

# new horizons

The magazine of the National FFA Organization

May/June 1997

## westward ho!

URBAN MEETS RURAL AS  
TWO FFA CHAPTERS  
MEET TO EXCHANGE  
IDEAS, FRIENDSHIPS—  
AND FUN

## a capitol experience

GEAR UP FOR  
WASHINGTON  
LEADERSHIP  
CONFERENCE

## climb, ride, and roll

3 WAYS TO  
SHAKE UP  
YOUR SUMMER



Every once in awhile,  
a debut artist  
comes along  
with a song  
and  
an album  
that touches people  
in a remarkable  
new way.

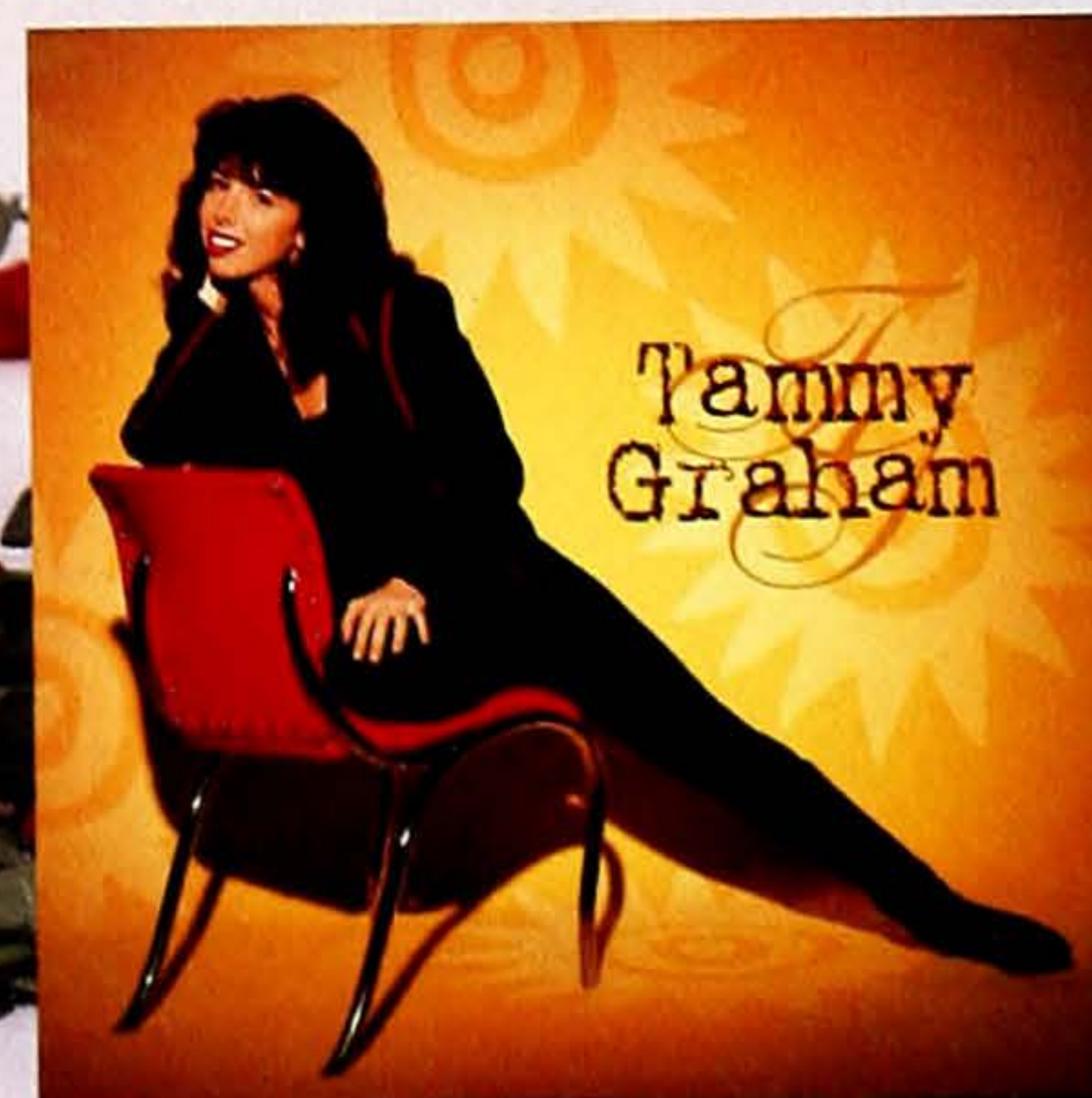
The song is  
**"A Dozen Red Roses."**

The artist is  
Tammy Graham.

Tammy's debut album features  
**"A Dozen Red Roses"**  
and 9 more powerful  
new songs.

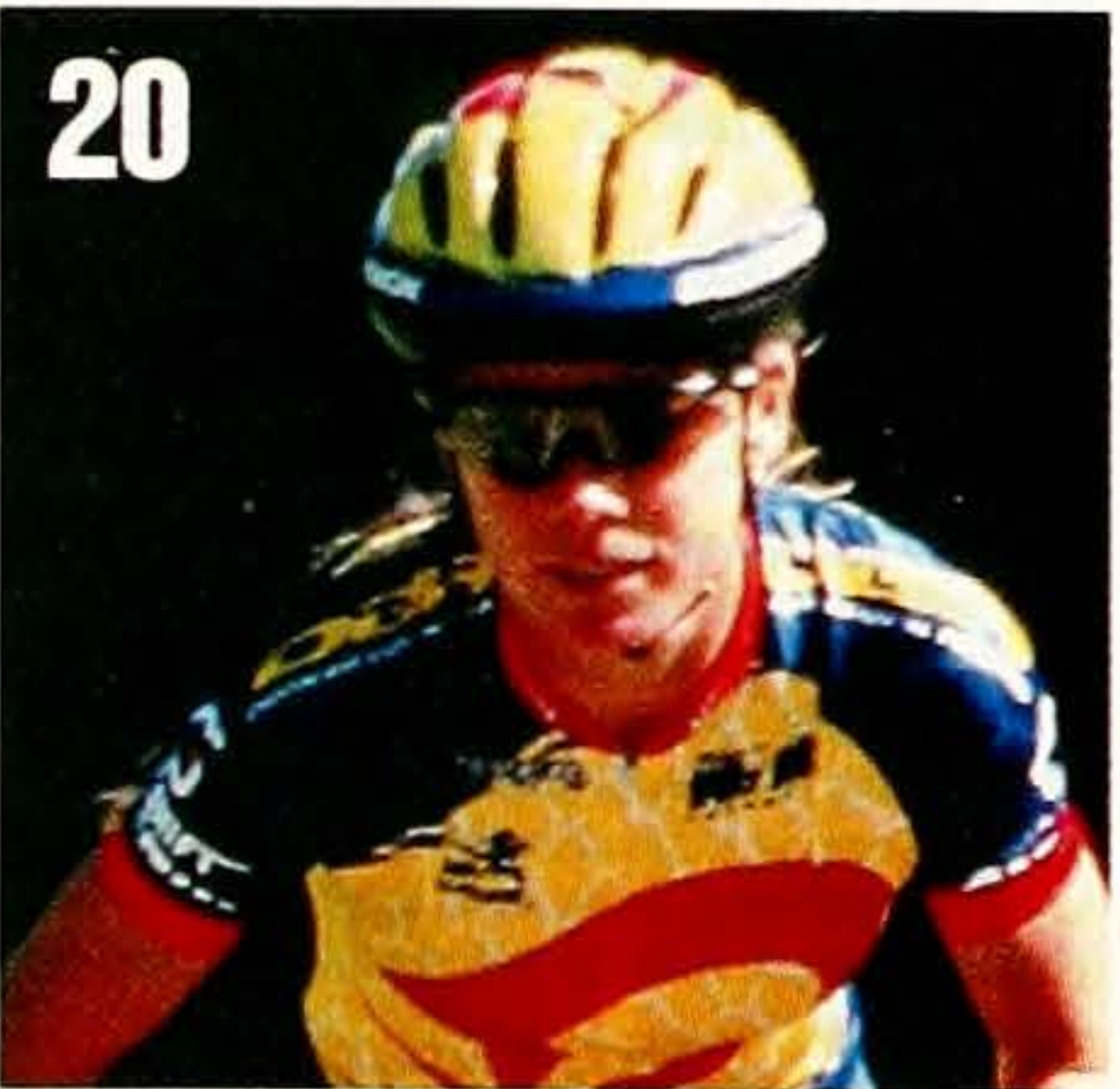
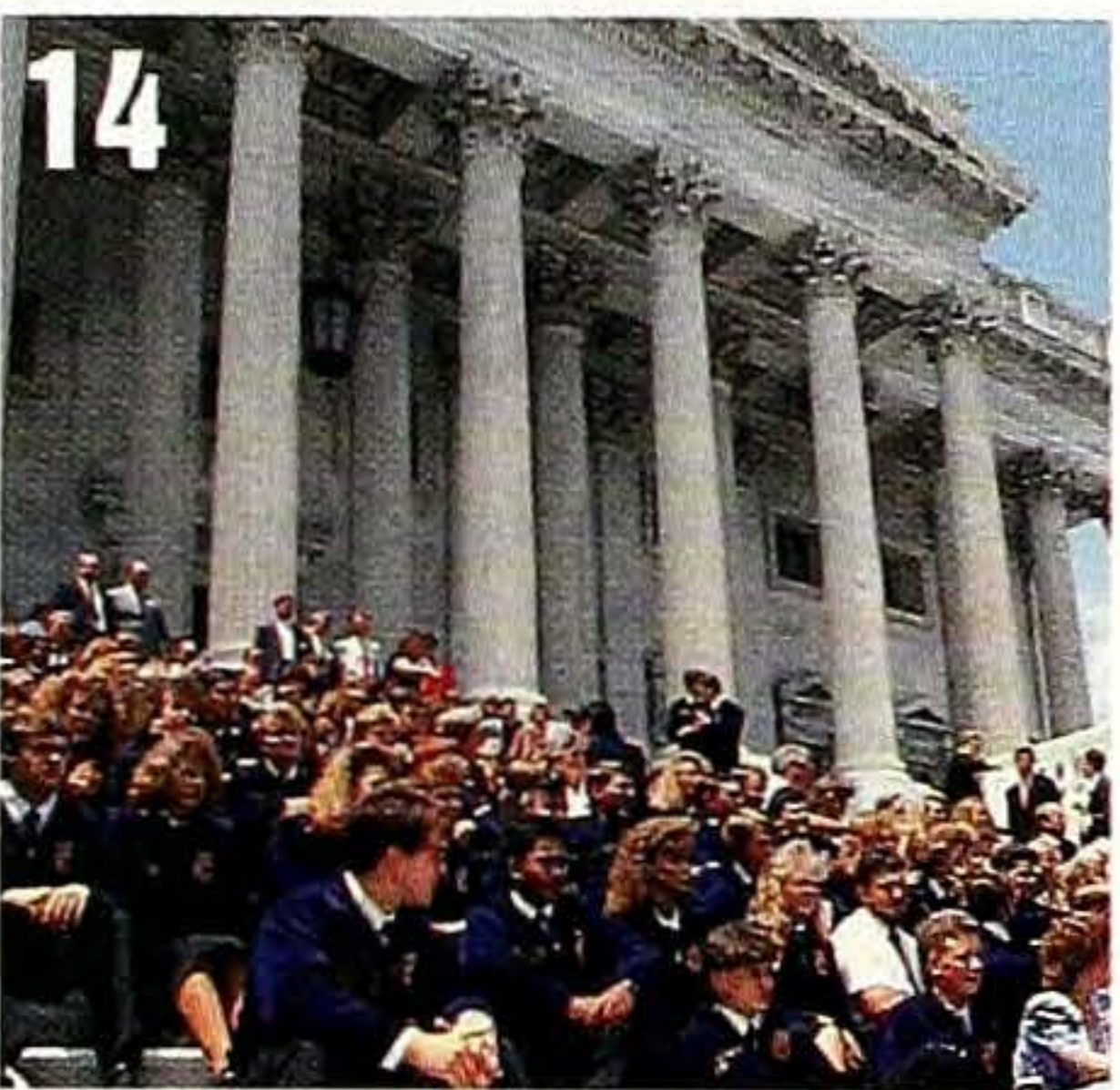
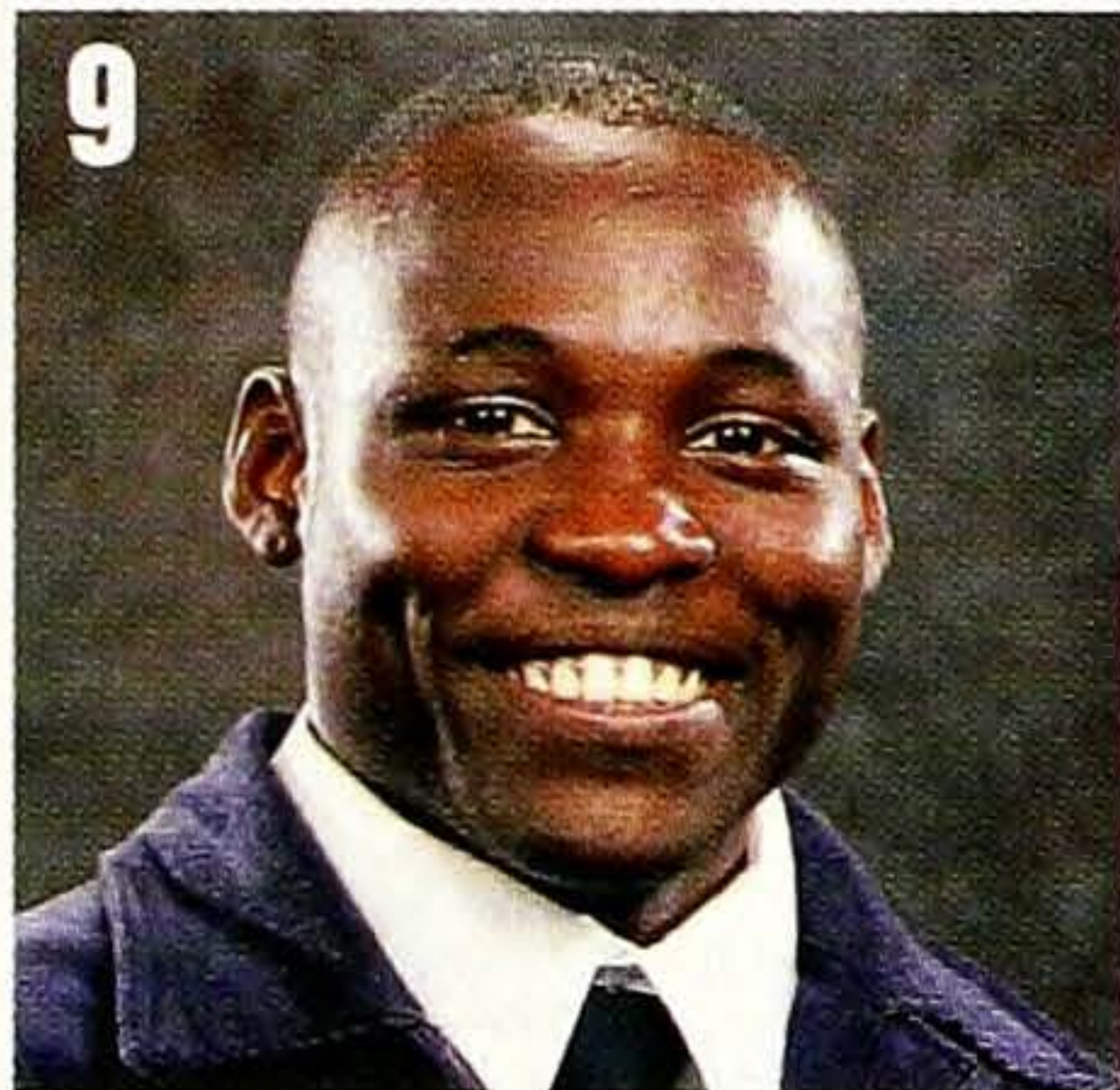
# Tammy Graham

Available Now!



Produced by Barry Beckett for Beckett Productions  
Management: Stellar Entertainment  
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## features

### 14 A Capitol Experience

Washington Leadership Conference is just around the corner. Here's your last chance to jump on board for a week of fun and personal growth in George Washington's old stomping grounds. Find out why FFA members are saying it's worth the trip.

### 18 Let the Summer Begin!

Summer is almost here. Looking for new ways to shake up your summer fun? We'll show you three exciting ways to get around this summer...but don't forget your helmet!

## cover story

### 10 Westward Ho!

Find out what happened when the East Kansas City FFA Chapter got on a bus and went west for a chapter exchange with the Platte Valley FFA Chapter in Colorado. And learn how your chapter can start its own exchange!

## departments

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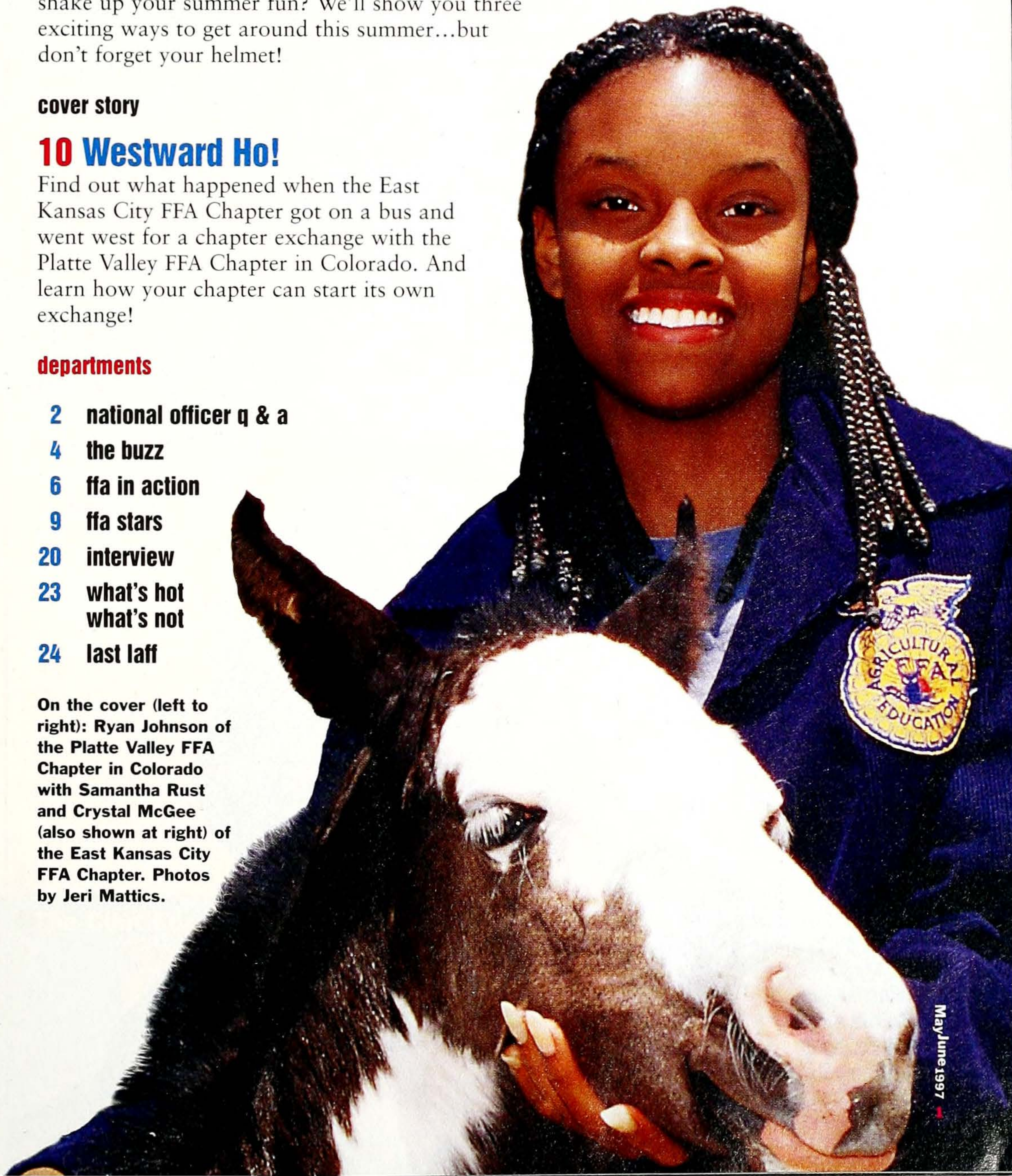
On the cover (left to right): Ryan Johnson of the Platte Valley FFA Chapter in Colorado with Samantha Rust and Crystal McGee (also shown at right) of the East Kansas City FFA Chapter. Photos by Jeri Mattics.

#### FFA Mission Statement

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

#### Agricultural Education Mission

The mission of agricultural education is to prepare and support individuals for careers, build awareness and develop leadership for the food, fiber and natural resources systems.





one on one with

# Brad Montgomery

With all of the travel you do as a national officer, how do you balance your time?

Well, it takes a lot of preparation and training. In December, we had two weeks of training, provided by the National FFA Organization staff. The Franklin Quest time management training is another thing that really helped us out a lot. We all use these Franklin Day Planners, and they have proved very useful as we're planning our schedules.

How do you and the other national officers relax when you're on the road?

Well, we've kind of coined a thing called "ENO" night. It stands for "etiquette night off." That's where we sit down and we have a meal and we don't necessarily use all our manners. We just totally relax. It's a non-

performance atmosphere, so there's no pressure. We just laugh, tell jokes and have a great time.

You and the other national officers visited Louisville, the future home of the national FFA convention. What do you think of Louisville as the convention site?

We love it. The reason we do is because it gives us room for expanding, room for growth. But aside from the convention facilities, which are awesome, Louisville is very excited about the convention. The people are very friendly, very open and very receptive. They're determined to see that we have a successful seven years in Louisville, and maybe even more.\*

## timeline

Age 13

Attended church camp

15

Ran for district office and lost

Attended state FFA conference for chapter leaders

Served as district officer

16

Attended Washington Leadership Conference

17

Participated in extemporaneous public speaking contest

18

Served as state officer  
Left home for college and college life

19

Church camp counselor

## vitalsigns

**National central region**

**vice president:** Brad Montgomery

**Hometown:** McDonald, Kansas

**Age:** 19

**Chapter:** Cheylin

**Advisor:** Max Keltz

**SAE:** Sheep production, registered seed wheat production and placement in agribusiness firm

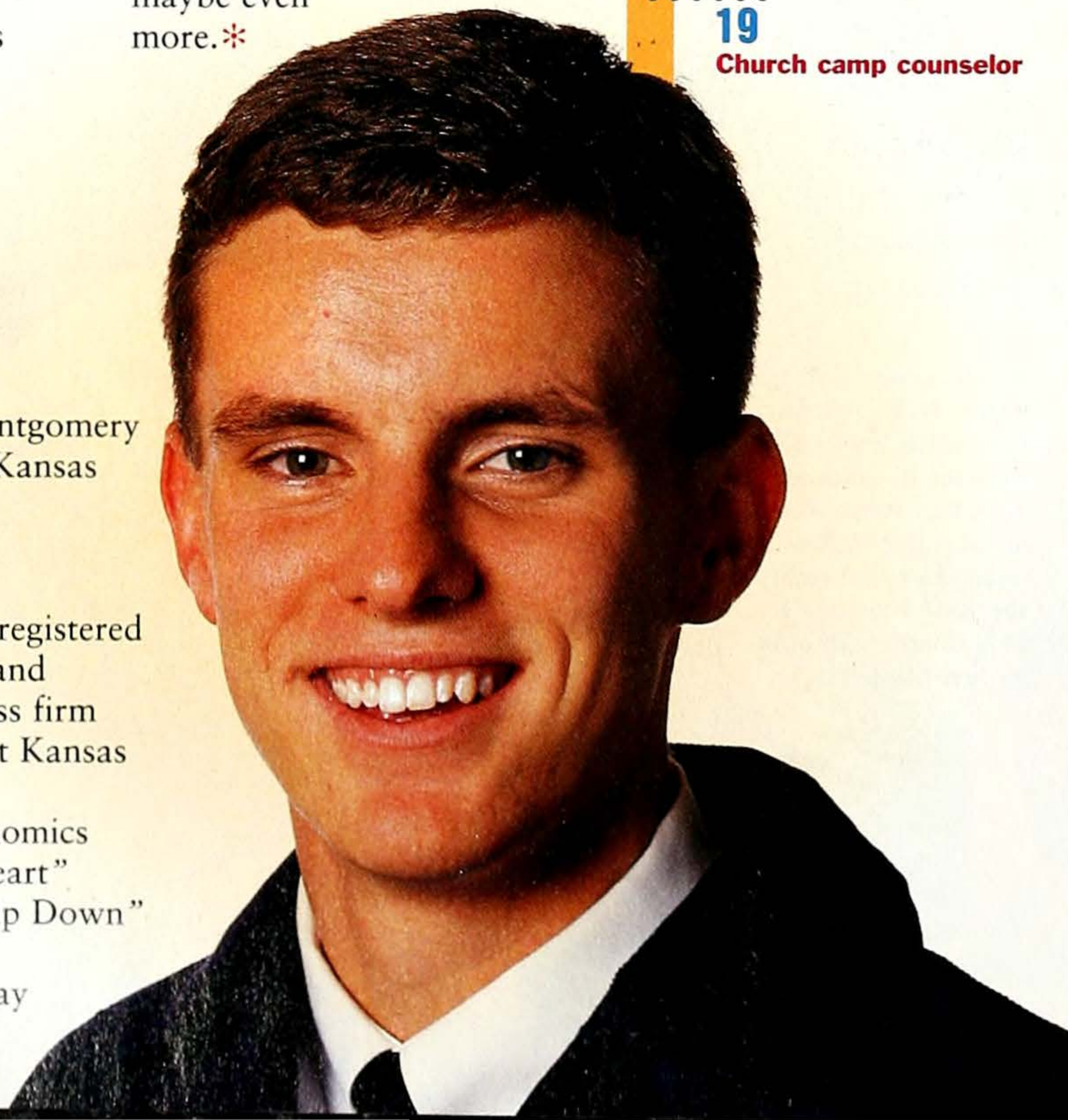
**Education:** Sophomore at Kansas State University

**Major:** Agricultural economics

**Favorite movie:** "Braveheart"

**Favorite book:** "Watership Down" by Richard Adams

**Favorite band:** Jars of Clay



Official Magazine of the National FFA Organization

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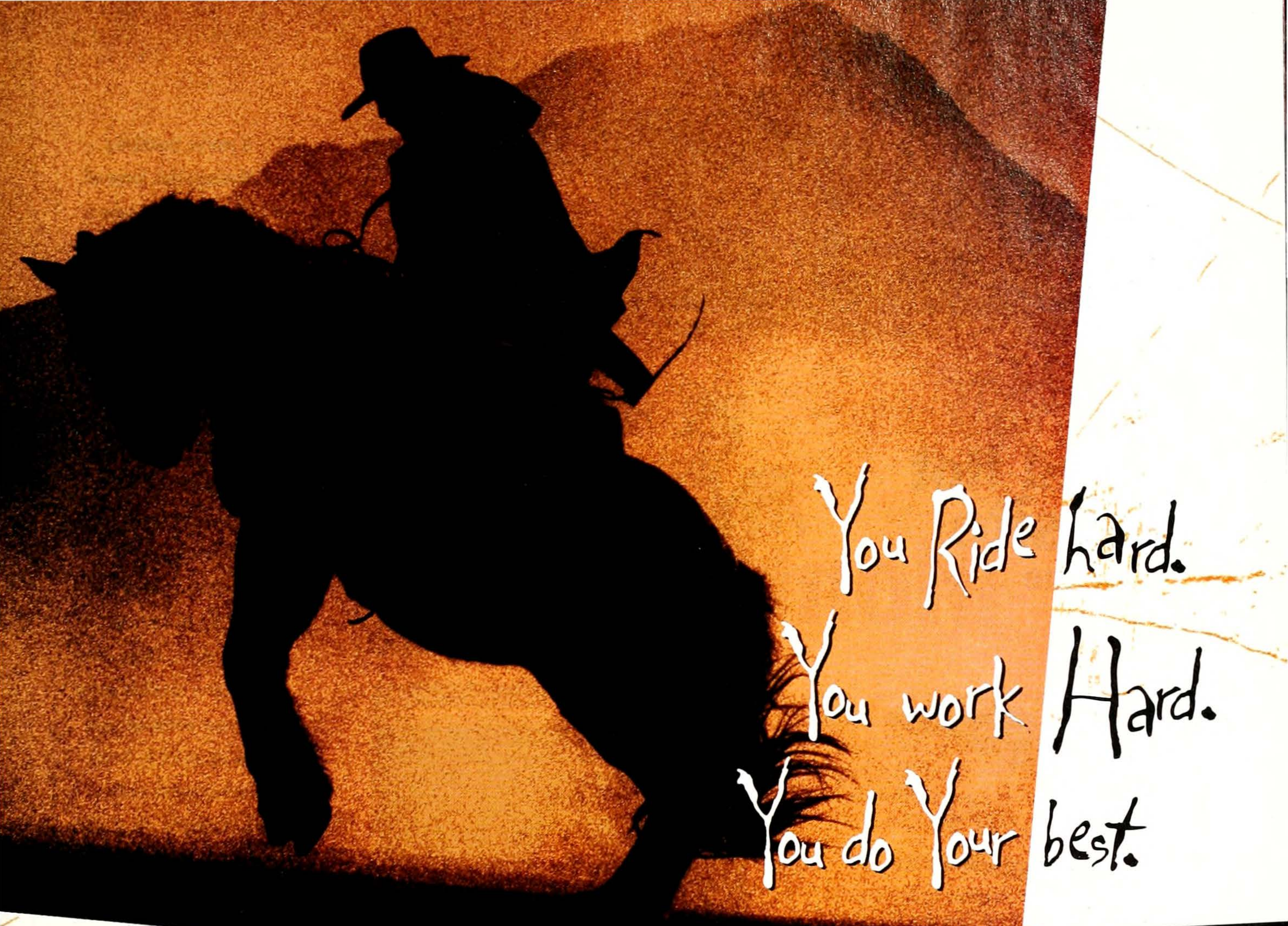
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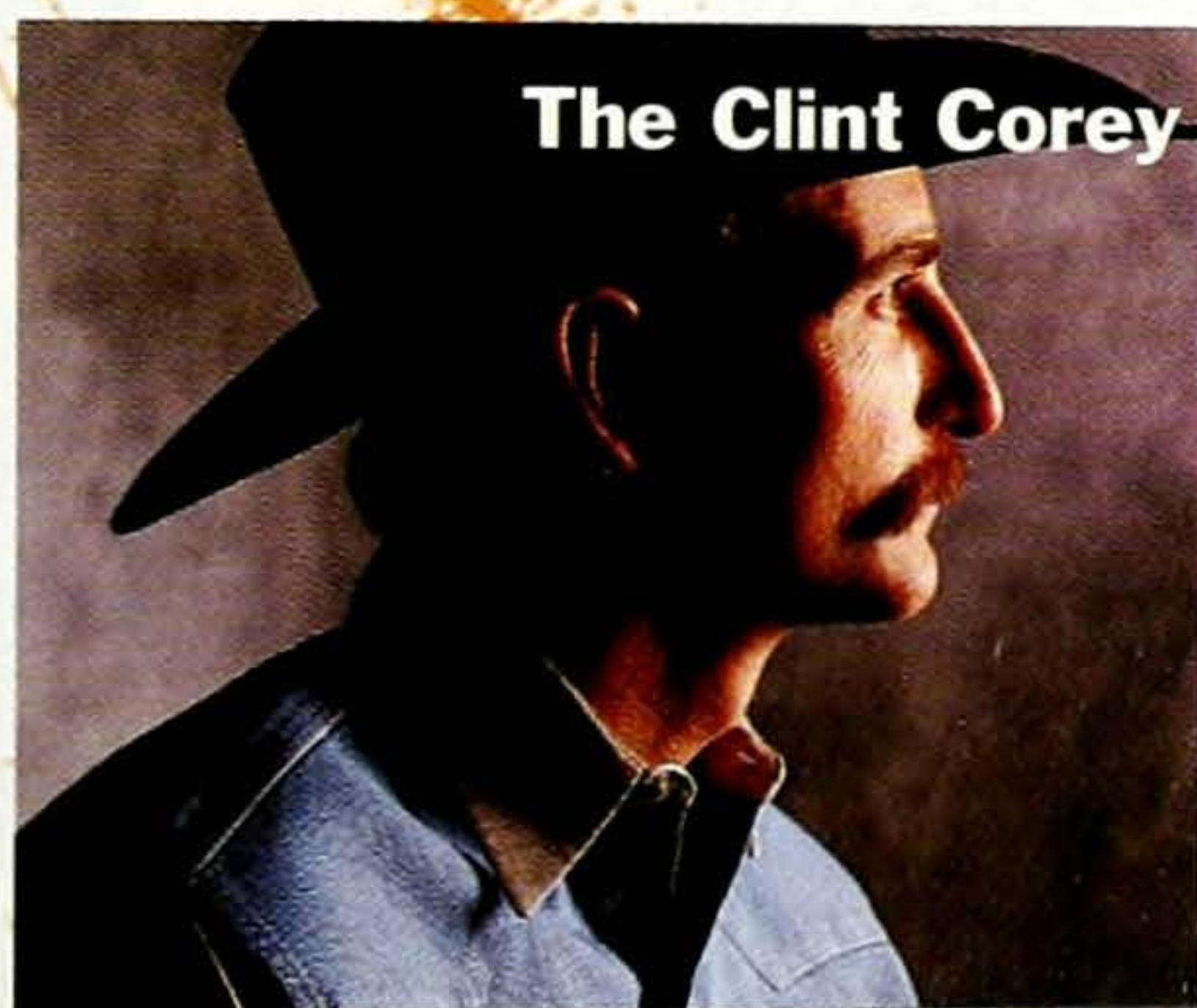
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In the news and on your mind

# BUZZ

## FFA Red Hot Website of the Month



### Rocky'swackywebworld

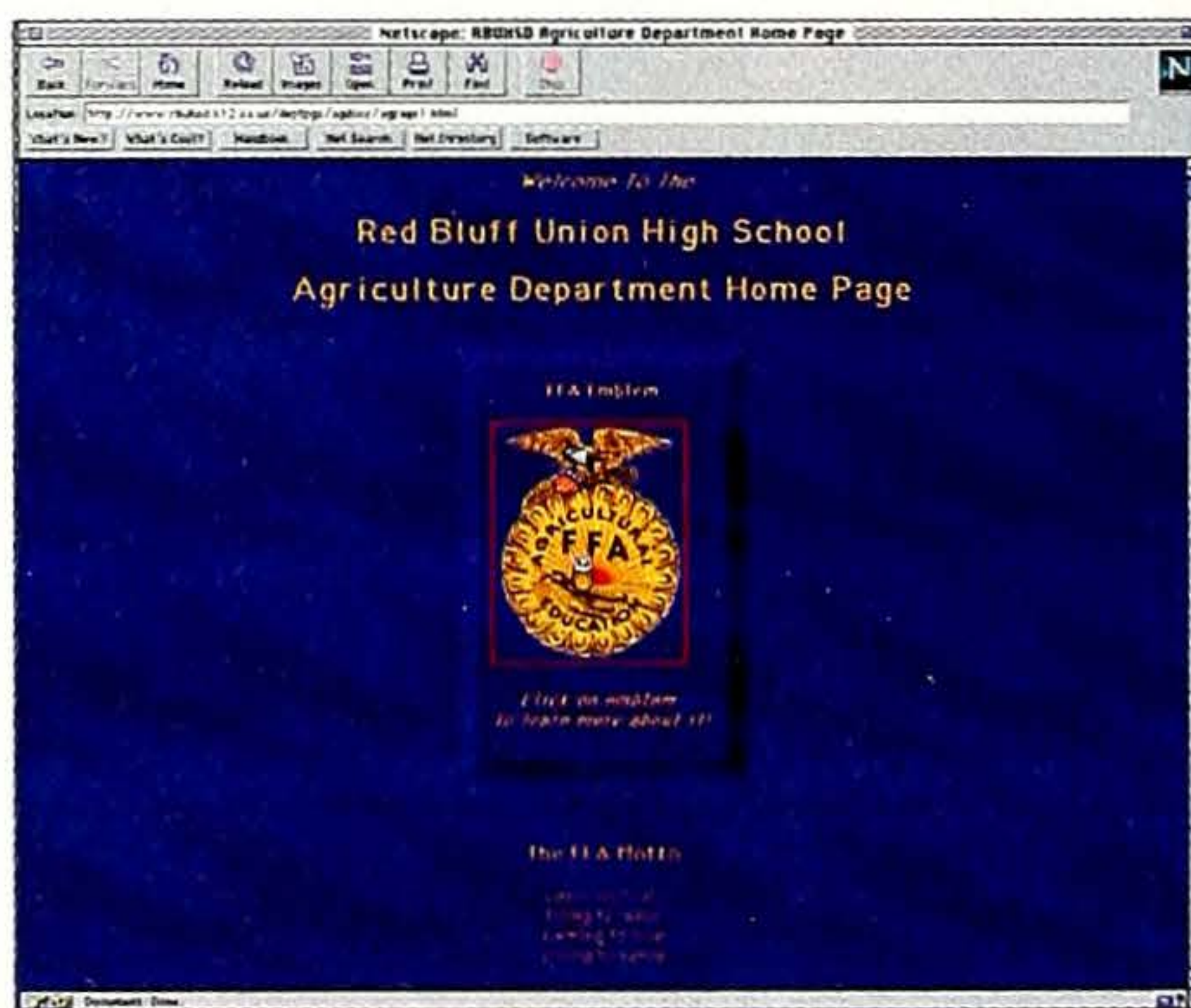
If I didn't have to sit here all day, I'd be designing my own website!

## Red Bluff, CA

Look for Red Bluff's page by going to the National FFA Online directory and select "About FFA" then "State and Chapters" then "Link to The Ultimate FFA Chapter Homepage List." Click on California and you'll see it listed. Great job Red Bluff!

### Build your own chapter homepage

Starting your own chapter homepage is easy! FFA Online, <http://www.ffa.org>, now provides a template for you to use in designing your own page. Select "About FFA" then "States and Chapters" and then "Build Your Own Chapter Homepage." This will get you started on mak-



ing your chapter's presence known in your community and across the country.

### erich'ssay

**A**s you're thumbing through this issue of *FFA New Horizons*, take a close look at the members and chapters recognized in the "FFA Stars" and "FFA in Action" departments.

Do you know someone in your chapter who has achieved his or her goals or has accomplished something special? Is your chapter making a difference in the school or community? If you can say "yes" to any of these questions, tear a sheet of paper out of your notebook, and tell me all about it. Send your submissions (with color photos) to me at *FFA New Horizons*, 5632 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, VA 22309-0160.

We'll try to include your submission in a future issue.

I also invite you to write us with your comments, suggestions, story ideas—and, yes, even your jokes.

Erich Gaukel, Editor

### Horses—24hoursaday

If golfers can have their own TV network, why shouldn't horse enthusiasts have their own? With a launch slated for this fall, the Premier Horse Network (PHN) will be the first network devoted entirely to hors-



es. Coverage will include live events, news, instructional programs, and racing. PHN will be available as a pay channel on cable and satellite networks. Check out the PHN web page for more info <http://horsenet.com/premier>.

### Ground-breaking news from Indianapolis

A site has been chosen and ground has been broken for the new National FFA Center, which is currently being built in Indianapolis,

Ind. In the next issue of *FFA New Horizons*, we'll have an update on the construction, and we'll give you a sneak preview of the FFA's new digs!

### Newsfor entrepreneurs

Read about other young people starting their own businesses in the new free newsletter, "Young Entrepreneur." Order toll-free by calling 1-(888) KidsWay.







Billy



Tomas



Jan



Pamela



Nada



Bruce



YOU KNEW FROM AN EARLY AGE.  
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There were subtle differences between you and the other kids. You *enjoyed* yard work. And when you planted seeds in science class, they actually grew into flowers that looked better than the pictures on the package. It was obvious even then. You didn't want to be an astronaut or a fireman.

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## Ohio

### Day on the farm

The East Clinton FFA Chapter treated second and third grade students from Sabina Elementary to a day on the farm as part of their "Ag in the Classroom" project. Chapter members set up stations throughout a local farm,



showing the youngsters dairy calf feeding, milking, butter making, tractor and grain bin safety and a petting zoo. The day ended with ice cream for all.\*

East Clinton FFA Chapter members Canolie Whittington (left) and Julie Chance show elementary students how to feed dairy calves.

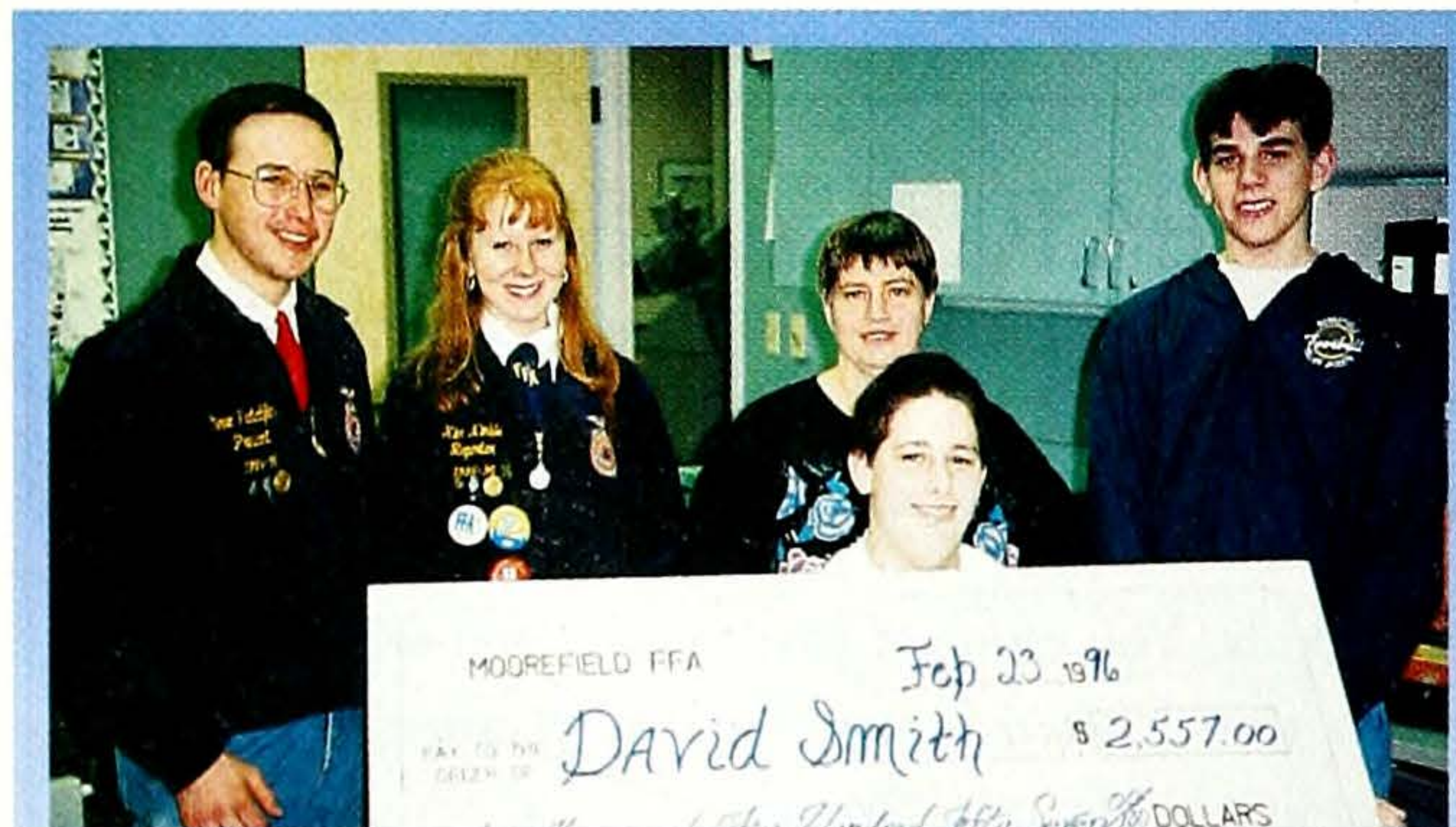
*Submitted by Natalie Greer, chapter reporter.*

## Kentucky

### Farm toy fundraiser

The Spencer County FFA Chapter needed money to get its new horticulture program going and to purchase new computers for the agriscience room. So the chapter hosted its seventh annual farm toy show, a fundraiser which brought in over 2,000 guests and exhibitors from over 12 states. Displays included a detailed "farmscape" made by members of the Spencer County FFA Chapter and a model combine factory.\*

*Submitted by Jamie Butler, chapter reporter.*



## West Virginia

### Noble noodles

Moorefield FFA Chapter member David Smith was recently paralyzed in a skiing accident. As medical bills started piling up, members of his chapter knew they had to help. They put their noodles together and decided to sponsor a benefit spaghetti dinner. After they had served the last plate of spaghetti, the chapter members had taken in \$2,557 for David and his family.\*

Moorefield FFA Chapter President Steven Wratford and Reporter Kim Kimble present the Smith family a check to help pay David's medical bills.

# FFA<sup>in</sup>action

## California

### Into the woods

Since most of the members of the Johansen FFA Chapter live in urban areas, their recent community service project at Turlock state park gave them an experience in nature. The project involved helping some newly planted blue oak trees make it through the winter. Members weeded and raked leaves, but also roasted marshmallows, camped under the stars and listened to a presentation by a park ranger. The Johansen members received a certificate of appreciation for their hard work.\*



Johansen FFA Chapter members take a rest on the leaves they bagged as part of their community service project.

## Pennsylvania

### Toy story

Members of the Philadelphia FFA Chapter made the holidays a little brighter for residents of a shelter for homeless women and children in downtown Philadelphia last winter. The chapter collected over 200 toys and 50 personalized gift bags for the residents, then delivered the gifts, led by chapter president John Whitehead, dressed as Santa, Laurie Hobbs, dressed as Mrs. Claus, and Niki Steinberg, who served as Santa's little helper.\*



Philadelphia FFA Chapter members team up to make the holidays better for their city's homeless last winter.





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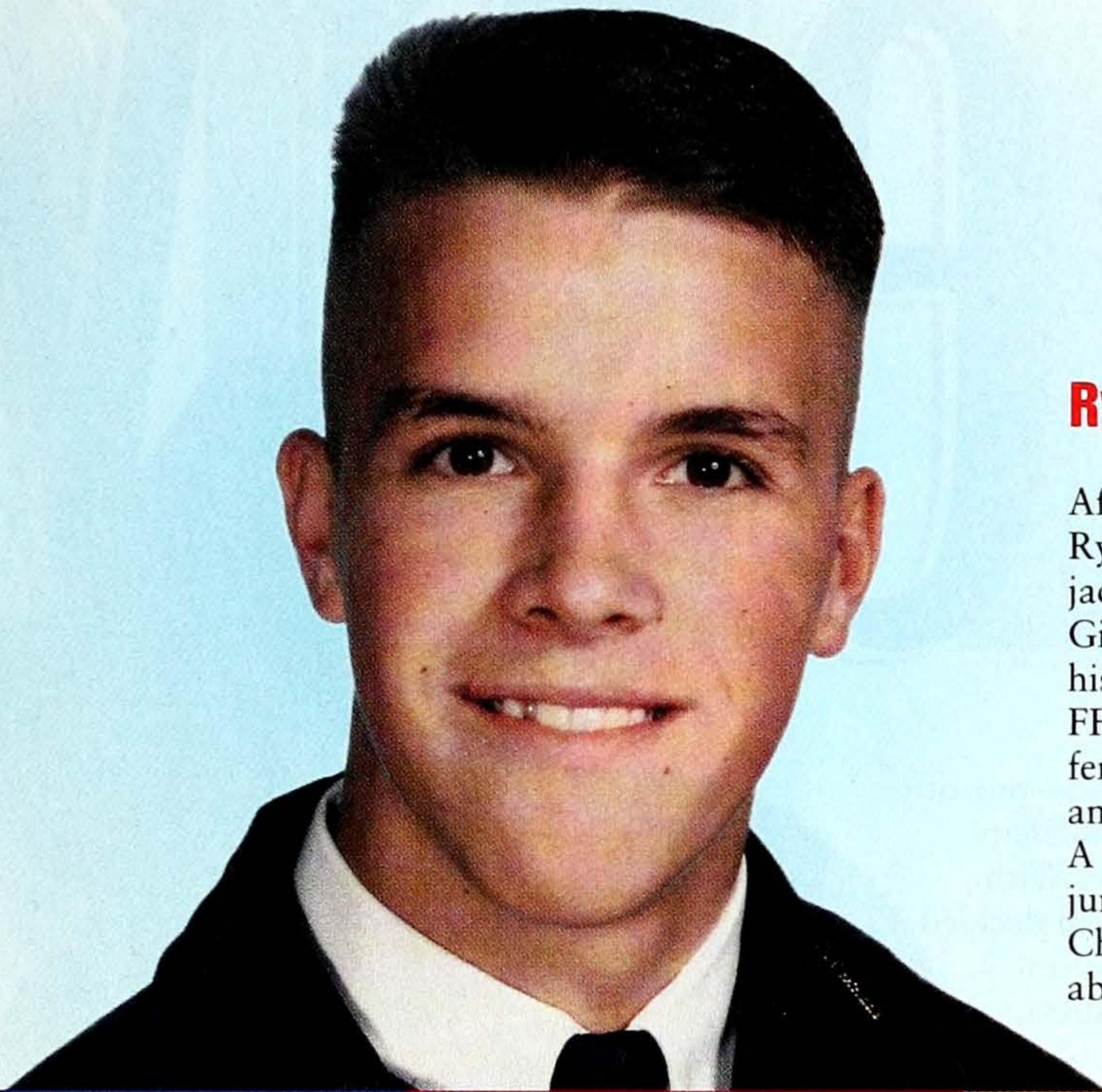
You're born, you go to school,  
then one day things begin  
to get interesting.



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GEORGIA

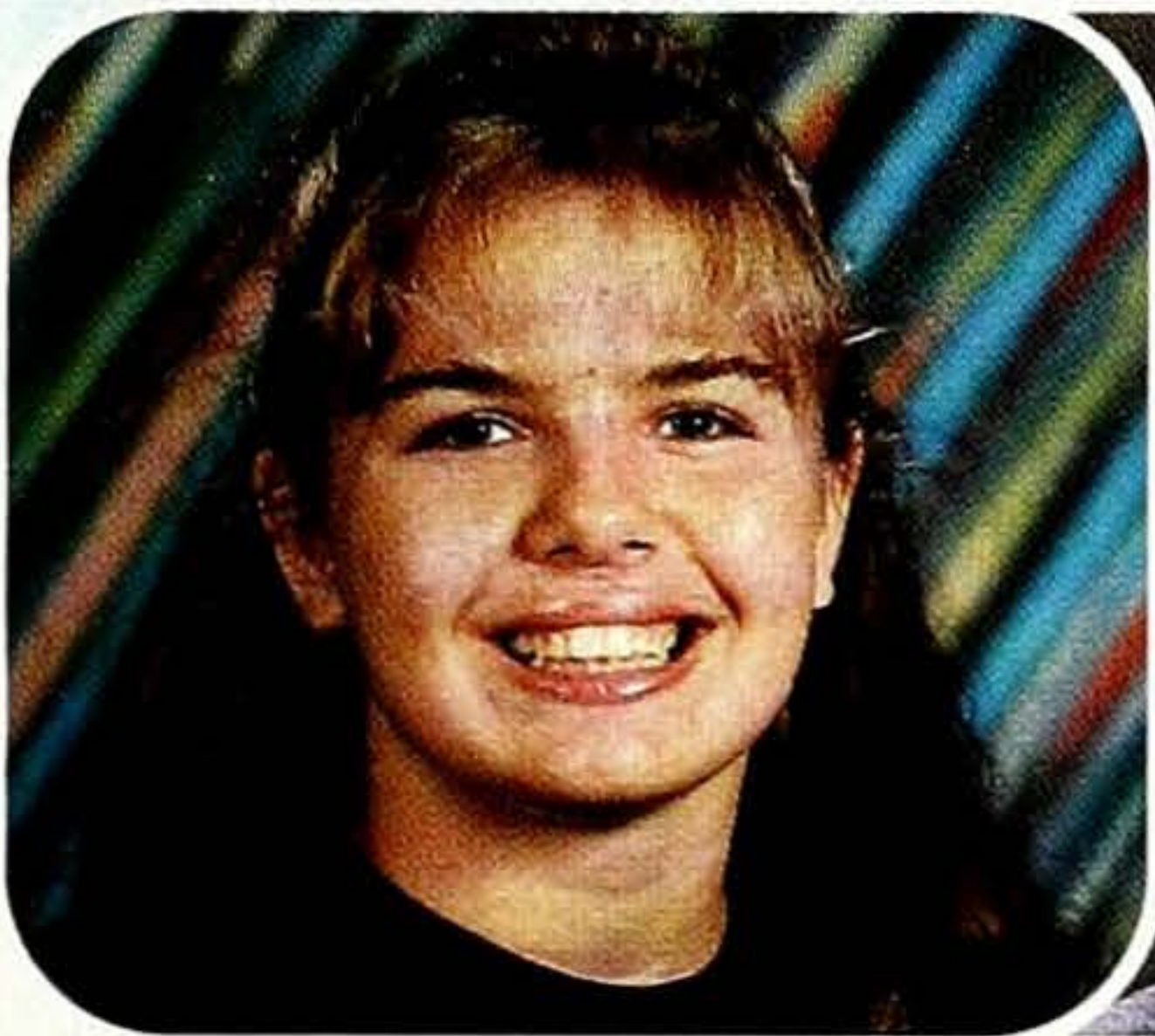
## Ryan Parks

After seeing his older brother succeed in FFA, Ryan knew he had to wear the blue and gold jacket. So he joined in eighth grade. He's now Gilmer FFA Chapter president. Ryan sharpened his leadership skills by taking advantage of such FFA programs as Washington Leadership Conference; Made for Excellence; livestock, poultry and meat judging; and parliamentary procedure. A star greenhand, he was chapter reporter his junior year and has earned his Greenhand, Chapter and State FFA degrees. (Read more about Ryan's WLC experience on page 14.)

ILLINOIS

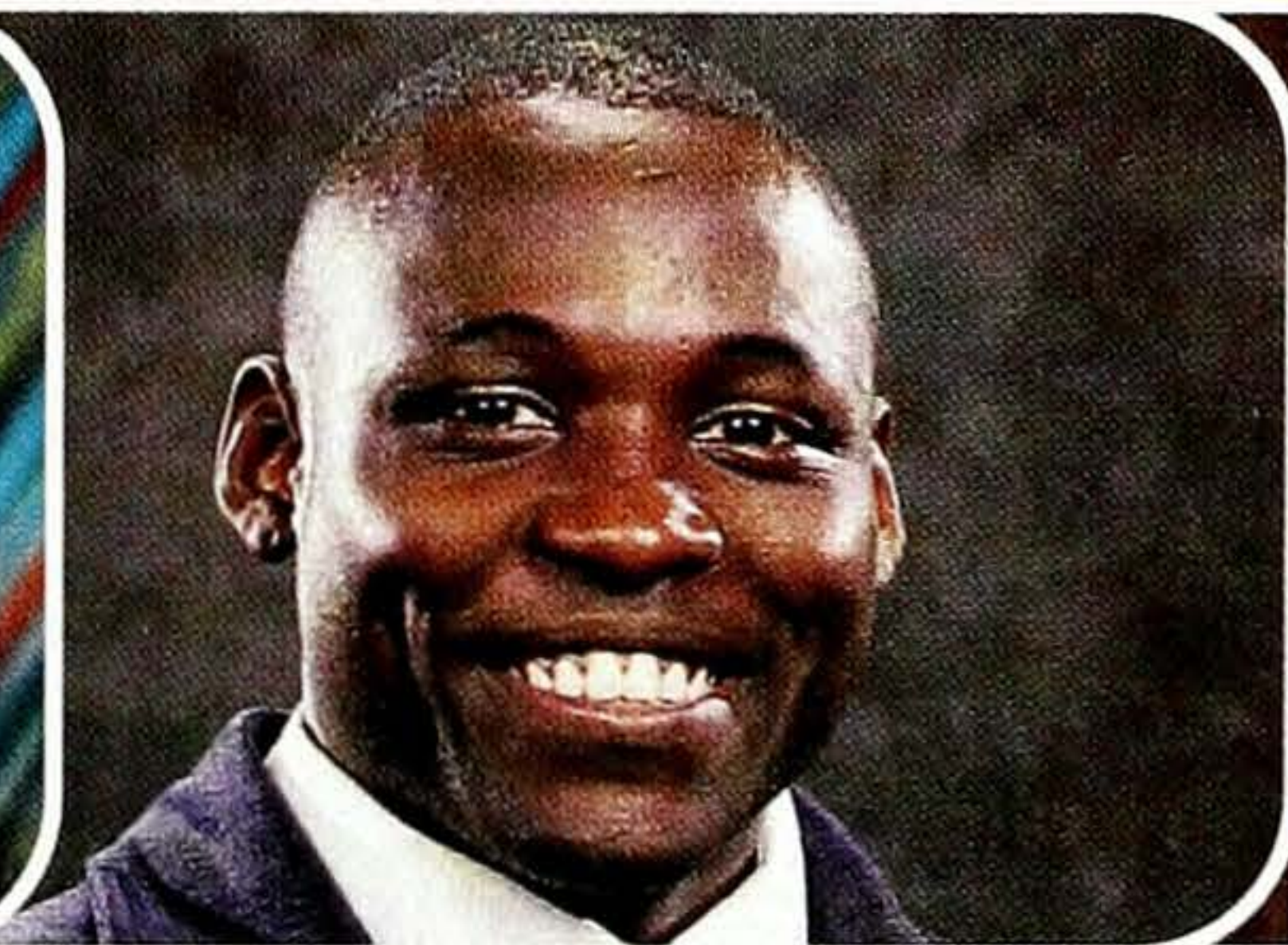
SOUTH CAROLINA

INDIANA



## Vanessa Gertsch

As a guard and tackle for the Olney Tigers football team, Vanessa, at the age of 15, has had to overcome skeptics. She's done this by proving herself on the field. She started playing the game in eighth grade and that year was named offensive line player of the year. Her success has followed her to high school, where she is also the center on the girls' basketball team, catcher and pitcher on the softball team and a competitor in three track and field events. Vanessa is an active member of the Olney FFA Chapter.\*



## Frederick Young

Frederick, now serving as state vice president, recently received national recognition for his appearance in the National FFA Organization's sponsor appreciation video, which was shown at the 1996 National FFA Convention. This video is now being shown to companies and organizations across the country who provide financial support for FFA and its many programs. Frederick is a member of the Holly Hill-Roberts FFA Chapter and is now attending Claflin College.\*



## Brian and Adam Warren

They grew up separated by two grades in school. With a little guidance from their father (who also happens to be their agriculture teacher), they're on the same page when it comes to choosing career paths. Brothers Adam (right) and Brian Warren both see agronomy as their ticket to career success. Adam has already taken the agronomy plunge as a freshman this year at Purdue University. Brian, now a junior at Wawasee High School, hopes to join his

brother at the Purdue campus after graduating from high school. He's currently District II sentinel and he's working on an SAE in nursery operations. Last year, Adam received Indiana's Hoosier FFA Degree and was a finalist in the national nursery operations proficiency award program. He'll travel to Costa Rica with other FFA members this summer to learn about the world of international agriculture.\*



**FFA members  
from Kansas City,  
Missouri, hit the  
road for a chapter  
exchange with  
the Platte Valley  
FFA Chapter in  
Kersey, Colorado  
by Erich Gaukel**

# Westw

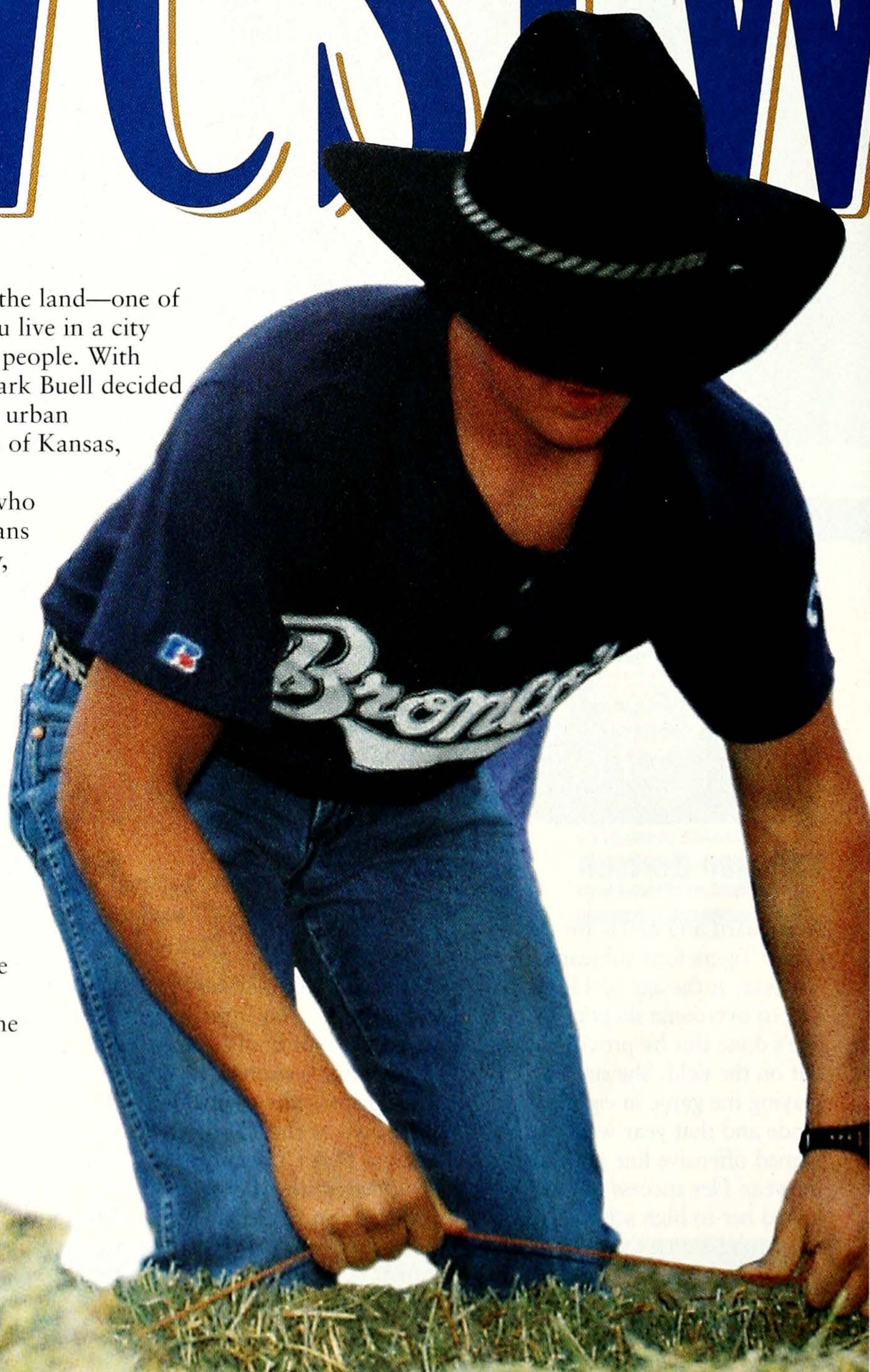
**I**t's difficult to develop an appreciation of the land—one of agriculture's basic components—when you live in a city congested with hundreds of thousands of people. With this in mind, Kansas City East advisor Mark Buell decided to take his chapter members outside their urban boundaries last spring, to the open spaces of Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska.

Phil Johnson, a former national FFA officer who now lives in Kansas City, heard about Buell's plans and phoned his nephew Ryan Johnson in Kersey, Colorado. Ryan is the president of the Platte Valley FFA Chapter. Johnson asked Ryan if his chapter could host the Kansas City group for a day during their trip. Ryan liked the idea and called Buell in Kansas City.

What would have been just a field trip for the Kansas City chapter was suddenly developing into an FFA chapter exchange.

## **Last-minute**planning

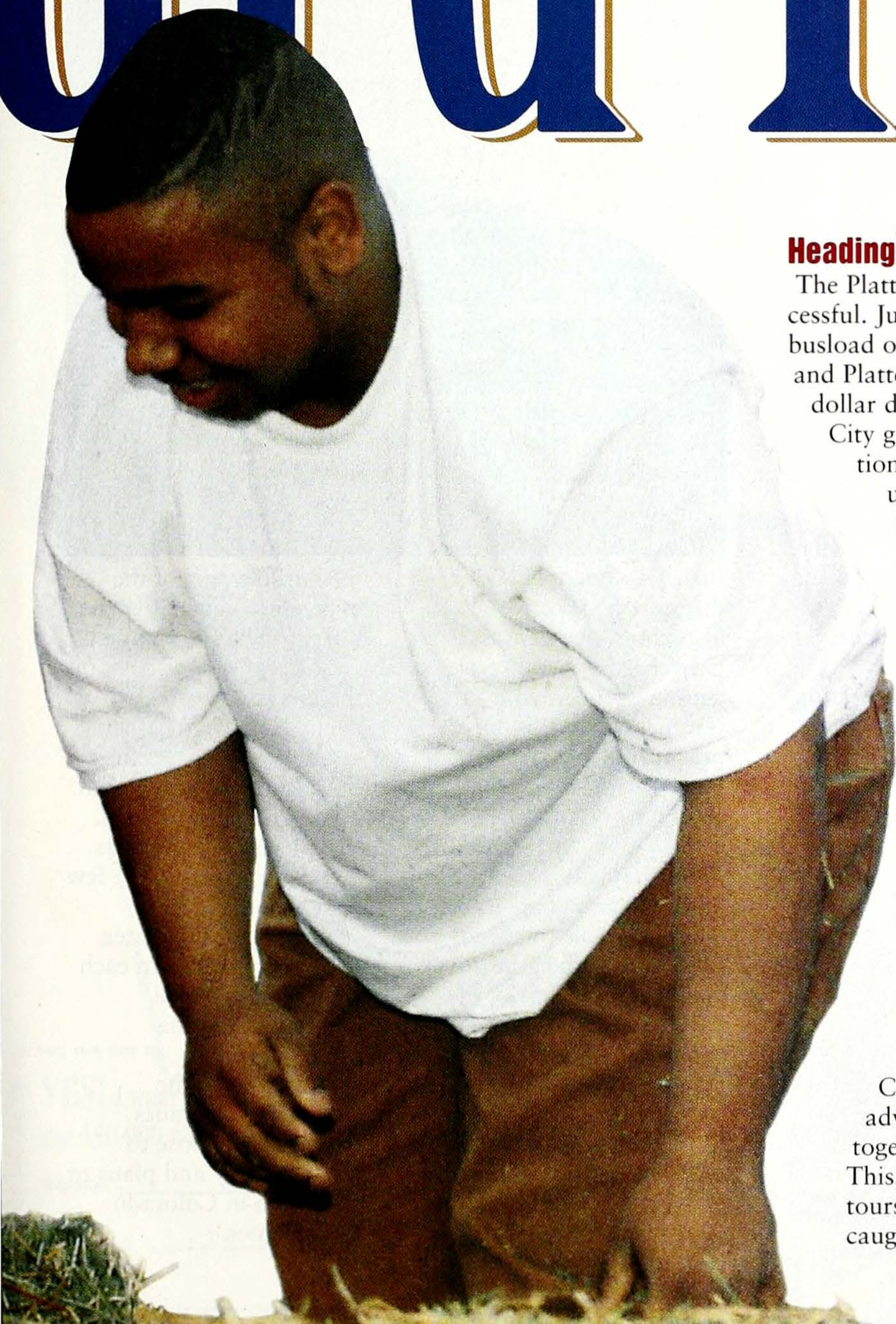
After talking to Buell, Ryan realized he and his chapter members had only two weeks of planning before nearly 40 kids from Kansas City would be rolling into Kersey on a bus. "I've never hustled so much in my whole life," Ryan says, recalling his last-minute preparations for the visit. "I have to credit a lot to my dad. He's an agribusinessman and knew a lot of people. Through him, I contacted all the places I thought would benefit the kids from Kansas City." Ryan says that meant "a lot of phone calls, a lot of patience, and a lot of bitten fingernails."



Platte Valley FFA member Chris Kerschen (left) shows Kansas City FFA member Kenneth Stone the ups and downs of bale stacking.



# ard Ho!



## Heading West

The Platte Valley chapter's planning efforts proved successful. Just two weeks after Ryan had talked to Buell, a busload of FFA members from both the Kansas City East and Platte Valley FFA chapters stood inside of a million dollar dairy facility in northern Colorado. The Kansas City group, not often exposed to this kind of operation, especially one this big, was impressed. "I grew up on a dairy operation," Buell admits, "and I've never seen a 64-cow milking parlor, not even a picture of one."

Earlier in the day, a bus took the group to the Monfort beef feedlot, estimated to be the world's largest. "There were cows everywhere," says Debbie Dwyer, a sophomore Kansas City East member. "I was like 'Wow!'"

The next day, the group visited a 1.5 million square-foot rose production facility. For Daniel Garcia, another Kansas City sophomore, the experience changed his life. He had given some thought to a horticulture career before the trip, but when he saw the football field-sized greenhouses, his career plans began to solidify. "I decided I wanted to go into that [career] after the visit," Daniel says.

The experience didn't just benefit the Kansas City members. John Stahley, the Platte Valley FFA advisor, says his members learned how to work together to plan for people other than themselves. This, along with making contacts and setting up tours, develops leadership skills, he says. "I was so caught up in getting everything



organized,” Ryan says, “I can’t say I had much time to think about how beneficial this really could be. It was a situation where if it worked, great. If it didn’t, well, we didn’t lose much. I was hoping it would be a great experience for both chapters and it turned out that way.”

## Commonground

Even though they’re only separated by the state of Kansas, these are, on the surface, two very different FFA chapters. One is from a small town. One is from a large city. The Kansas City urban environment gives its chapter a more racially diverse group than its counterpart in Colorado.

“We are far enough from Denver where we have a primarily white, Caucasian population,” Platte Valley FFA advisor John Stahley says, “so this was a little bit of a culture shock for some of us. I think it was a real good experience.”

Ryan says his Platte Valley members learned from the “exposure to something new, something different, different beliefs, different culture.”

FFA is the common thread that brought these

groups together. While rural and urban chapters often approach FFA and agriculture differently because of the geographic limitations of each, common ground was easy to find for members of the two chapters.

“They accepted us for who we were,” says Crystal McGee, a member of the Kansas City chapter. “We asked questions and they answered,” she says. “They were just like family.”

“The thing that is important to us,” Crystal adds, “is that we not be treated differently because we’re urban and because we don’t get to do as many things as people from the suburbs and country do. We do want to learn, so I think it’s important, being in FFA, that we do get out and learn about those different things. There’s more to life than city life and street life. We can be what we want to be, and do what we want to do.”

Ryan sees the success of the event as “the interaction and realization on the part of both chapters.” It’s about his chapter members seeing and learning about their own way of life through

## Get the ball rolling!

It takes a little work to get an exchange started, so here are a few tips.

### Grab a partner.

Call or write friends from other chapters you’ve met at conventions or competitions. First try an exchange with a chapter from your area. Then use what you learn from this experience to plan a bigger exchange with a chapter from another state or region.

### Money, money.

It’s going to cost some money, whether you’re the host or visiting chapter. Start planning those fundraisers now. You may even find a local business that will help as a sponsor.

### Planning.

This is the key to chapter exchange success. If you’re the host chapter, have a schedule of tours and activities ready for your guests. Show your guests a little bit of everything that makes your area and chapter unique.

### Have fun.

Yes, it’s a learning experience, but this is a chance to learn and enjoy yourself. Informal gatherings will help break the ice and get members from different chapters talking to each other. \*

the eyes of people with a different perspective. It’s also about the Kansas City chapter members getting in touch with production agriculture practiced by the Platte Valley members and community.

## Mixing it up

Since the two chapters were only able to spend one day together, the group made the most of its time. After the tours, everyone headed back to Platte Valley High School for a mixer.

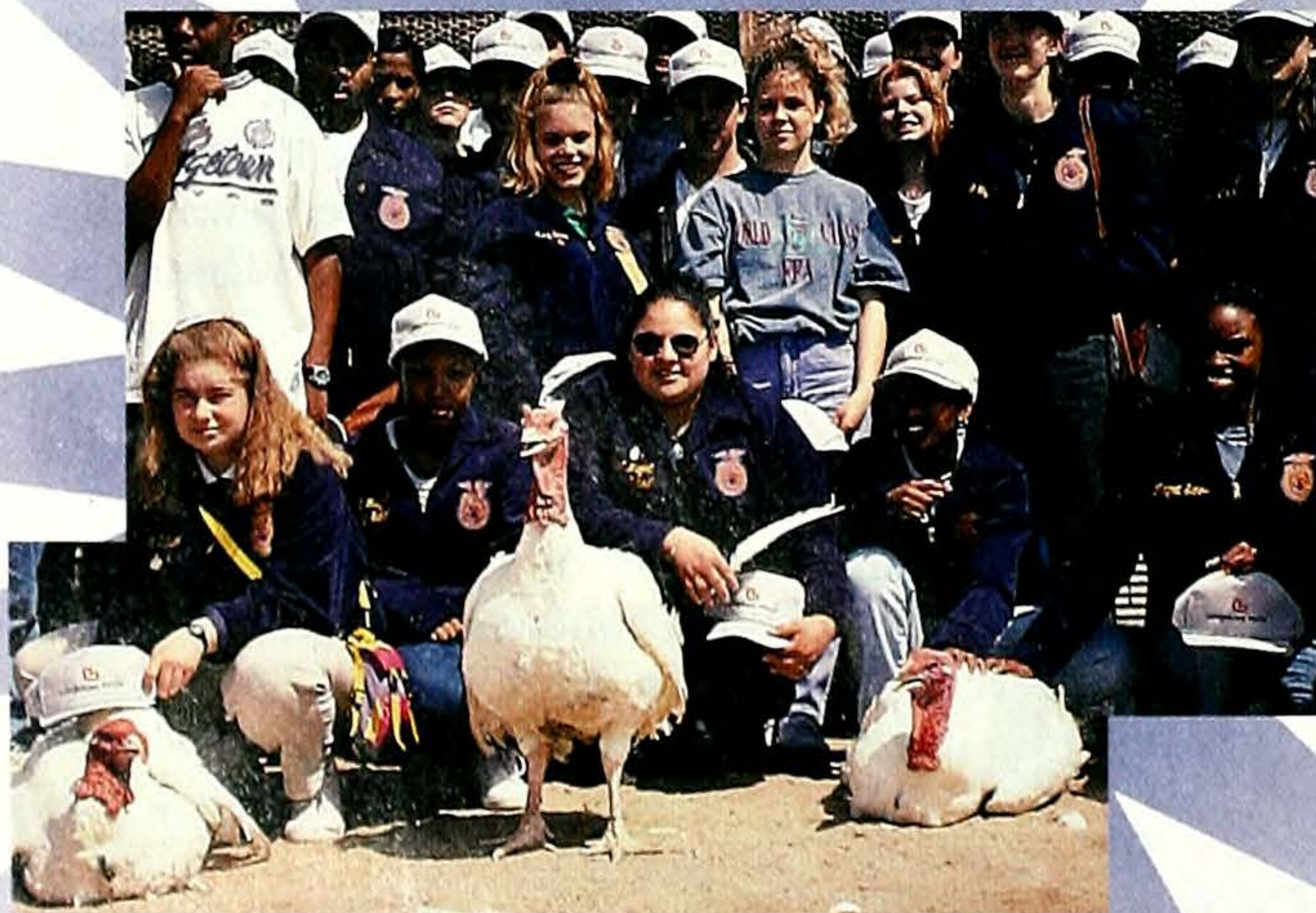
Here, the chapters mixed it up for a cook-out and some friendly competition. Mixed teams competed in such local games as tug-of-war, bale stacking, irrigation tube setting and bike roping.

Ryan says the most

memorable part of the experience came after the mixer, when the Kansas City members got back on the bus to start the trip back home. “After they got on the bus,” Ryan says. “I got up there with my advisor and parents. We all said a few words and there were quite a few people in tears.”

Several months later, some members from each chapter had a mini-reunion at national convention.

For Crystal, the experience continues. She’s become close to Ryan’s family and plans to visit them in Colorado this summer. \*



Platte Valley and Kansas City East FFA Chapter members hang out with some turkeys during an industry tour.



# grad·u·ate (graj-oo-ayt)

to pass from one stage of experience, proficiency,  
or prestige to a higher one.

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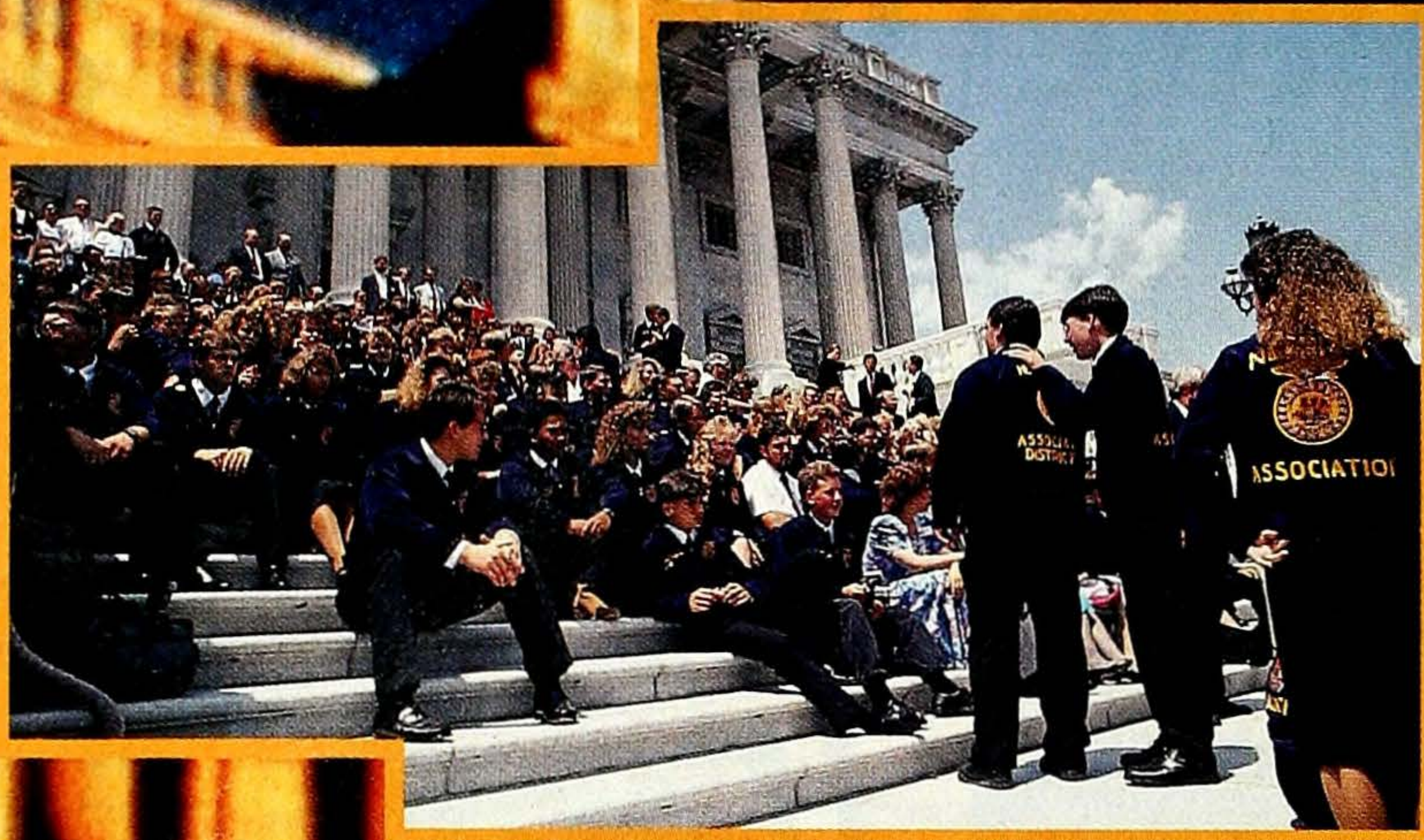
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# a capital

**Establish long-lasting friendships, learn to work together with others as a team, develop a sense of national pride—do all of these things and more as a participant in the 1997 Washington Leadership Conference in the nation's capital. by Erich Gaukel**

**R**yan Parks, a senior from the Gilmer County FFA Chapter in Georgia, says he's done just about everything in FFA "at least once."

Before last summer, however, he still hadn't been to a Washington Leadership Conference (WLC). Ryan, who aspires to be a state officer, says the WLC learning experience started from the moment he left his house and continues—

even to this day—through the leadership skills he's developed and the long-distance friendships he established (he still writes letters every week to a friend he made at last year's WLC).

"I loved it," Ryan says. "I got to fly for the first time. We (Ryan and his friend from home) got there and had to take a cab by ourselves—it was like being out of the house and grown."





# to experience

Getting there is just part of the experience. Rebecca Kaupp, a senior from the Gonzales FFA Chapter in California, says the workshops made a big impact on her. "We learned team building and how to interact with other members better," she says.

Matthew Rutt, president of the Blue Hill Chapter in Nebraska, couldn't agree more. "I learned ideas that can inspire other members

of my chapter," he says. "There was a lot of focus on community involvement and just getting involved in your chapter; and helping your chapter help the community; and helping your chapter help itself."

In a separate WLC workshop for advisors, the learning continues. As the Tippecanoe, Indiana, FFA Chapter advisor, Lisa Paxton knows how useful the experience is for her



students, but she's gained a lot from it too. "We go every other year. I enjoy going and sharing ideas with other FFA advisors—to be able to get ideas from them." She says it's also a chance for advisors to share their input with the national FFA organization staff.

### New faces, new friends

It's not only an opportunity to meet people from different places—it's an opportunity to get to know them. "One of my friends and I went together," Ryan explains, "and I hardly spent any time with him because they put me in a room with three people from different states that I didn't even know. When we did group work to learn leadership skills, they put us in groups of five to 10—again with people I didn't know—and they made us

work together. It really made it easier."

Matthew says the opportunity to meet people from all over is one of the best reasons to attend. "I've got connections all over the country, knowing people from different places, finding out what they do for SAEs and what they do for FFA."

### Location, location, location

The Washington, D.C., setting just adds to the experience. Paxton says it's a "big plus" for members and students alike. "A lot of the kids—as well as some of the advisors—don't get that opportunity a lot. And we learn a lot about our nation."

"Being in the nation's capital," Matthew says, "you get a sense of awe just knowing that this is where so many important things take place, and it makes you feel like 'Well, yeah, I can go

back to my community and I can make important things happen there too.'"

### How to make it happen

There are all kinds of ways to make WLC a reality for you. Rebecca got help from a local booster club. Ryan had his registration fee paid by winning an FFA essay contest. Matthew received a WLC scholarship from Land O' Lakes. "I went to Washington for 35 bucks," he adds.

Paxton says the Indiana FFA Association sends out letters with fundraising ideas for its members. They also charter a bus to make it easier for the students and advisors to participate.

Maybe your chapter could sponsor a car wash, bingo or a raffle. Or try working odd jobs in the community. You could do spring cleaning, house

cleaning, washing windows or mowing lawns.

The National FFA Alumni Association gives out nearly 80 WLC scholarships every year. Check with your advisor or state alumni association for more details.

Matthew's Land O' Lakes scholarship was made possible by the National FFA Foundation, Inc. Members from other states are eligible for this and other scholarships, so check with your advisor or state executive secretary for details.

*The WLC registration fee includes lodging, some meals, in-town transportation and workshop supplies. Find out more by asking your advisor or by calling the National FFA Organization at 703-360-3600.\**

# what's HOT

# what's NOT

## survey

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

**Send your picks to:**  
**FFA New Horizons/**  
**What's Hot**  
**5632 Mt. Vernon**  
**Memorial Highway**  
**P.O. Box 15160**  
**Alexandria, VA**  
**22309-0160**

Movie \_\_\_\_\_

Actor \_\_\_\_\_

Actress \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete \_\_\_\_\_

Musician or band \_\_\_\_\_

Car \_\_\_\_\_

Pickup truck \_\_\_\_\_

Magazine \_\_\_\_\_

Website on Internet \_\_\_\_\_

Place to go \_\_\_\_\_

Weekend activity \_\_\_\_\_

Sport \_\_\_\_\_

FFA event \_\_\_\_\_

Clothes \_\_\_\_\_

TV show \_\_\_\_\_

FFA fundraiser \_\_\_\_\_

Career \_\_\_\_\_

Movie \_\_\_\_\_

Actor \_\_\_\_\_

Actress \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete \_\_\_\_\_

Musician or band \_\_\_\_\_

Car \_\_\_\_\_

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Magazine \_\_\_\_\_

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Sport \_\_\_\_\_

FFA event \_\_\_\_\_

Clothes \_\_\_\_\_

TV show \_\_\_\_\_

FFA fundraiser \_\_\_\_\_

Career \_\_\_\_\_



# Why Not Change Lives?



## 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

The mission of Agricultural Education is to prepare and support individuals for careers, build awareness and develop leadership for the food, fiber and natural resource systems.

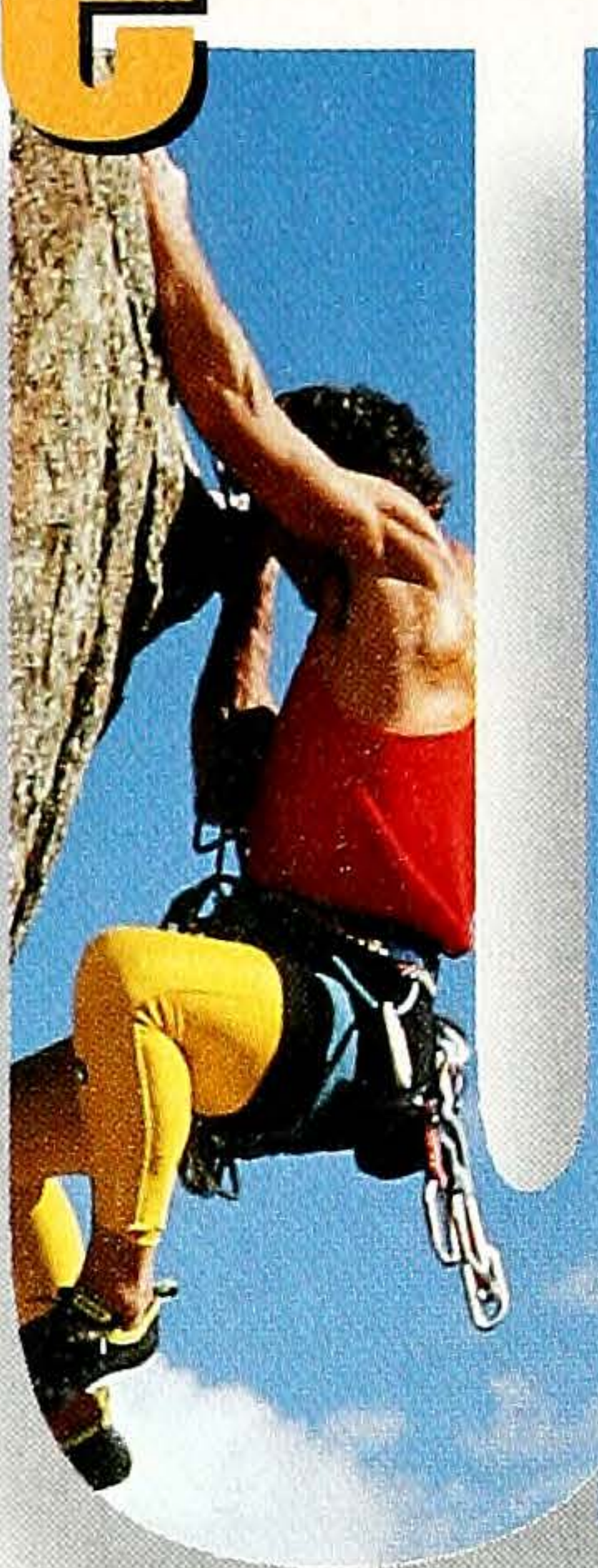
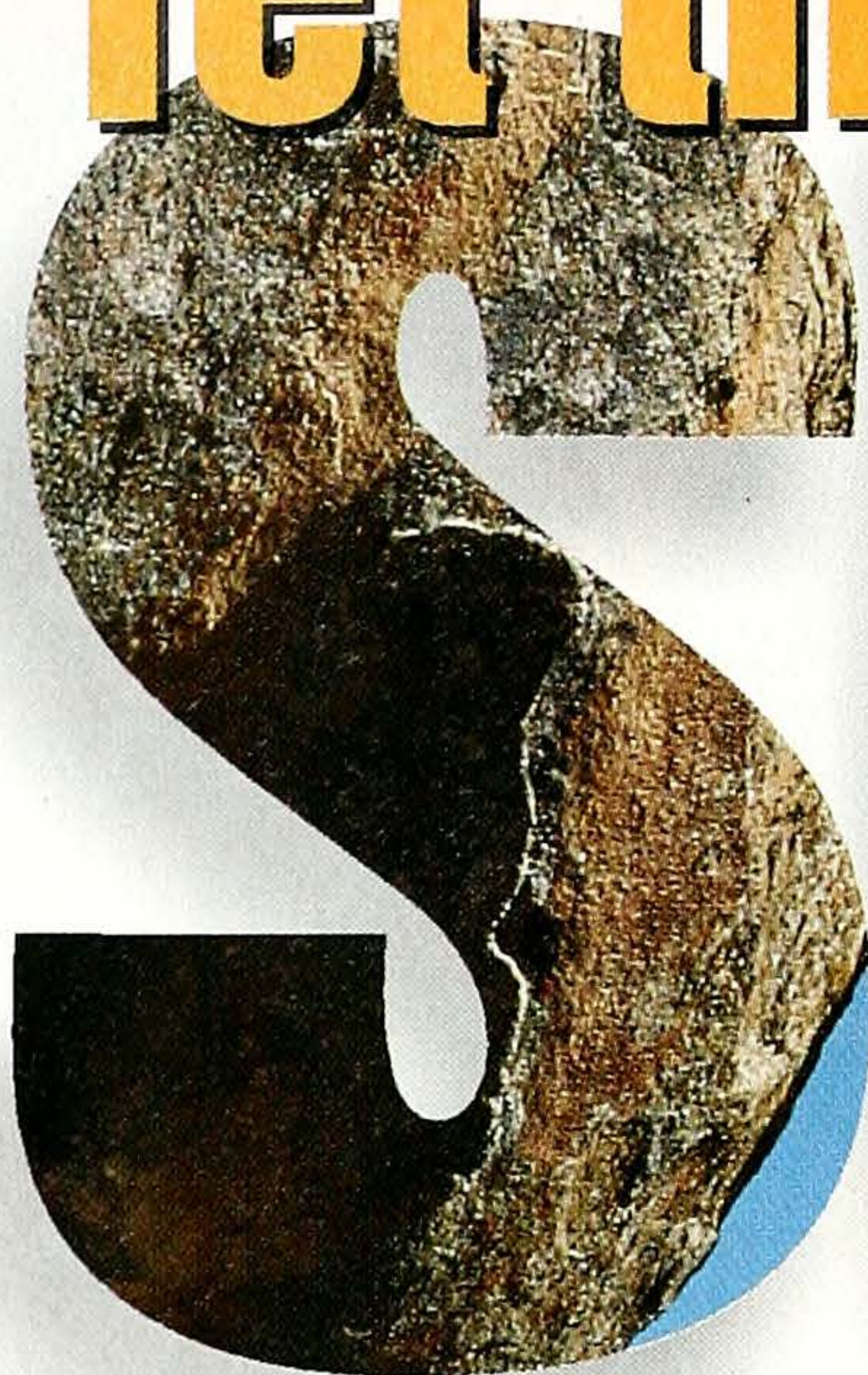
Pictured clockwise from top, FFA member Justin Day, Shenandoah FFA Chapter; FFA member Lydia Heddings and advisor Craig Kelican, Fauquier FFA Chapter; FFA member Troy Pearce and advisor Doug Daley, Gilbert FFA Chapter; FFA member Desmond Washington and advisor Edie Coleman, Fauquier FFA Chapter.

# Teach Agricultural Education



# let the

# What you need to know to get



## Mountain biking

"Mountain biking isn't a Mountain Dew commercial," says Craig Crawford, owner-operator of Sedona Bike and Bean in Sedona, Ariz. He sells both bicycles and caffeine, so Crawford knows what he's talking about.

"As cycling evolved, mountain biking became so much more popular because it's so much more entertaining than road biking," he says.

Crawford caters to everyone, from beginners buying \$200 bikes to professionals spending \$3000 for equipment, from teenagers to the over-50 crowd. Pay \$300 or more for a bike and it should be "pretty off-road worthy," Crawford says, and after that you can think about comfort and safety.

Better front-end suspension decreases stress on your wrists, elbows, shoulders and

back. The size of the bike frame is important, too; standing flat-footed and straddling the bike, with the frame lifted snugly against your crotch, the wheels should be suspended five inches off the ground. A helmet should be National Safety Inspection (NSI) approved.

But what happens when all this nifty equipment breaks down? A chain tool (and spare links) fix a broken chain, an air pump, spare tube and patch kit fix flat tires, the most common hazard. "Slime," a gel-like sealant you inject into your tires, cuts the odds of having a flat tire in half, Crawford says.

You can buy equipment, but you can't buy skill. How do you learn to mountain bike?

"Learn the trails first," Crawford says, "then technique comes." Shops like Bike and Bean often organize group rides on weekends where you

learn technique, like how to stand up on the bike and anchor the saddle between your legs to stabilize during a downhill ride, Crawford says. Working uphill, grip the handlebars, position your forearms so your elbows point toward the back axle, and lean forward.

Mountain biking is popular because "people tend to desire to challenge themselves more physically," Crawford says. "Also, once you buy the bike the sport is virtually free."

## Rock climbing

You think rock climbing is reserved for big rocks, right, like mountains? Uh-uh, says Rob Van Aernem, a rock climber for the past eight years and a former rock climbing guide for Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. Only a "battle with gravity" defines the sport, he says, whether you're hanging from a

sheer rock face or resting on a gentle slope. (The Mount Everest-type challenge is a branch of rock climbing appropriately called "mountaineering.")

"It's a way to get outdoors and push your personal limits," Van Aernem says, "a way to get to some amazing places." From New York to Wyoming, Van Aernem has sampled a fair share of these rocky sites. Outdoor clubs or guide services can teach you rock climbing, because you don't tackle the sport alone.

Start indoors and learn the basics in a gymnasium, Van Aernem says. Your equipment should include a harness, rope and gated aluminum snap-links called "carabiners" (pronounced "care-ah-bean-ers") or "biners" that all work in tandem to secure you to the rock as you climb up it. Thin-soled with sticky rubber, specialty climbing shoes help you grip tiny



# going in exciting summer adventure sports



by Kyle Munson

rock edges but aren't necessary for beginners.

"Stay in tune with the fact you have two hands, two feet and one center of balance," Van Aernem says. "One hold (on the rock surface) may work for somebody else, but it won't work for you."

Rock climbing relies on a buddy system of at least two people securing ropes to the rock—this is the "belay" process—as you move up a steep slope, or "pitch," but it's also a personal sport that may take decades before you improve. You can practice alone, just a few feet off the ground, by climbing on large boulders ("bouldering") or buildings ("build-ering"), Van Aernem says. These represent small "problems"—how do I get from this spot to the next?—that help you develop the skills to tackle more complex climbs.

"I've grown a lot from rock climbing," Van

Aernem says. "My level of confidence in problem-solving situations is stronger, physically as well as mentally." The sport is only dangerous, he adds, if you take too many risks or don't learn what you need to know. Climb on!

## In-line skating

If you're unfamiliar with in-line skates, you must be an "X-Files" alien, or maybe you unknowingly run skaters off the road when you drive. Cory and Becky Hundley own and operate Wisconsin Skate University, a roller rink in Milwaukee, Wis., and have witnessed in-line skates boom in popularity since 1991, when many rinks began allowing them indoors.

"In-lines are reaching their peak right now," Cory says, "and I don't look for them to die off." Not your father's roller skates, in-line skates represent a more progressive, physical market, Cory

adds. Recreation and fitness are two of the more casual uses for in-line skates, with speed skating, roller hockey and aggressive skating—the last a mixture of wild-eyed youth, baggy clothing, wooden ramps and crazy stunts—the more physical incarnations.

"If you don't buy a good skate you won't enjoy the sport," Cory says. Avoid cheap, off-brand skates and opt for a better pair that costs \$100 or more. (For aggressive skating, buy within the \$150 to \$200 range.) Also, the American Medical Association reports that wrist injuries are the most common sports injury, Cory says, so buy wrist guards, too, and knee pads and a helmet.

Just about every roller rink and sporting goods shop in the country sells in-line skates and offers lessons or knows somebody who does. From

simple bike trails just down the block to specialty in-line skating tours around Europe, you can find skating fun to fit your means. The Hundleys' rink offers a continual rotation of skating lessons and eight-week programs and supports a roller hockey league with 500 people.

"It takes two to three lessons to learn the basics like starting and stopping," Cory says. "After that you need to practice to put that in gear." In-lines skates are easy to learn, Cory adds. Even though you don't have the stability of four wheels, you have better ankle support with in-line skates.

For maintenance, treat your skates like a car: rotate the wheels and clean the bearings regularly. Remember, if your skates are smooth enough, comfy enough, they could be your car if weather permits. \*



# Susan DeMattei

**It's all uphill if you're going for an Olympic medal, especially if you're on a mountain bike**

**In the first year of the event's inclusion in the Olympics, DeMattei, 34, won the bronze medal for the United States in women's cross-country mountain biking at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. She took a few minutes to talk to FFA *New Horizons* from her home in Gunnison, Colorado.**

**How did you get started in mountain biking?**

I was living in Northern California, working as a nurse. I was fairly active with running and cycling, but nothing competitive. I had some friends who had just gotten mountain bikes, which were quite new at the time, and I decided to go ahead and get one as well. I started riding for fun.

Some friends were starting to get into the racing aspect of it, and I went to a race with them one day, and had brought my bike. I wasn't really planning on racing, but it looked like a fun thing to do, so I went ahead and entered, had a great time, and was hooked from there on out.

**What were some of the key ingredients to your success at the Olympics?**

I love the sport. I had great support from my sponsor, Diamond Back, and from my family and friends, even though mountain biking was kind of a fringe sport when it first started

out, and maybe not a typical thing that a woman might do. My dad was very supportive and my biggest fan. That kind of atmosphere was nice for me.

**What was it like as you were gearing up for the Olympics?**

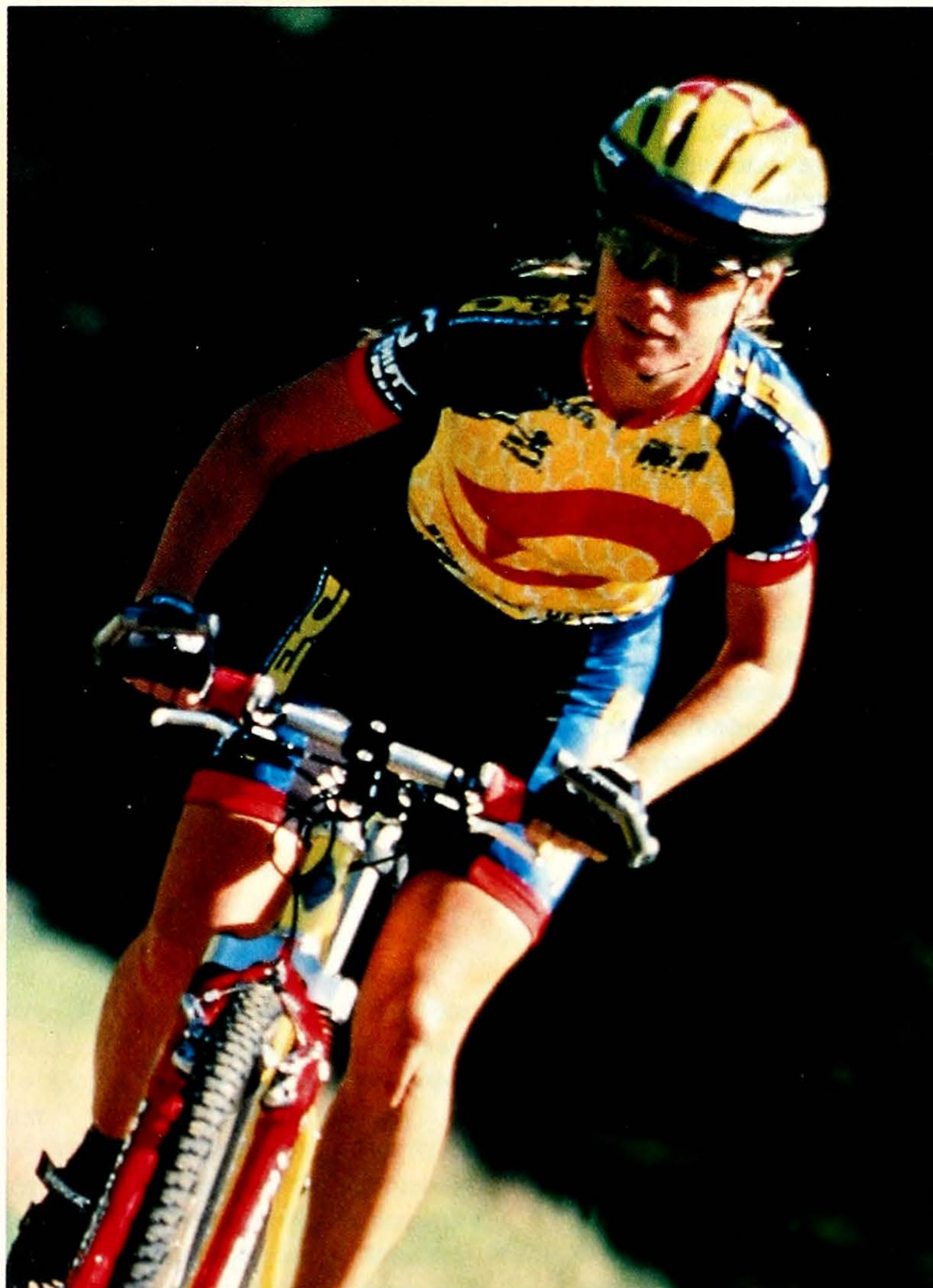
The last month before [the Olympics] I still had a few races. I did one race two weeks before the Olympics that was one of our big national series races. So, I was focusing on the Olympics, but I was concerned about this other race too. It was good in a way because I had some diversions. I also had a coach who I worked with and we had a very particular schedule that I followed every day. Luckily, I had been very healthy and was feeling great prior to the race. I tried not to veer off from what had worked for me in the past. Even though it was the Olympics—the biggest thing that I have ever done in my sporting career—I couldn't put it on such a pedestal that I would freak

out. It had to be just another race. I tried to stick to the schedule as normal. There was a lot of intense training, not just a month before, but two months before, narrowing it down to training for that particular race. I was in Alabama and the Atlanta area about 12 days before my race, getting used to the humidity. I was going out

and training in the middle of the day, doing a few telephone interviews and just trying to keep busy.

**What was the toughest part of the experience once you got to the Olympics?**

The toughest part for me was the month after the race. I was more of the underdog on our team. The other woman on the





team, Julie Frutado (who finished tenth), is very well known as being the best woman mountain biker in the world. She was not having a stellar season, unfortunately, but she was still one of the favorites. So there wasn't any attention focused on me. That was great because I had no pressure. I was hardly even nervous for the race. I was just excited to be there and wanted to do the best that I could, but again, trying not to make more stress for myself.

So, I didn't have any problems at all. I felt very well taken care of and my training was going very well. After the race, though, with people calling and people wanting to do interviews, it was very flattering and very nice, but I still had quite a bit of my season left to go, so it was pretty stressful.

#### **What impressed you most about being at the Olympics?**

The spirit of the competition and the spectators. It was such an exciting feeling for people who were realizing a dream. The spectators felt it too—they were so excited to be watching the people in all the different events. That was just really awesome to me. And seeing the people no matter how they finished, just getting the chance to participate in such an historic event. That was the big thing to me.

#### **What are your goals now?**

I retired from racing. I knew I'd been wanting to do that for a few years actually. When we found out that mountain biking would be in the Olympics, I stuck it out a little bit longer to see if I

would get on the team. Luckily, it worked out and I got to revel in that time there.

I just got married recently. My husband's also a racer, and he's continuing to race, but I'm resuming my nursing career, and we'll hopefully start a family sometime this year. I want to stay within the mountain biking community. I still love it and do my best to encourage other people to

become involved in it.

#### **What advice can you give to FFA members who are chasing their own dreams?**

First of all, really enjoy what you do, and set small goals for yourself if you're trying to improve on whatever it is, whether it's a new job after school, a new sporting event or anything having to do with FFA.

Envisioning yourself reaching these little goals

is great motivation for continuing anything you do for the rest of your life. And never say never. I found myself feeling like everyone else was on the pedestal and I never would be able to get up there. The next thing you know, with a lot of focus and perseverance, I was fortunate enough to be in that spot. So I know that hard work and perseverance can get you where you want to go.\*

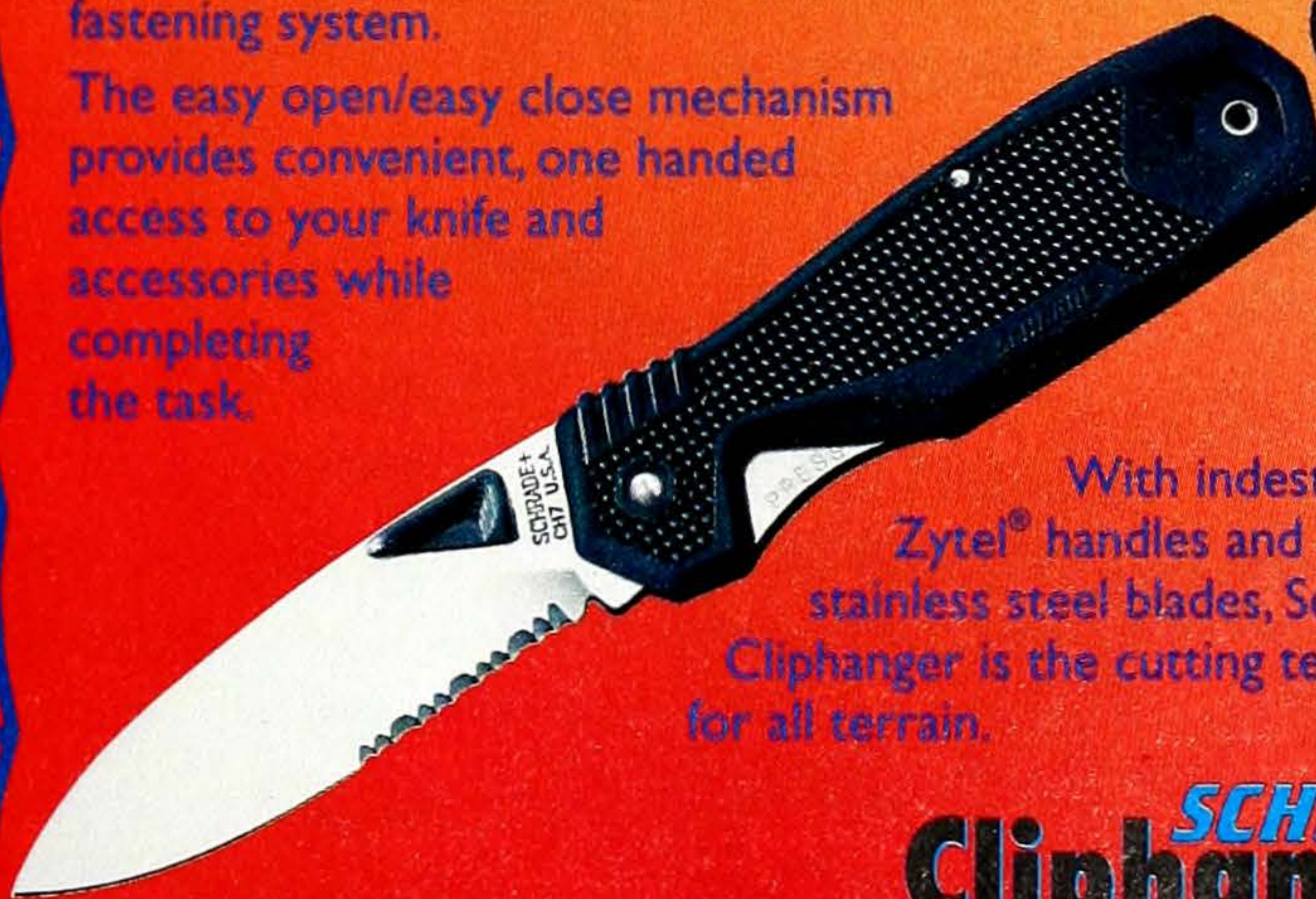
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# What's Hot What's Not

In the last issue of FFA New Horizons we asked you to write us with your picks for "What's Hot/What's Not." Here's what you had to say.

(Don't forget to fill out the new survey on page 16!)

## Hot

**actress:**  
Demi Moore

**actor:**  
Tom Cruise

**movie:**  
Romeo and Juliet

**athlete:**  
Brett Favre

**musician:**  
George Strait

**book:**  
A Time to Kill by John Grisham

**place to go:**  
The rodeo

**sport:**  
Basketball

**clothes:**  
Wranglers

**tv show:**  
Home Improvement

**fundraiser:**  
Fruit sales

**career:**  
Veterinarian

## Not

**actress:**  
Pamela Anderson

**actor:**  
Jim Carrey

**movie:**  
Dumb and Dumber

**athlete:**  
Dennis Rodman

**musician:**  
Alanis Morissette

**book:**  
Books by R.L. Stine

**place to go:**  
The mall

**sport:**  
Golf

**clothes:**  
Baggy

**tv show:**  
Ellen

**fundraiser:**  
Car Wash

**career:**  
Lawyer

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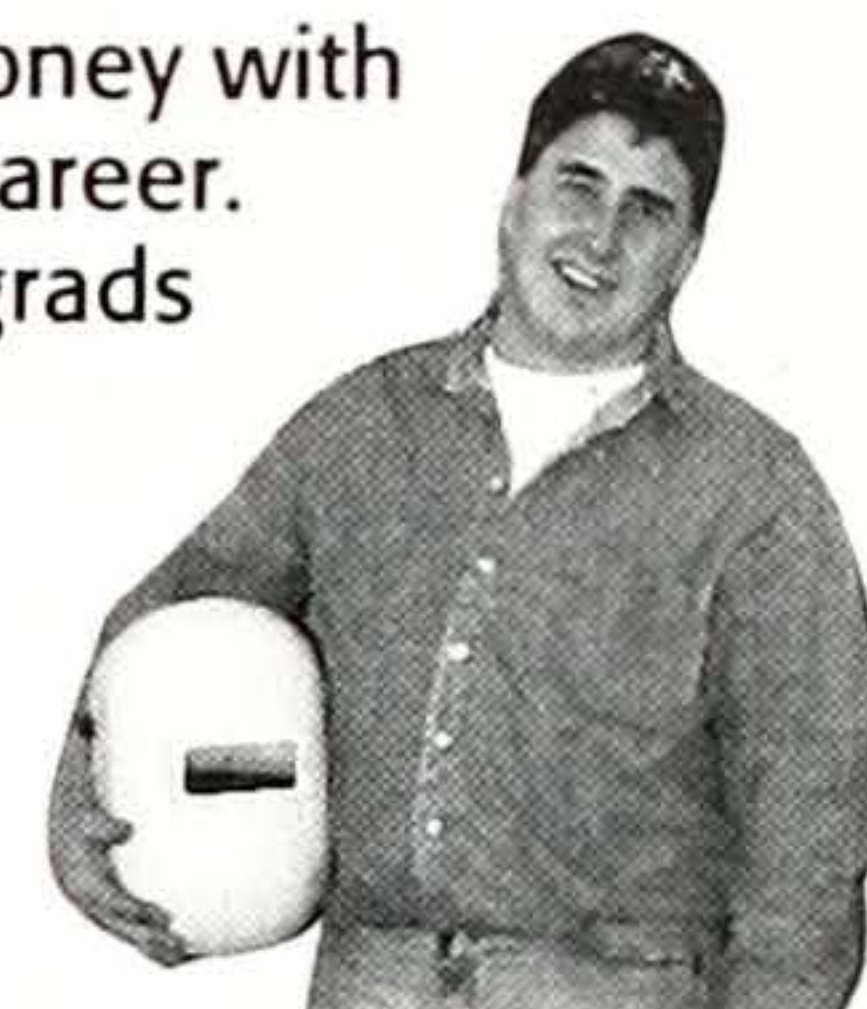
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FOR INFORMATION contact the Student Ambassador Coordinator, c/o American Royal Assn., 1701 American Royal Court. Kansas City, MO. 64102



# Last Laff

**Q:** Why did the apple like the banana?

**A:** Because it had appeal.

**Katherine Hull**

*Enosburgh Falls, Vermont*

**Q:** Why do people think tomatoes are slow?

**A:** Because we are always making them catch-up.

**Sheri Howard**

*Coin, Iowa*

**Q:** Why do you wear two pairs of underwear when you play golf?

**A:** In case you get a hole in one.

**Russ Knopp**

*Okeene, Oklahoma*

**Q:** Why did the fly fly?

**A:** Because the spider spied her.

**Jacob Hesse**

*Sedalia, Missouri*

**Q:** Why did the elephant eat 50 light bulbs?

**A:** He wanted to eat a light meal.

**Price Patterson**

*Daphe, Alabama*

**Q:** Why did the football coach go to the bank?

**A:** To get his quarter back.

**Angelica Briseno**

*Rosharon, Texas*

**Q:** What did the duck say to the store clerk?

**A:** Please put the item on my bill.

**Andy Ford**

*Millport, Alabama*

**Q:** Why did the belt and the suspenders go to prison?

**A:** They were guilty of holding up a pair of pants.

**Kurt DeMoe**

*Frederic, Wisconsin*

**Q:** Why did the bee go to the doctor?

**A:** It had hives.

**Steve Pacheco**

*Tulare, California*

**Q:** If a waiter were carrying a turkey on a dish and let it fall, what three national calamities would occur?

**A:** The downfall of Turkey, the breakup of China, and the overthrow of Greece.

**Stephen Blackburn**

*Warsaw, North Carolina*

**Q:** What did the farmer say when he lost his tractor?

**A:** Where's my tractor?

**Amanda Jo Stilson**

*Cottonwood, Arizona*

**Q:** Where do sheep get their haircut?

**A:** At the baa-baa shop.

**Luis Aspietia**

*Sacramento, California*

**Q:** What don't you bring a sick chicken?

**A:** Chicken soup.

**David Mays**

*Roseland, Virginia*

**FFA New Horizons will pay \$5.00 for each joke selected for Last Laff. Jokes must be addressed to:**

**FFA New Horizons/Last Laff  
5632 Mt. Vernon Memorial  
Highway P.O. Box 15160  
Alexandria, VA 22309-0160**

**In case of duplication, payment will be for the first one received. Contributions cannot be acknowledged or returned.**

## Agri-nuts by Jim Bradshaw and Michael Bettendorf



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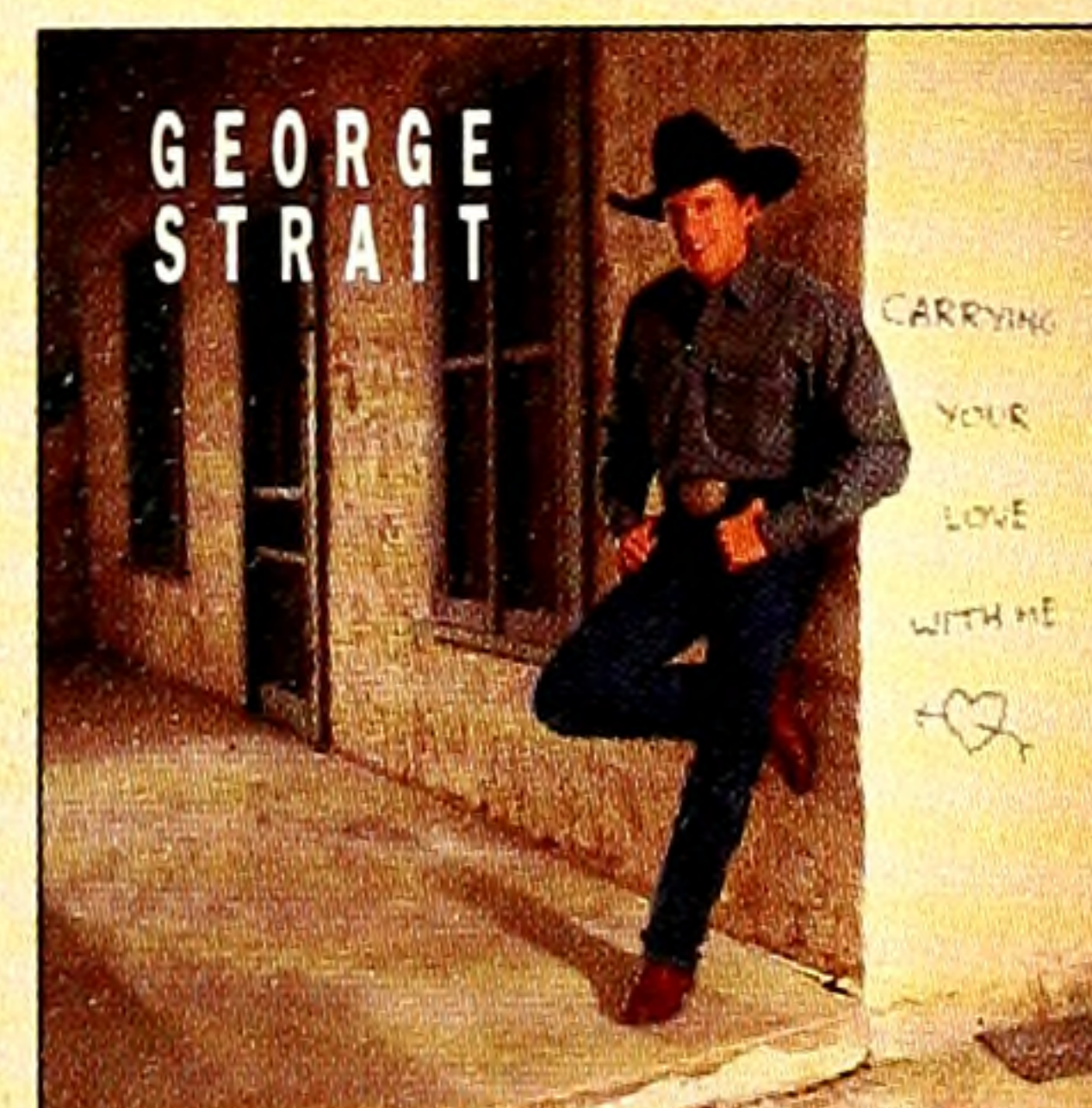




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