA members, Kyle and Mike, who showed Brian and me their supervised agricultural experience programs and offered me a glimpse of what brings them joy.

Kyle began by showing us how his family grows celery. I'd never really thought about how celery was grown. Have you? But over the next hour, I discovered not only what their operation entailed, but also the pride that Kyle and his father share. After checking out the celery operation, Brian, Kyle, Mike and I jumped back in the pickup truck and drove down the dusty lane.

As we drove through the lemon trees, Kyle explained the irrigation system, why the trees were planted in this particular pattern and how the lemons were harvested and the trees pruned each year. With excitement in his voice, he described his family's plan for the expansion of the farm. Just then we stopped and got out of the truck. I pulled out my camera to take a picture by a cactus (a very touristy thing to do, but they just don't grow like that in Ohio!), and I heard Kyle telling Brian that this particular cactus was planted by his father on the day he was born. This farm has been in the family for generations, and Kyle's dream is to return to the farm after college.

Too soon, Brian and I parted with Kyle and his best friend Mike. As Brian and I got in his car to leave, he struck the palm of his hand on the steering wheel and exclaimed, "THAT IS WHY WE HAVE AN ORGANIZATION! THERE ARE STILL FFA MEMBERS OUT THERE WHO BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF

AGRICULTURE!" He was right, there are FFA members who believe in the power of their dreams!

What would happen if we all found something to be that excited about? What if we all found something that filled us with that much joy, that much pride? A dream to pursue that lit the fire within us. What would happen if we let our dreams keep burning strong, driving us to achieve our goals?

What would happen if we just changed our thinking a few degrees? If we stopped for 30 seconds and focused on all of the things that fill us with pride and an overwhelming sense of joy? If we focused on what we do well, those unique gifts that are ours alone to share with the world?

No matter what our individual gifts or abilities, we've enrolled in agricultural education; we've said the Creed and earned our jacket. But does just putting on the jacket make us successful FFA members? No more than standing in a garage makes us a car! How then do we achieve the success we dream of?

We're all programmed for greatness! Just as a lighthouse is programmed to create a constant stream of light that reaches out into the darkness, we're gifted with abilities that help us to smile with joy and pride, that help us to achieve success. We'll be successful because we expect nothing less.

Like a lighthouse, our light will be unwavering, steadfast and illuminating; it will give hope to others.

What does it take to shine that light? Merely altering our course a few degrees—laughing a little more and believing in our dreams!

When we love those around us, we leave an amazing legacy. When our days are filled with joy and our focus is on unwavering values, we shine the rays that guide someone else's path; we're a traveling light. Each of us has all the tools and resources we need; what we do with them is up to us. Don't ever forget there's someone who believes in you. You have a gift; you're one of a kind. God put you here so you could shine!

Retiring Address

When I was young, there were very few things that I enjoyed more than Saturday mornings at Grandma's. The adventures at Grandma's often began when my brother Philip and I decided we

Joel McKie
Southern Region Vice President
General Session Four
The Best Way to Start Your Day

wanted to spend Friday night somewhere other than at home. We would head up the road two-tenths of a mile, watch television well into the night and then sleep in the next morning.

That was when the real fun began! Around 9:30, Philip and I would wake up and turn on the television to our favorite cartoons. My grandma, who had been up for hours, would hear us in the bedroom. She soon would poke her head in and ask my favorite question, "What do you boys want for breakfast?"

"Hot dogs, Grandma! Hot dogs! Three of 'em! Just the way I like 'em—a little ketchup, but no bun! Pleeaaaaassssseeeee!" That's right, I firmly believed the best way to get-your-morning-started-right was to have a nice hot dog! It was my breakfast of champions.

As I grew older, I realized there were other options for my morning meal. There were pancakes and Blackburn syrup, pigs in a blanket, ham and eggs and, of course, a Southerner's favorite—grits. But I soon fell in love with, of all things, cereal! There were plenty of trends and fads during my cereal-eating days. First, it was Rice Krispies, then Froot Loops, a brief bout with Cap'n Crunch, a few Frosted Flakes and then back to Froot Loops.

Now these were just a few of my favorite cereals growing up, but

traveling this year in places like Oregon, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, I have learned that we each have our favorites, whether in breakfast cereals, college football teams or tractor color.

This morning we have a huge stage at the 2003 National FFA Convention to decide just what some of those favorites are among FFA members. Now we may NOT be able to decide today whether the favorite tractor color among FFA members is red or green. We probably can't determine whether the Tigers, the Cowboys or the Bulldogs are the most loved college football team in the land. But we can determine the favorite breakfast cereal among FFA members.

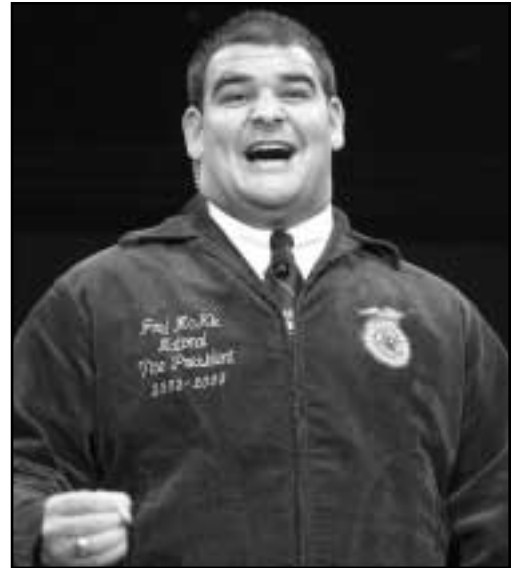
As a matter of fact, we have here with us two of the most popular brands. We have a box of Lucky Charms and a box of Froot Loops. In a moment, on my cue, cheer for your favorite cereal. The cereal that receives the most applause and cheers will be named our winner.

You may choose your favorite based on its taste, the look of the box or maybe even the personality of the mascot. Our sound-o-meter will help us determine who our winner is this morning. On the count of three, stomp your feet, put your hands together and raise your voices to make sure this sound-o-meter is indeed working. Ready? One...two...three!

Sounds great!

Now that we know the sound-o-meter is working, let's begin this serious cereal competition! If you feel lucky with your Lucky Charms, shout out! If you absolutely love Froot Loops, make some noise!

Not bad! Let's see who our winner is. Are you ready to hear the



winner? I said, are you ready to hear the winner?

Now stop a minute and think "why." Why are you ready to hear the winner? What inside of you makes you want to know whether your cereal won or not?—especially when we made our decision based on the shape of the cereal, the mascot or the front of the box.

Now you're probably thinking, "Hey Joel, don't leave us hanging! You told me to scream, so I screamed! Here I was trying to help you out, and now you won't even tell me whether my favorite cereal won or not!" You're right; I did ask you to scream. And it's natural to want to know if your cereal won! But I brought you to this point to share this piece of insight.

It's normal to want to pit one thing against another and see which one is better—even with something as silly as breakfast cereals. We do that same thing in our daily lives; we pit ourselves against other people and try to figure out who's the best.

Comparing ourselves is not necessarily a bad thing, and later we will talk about the good that can come from comparisons. But it's the negative results of comparing me to you, Sam to Joe, Brenda to Kristy that can destroy our self-

confidence and emotional security.

When I was young, and even to this day, I suffered from perfectionism. During my early school days, I came to expect nothing less than the best. Now that would have been fine to expect my best, but rather, I always expected to be the best in the class. So any time a test or assignment was handed back, I would begin looking around the room to see how my test score stacked up against everyone else.

Usually, I was in pretty good shape, but on occasion, my grade was less than the best in the class. In those cases, rather than being proud of my performance, I felt like I had failed. When my classmates recognized my need for superior grades, they would sometimes gloat when their performance surpassed mine!

By comparing myself so much, my self-esteem and my perception of “who I was” became dependent on having the best grade in the class. These comparisons began to control my life.

FFA members, comparisons happen everywhere! We experience them at school, at the mall, on athletic fields, on FFA trips and even at home with our brothers and sisters. Our society has taught us that it’s the norm to compare my looks to your looks, my talents to your talents, my house to your house, my intelligence to your intelligence and my life to your life. We might say to our friends, “I wish my family had as much money as his family does,” or “She speaks so much better than I do.”

So often when we start making comparisons to other people’s situations, abilities and lifestyles, we sell ourselves short and begin to believe that we are indeed less fortunate and less gifted. Long-term, if we trick ourselves into believing that we’re not successful because we’re not the best at something, we become insecure and act uncomfortable in our very own skin.

This morning I am not asking you to stop comparing yourself to other people—that would be nearly impossible. Instead, I am challenging you to change your mental perspective when you compare yourself to others. Rather than focusing on whether you’re better

or worse at something than someone else, center your attention on how you can best use your talents, your ability and your situation. It’s mental. Your perspective determines whether the results of your comparisons have a positive or negative impact on your life.

This year God has blessed me with five incredible teammates. A year ago tomorrow, we came together on this very stage for the first time. When the excitement of our own individual triumph began to subside, we soon discovered each other’s unique talents, personalities and, yes, imperfections. Naturally, we began to evaluate each other’s strengths and weaknesses. We recognized Julie’s poise, Seth’s creativity, J.J.’s practicality, Dustin’s charisma and Tim’s logic. We all realized our individual roles and our place on this team.

That’s the great thing about living in this world full of talented people. We are not asked to be the best; we are simply asked to do our best. We will naturally excel in certain areas of our lives, and yet in other places, it will be more challenging for us to succeed. We often discover our strengths and growth opportunities by comparing ourselves to peers and other predetermined standards.

That’s the essence of math tests, athletic competitions and FFA career development events. These types of comparisons help us to understand “what we are good at” and thus begin our journey of finding our place in this world.

Many of you came to convention in hopes of winning a national competition. For those of you with these goals, it would be easy to leave Louisville thinking that you’re less simply because someone else might have been more this week. Some of you look down your row of seats and wonder why he or she is in a higher office than you. Others will go back to school on Monday and dream of being beautiful or handsome so they can catch the eye of that special someone. Next weekend, undoubtedly, a few of you will sit around and talk about who has the best car or truck.

These are all natural comparisons. But we must consciously choose to change our natural reac-

tion to this method of self-evaluation. If we can’t avoid comparing ourselves to others, let’s use comparisons as a tool to discover who we are and our place in this world.

I think we can all agree that comparing brands of cereal seems pretty silly. In the grand scheme of things, though, isn’t the idea of comparing cars, hair, houses, clothes or talents just as ridiculous? The idea of letting the comparisons we make rule our lives in a negative way is simply outrageous.

But it happens. People you know are already suffering from it. Maybe you are. Maybe the negative results of comparisons are keeping you from being the real Brett, the true Jessica or the unique Tiffany. You may be searching for “who you are” in all the wrong places because you believe you’re not good enough to be the person you truly are.

FFA members, the result of comparing yourself can be good or bad, worthwhile or wasteful, healthy or unhealthy. It’s your

If we can’t avoid comparing ourselves to others, let’s use comparisons as a tool to discover who we are and our place in this world.

decision! It is a choice that you make on a daily basis. Just as you step out of bed, dress, brush your teeth and eat breakfast every morning, make it a habit to look in the mirror and promise yourself you’ll only make healthy comparisons.

Then you’ll realize that striking out in an important game doesn’t make you a poor baseball player. You’ll understand that not winning the local creed-speaking event actually allowed you to grow. You might not be the best dressed, but you could be the best read. Find your inner-self amid the scars of defeat and the triumphs of victory. Use comparisons to define “who you are” and to discover your place in this world. FFA members and guests, that’s the best way to start your day!

Retiring Address

Wow, what a ride!

Taking a leap out of a moving aircraft from 2.5 miles above the Earth, free falling for 45 seconds, then coasting down to Earth for four to five minutes. Now that is what I call an experience of a lifetime!

Dustin A.G. Clark **Western Region Vice President** **General Session Seven** **Live...Right...Now**

How many of us are just waiting for that experience of a lifetime? How many of us are waiting to wake up one day and just be blown away with the awesome things that are going on in our lives? I am willing to bet all of us are.

You know what? So was I—and this is what led me to pursue such a crazy act as skydiving.

As I prepared for the dive, I realized that three things would be critical to the success of that jump. I had to Live...and make the decision myself, not letting anyone else dictate my actions.

I had to Live Right...once I was in the air, I had to give every bit of my attention to the people who were around me.

I had to Live Right Now...I knew that when I was about to jump out of that airplane, I couldn't let hesitation stand in my way!

When I first had the idea to go skydiving, it was met with fierce resistance. But I've always liked to do my own thing.

Just like when I was in junior high—I was just like every other junior high student. I had one desire, and that was to be cool. You know what I am talking about...so cool that I was above taking my lunch to school. So cool that I would only sling my backpack over one shoulder. When I was asked why do I do these things, I would

always reply, "Because it's cool."

My desire to be cool reached a peak one night when my best friend Brian and I were hanging out. We decided it was time to take the lead at school by starting a new fad. We brainstormed and brainstormed, but couldn't come up with any ideas. Then Brian said, "Dude, we need to get some Dickies." I said, "Some Dickies?" He said, "Yeah, you know those overalls people wear." Those overalls were what my granddad wore! Brian suggested we get them really, really big. Aha. I finally got it. We were on to something. So we begged and begged my stepmom to take us to Wal-Mart so we could buy some Dickies.

Before I knew it, we were in the middle of the aisles trying on overalls. Finally I found my pair. I'd like to show you the Dickies that I bought, but you need to understand something about me first—I had a 32-inch waist. I was skinny. I am talking I was so skinny that I had to jump around in the shower to get wet. So, I bought a size 40.

After buying them, I couldn't wait to wear them to school the next morning. So I woke up, put them on and went to school. As I walked into the school, I had a new limp and a new lingo. I saw the captain of our basketball team and I said, "Hey, what up dog?" He just left me hanging. But, I was like, it's okay, because up walked the girl that I had a crush on for two years. I just knew that she was going to ask me to go to homecoming. She approached me and said, "Will you...let me borrow your biology book?" I was so disappointed. Then I turned around because I heard a group of people

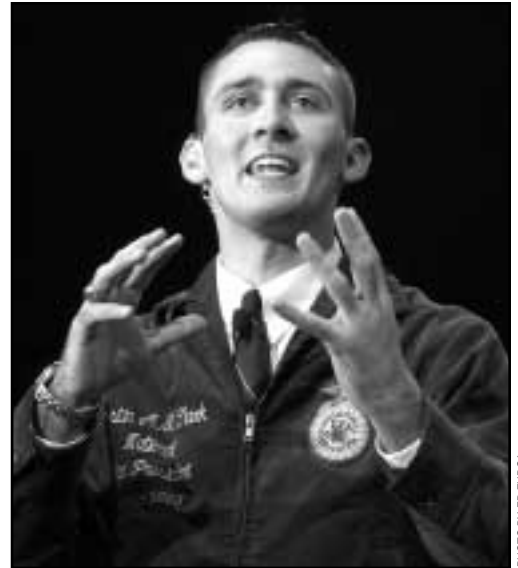


PHOTO BY ED ZURGA

laughing hysterically at something, so I looked to see what they were laughing at...and realized it was me!

I was crushed, humiliated and broken. The group of "cool" people that I was trying to fit in with just laughed at me even more.

I had failed in my attempt to be cool and impress "the in crowd" with my big Dickies. As I failed there, I also failed myself. As much as I was trying to please other people, I lost sight of pleasing myself. Not only did other people not like me, but I didn't like me! I wasn't living; I was pretending.

Then I tried just going back to living my life...liking country music, wearing Wrangler 20X jeans, going spotlighting on the weekends, watching "SportsCenter," driving a tractor and staying home on Friday nights.

Now none of these things ever got me voted best dressed, most popular or most likely to succeed. I got something much sweeter though—I got an inner peace and happiness. That happiness came from simply being myself, not because I was "popular."

So you ask, What does it mean to live? To live is to let absolutely no one's opinion dictate who you are. Be proud of your faith; be proud of your taste in clothes; be

proud of having a clean vocabulary; be proud of wearing your official dress through the hall; be proud of daring to be the one that makes his own decisions. I promise that you will be rewarded. This is what it is to live.

Back to the day that I risked my life—no, I'm not talking about my first date, rather my skydiving experience. To ensure the safety of the jump, I mentioned that I had to focus on those two people who were around me. Not only was I living that day, I knew by doing this, I would live right.

We can learn a lot from a guy who I hold close to my heart. When Jesus was only 30 years old, He was making His way to Jerusalem. Throughout the day, He would teach, preach and then heal people who had broken bones, leprosy or were dying of cancer. Many people would run to Him and want Him to perform miraculous works and, of course, if they had faith, He could heal them.

The 12 disciples who were traveling with Him witnessed all of this. One afternoon, in the midst of all His healing, teaching and preaching, a group of children approached Jesus. But the disciples told them to go away—Jesus didn't have time for them. Jesus was greatly displeased and said, "Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them." So the children came to Him. He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them and they were blessed.

Two significant things happened there. Jesus made time for the children when He already had His hands full with teaching, preaching and healing. Secondly, He didn't say a word to them. He simply accepted them. FFA members, this pure example of care is a great model of how to LIVE RIGHT. This is the root of all success — to take care of other people.

As FFA members, we are called to a higher calling than many others our age. We have chosen roles in which we are expected to be people of positive influence. We are called to change the lives of people around us. Some people would argue that the only people who can change lives are the state officers or chapter officers or someone who has been given a position of leadership. I don't believe that. I believe that EVERY person in Freedom Hall tonight can influence another.

How? you might ask. It's quite simple. It begins with understanding one thing—everyone wants to be wanted and needs to be needed.

Think about it. You are happiest when

people accept you. We feel the best when people laugh at our jokes, want to listen to our stories or when they want to ride in our car. Because of this need, we turn to alcohol so that our peers accept us. We turn to premarital sex because that one person shows us that we are wanted. So what greater way to change a person's life than to show them that they are needed and wanted?

Here is the bottom line: We will change people's lives by doing exactly as Jesus did in the example I shared. All we must do is show a genuine interest in other people. How do we do this? By...

Asking people, whether they're our friends or not, how their day was...and really caring about their answer.

Sitting at the lunch table with the person who eats alone every day.

Simply asking questions that show that you are interested in other people's lives.

We don't have to teach, preach and heal. To live right, all we must do is let people know that we care about them.

So the second thing I learned that day was that I had to focus on those around me. This is what it is to LIVE RIGHT.

When I was in that airplane 13,500 feet over the Earth, fear overwhelmed me and I considered not jumping. But then the others I was with said, "If you are going, it's now or never!" I knew that if I

To live is to let absolutely no one's opinion dictate who you are.

wanted to experience skydiving, I had to LIVE RIGHT NOW!

Now or never.

My teammates and I were stepping onto American soil after an amazing trip halfway around the world to Japan. We were all tired from the 14-hour flight and couldn't wait to talk to friends and family and tell them of our incredible experience.

The first thing I did in the airport in San Francisco was turn on my cell phone and check my voicemail. When I learned I had 19 new messages, I quickly grabbed a pen and paper and began writing down everyone who had called me. Then I went to work, returning all of the phone calls. As I was close to getting all of the calls

made, I heard that it was time to board our next flight so I realized I didn't have time to call one person back that day. It was Jessica, a state officer and a great friend. I thought she was just calling to say hello.

Well, one tomorrow turned into another tomorrow and another, and before I knew it, two weeks had passed. When I tried to call her, she didn't answer her phone. I called another friend to ask if he had talked to Jessica, and he said, "Oh Dustin, you haven't heard? She is in the hospital. She tried to commit suicide."

I'll never ever forget the feeling that I had at that very moment. I was so mad at myself! I had put off calling her back when she really needed me. I couldn't help but wonder...if I had called her back sooner and shown her how much I care for her, would she still have tried to take her own life? I hated myself for waiting. I would have given anything to have those two weeks back to call her back sooner.

We live in a world where everyone points to tomorrow. Our role models tell us to dream about tomorrow and focus on the future to achieve success. My personal experience tells me otherwise. I have learned that the successes of tomorrow depend upon the actions of today.

Hear me...we will not be successful tomorrow if we do not act today! On your way home, write one word on a piece of paper, your convention program or the little bag that you find in the seatback pocket on the airplane. Write the word "now." When you get home, put it on your mirror in your bathroom, your locker or the dash of your car, just somewhere you will see it every day. Then whenever you ask yourself when should I do this or when should I do that, the answer is in front of your eyes.

The time to act is now! It's not when we get home from national convention; it's not when we graduate. It's now. It's pretty simple in my mind. Someone has got to stand up and be proud of who they are. Then we have got to reach out and let others know that they belong. And when's the time to do that? The time to do that is NOW. That's right, LIVE RIGHT NOW.

Whisper that with me; say LIVE!!!!

Say RIGHT!

Say NOW!

A LITTLE BIT LOUDER. Live Right Now!

Now as loud as you can! Live Right Now!

You must LIVE RIGHT NOW.

National Chapter Awards

Sponsored by Cargill and Land O' Lakes Foundation as a special project of the National FFA Foundation

Top FFA chapters from across the country put their programs up against one another in hopes of winning a national chapter award. With innovation as the common theme, 30 chapters competed to be named a Model of Innovation award winner in one of three areas: community, student or chapter development. Awards are based on a chapter's Program of Activities (POA) and how those activities advance the FFA mission. From the national finalists, an overall winner was chosen in each category. Middle school chapters competed for the outstanding middle school award.

Models of Innovation winners

NATIONAL WINNER STUDENT DEVELOPMENT Blanchester FFA, Ohio

Members from the Blanchester FFA Chapter in Ohio succeeded in developing students by implementing a "Student of the Quarter" recognition program and participating in PALS (Partners in Active Learning Support). Through the PALS program, FFA members tutored 27 at-risk elementary students. Blanchester members also focused their efforts inward when they started a Big Brother and Big Sister Mentoring Program, in which all first-year FFA members were connected with a chapter officer or senior member.



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Brooksville Senior FFA Chapter proudly accepts the Models of Innovation Award for Community Development.

NATIONAL WINNER CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT Garretson FFA, South Dakota

The Garretson FFA Chapter of South Dakota sought to expand members' agricultural knowledge and participation and increase chapter publicity. In a "Sell What You Grow" project, members sold soy, corn, cheese and meat products as a fundraiser to learn about value-added products. Members also promoted activities for the chapter's 50th anniversary through window displays, a state fair booth and recognition of past members at sporting events. Through their efforts, the chapter received positive publicity in 32 articles about the chapter that appeared in local, regional and state newspapers.

NATIONAL WINNER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Brooksville Senior FFA, Florida

Making a difference in the local community has been a top priority for the Brooksville Senior FFA Chapter of Brooksville, Fla. Chapter members cleaned their high school campus for a month as part of "Operation PRIDE," a countywide program promoting community development. The chapter also raised more than \$1,500 for the Angelus House for Developmentally Handicapped. In addition, members logged more than 900 hours of service for the Hernando County Cattlemen's Rodeo, saving the organization money by setting up bleachers, working concession stands and managing trash removal. The rodeo donated the saved money to local youth programs.

Three Star

Colorado: Briggsdale Idalia, Liberty, Valley

Florida: Brooksville Sr., Fort White Middle, Pine Ridge, Suwannee Middle, Suwannee Senior

Georgia: Franklin County, Jackson County, Montgomery County

Idaho: Cambridge, Kuna

Illinois: Mt. Vernon, Newark, Seneca, Somonauk-Leland

Indiana: Carroll at Flora, Shenandoah

Iowa: Alburnett, Anamosa, Benton Community, Creston, Harlan, Hawkeye, Manson Northwest Webster, Monticello, Rockford, Wapsie Valley

Kansas: Arkansas City, Chapman, Holton, Linn

Kentucky: Apollo, Central Hardin, Meade County, Nelson County, Oldham County, Spencer County

Michigan: Byron, Lowell, Springport

Minnesota: Chaska, Perham, United South Central

Mississippi: Biggersville

Missouri: Aurora, Troy

Nebraska: Centennial, Franklin, Laurel-Concord, Norris, Ravenna, Seward, Sutton

North Dakota: Finley-Sharon, Napoleon, Wahpeton

Ohio: Anna, Blanchester, Bowling Green, Canal Winchester, Miami East, Mississinawa Valley, National Trail, Otsego, Versailles

Oklahoma: Atoka, Central High, Chickasha, Elgin, Elk City, Glencoe, Guthrie, Jenks, Moore, Stillwater, Tipton

Oregon: Perrydale

South Dakota: Garretson, McCook Central

Texas: A&M Consolidated, Snyder, The Woodlands

Washington: Colton, Yelm

Wisconsin: Lodi, Oconto Falls, Prairie Farm, Spencer, Waupaca, Weyauwega-Fremont

Two Star

Alabama: Enterprise, Fort Payne, Jacksonville

Arizona: Chino Valley, Gilbert, Parker, Peoria, Willcox, Yuma

California: Firebaugh, Norco

Colorado: Delta, Flagler, Hotchkiss, McClave, Merino

Connecticut: Lyman Hall, Suffield Regional, Woodbury

Delaware: Smyrna, Sussex Central

Florida: Armwood, Baker County Sr., Coral Reef, Cottondale, Crusaders, Deltona Senior, Fort White Senior, Heritage Middle, Lafayette Jr., Lafayette Sr., Marianna, New Smyrna Beach Middle, North Marion Sr., Okeechobee Brahman, Orlando Colonial Senior, Santa Fe, Sebring Senior, South Lake Senior, Vanguard Sr., West Orange Sr.

Georgia: Bainbridge, Coffee, Colquitt County, Franklin County Middle, Hutto Middle, Jeff Davis Middle School, Screven County

Hawaii: Leilehua

Idaho: Castleford, Meridian, Midvale

Illinois: Amboy, Ashton, Athens, Bluford, Bushnell-Prairie City, Chicago Ag Sciences, Cissna Park, Eastland, Franklin Center, Highland, Liberty, Marissa, Midland, Monticello, Mt. Carroll, Olney, Paxton-Buckley-Loda, Payson, Pinckneyville, Roanoke-Benson, ROWVA, Sullivan, Sycamore, Taylorville, Valmeyer, Warsaw

Indiana: Adams Central, Carroll Fort Wayne, Delphi, Eastbrook, McCutcheon, Mt. Vernon, North Newton, Rensselaer Central, South Adams, Southmont, Switzerland County, Tippecanoe Valley, Tri-County, Western Boone, Woodlan

Iowa: Charles City, Colo-NESCO, Glidden-Ralston, Indianola, Maquoketa Valley, Mid-Prairie, North Fayette, Osceola Big Chief, Rockwell-Sheffield, Sibley-Ocheyedan, Tri-Star, Vinton-Shellsburg, Waverly-Shell Rock

Kansas: Atwood, Buhler, Hillsboro, Jefferson West, Marysville, Mission Valley, Norton, Riverton, Solomon, Southeast of Saline, Stockton, Winfield

Kentucky: Breckinridge County, Caldwell County, East Carter, Jessamine County, Larue County, Scott County, Taylor County, Wolfe County

Louisiana: Bogalusa, Hathaway, La.S.A.S., Mt. Hermon, North Central, Ponchatoula High, Ruston, Springfield, Welsh

Michigan: Allegan County Tech & Ed Center, Bronson, Corunna, Sanilac



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Many outstanding chapters were honored with one, two and three star ratings.

Minnesota: Alden-Conger, Battle Lake, Benson, Blue Earth Area, Buffalo Lake-Hector, Forest Lake, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted, Litchfield, Montevideo, New London Spicer, New Ulm, Stillwater, Tracy Area, Winona, Zumbrota-Mazeppa

Mississippi: Carthage, Forest-Scott, Lawrence County

Missouri: Ashland, Boonville, Bowling Green, Carthage, Centralia, Clopton, Dadeville, El Dorado Springs, Eldon, Gallatin, Glasgow, Logan-Rogersville, Maysville, Meadville, Milan C-2, Miller, Monroe City R-1, North Shelby, Owensville, Salem, Salisbury, South Shelby, Strafford, Union, Warrenton, Willow Springs

Montana: Bainville, Big Timber, Clarks Fork, Conrad, Flathead, Park, Shields Valley

Nebraska: Imperial, Lakeview, Schuyler, Superior, Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca, Wilbur-Clatonia

New Jersey: Allentown, Penns Grove, Warren Hills Regional

New Mexico: Artesia, House, Mesa Vista, Moriarty

New York: Medina, Pioneer

North Carolina: Cape Fear, Eastern Randolph, Piedmont, Randleman, South Rowan, Southern Nash, Sun Valley, West Carteret

North Dakota: Divide County, Garrison, Kindred, Rugby, Turtle Lake-Mercer

Ohio: Amanda-Clearcreek, Ansonia, Clyde, Crestview, Delphos, East Clinton, Elmwood, Fayetteville, Greenville, Hardin Northern, Hillsboro, Lynchburg-Clay, Madison Plains, Margaretta, Miami Trace, Northeastern, Preble Shawnee, River Valley, Talawanda, Tri-Village, Twin Valley South

Oklahoma: Achille, Adair, Altus, Amber-Pocasset, Arnett, Billings, Calera, Canton, Claremore, Dickson, Durant, Geary, Grove, Indianola, Kiowa, Madill, Mooreland, Okemah, Perry, Prague, Ripley, Strother, Vinita, Woodward

Oregon: Dayton

Pennsylvania: Big Spring, Brothersvalley, Cedar Crest, Cloister, Conococheague/James Buchanan, Cumberland Valley, Greenwood, Manor, Middleburg, Spud Growers, Twin Valley

South Dakota: Elkton, Harrisburg, West Central

Tennessee: Bradley Central, Dyersburg, East Robertson, Munford, Portland, Riverside, White House

Texas: Alvarado, Alvin, Anderson-Shiro, Aubrey, Bonham, Burselson, Calallen, Caney Creek, Cedar Park, Childress, Columbus, Crosby, Dayton, East Central, Gilmer, Grandview, Hallsville, Hamshire-Fannett, Humble, Jacksboro, Katy, Kingwood, Krum, Lampasas, Livingston, Mansfield, Motley County, Navasota, Normangee, Northwest, Pearland, Quanah, Robinson, Rockdale, Rusk, Sheldon, Tidehaven, Waskom, Weimar

Utah: North Summit, Spanish Fork, Uintah, Wasatch

Virginia: Beverley Manor Middle, Buffalo Gap, Carroll County High, Central, Central Middle School, Christiansburg Middle, Edward W. Wyatt, Essex, King William, Nelson Senior, Park View Middle School, Peter Muhlenberg, Randolph-Henry, Sherando, Signal Knob, Turner Ashby

Washington: Cathlamet, Chelan, Evergreen, Franklin Pierce, Goldendale, Grandview, Heritage, Ritzville, Rochester, Wenatchee, White River, Winlock, Zillah

West Virginia: Doddridge County,

Ripley

Wisconsin: Barron, Beaver Dam, Big Foot, Bonduel, Cambridge, Chippewa Falls, Clear Lake, Cochrane-Fountain City, Fort Atkinson, Marshall, Montello, New Holstein, New Richmond, Randolph-Cambria-Friesland, Sauk Prairie, Stevens Point, Stratford, Waupun, Wauzeka, Wittenberg-Birnamwood

Wyoming: Bow River, Lyman, Pine Bluffs, Powell

One Star

Alabama: Brantley, Eufaula, Geraldine, New Brockton, Randolph-Roanoke CTC

Arkansas: Melbourne, Ola, Prairie Grove, Searcy

California: Dinuba, Fresno-Central, Hollister, Imperial, La Puente Valley ROP, Lemoore, Norte Vista, Quartz Hill, Riverside-La Sierra, Sacramento-Florin

Florida: Clewiston, East Bay, Moore Haven

Georgia: Berrien, Central of Carroll, Jeff Davis, Miller County, Swainsboro, Upson-Lee, West Laurens

Maine: Presque Isle

Maryland: Easton

Mississippi: Alcorn Vocational Technical Center, Neshoba Central

Nevada: Ruby Mountain, Silver Sage

New Mexico: Hagerman

North Carolina: Bartlett Yancey, Bunker Hill, Fairmont, Forest Hills, Hobbton, Lumberton, North Iredell, North Lenoir, Princeton, Purnell Swett, Southern Guilford

Pennsylvania: Danville, Hans Herr, Northern Lebanon

South Carolina: Aiken, Belton Honea-Path, Crescent, Laurens, Loris, Manning, McBee

Tennessee: Cosby, Covington, Crockett County, Jefferson County, Johnson County, Lebanon, Lexington, Loretto, McMinn, Mount Juliet, Powell Valley

Texas: Arlington, Axtell, Boerne, Bowie-Austin, Brownsboro, Bryan, Cleburne, Coleman, Fairfield, Garland, Greenville, Iola, Leander, Mary Carroll, McGregor, Midlothian, Pilot Point, Sinton, Tom Bean, Tomball

Utah: Bear River, Morgan

Vermont: Bennington

West Virginia: Ravenswood, Roane County, St. Marys, Tyler

Membership Recognition



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

A representative of the South Carolina FFA Association accepted a plaque recognizing the state's growth in FFA membership over the past year.

The agricultural education model consists of three components: classroom, FFA and supervised agricultural experience program (SAE). These components make agricultural education stand out. In order to receive the maximum benefit, students should be involved in all aspects of agricultural education. Several states have met that objective by having 100 percent FFA membership for all students enrolled in agricultural education courses. States that have recorded 100 percent membership include California and Oklahoma. There are 29 states that are working toward this goal and have increased membership numbers.

100% Membership States

California
Oklahoma

Membership Growth States

Arizona
Arkansas
California
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Illinois
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Maryland
Missouri
New Mexico
New York

North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Rhode Island
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virgin Islands
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin

VIP Citations

JANE BAGLEY has provided 10 years of service to support FFA. A rancher in Dimmit, Texas, Bagley's primary roles have been associated with national horse career development events (CDEs). Through these CDEs, she has been an integral part of ensuring the success of students and upholding the events' high standards.

JAMES C. BOREL has been a key player in expanding the relationship between FFA/agricultural education and the DuPont Company and its business subsidiaries. Now chairman of the board of directors of CropLife America, Borel's leadership and vision have led to major gift contributions to support the New Century Farmer program and the "I Believe in the Future" capital campaign. This Wilmington, Del., resident has also been on the National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board, served as president of the Asia-Pacific Crop Protection Association and performed as a board member for Griffin LLC, a DuPont venture.

MARTIN L. MITCHELL, now retired, has devoted 36 years to FFA and agricultural education. His service includes having been state FFA advisor and agricultural education supervisor, an agriculture teacher, a member of the National FFA Organization Board of Directors and a trustee of the New Hampshire FFA Foundation. Mitchell, of Dover, N. H., is responsible for having begun numerous agricultural education programs at high schools and vocational centers throughout New Hampshire.

JOHN P. MUNDT of Boise, Idaho and professor emeritus, taught high school agriculture for 13 years, led as state FFA supervisor for six years and instructed as professor of agricultural and extension education at the University of Idaho for 16 years. His professional and academic service include roles with the Association for Career and Technical Education Professional Development Committee, the National FFA Board of Directors, the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association and the *Agricultural Education* magazine.

JOHN W. PARRIS is currently the director of public affairs for the South Carolina FFA Association. More noteworthy is the fact that Parris has indeed given a lifetime—67 years—to South Carolina agricultural education. His service spans having been a classroom instructor to associate executive director of the South Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission to editorship of *AgriBiz*. At each level of Parris' career, he has maintained direct connection with agricultural education and FFA by providing educational opportunities. Some of his past honors include the

Centennial Distinguished Ag Alumni Award – Clemson University, the South Carolina Ag Educators Society Distinguished Service Award and the South Carolina Honorary State FFA Degree.

CLARENCE PEARSON may be best known as a reformer. As a result of his role in the Washington State Commission on Student Learning, FFA and agricultural education became an integral part of the school reform process. Pearson, of Oakville, Wash., has given that along with several years of committed service to FFA and agricultural education. Other recognitions received by him include being named Teacher of the Year in 1981, Youth Leader of the Year in 1982 and Daily World's Citizen of the Year in 1985. He currently serves as president of the Washington State FFA Foundation.

BENNY RENICK of South Charleston, W. Va., is a former FFA member who continues to play an important role for agricultural education and FFA. Now zone manager for Kroger Mid-Atlantic, Renick has involved Kroger in numerous local junior livestock shows/fairs. In addition, he has been a business partner with the West Virginia FFA, participated in the Governor's Visioning Conference on Agricultural Education, provided processing equipment for local programs and hosted state FFA officer teams during their business tours. Awards he has received include Honorary State and American FFA Degrees.

JOHN W. ROSE of Hickman, Tenn., for several years has been a huge supporter of FFA, financially, physically and politically. Former co-owner of Transender Corporation, his financial support has made possible an executive director position for the Tennessee FFA Foundation, an endowment at Tennessee Technological University for a state FFA officer each year and grants to FFA alumni affiliates. His physical support includes having served on the nominating committee for state officers as well as on the Tennessee FFA Foundation Inc. board of directors. In addition, he has served as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, president of the Tennessee Alumni Council and a political advocate for the restoration of Camp Clements, a state FFA camp.

JOSEPH SABOL of San Luis Obispo, Calif., is a retired teacher educator. He has fulfilled various academic roles. A former high school teacher, community college agriculture teacher and college dean, his service has extended beyond America to Costa Rica, Pakistan, New Mexico and Australia. In these countries, he has presented workshops on effective teaching. In recognition of his outstanding achievements and

contributions as an educator, Dr. Sabol has received the Monsanto Agriculture Faculty Award and the California Agriculture Teachers' Association Teacher of Excellence Award.

JOHN D. TODD is a man of devotion and leadership. During the more than 40 years he has devoted to agricultural education and FFA, Dr. Todd has provided leadership to the agricultural teacher education program at the University of Tennessee, served as a board member and president of the Tennessee FFA Alumni Foundation and initiated several successful fundraising programs to support statewide FFA events and activities. This professor emeritus from Knoxville, Tenn., has other accomplishments that include the Overton Teaching Award and having a scholarship established in his name at the University of Tennessee.



James C. Borel accepted a VIP Citation for his many years of service to FFA.

WALTER E. UPTON, area supervisor for agricultural education in Little Rock, Ark., takes pride in having dedicated his life to young people and agricultural education for more than 40 years. He is an Arkansas Honorary State FFA Degree recipient. Other accomplishments he has to his honor include having served as the state FFA supervisor for Arkansas, having been a National FFA Organization nominating committee coordinator and having served as an active member of the National Association Supervisors of Agricultural Education Inc.

Honorary American FFA Degree

The Honorary American FFA Degree is the highest honorary degree of the National FFA Organization. It honors teachers and other individuals who have given continuous service to FFA and are committed to advancing agricultural education. Because of their strong support, FFA is one of the nation's elite youth organizations, impacting the lives of many students. Contributions from these supporters help FFA instill in students the time-honored legacies of premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Each of the 181 adults who received the award was honored on stage with a medal and certificate and recognized at an award ceremony.

Ellen Williams was recognized for her commitment to FFA and agricultural education.



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Alaska: Sam Harrel, Al Poindexter

Arizona: Andrew Groseta, Mike Olsen, Dave Perey

Arkansas: Donald Brown, Alice Eason, Robert Fitz, Gary Keathley, Bill Rue, J. Saldana

California: Jim Brabeck, Robert Dempel

Florida: Marty Bowen, Charles Bronson, Frankie Hall, William "Nick" Nichols, Ron Wetherington

Georgia: Randy Dill, Terry England, Teresa Hamlin, Maynard Iverson, Alan Powell

Idaho: Anna Davis

Illinois: David Stille, Gary Taets, Nelson Thorp, Ron Warfield

Indiana: Jim Armbruster, Lynn Campbell, Janet Davies, Jan Ferris, Melinda Findley, Rosalie Hunsinger, Frank Saldana, Ellen Williams

Iowa: David Blecha, Tom Davis, Sonny Deke, Kenneth Larson

Kentucky: William (Bill) Cherry, John Cotton, Peter Dreisbach, Larry Faue, Luther Hughes, Roy Hunt, Ron Peters, Mike Richey, Cara Sariscsany, Greg Webb

Louisiana: Linda Bordelon, Lynda Danos

Maryland: Clayton Lenhart, Harold Roderuck,

Massachusetts: Eugene Longfield, Jerome Myers

Michigan: Douglas Darling, Jennifer Decker, Eddie Moore, Jo Pierce

Minnesota: Guy Doud, Brant Groen, Steve Koziolk, Peter Neigebauer, Lyle Westrom, Alan Willits

Mississippi: Timothy Chamblee, Connie Coker, Margaret Greer, Mary Ladner, Dixon Mills, Suzi Phillips

Missouri: Don Copenhaver, Daryl Oldvader, Thomas Payne, Frederick Worman

New Hampshire: James McConaha, Stephen Taylor

New Jersey: John Hannum, Deborah Pomroy-Moyer, Liz Thompson

New Mexico: Brian Moore, Jack Wiley

North Carolina: Joshua Bledsoe, Horace Johnson, Matthew Keefer, Dave Zerfoss

North Dakota: Anissa Wilhelm

Oklahoma: Greg Ramsey, Brett Ramsey, Curtis Shumaker, Ken Starks, C. Waldner

Oregon: Dennis Ettestad, Clayton Fox, Loree Fox, Larry GrosJacques, Greg Thompson

Pennsylvania: Steven Crawford, John Hall, Sheila Miller, Russell Redding, Wayne Zeigler

Rhode Island: Donald Kettle

South Carolina: Gary Goodman, John Kelly, Jack Mercer, David Winkles, William Witherspoon

Tennessee: Linda Byler, Rhedona Rose

Texas: Gordon Davis, Steve Johnson

Virginia: Janet Bray, Benny Guill, Stuart Moffett, David Shiflett

Washington, D.C.: Kimberly Green, P. Smith

Wisconsin: Gary Connell, Richard Daluge, Rodney Kittelsen

Wyoming: Lesley Jeffres

Agriculture Teacher

Alabama: Aubrey Barrow, Smiths Station

Arizona: Dennis Bushong, Gilbert

California: Kathy Bibby, Santa Ynez Vly.; Michael Clifford, Lompoc; Joe DiGrazia, Turlock; Don Dyer, El Capitan; Holly Egan, Lassen Union; Laura Goss, East Nicolaus; Gina Gravatt, Firebaugh; Ron King, Lemoore Union; Kenneth Martin, Placer; Ralph Mendes, Foothill; Chad Oilar, Cottonwood-West Valley; James Polly, Mc Kinleyville; Kip Proctor, Tracy; Bobbi Roderick, Carpinteria; Doug Sehnert, Fallbrook Union

Colorado: Rich Siegfried, Holly

Georgia: Steve Bass, Colquitt Co.; Michael Turner, Harris Co.; Larry Williams, Dade Co.

Idaho: John Davis, Vallivue

Kansas: Larry Goering, Moundridge-Hesston

Michigan: Dale Johnson, Wexford-Missaukee Career Center; Robert Sollman, Sanilac Career Center

Montana: DuWayne Wilson, Wolf Point

Nebraska: Lynn Gloystein, Henderson/Bradshaw; Tim Laughlin, Lawrence/Nelson

New Mexico: Jerry Franklin, Logan

North Dakota: Brian Schneider, Napoleon

Oklahoma: Bruce Akins, Comanche; Abraham Warren, Harrah

Oregon: Ted Tesconi, Redmond

Pennsylvania: Michael Kennis, Clearfield

South Carolina: James Ulmer, Ellore

Tennessee: Harvey Burniston, Johnson Co.; Mark Gregory, Peabody

Texas: Bobby Andrew, Valley View; Joe Kaspar, Mary Carroll

Virginia: Deborah Birge Barker, Laurel Park; James Craddock, Chatham; Robert Walton, Powhatan Voc Ctr.

Wisconsin: Roger Hooker, La Farge; Steven Zibell, Oregon Sr.

Wyoming: Ty Berry, Frontier

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Texas

John & Laurie Gillespie
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Wyoming

Larry & Diane Jones
Kansas

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Georgia

Mike & Lora Tyson
Ohio

Retiring National FFA Board of Directors, Trustees and Consultants

Gerald Brase

Jack Elliott

Horacio "Lacho" Garza

Patricia Natusch

Parents of Star Finalists

Star in Agribusiness

Indiana: Debbie & Doug DeSchepper

Minnesota: Diane & Alan Zeithamer

Oklahoma: Susan & the late Jay Henricks

Wisconsin: Annmarie & Edward Wolf

Star in Agricultural Placement

California: Cecillia & John Parsons

Illinois: Dawn & Daniel St. Peters

Ohio: Cynthia & Ronald Hilton

Wisconsin: Karen & Roger Blaser

Star in Agriscience

California: Patty Esau & Scott Wohlgemuth

Minnesota: Patricia A. & Del W. Swanson

South Dakota: Aileen & Gary Brunner

Wisconsin: Carol Beyer-Makuski & Craig Beyer

Star Farmer

Kansas: Mary & Kevin Holle

Minnesota: Jane & Larry Wellens

New Jersey: Diane F. & William N. Brooks Jr.

Oklahoma: Gayla & Chris Ledbetter

National FFA Alumni Convention



Former members come together at the FFA Alumni convention to renew their commitment to the FFA mission.

After taking off their FFA jacket for the last time, many former members go on to successful careers—but their involvement in the FFA stays with them long after the blue corduroy is stored away, for FFA gives them skills and experiences to lead them through life and leaves a lasting impression in their hearts. Through the National FFA Alumni Association, former members and other supporters have the opportunity to give back to the organization that has given them so much, as they come together to ensure that the FFA legacy continues in future generations.

In conjunction with the 2003 National FFA Convention, the National FFA Alumni Association held its 31st convention, themed “Doing Together What We Can’t Do Alone.” During the convention, Oct. 29-31, the alumni organization conducted its annual business session, elected the



Each state association submitted a basket containing items that represented their state, FFA, and FFA alumni, in a contest sponsored by the National FFA Alumni association. The top three winning baskets were a hot item at Friday night’s auction.

2003-2004 national council and national president, Dale Beaty of Milton, Wisc., and hosted a silent auction to raise money to benefit FFA members through scholarships for the Washington Leadership Conference.

An awards session was also held, recognizing this year's Outstanding Achievement Award recipients: David Bishop of Ashland, Ohio; Raymond Cockrum of Guthrie, Okla.; and Patrick Igl of Antigo, Wisc.

A live auction was held Friday evening, bringing in nearly \$88,000. Items auctioned included a John Deere Gator 4x2, an E-Z-Go Yard Tractor and a 2004 Chevy Silverado.

Another big ticket item was a cast-iron FFA emblem, weighing 1,100 pounds and standing over six feet tall, donated by Southwest Graphix. In addition to WLC scholarships, auction proceeds go toward scholarships for future agriculture teachers and fund local chapters through grants. This year, the alumni awarded approximately \$20,000 in grants to chapters across the country.

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.



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Members and guests took home some great items from the FFA Alumni Association's silent auction, and benefited FFA members with WLC scholarships in the process.



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

The National FFA Alumni auction raised over \$88,000 for WLC, collegiate and agriculture teacher scholarships. This Chevy truck was the big-ticket item of the event.

Foundation Sponsors

The National FFA Foundation plays an integral role in the success of FFA and agricultural education. For the 38th consecutive year, the foundation set a record level of support, raising \$8,701,682. Through the support of its generous corporate and individual donors, more than \$130 million has been raised to develop curriculum, fund programs and recognize members. Through the foundation's contributions, FFA is able to offer a wide range of leadership and development opportunities for members and teachers while advancing agricultural education. With more than 1,700 sponsors, the foundation continues to invest in the future of FFA members, striving to make a difference in the lives of students.

Distinguished Service Citations

The National FFA Organization presented the Distinguished Service Citation to three companies that have spent years providing opportunities for FFA members and agricultural education students to achieve success. Representatives from the California Farm Bureau Federation, Kroger Mid-Atlantic and PotashCorp accepted the honor on behalf of their organizations during an onstage ceremony held at the 2003 National FFA Convention.

The **California Farm Bureau Federation** in Sacramento, Calif., has been an incredible supporter of and advocate for FFA and agricultural education. Their commitment and vision has been consistently demonstrated through their annual sponsorship of career development events, proficiency awards and scholarships at all levels. The bureau's dedication to developing talented and successful leaders has been clearly manifested by the training assistance and educational resources it has provided to state FFA officers and other agriculture students. The bureau's advocacy for FFA through letter writing and phone calling campaigns was instrumental in uniting legislators as well as the agricultural industry to support the FFA delivery system in California. We honor the California Farm

Bureau Federation for its immeasurable support of FFA and agricultural education.

Kroger Mid-Atlantic has been a long-time friend to the West Virginia FFA Association. Kroger is an annual sponsor of parliamentary procedure CDE and national chapter awards for West Virginia. In addition, Kroger Mid-Atlantic cooperates with several agricultural education departments to provide training sites for experiential learning. The FFA mission is to provide premier leadership and personal growth opportunities for its youth. Kroger, as a result of its sponsorships and scholarships, has been a crucial partner in fulfilling that mission. Not only have financial resources enriched the learning and training opportunities of agriculture students, but also the industry tours state FFA officer teams have taken with Kroger management. We celebrate Kroger for the invaluable ways it has made a life-long difference in the lives of youth in FFA and agricultural education.

As a sponsor of the National FFA Foundation, **PotashCorp** over the past 13 years has contributed \$314,000. This funding



Bob Lane of John Deere, celebrating its 60th year of supporting FFA, presented a check to the National FFA Foundation.

PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

enabled the National FFA Organization to inspire, challenge and grow teachers within agricultural education through our Agriscience Teacher of the Year award program. Potash's financial support also enabled the National FFA Organization to provide resources to enhance projects belonging to the diversified agricultural production proficiency. We thank and recognize PotashCorp for the excellence in FFA and agricultural education that has been cultivated as a result of their relationship with us.

The Distinguished Service Citation is the highest award presented to an organization, agency, business or other group by the National FFA Organization. A limited number of citations are awarded annually. The award recognizes outstanding contributions made to agricultural education and FFA.

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** retiring

15-25-35-50-60 Year Sponsors

60 Year

John Deere

50 Year

Monsanto
Pfizer Animal Health

35 Year

Blue Seal Feeds Inc.
Goodyear Tire and Rubber
Company

25 Year

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Paul & Rita Day
Don Dye Company Incorporated
High Plains Journal
McCormick Farms
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15 Year

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R. Lynn Wells
Woodstream Corporation
Homer J. Yokum

FFA National Agricultural Career Show[®]

Approximately 50,000 FFA members, parents and advisors flooded the South Wing of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center during convention to take part in the FFA National Agricultural Career Show. More than 340 exhibitors, including representatives from universities and technical schools, military branches, organizations and commodity groups, supplied attendees with information on careers in agriculture.

One of the biggest highlights of the career show was the line-up of country music stars, including Terri Clark, Jo Dee Messina and Joe Nichols, who were on hand to sign autographs for attendees. Another special exhibit was the FFA museum display, which celebrated the 75th anniversary of the organization through historical documents, photos and artifacts.

The career show is also the site for the Hall of States—providing the perfect location for delegates to learn about agriculture in other areas, as well as gather signatures from representatives of 47 associations.



The career show allowed students to explore a vast array of agricultural careers and post-secondary education programs.



Over 340 exhibitors shared information with students about opportunities within the agriculture field.

Hall of States

Alabama Association
Alaska Association
Arizona Association
Arkansas Association
California Association
Connecticut Association
Delaware Association
Florida Association
Georgia Association
Hawaii Association
Idaho Association
Illinois Association
Indiana Association
Iowa Association
Kansas Association
Kentucky Association

Louisiana Association
Maryland Association
Massachusetts Association
Michigan Association
Minnesota Association
Mississippi Association
Missouri Association
Montana Association
Nebraska Association
New Hampshire Association
New Jersey Association
New Mexico Association
New York Association
North Carolina Association
North Dakota Association
Ohio Association

Oregon Association
Pennsylvania Association
Puerto Rico Association
Rhode Island Association
South Carolina Association
South Dakota Association
Tennessee Association
Texas Association
Utah Association
Vermont Association
Virginia Association
Washington Association
West Virginia Association
Wisconsin Association
Wyoming Association

Exhibitors

AGCO
AgEdNet.com
Agricultural Consortium of Texas
Agricultural Marketing Resource Ctr.
AgriScience Institute - DuPont Classroom
AgriScience Institute - Texas Instruments Classroom
AgriScience Institute - Veterinary Science Inst. Mat. Classroom
AgriTechZone by Questech Inc.
Agrowknowledge
Akey/Sunglo
Alabama Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Alaska Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
American Angus Association
American Association for Lab Animal Science (AALAS)
American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials (AAVIM)
American Dairy Goat Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American National Cattlewomen National Beef Ambassador Program
American Paint Horse Association
American Quarter Horse Youth Association
American Shorthorn Association
American Serrimmental Association
American Tractor Pullers Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Agriculture Alliance
Animal Health Publication
Animal Place
Applied Technologies
AquaCenter Inc.
Aquatic Eco Systems
Archer Daniels Midland Co.
Arkansas Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Atlas Greenhouse Systems
Auburn University
Bekaert Wire
Berne Apparel
Black Hawk College
Blue Freedom Farm Market
Boone FFA
Breaking New Ground
Briggs & Stratton Corporation
Burlay Tobacco Growers
BWI Companies Inc.
California Association Hall of States Exhibitor
California Polytechnic State University
Carhart Inc.
CARQUEST Corporation
Case IH
Caterpillar - Think Big
Cave City Tourist & Convention Center
Ceres International Women's Fraternity
CEV Multimedia
Chevron Texaco
Chevy Trucks
Christian Kropf Inc.
CHS
Clemson University
CMA Publications Inc.
College of the Ozarks
Colorado State University
Colorado State University Masters of Agriculture - Integrated Resource Management
Connecticut Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Cornell University
Crosmen Aircrugs
Cummins Inc.
Dee Zee Manufacturing
Delaware Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Delaware State University
Delaware Valley College
Delmar Learning
Depco Inc.
Diversified Fund Raisers Inc.
Dodge Division and Daimler-Chrysler Corporation Fund
Dordt College
Dow AgroSciences
DuPont
Durango Boot
Eastern Kentucky University
Eastern New Mexico University
Empire Southwest
Equine Industry Program/University of Louisville
Exotic Hibiscus
Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE)
Farm Safety 4 Just Kids
Farmers for Christ, International
FarmHouse Fraternity
Fastlane Publications
Fellowship of Christian Farmers International
Ferrum College
Firestone Agricultural Tire Company
Florida A&M - Tallahassee
Florida Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Florida Farm Bureau Marketing Division
Florida Fruit Association Inc.
Ford Trucks Built Ford Tough
Friends Inc.
Garst Seed Co.
GBC Customized Calendars
Georgia Agriculture and Ag Education Consortium
Georgia Boot
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
Grad Break Escape
Graduate Study at Purdue University
Greater Louisville Inc., The Metro Chamber of Commerce
Hanson Aggregates Midwest Inc.
Hawaii Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Hawkeye Community College
Hobar Publications/Finney Company
Hobart Welders
Hormel Foods Corporation
Hummert International
Husqvarna
Idaho Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Illinois Agricultural Universities
Illinois Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Illinois Central College
Indiana Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Indiana Soy Products
Ingersoll Rand/Bobcat/Club Car
Instructional Materials Lab University of Missouri
Instructional Materials Service Texas A&M University
International Greenhouse Company
International Truck and Engine Corp.
Iowa Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Iowa FFA Foundation Inc.
Iowa State University College of Agriculture
Iowa State University - Horticulture Dept.
Iowa Western Livestock Judging Contest
Jobhogn.net
John Deere
Johnson and Wales University
Joliet Junior College
Justin Boot Company
Kansas Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Kansas State University
Kentucky Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Companies
Kentucky Soybean Association
Kentucky State University
Keystone Steel & Wire Company
Kosair Charities
Kraft Foods
Lake Land College
Land Grants of the Palouse
Land O'Lakes
Langdon Barber Groves Inc.
Lehi Valley Trading Co.
Lexington Convention & Visitors Bureau
Lincoln Electric Company
Lincoln University
Linn State Technical College
Louisiana Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Louisiana State University
Ludy Greenhouse Manufacturers
Maple Grove Distributing Inc.
Maryland Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Mason County Fiscal Court
Massachusetts Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Michelin North America
Michigan Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Michigan State University
Mississippi Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Mississippi State University
Missouri Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association
Missouri Welding Institute
Moltan Company
Monsanto Company
Montana Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Morehead State University
Morton Salt
MTD Products Inc./Cub Cadet
Murray State University
NAPA Auto Parts
Nashville Auto-Diesel College
National 4-H Council
National AgrAbility Project and Easter Seals
National Antique Tractor Pullers Association
National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)
National Association of Farm Broadcasters
National Bison Association
National Children's Center for Rural Ag Health & Safety
National Cutting Horse Association
National Education Center for Agricultural Safety
National FFA Agriscience Fair
National FFA Agriscience Student Award Program Displays
National FFA Alumni Association
National FFA History Display
National FFA Organization Education Programs
National Grange
National High School Rodeo Association
National Junior Swine Association
National Pork Board
National Reining Horse Association
National Rifle Association of America
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Tractor Pullers Championships
National Wild Turkey Federation
Nebraska Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture
Nebraska Consortium
Nestle Purina Pet Care Company
New Hampshire Association Hall of States Exhibitor
New Jersey Association Hall of States Exhibitor
New Mexico Association Hall of States Exhibitor
New York Association Hall of States Exhibitor
North American Limousin Foundation
North American Salt Co.
North Carolina A & T State University
North Carolina Association Hall of States Exhibitor
North Carolina State University
North Dakota Association Hall of States Exhibitor
North Dakota State College of Science
North Dakota State University
Northeast Iowa Community College
Northern Boots
Northwest Missouri State University
Ohio Agricultural Technical Institute
Ohio Curriculum Materials Service
Oklahoma Curriculum & Instructional Materials Center
Oklahoma Panhandle State University
Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma State University - HEVI
Oregon State University
Owens Community College
Pat Mooney Co. - The Saw Company
Pee Jay's Fresh Fruit
Pennsylvania Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Prentice Hall - Interstate Publishers Inc.
Preston Farms Popcorn Company
Progressive Agriculture Foundation
Project Food, Land & People
Puerto Rico Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Purdue University
Purdue University Agronomy Department
Ranger Boats
RFD-TV
Rhode Island Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Rimol Greenhouse Systems Inc.
Roper Apparel and Footware
Rose Acre Farms Inc.
Rotary International District 6710
Safari Club International Foundation
San Joaquin Delta College
Shaffer's Goldrush
Sigma Alpha Sorority
Society of American Florists
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Association Hall of States Exhibitor
South Dakota Association Hall of States Exhibitor
South Dakota State University
South Georgia Technical College
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Heritage Fundraising
SouthWest Graphix
Southwest Missouri State University - Collegiate FFA
Sports Turf Managers' Association
St. Louis Community College
Stihl Inc.
Stone Manufacturing & Supply Company
Stuppy Greenhouse Manufacturing Company
SUNY Cobleskill
Superior Growers Supply
Tendersticks L.L.C.
Tennessee Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Texas Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Texas Instruments
Texas State Technical College
The American Phytopathological Society
The Davey Tree Expert Company
The Fraternity of Alpha Zeta
The Humane Society of the United States
The Ohio State University
The Ohio State University Dept. of Food, Ag. & Biol. Engr.
The Ohio State University School of Natural Res.
The Pennsylvania State University
The University of Maine
Toyota
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
The Nature Conservancy
Freedom's Answer
The National Arbor Day Foundation
Tractor Supply Company
Tulsa Welding School
Tyson Foods Inc.
U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service
U.S. Army Recruiting Command
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Marine Corps
U.S. Navy Recruiting Command
U.S. Rubber Reclaiming
Unity College
University of Alaska Fairbanks - SALRM
University of Arkansas
University of California - Davis
University of Delaware, Agricultural and Technical Education
University of Delaware College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
University of Florida
University of Illinois - ITCS Instructional Material
University of Kentucky
University of Kentucky Distance Learning Programs
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Ag., Food & Natural Res.
University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Veterinary Medicine
University of New Hampshire
University of Northwestern Ohio
University of Tennessee - Knoxville
University of Tennessee - Martin
University of Wisconsin - Madison
University of Wisconsin - River Falls
USDA Agricultural Research Service - Information Staff
USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
USDA Economic Research Service
USDA Farm Service Agency
USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs Recruitment
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service/CENSUS
USDA National Animal Disease Center
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA Risk Management Agency
USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service
Utah Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Venturing Division, Boy Scouts of America
Vermont Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Vidalia Sweet Onions for Education Program
Virginia Association Hall of States Exhibitor
Virginia Tech, Agricultural and Extension Education
Visual Impact Imaging
Ward's Natural Science
Washington Association Hall of States Exhibitor
West Virginia Association Hall of States Exhibitor
West Virginia University
Western Kentucky University
Winchester Ammunition-Olin Corporation
Wisconsin Association Hall of States Exhibitor
WIX Filters Products Division of Dana Corporation
Wrangler
WWW.HORSECOURSEONLINE.COM - Austin Education Center
Wyoming Association Hall of States Exhibitor
WyoTech
Yavapai College - Agribusiness
Zeecraft Tech.

Courtesy Corps



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

From ushering members to their seats in the arena to stuffing envelopes, Courtesy Corps members are the embodiment of "living to serve."

A dedication to true service made up the heart of the 2003 National FFA Convention courtesy corps. FFA members and advisors from all over the country volunteered their time and effort to assist convention staff in a variety of activities. From helping out in the awards office to securing the doors, courtesy corps was a vital part of behind-the-scenes work. The experience of serving proved to be worthwhile for many members. "The courtesy corps makes you feel like you're part of the FFA—like you actually did something and got involved," said Brittany Harrington of the Bucklin FFA Chapter in Missouri.

FFA thanks those who participated in the courtesy corps. Each volunteer helped make national convention a success.

Alabama: Marbury FFA

Arizona: Mesquite FFA

Arkansas: England FFA

California: McFarland FFA

Colorado: Brighton FFA

Connecticut: Lyman Hall FFA, Matabeset FFA, Trumbull Regional FFA

Delaware: Caesar Rodney FFA, Lake Forest FFA

Florida: Auburndale Sr. High FFA, Bartow Middle FFA, Brooksville Sr. FFA, Haines City Sr. FFA, J.M. Tate Senior FFA, Kennedy FFA, Lake Butler FFA, Lake Gibson Senior FFA, Lakeland FFA, Lakewood Ranch FFA, New Smyrna Beach FFA, Northview FFA, Southeast Manatee FFA

Georgia: Etowah High School FFA, Lowndes FFA, Oconee County FFA

Idaho: Kendrick FFA

Illinois: Chicago Ag Sciences FFA, Georgetown-Ridge Farm FFA, Liberty FFA, Minooka FFA

Indiana: Indian Creek FFA, North Newton FFA, Rossville FFA, South Ripley FFA, Woodlan FFA

Iowa: Akron-Westfield FFA, Cascade FFA, DeWitt Central FFA, Fairfield FFA, Louisa-Muscatine FFA

Kansas: Goessel FFA, Neodesha FFA

Kentucky: Apollo FFA, Butler County FFA, John Hardin FFA, LaRue County FFA, Lincoln County FFA, Mason County High School FFA, Nelson County FFA, Nicholas County FFA, Ryle FFA

Louisiana: Bogalusa High School FFA, Fifth Ward Junior FFA, Franklinton FFA, Jena High FFA, Loranger High FFA, Mount Hermon FFA, Pearl River FFA, Pine High School FFA, Raceland Middle FFA

Maine: Ashland FFA

Maryland: Gaithersburg FFA

Massachusetts: Essex Chapter FFA

Michigan: Unionville Sebawaing Area FFA

Minnesota: Dassel Cokato FFA, Sibley East FFA, Southwest Star Concept High School FFA, Stillwater FFA

Mississippi: Weir FFA

Missouri: Belle FFA, Bucklin FFA, Carl Junction FFA, Dadeville FFA, Galena FFA, Gallatin FFA, Greenfield FFA, Hamilton FFA, Hermann FFA, Higginsville FFA, Koshkonong FFA, Linn Co. R-1 FFA, Mansfield FFA, Meadville FFA, Mount Vernon FFA, North

Central Career Center FFA, North Daviess FFA, Smithville FFA, Union FFA, Verona FFA, Walnut Grove

Nebraska: Blair FFA, Bloomfield FFA, Broken Bow FFA, Fillmore Central FFA, Hartington FFA, Pawnee City FFA

New Jersey: Warren Hills FFA

New Mexico: Las Cruces FFA

New York: Letchworth FFA

North Dakota: Beulah FFA, Carson FFA, Kenmare FFA, Larimore JE Eastgate FFA

Ohio: Edgewood FFA, Fort Frye FFA, Lakota FFA, Morgan FFA, New Lexington FFA, Pickaway-Ross FFA, Ross FFA, Talawanda FFA, Warren FFA/Ohio District 10 Officers, Wauseon FFA, Waynesfield-Goshen FFA

Oklahoma: Altus FFA, Elk City FFA, Jenks FFA, Tecumseh FFA

Oregon: Helix FFA, Perrydale FFA

Pennsylvania: Big Spring FFA, Cumberland Valley FFA

South Carolina: Edisto FFA

South Dakota: Centerville FFA, Florence FFA, Gettysburg FFA, Newell FFA

Tennessee: Bolivar Central FFA, Hendersonville FFA, Mark Twain FFA

Texas: Academy FFA, Aledo FFA, Athens FFA, Aubrey FFA, Bellaire FFA, Bland FFA, Bremond FFA, Bridgeport FFA, Bryan FFA, Chico FFA, Columbus FFA, Crowley FFA, Decatur FFA, Duncanville FFA, Era FFA, Franklin FFA, Freer FFA, Goldthwaite FFA, Greenville FFA, Hartley FFA, Huntsville FFA, Kirbyville FFA, Lone Oak FFA, Madisonville FFA, Mansfield FFA, Mt. Pleasant FFA, Palacios FFA, Plano East Senior High FFA, Quinlan FFA, Roscoe FFA, Sam Rayburn FFA, Snyder FFA, Tulo-Midway FFA, Weimar FFA, Yoakum FFA

Virginia: Blacksburg High School FFA, Essex FFA, Signal Knob Middle FFA

Washington: Evergreen FFA, Ferris FFA, Moses Lake FFA, Mountain View FFA, Reardan FFA

Wisconsin: Wauzeka FFA

Wyoming: Chief Washakie FFA

Official Delegates



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Delegates shared their ideas for the betterment of the organization at a business session in Freedom Hall.

Taking a lesson from Mohandas Gandhi, who once said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world,” a group of FFA members from across the nation arrived early the week of convention to take part in delegate committees. In a format similar to that of our nation’s Congressional hearings, 475 students served on committees to evaluate suggested changes to the organization’s policies, which were compiled at the State Presidents’ Conference in Washington, D.C., in July.

The process begins as delegates are divided into their respective committees, where they listen to testimonies and review provided information, as well as discuss their own findings with the group. From this, a committee recommendation is formed and submitted to the entire delegation for a vote. These delegate recommendations are then forwarded to the National FFA Board of Directors, who will review them in January 2004.

Issues considered this year included the size of the national officer team, the selection process of the national officer nominating committee and middle school student participation in CDEs.

Alabama: Matt Barton, Hannah Beam, Brittany Beasley, David Bryant, Ashleigh Butts, Cody Eiland, Whitney Griffin, Jennifer Himburg, Alex Popwell, Joanna Stewart, Margaret Trione

Alaska: Brad Hayes, Jessica Nolin

Arizona: Jerrod Alcaida, Anna Marie Groseta, Malorie Lewis, Josh Morgan, Richard Sivils

Arkansas: Jason Clenney, Monica Coker, Cody Comeaux, Corey Davis, Nikki Evans, Joe Garner, Miranda Haywood, Jessica Hickmott, Tim Lewis, Bryan Powell, Casey Simpson, Shellie Umphries, Allisyn Woodrow, Bobby Yarbrough

California: Kourtney Aboudara, Mark Aguiar, Nicole Amaral,

Meghan Barker, Breanna Bell, Kimberley Bennett, Kelly Bishop, Kelsey Blagg, Tyler Blagg, Nicole Borges, Thomas Bottoms, Megan Brownell, Jazmyn Chandler, Phillip Chism, Amber Cleaver, Carrie Crane, Kristy Crow, Beth Cundiff, Sumiko DeLa Vega, Audrey Denney, Mark Diener, Anne Marie Diener, Bryan Dodson, Brian Fiorini, Erica Flores, Kelly Forsythe, Carey Galliani, Lisa Hammerich, Erik Holland, Sarah Hubbard, Andrea Jue, Alex Lopez, Megan Marques, Kyle McCullough, Kristen Mejia, Hallie Muller, Cody Penfold, Jimmy Pierce, Domenica Prestininzi, Nicolina Prestininzi, Katie Robertson, Colette Rose, Natalie Ryan, Ashley Smith, Katy Teixeira, Erin VanPeer, Lindsay Walsh, Janelle Williams

Colorado: Melanie Calderwood, Anthony Mengel, B.J. New, Linsey Pollart, Benjamin Weber

Connecticut: Missy Chick, Gina Gambino, Stephen Russell, Fred Scoville

Delaware: Krissy Keeler, Jonathan Snow, Mollie Stevenson

Florida: Kelly Aue, Laura Fowler, Aaron Giorgi, Melissa Hinton, Amy Keyser, Kristine Lally, Stephanie Mack, Kelvin Moreno, Stacy Revels, Justin Sharpless, Jordan Sims, Kristina Sims, Gina Watters

Georgia: Charity Brown, Audrey Collins, Shelby Corbett, Brian Elrick, Justin Grimsley, Dathan Harbert, Hope Hatcher, Alex Hicks, Michael Maw, Ransom McArthur, Rachael McCall, Nathan McLeod, Katie Murray, Rodney Redd, Constance Saxon, Ashley Seamon, Cathy Strickland, Cliff Tippens, Candace Williams, Amanda Zittrouer

Indiana: Amber Ebbert, Jessica Geisler, Timothy Green, Shane Hageman, Micah Haltom, Mikki Marshall, Michael McDaniel, Jennifer Shepard, Jill Steiner

Iowa: Derek Balk, Kally Boehmer, Danny Dreher, Kyle Maas, Jenna Maubach, Alana McNutt, Betsy Ratashak, Sheena Spurgin, Aric Yaw

Kansas: Clint Blaes, Clint Bryant, Melissa Hildebrand, Lucas Maddy, Emily Schmeidler, Justine Sterling

Kentucky: Eric Adams, Coty Back, Justin Bailey, Katie Clark, Molly Fields, Brian Hopkins, Jenna Hougen, Adam Johnson, Josh McCubbins, Sara Riggs, Tonya Sexton, Drew White, Lindsay Williams

Louisiana: Matthew Babcock, Morgan Bertrand, Blake Brignac, Josh Dahlem, C.C. DuBois, Jordan Guice, Karli Mizell, Ashley Passman, Veronica Penalber, Cory Smith

Maine: Jeffrey Blackstone, Micaela Hotham

Maryland: Chris Brosch, Daniell Holter, Jeanna Prather

Massachusetts: Tiesha Hernandez, Danielle Poirier, Timothy Roy

Michigan: Seth Earl, Jason Jaekel, Katie Marchal, Ryan McBride, Ryan Peterson, Michael Sheridan

Minnesota: Krystal Anderson, Luke Becker, Ken Deal, Megan Kappers, Mary LaValla, Dawn Luhmann, Kristin Rieman, Eric Sawatzke, Kristyna Schultz

Mississippi: Dana Barber, John Adam Greenlee, Kristy Mayo, Daniel Moore, Cory Smith

Missouri: Casey Blevins, Nicki Busdieker, Brook Carder, Jess Cheever, Gina Eckler, Blake Harper, Chase Holcumbrink, Ryun Morris, Sara Muri, Heather Shauck, Marin Summers, Rachel Whitener, Brian Worthington, Allison Yarnell

Montana: Branden Braaten, Amanda Cloud, Patrick Hackley, Halsey Wallace

Nebraska: Ryan Becker, Jill Klepper, Beau Klug, Miranda Koepke, Megan McElfresh, Becky Small, Adam Wollenburg

Nevada: Casey Bieroth, Rachel Gattuso, Lauren Landa

New Hampshire: Carrie Bascom, Joe Meallo, Melanie Sanborn

New Jersey: Cynthia Anthes, Catherine E. Bell, Jenelle P. Montilone, Jennifer Wilson

New Mexico: Mia Armstrong, Tessie Emond, Ginger Goodan, Rachel Lueras, Ashley Riley

New York: Dustin Bliss, Miranda Clayson, Sarah Hinz, Amanda Koszewski, Michael Sidoti

North Carolina: Taylor Best, Neil Correll, Isaac Davenport, Holly Deal, Camber Howard, Daniel Locklear, Caroline Long, Jade Love, Ted Clayton, William Pence, Jason Thornton, Lendy Yeaman, Ashley Yopp

North Dakota: Ryan Hauck, Adam Little, Amy Nolan, Ashley Vangsness, Riston Zielke

Ohio: Whitney Beck, Lindsey Calhoun, Ryan Curtis, Mike Derringer, Pete Dinius, Rose Dudgeon, Todd Endsley, Becky Gibbs, Trisha Kick, Jeremiah Logsdon, Andrea Maurer, Ben Stoller, Dan Wendt, Cassie Yantis, Abby Yochum

Oklahoma: Kelly Barnes, Travis Jett, Dallas Krout, Amber Rose, Tallie Stewart, Chase Turner, Shanelle White

Oregon: Shannon Berrett, Tyler Bradley, Dan Corn, Seth Klann, Anna Sheperd

Pennsylvania: Amber Frank, Laura Grove, Becky Hedges, Amy Kaucher, Jason Klouser, Brian Oberholtzer, Eric Rubenstein, Heather Sisto



PHOTO BY SAM HARRIEL

Delegates debated many important issues in committee meetings.

Hawaii: Jackie Akuna, Danielle Morris

Idaho: Jason Fellows, Katie Jenkins, John Meyers, Trent Van Lueven, Matt Woodington

Illinois: Kacy Baugher, Rachel Baum, Kirk Builta, Rich Chapple, Brian Dallam, Cliff Dolbeare, Jeffrey Evers, Bruce Frank, Kristina Gerber, Becky Littlefield, Maurey Peterson, Ryan Robinson, Jaye Snyder, Wade Vangilder, Stephanie Witt

Puerto Rico: Karlai Acevedo, Idalys Reyes, Warys Zayas

Rhode Island: Shane Jacques, Joe Procopio

South Carolina: Alex D. Gleason, Lauren Holden, John A. Lesaine, Bryan W. Lowman, Rachel McLeod, Christopher Moss, Allison Waggoner

South Dakota: Chelsea Budde, Shane Deranleau, Jess Geib, Jesse Larson, Crystal Nielson

Tennessee: Ashley Baker, Adam Carlton, David Erwin, Mark King, Laura McCrary, Rachel Paschall, Leann Quinn, Daniel Rogers, Allie Shrum, Chris Vessell, Chelsey Warfield, Tyler Wilson

Texas: Grant Alkire, Kyle Anderson, Matt Anderson, Sarah Barron, Eric Bitner, Dyllan Bryant, Courtney Bullock, Katherine Byrd, Jessica Carter, Chase Cockerell, Monica Cordova, Brian Corley, Chris Cumby, Blaze Currie, Lacy Davidson, LaRenda Douglas, Nick Dow, Heather Evans, Kati Gilliam, Nick Gonzales, Blaine Gwinn, Aaron Henderson, Jessica Housley, Justin Johnson, Jerod Justice, Tyler Koch, Monty Middleton, Stephanie Miles, Megan Mitchell, Zac Morris, Kelly Murdock, Travis Orms, J.P. Parkerson, Scotty Pearson, Kyle D. Pinkerton, Ansen Pond, Tobin Redwine, Ashley Sawyer, Kyle Shipley, Erin Smith, Samantha Srp, Joe Stan, Travis Sullivan, Kellie Swanberg, Brandi Taylor-Christ, Matthew Townsend, Wil Wiederhold, Jason Wilhelm, Kayla Williams, Justin Yancey

Utah: Tiffany Clegg, Bill Munns, Todd Kelly, Tanya Vanderstappen, Cash Williams

Vermont: Renee Audet, Patrick Deering

Virgin Islands: Emily Clark

Virginia: Lindsay Charity, Eliot Daniels, Cindy Green, Heather



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Members had opportunities to speak their minds at delegate hearings.



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL

Delegates listened carefully one another's input, in order to make informed decisions.

Keagy, Mike Langford, Ed McCann, Greg Osborne, Josh Stephens, Virginia Watson

Washington: Eric Dobbins, Laura Kowalkowski, Candice Kurka, Anne Meyer, Randi Nickels, Joe Patterson, Stacy Pickett, Ben Tucker

West Virginia: Lacy Kimble, Brent McClung, Sidney Phelps, Ashby Ruddle, Amber Taylor, Amy VanCamp

Wisconsin: Steve Boe, Keith Christen, Julie Felix, Adam Freis, Jamie Hagenow, Angie Kringle, Kevin Larsen, Christine Lepple, Kim Miller, Jackie Mundt, Chris Ritscher, Alexis Schank, Matthew Schleusner, Nicole Schmidt, Kayla Woolever

Wyoming: Tara Bolgiano, Josh Cooper, Bryttni Westlake

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Size of the National Officer Team

Matt Barton, AL
Alex Popwell, AL
Malorie Lewis, AZ
Tim Lewis, AR
Meghan Barker, CA
Thomas Bottoms, CA
Carrie Crane, CA
Audrey Denney, CA
Erica Flores, CA
Kelly Forsythe, CA
Hallie Muller, CA
Missy Chick, CT
Mollie Stevenson, DE
Aaron Giorgi, FL
Stacy Revels, FL
Charity Brown, GA
Rachael McCall, GA
Jason Fellows, ID
Kacy Baugher, IL
Brian Dallam, IL
Amber Ebbert, IN
Micah Haltom, IN
Kally Boehmer, IA
Katie Clark, KY
Ryan McBride, MI
Megan Kappers, MN
Kristy Mayo, MS
Brian Worthington, MO
Lauren Landa, NV
Mia Armstrong, NM
Isaac Davenport, NC
Camber Howard, NC
Dan Wendt, OH
Seth Klann, OR
Chelsea Budde, SD
Daniel Rogers, TN
Chelsey Warfield, TN
Kyle Anderson, TX
Jessica Carter, TX
Blaine Gwinn, TX
Aaron Henderson, TX
Megan Mitchell, TX
Brandie Taylor-Christie, TX
Justin Yancey, TX
Tanya Vanderstappen, UT
Mike Langford, VA
Sidney Phelps, WV
Keith Christen, WI
Kim Miller, WI
Matthew Scheusner, WI
Josh Cooper, WY

Whereas, Public Law 105-225, our national charter, could be adversely affected.

Whereas, additional officers would require an increase in the national officer budget.

Whereas, the selection process of additional officers is ambiguous

The following support leads this committee to believe these recommendations are needed:

The charter could be altered in any way Congress sees fit; therefore, it could be dispelled if desired.

With the increase of the national officer team, the budget could be increased, which in turn would take away funds from other ventures of the National FFA Organization.

Increasing the size of the national officer team would lead to further questions, i.e., alignment, charter, positions.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Karli Mizell, LA
Committee Vice Chair: Pat Deering, VT; Cliff Tippens, GA
Committee Secretary: Joe Patterson, WA; Justine Sterling, KS
Committee Sentinels: Ben Weber, CO; Abby Yochum, OH

Discussion Chairs:

Alex Gleason, SC
Eric Rubenstein, PA
Sara Riggs, KY
Kelly Barnes, OK
Garret Hylton, NV
Jessica Hickmott, AR
Dustin Bliss, NY



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Bonded by the realization of a common goal, the newly elected national officers joined together.

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Selection of the National Officer Nominating Committee

Lacy Kimble, WV
Todd Endsley, OH
Stephanie Miles, TX
Jimmy Pierce, CA
Chris Moss, SC
Anne Meyer, WA
Travis Jett, OK
Ashley Smith, CA
Heather Shauck, MO
Cory Smith, LA
Cathy Strickland, GA
Jason Wilhelm, TX
Lindsey Williams, KY
Tyler Wilson, TN
Derek Balk, IA
Neil Correll, NC
Ken Deal, MN
Margaret Trione, AL
Kevin Larsen, WI
Katie Murray, GA
Laura Grove, PA
Rich Chapple, IL
Lisa Hammerich, CA
Ashton Caves, MS
Cash Williams, UT
Ashley Sawyer, TX
Katy Teixeira, CA
Bruce Frank, IL
Tessie Edmond, NM
Brian Elarick, GA
Seth Earl, MI
Eliot Daniels, VA
Nick Dow, TX
Nicole Schmidt, WI
Ashley Vangness, ND
Melanie Calderwood, CO
Ashley Yopp, NC
Mikki Marshall, IN
Clint Blaes, KS
Melissa Hinton, FL
David Bryant, AL
Bryan Dodson, CA
Kelly Murdock, TX
Chase Cockerell, TX
Kyle Shipley, TX
Megan Brownell, CA
Kimberely Bennett, CA
Adam Johnson, KY
Becky Small, NE
Casey Simpson, AK
Mike Sidofi, NY
Chase Holcumbrink, MO

Whereas, it was recommended to add a policy to not allow national officer nominating committee members to be selected from the six states currently represented by national FFA officers.

Whereas, it was recommended to add a policy to not allow a person who has served on the national nominating committee to run for national office.

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on Selection of the National Officer Nominating Committee recommends the following:

That there be no change to the current procedure.

That the National FFA Board of Directors direct the national staff to further research strategies on the diversification of the selection of the nominating committee members.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair:	Ryan Robinson, IL
Committee Vice Chair:	Cody Comeaux, AR
Committee Secretary:	Anna Groseta, AZ
2nd Vice Chair:	Matt Babcock, LA
Secretary:	Jordan Sims, FL
Sentinels:	Brad Hayes, AK; Idalys Reyes, PR

Discussion Leaders:

Jessie Geib, SD
Casey Bieroth, NV
Lindsey Calhoun, OH
Ashley Baker, TN
Amanda Cloud, MT
Danielle Poirier, MA



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Participation in National CDEs by Middle School FFA Members

Laura Fowler, FL
Ashley Passman, LA
Cody Penfold, CA
Veronica Penalber, LA
Monty Middleton, TX
Miranda Clayson, NY
Bryan Powell, AR
Todd Kelly, VT
Michael Maw, GA
Erik Holland, CA
Angie Kringle, WI
Pete Dinius, OH
Virginia Watson, VA
Laura McCrary, TN
Whitney Griffin, AL
Kristin Reiman, MN
Joe Stan, TX
Taylor Best, NC
Amber Cleaver, CA
Marin Summers, MO
Amanda Zittrouer, CA
Rachel McLeod, SC
Kelsey Blagg, CA
Courtney Bullock, TX
Ryan Becker, NE
Ryan Curtis, OH
Blaze Carnie, TX
Lucas Moddy, KS
Edward McCann, VI
Maurey Peterson, IL
Tallie Stewart, OK
Becky Hedges, PA
Erin Smith, TX
Stephanie Witt, IL
Blake Harper, MO
Katie Marchal, MI
Betsy Ratashak, IA
Kristine Lally, FL
Nathan McLeod, GA
Rachel Whitener, MO
Matt Anderson, TX
Natalie Ryan, CA
Rachel Paschall, TN
John Adam Greenlee, MS
Candise Kurka, WA
Jamie Hagenow, WI
Justin Bailey, KY
Kourtney Aboudara, CA
Jennifeur Wilson, NJ
Brandon Braah, MT
Zac Morris, TX
Lacy Eiland, AL
Shellie Umphries, AR
Jesse Larson, SD

Whereas, this committee feels we need to find equal opportunities for dues-paying middle school members.

Whereas, we feel there is not sufficient information on middle school agricultural education and FFA members.

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on Middle School FFA Members Participating in National CDEs recommends the following:

Convene a middle school task force to find more information and statistics on this matter.

Evaluate the information and provide it to a future delegate committee.

The following support leads this committee to believe these recommendations are needed:

Our committee feels it is important to find information on the following: middle school statistics, statistics on agricultural education teachers instructing high school and middle school, the Discovery Degree's objectives and productivity, as well as the number of states with winning teams as middle school members. We also are looking for any other statistics and information that would better able the committee to reach a recommendation.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Matthew Woodington, ID
Committee Vice Chair: Bryttni Westlake, WY; Tyler Bradley, OR
Committee Secretary: Jessica Geisler, IN



The winners of the Model of Innovation Middle School Chapter award, prove that students can benefit from FFA early in their scholastic careers.

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Expansion and Diversification of Career Development Events

Nicolina Prestininzi, CA
Nikki Evans, AR
Joe Garner, AR
Josh Morgan, AZ
Mark Aguiar, CA
Breanna Bell, CA
Carey Gallani, CA
Kristen Mejia, CA
Janelle Williams, CA
BJ New, CO
Kristina Sims, FL
Gina Watters, FL
Audrey Collins, GA
Rodney Redd, GA
Ashley Seamon, GA
Kyle Maas, IA
Rachel Baum, IL
Cliff Doubeare, IL
Michael McDaniel, IN
Emily Schmeidler, KS
Drew White, KY
Morgan Bertrand, LA
Tiesha Hernandez, MA
Michael Sheridan, MI
Krystal Anderson, MN
Eric Swatzke, MN
Brooke Carder, MO
Allison Yarnell, MO
Daniell Moore, MS
Holly Deal, NC
Amy Nolan, ND
Beau Klug, NE
Catherine Bell, NJ
Ashley Riley, NM
Whitney Beck, OH
Trisha Kick, OH
Shanelle White, OK
Danielle Hotter, MA
Shannon Barrett, OR
Karlai Acevedo, PR
Allie Shrum, TN
Grant Alkire, TX
Eric Bitner, TX
Lacy Davidson, TX
Kati Gillian, TX
Nick Gonzales, TX
Jerrold Justice, TX
Wil Wiederhold, TX
Heather Keagy, VA
Greg Osborne, VA
Randi Nickels, WA
Steve Boe, WI
Brent McClung, WV

Whereas, it is vital that the National FFA Organization meet the needs of students from all backgrounds; and

Whereas, state associations are more able to identify student backgrounds and their needs; and

Whereas, state and national career development events play an integral role in the FFA experience; and

Whereas, the expansion and diversification of current career development events for future FFA members will prepare students for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on the Expansion and Diversification of Career Development Events recommends the following:

To collect and analyze data of the State Career Development Events Survey to determine the demand for expansion and diversification of national career development events.

The National FFA Organization compile a list with the descriptions of state career development events, including the following: space, time, volunteers, participation level, sponsors and budget.

Send a follow-up report on the survey results and identify states willing to participate in potentially new national CDEs.

Expand and diversify future CDEs using the survey results as a guide.

The following support leads this committee to believe these recommendations are needed:

Proven by testimony, it is apparent that members of the National FFA Organization desire further expansion and diversification of career development events. This expansion and diversification will not only continue the legacy of student success, but also better prepare FFA members for career success in the diverse agricultural industry.

The following examples demonstrate this need:

- 1) Expanding Parliamentary Procedure to include Opening Ceremonies;
- 2) Expanding Agricultural Mechanics to include a small engines and welding section;
- 3) Adding a National Agriculture Discussion Meet contest;
- 4) Adding a Small Animal Care/Vet Tech contest;
- 5) Adding a Turf Grass Management contest.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Jackie Mundt, WI
Committee Vice Chair: Fred Scoville, CT; Tiffany Clegg, UT
Committee Secretary: Jeffrey Blackstone, ME; Carrie Bascom, NH

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Review Criteria for Collegiate FFA Membership

Gina Eckler, MO
Dana Barber, MS
Lendy Yeaman, NC
Hannah Beam, AL
Jonathan Snow, DE
Riston Zielke, ND
Josh Stevens, VA
Cindy Anthes, NJ
Laura Kowalkowski, WA
Allisyn Woodrow, AR
Bobby Yarbrough, AR
Kelly Bishop, CA
Tyler Blagg, CA
Nicole Borges, CA
Philip Chism, CA
Alex Lopez, CA
Domenica Prestininzi, CA
Lindsay Walsh, CA
Gina Gambino, CT
Kelly Aue, FL
Stephanie Mack, FL
Candace Williams, GA
Jackie Akuna, HI
Kirk Builta, IL
Kristina Grebner, IL
Jill Steiner, IN
Jenna Maubach, IA
Molly Fields, KY
Brian Hopkins, KY
Danielle Hoter, MD
Jason Jaekel, MI
Luke Becker, MN
Ryun Morris, MO
Halsey Wallace, MT
Miranda Koepke, NE
Joe Meallo, NH
Rachel Lueras, NM
Caroline Long, NC
Becky Gibbs, OH
Andrea Maurer, OH
Dallas Krout, OK
Anna Sheperd, OR
Heather Sisto, PA
Allison Waggoner, SC
Leann Quinn, TN
Chris Cumby, TX
Tyler Koch, TX
JP Parkerson, TX
Kyle Pinkerton, TX
Ansen Pond, TX
Samantha Srp, TX
Matthew Townsend, TX
Ashby Ruddle, WV
Adam Freis, WI

Whereas, collegiate FFA guidelines currently limit membership to students enrolled in agricultural courses or who are pursuing career objectives in the industry of agriculture.

Whereas, expanding membership has the potential to increase agricultural literacy on a national basis.

Whereas, collegiate FFA currently eliminates potential contributors who have never had the previous opportunity to join the FFA.

Whereas, there are no current dues that support national collegiate FFA programs.

Whereas, there are no current national bylaws and constitution set up for collegiate FFA.

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on Collegiate FFA recommends the following:

1. Amend Article V, Section D of the Constitution so that it will read: Collegiate membership—Collegiate membership shall be open to students who are enrolled in agricultural courses, who are pursuing career objectives in agriculture, or have an interest in the future welfare of the agriculture industry at a two- or four-year postsecondary institution having a collegiate FFA chapter.
2. Collegiate FFA members will pay dues to the National FFA Organization specifically supporting collegiate FFA. An optional fee will be made by individuals who want the *New Horizons* magazine. We also recommend that *New Horizons* magazine include a collegiate insert highlighting state and national activities.
3. There is no current national collegiate FFA constitution; therefore, this committee resolves that the National FFA Organization develop a constitution, bylaws and mission statement to help provide guidance for collegiate FFA membership, to be voted upon at the 2004 National FFA Convention.

The following support leads this committee to believe these recommendations are needed:

Increase membership and participation in collegiate FFA.

The collegiate FFA members will receive return value from their investment into the collegiate FFA.

The collegiate FFA programs and advisors will obtain structure and guidance through established constitutions and bylaws. This would establish conformity among the existing collegiate FFA programs and facilitate the construction of future collegiate FFA programs.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Chris Ritscher, WI

Committee Vice Chair: Chris Vessell, TN

Committee Secretary: Hope Hatcher, GA; Shane Jacques, RI

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: Increased Public Awareness of the FFA

Ryan Hauck, ND
Bill Munns, UT
Jason Clenney, AR
Miranda Haywood, AR
Alanna McNutt, IA
Monica Cordoua, TX
Scotty Pearson, TX
Jessica Housley, TX
Kayla Williams, TX
Brian Corley, TX
Katherine Byrd, TX
Rose Dudgeon, OH
Mike Derringer, OH
Cassandra Yantis, OH
Daniel Locklear, NC
Ted Clayton, NC
Cindy Green, VA
David Erwin, TN
Coty Back, KY
Rachel Gattuso, NV
Eric Dobbins, WA
Kelvin Moreno, FL
Amy Keyser, FL
Amber Rose, OK
Mark Diener, CA
Anne Diener, CA
Brian Fiorini, CA
Erin Peer, CA
Kristy Crow, CA
Aric Yaw, IA
Casey Blevins, MO
Mary LaValla, MN
Patrick Hackley, MT
Jaye Snyder, IL
Becky Littlefield, IL
Ransom McArthur, GA
Alex Hicks, GA
Shelby Corbett, GA
Ashleigh Butts, AL
Sarah Hinz, NY
Anthony Megel, CO
Alexis Schank, WI
Christine Lepple, WI
Josh McCubbins, KY

Whereas, the members of the National FFA Organization seek to find more operable and personable forms of media awareness and involvement tools.

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on Increased Public Awareness of the FFA recommends the following:

1. To establish training workshops at national convention, NLC SO, WLC and other national conferences concerning resources available and other methods of promoting awareness of FFA.
2. To include a recommendation for the national organization to provide a pamphlet or a brochure or a newsletter for chapters to develop a website that will increase the public awareness of FFA in their communities and also add a “visitor’s page” to ffa.org.
3. That the national FFA send to state and local associations more user-friendly programs and formats for news releases, media releases, televised broadcasts and all other forms of advertisement. Furthermore, these programs need to be able to be manipulated and personable.
4. That the national FFA publish an article in *New Horizons* magazine on how chapters can increase the public awareness of FFA in their local communities through newspaper, radio and TV public announcements, news/press releases, National FFA Week and chapter tours.
5. That the national FFA have cooperation with their sponsors through their own advertisements in order to encourage corporate sponsorship to help promote the FFA mission.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Megan McElffresh, NE
Committee Vice Chair: Melanie Sanborn, NH
Committee Secretary: Tara Bolgiano, WY



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS

Publicizing chapter activities helps ensure continued support of the organization.

Committee Reports

Issue Committee: FFA—What does it stand for?

Jennifer Himburg, AL
Joanna Stewart, AL
Eric Adams, KY
John LeSaine, SC
Richard Sivils, AZ
Jenna Haugen, KY
Crystal Nielson, SD
Monica Coker, AR
Blake Brignac, LA
Adam Carlton, TN
Corey Davis, AR
Josh Dahlem, LA
Mark King, TN
Nicole Amaral, CA
Micaela Hotham, ME
Dyllan Bryant, TX
Beth Cundiff, CA
Jeana Prather, MD
LaRenda Douglas, TX
Andrea Jue, CA
Timothy Roy, MA
Heather Evans, TX
Megan Marques, CA
Ryan Peterson, MI
Justin Johnson, TX
Kyle McCullough, CA
Dawn Luhmann, MN
Travis Orms, TX
Katie Robertson, CA
Jesse Cheever, MO
Travis Sullivan, TX
Stephen Russell, CT
Jill Klepper, NE
Kellie Swanberg, TX
Justin Sharpless, FL
Jenelle Montilone, NJ
Renee Audet, VT
Justin Grimsley, GA
Ginger Goodan, NM
Lindsay Charity, VA
Dathan Harbert, GA
Jade Love, NC
Stacey Prickett, WA
Constance Saxon, GA
William Pence, NC
Ben Tucker, WA
Jeffrey Evers, IL
Adam Little, ND
Amber Taylor, WV
Timothy Green, IN
Jeremiah Logsdon, OH
Julie Felix, WI
Jennifer Shepherd, IN
Ben Stoller, OH
Kayla Woolever, WI
Danny Dreher, IA
Chase Turner, OK
Linsey Pollart, CO
Sheena Spurgin, IA

Bernadette Nace, PA
Katie Jenkins, ID
Wade Vangilder, IL
Krissy Keeler, DE

Whereas, Article I of the national constitution states, "The name of the organization shall be the National FFA Organization"; and,

Whereas, recognized units of the organization may officially use the letters "FFA" and/or the words "Future Farmers of America" to designate the organization, its units and/or members; and,

Whereas, Public Law 105-225 states that the name of the organization is the "Future Farmers of America"; and,

Whereas, per 1998 National FFA Board of Directors minutes, the following technical amendment was made to the National FFA Constitution: "The name of the Future Farmers of America organization shall be known as and shall do business as the National FFA Organization"; therefore,

Be it resolved that the National FFA Delegate Committee on FFA—What does it stand for? recommends the following:

1. No change be made to the name of our organization.
2. National FFA Organization and state FFA associations make members more aware that the letters "FFA" still stand for Future Farmers of America.

Respectfully submitted on this 29th day of October by:

Committee Chair: Nicki Busdieker, MO

Committee Secretary: Amber Frank, PA; Amanda Koszewski, NY



PHOTO BY SAM HARRREL

Delegates carefully deliberated over the decision not to change the meaning of "FFA."

Committee Reports



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

The nominating committee had a tough job to do and spent long days reviewing the candidates and discussing the new national officer team...

Nominating

We, the nominating committee, have given careful and deliberate consideration to all applicants running for a national office. The committee nominates the following slate of candidates to the delegates at the 2003 National FFA Convention to serve as national officers for the year 2003-2004.

- Central Region Vice President:** Amy Rasmussen, Nebraska
- Eastern Region Vice President:** Anne Knapke, Ohio
- Southern Region Vice President:** Christy Windham, Mississippi
- Western Region Vice President:** Casey Hogan, Texas
- National Secretary:** Stacia Christine Berry, Wyoming
- National President:** Javier Moreno, Puerto Rico

Respectfully submitted:

- Stuart Joy (Chair), New Mexico
- Kenan Peters (Vice Chair), Illinois
- Rachel Chillas, Delaware
- Mindy Crane, Connecticut
- Erica Der, Florida
- Arne Harstad, South Dakota
- Meredith McCurdy, Mississippi
- Brandon McEndaffer, Colorado
- Chancey Redgate, Oklahoma



PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

...however, they still managed to have some fun while building lifelong friendships and memories!



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PHOTO BY SAM HARREL



PHOTO BY ED ZURGA



PHOTO BY SAM HARREL



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PHOTO BY ED ZURGA



PHOTO BY KELLY ROGERS



2003-2004 National FFA Officer Team



Javier Moreno

President

93 Troy Avenue
Lebanon, PA 17046
Voicemail: 317-802-4341
E-mail: jmoreno@ffa.org

Age: 20

FFA Chapter: S.U. Antonia Serrano FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Vegetable and fruit production

State FFA Office: 1999-2000 Puerto Rico Vice President

High School Activities: FFA, student council, National Honor Society, chorus

FFA Awards: H.O. Sargent Award, chapter scholarship, public speaking, parliamentary procedure

College and Major: Penn State, agricultural education

College Activities: Alliance Christian Fellowship, Ag Advocates, EARTH House, Ballroom Dance Club

Career Goal: To become an agricultural education teacher and FFA advisor



Stacia Berry

Secretary

3000 County Road 225
Cheyenne, WY 82009
Voicemail: 317-802-4346
E-mail: sberry@ffa.org

Age: 19

Chapter: Cheyenne FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Market and breeding beef and market swine

State FFA Office: 2002-2003 Wyoming President

High School Activities: DECA, speech and debate, varsity volleyball, National Honor Society

FFA Awards: 2002 National Extemporaneous Speaker; 2000 National Parliamentary Procedure Team; 2001 Third place National Poultry Evaluation; 1999 National Bronze Emblem Creed Speaking

College and Major: University of Wyoming, animal science

College Activities: SPURS (sophomore academic honorary), Alpha Zeta (agricultural academic honorary), Delta Delta Delta, Ag Ambassador

Career Goal: To represent the agricultural industry in the public arena in a positive manner



Anne Knapke

Eastern Region Vice President

P.O. Box 831
Oxford, OH 45056
Voicemail: 317-802-4343
E-mail: aknapke@ffa.org

Age: 20

Chapter: Talawanda-Butler Tech FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Job placement, market steers, market barrows, home improvement

State FFA Office: 2001-2002 Ohio Vice President

High School Activities: Class vice president, student council vice president, National Honor Society, St. Mary's youth group

FFA Awards: Third place state meats evaluation team, state extemporaneous public speaking, star chapter farmer, star chapter greenhand, Third place state cooperative education CDE

College and Major: The Ohio State University, agribusiness and applied economics

College Activities: University Ambassador, Ohio Staters Inc., Campus Crusade for Christ, Saddle and Siroin Animal Sciences Club

Career Goal: To work in a challenging career combining my love of agriculture and international relations



Amy Rasmussen

Central Region Vice President

1133 County Road Q
Mead, NE 68041
Voicemail: 317-802-4342
E-mail: arasmussen@ffa.org

Age: 20

Chapter: Mead FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Diversified crop production and beef production

State FFA Office: 2001-2002 Nebraska Vice President

High School Activities: National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, varsity volleyball and basketball, student council

FFA Awards: Star greenhand, state creed speaker, state extemporaneous speaker, star chapter farmer, DeKalb award

College and Major: University of Nebraska, agricultural education

College Activities: College of Agriculture Ambassador, Navigators, Ag Ed Club, intramural sports, Chi Omega

Career Goal: To teach agricultural education to junior high and high school students



Casey Hogan

Western Region Vice President

440 Avalon Lane
Coppell, TX 75019
Voicemail: 317-802-4345
E-mail: chogan@ffa.org

Age: 20

Chapter: Arlington-Martin FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Breeding beef heifers, meat goats and agricultural communications

State FFA Office: 2001-2002 Texas Vice President

High School Activities: Varsity volleyball manager, youth group

FFA Awards: American Degree, star chapter farmer, star greenhand, FFA officer of the year, DeKalb award

College and Major: Tarleton State University, agricultural education

College Activities: Alpha Gamma Rho, student government, collegiate FFA, interfraternity council officer

Career Goal: To be an agricultural science teacher and then a member of state or national FFA staff



Christy Windham

Southern Region Vice President

199 Triangle Drive
Laurel, MS 39443
Voicemail: 317-802-4344
E-mail: cwindham@ffa.org

Age: 19

Chapter: Northeast Jones FFA Chapter

Enterprise: Sheep production, beef production and work experience at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

State FFA Office: 2001-2002 Mississippi Vice President and 2002-2003 Mississippi President

High School Activities: Future Leaders of Jones County, student council, show choir, varsity soccer

FFA Awards: State extemporaneous speaker, second in state creed speaking

College and Major: Jones County Junior College, agricultural development

College Activities: Choir, College Republicans

Career Goal: To serve the agricultural industry in a corporate setting by lobbying for legislation



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

The Agricultural Education Mission: Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities except as expressly provided for in the National FFA Organization Constitution and Bylaws.

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

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as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Julian Garcia
FFA member 1987-1989



Who'd have thought corduroy could take you so far?

You've come a long way since you wore that blue jacket. And the lessons of teamwork and leadership you learned in it have served you well. On its 75th anniversary, FFA is asking former members to reconnect with the organization that gave them so much. Share your story and be an advocate for FFA and agricultural education. Visit www.ffa.org/reconnect/ or call 1-888-433-2674. After all, where would you be without the blue jacket?



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www.ffa.org/reconnect/