

new horizons

The magazine of the National FFA Organization

January/February 2000



the power of two

ACCIDENT YIELDS A NEW APPRECIATION OF LIFE

lighting up
louisville

REPORT FROM THE 72ND
NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION



Tony Latham Wins Tractor from JDC™

Congratulations, Tony!



"Tony plans to show his Classic 4020 John Deere Tractor and use it in the Homecoming Parade."

Tony Latham, Dwight, Illinois, enjoys the challenge of "making things better." As the winner of the John Deere Credit restored, classic John Deere 4020 Tractor at the 1999 National FFA Convention the high school freshman may use the tractor to help fulfill his dream of becoming a mechanical engineer.

Tony's name was drawn from more than 125,000 entries in the 6th Annual John Deere Credit "We Understand Getting Started Classic

4020 Tractor Program" at the 1999 National FFA Convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, in late October. "I can't believe I won," said Tony when John Deere Credit called to give him the exciting news.

John Deere Credit salutes the 425,000 FFA students nationwide, and is proud to sponsor the "We Understand Getting Started" program. Making things better for young people entering the agricultural profession is one of our goals at John Deere Credit – just like we've been making things better for generations of farm families.

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The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

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Go behind the scenes at "Let's Talk Gardening," a Saturday evening radio talk show, where the conversation is never dull, the advice is always good and the hosts feel lucky to get paid for talking about their gardens.

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Get our first report from the 72nd National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Check out the fireworks, the excitement and the entertainment. And meet some of the FFA members who made it special.

26 The Art of the Curl



In what other sport can you legally use brooms and stones? Throw in some ice and you have a sport that made its first Olympic appearance in 1998. Curling is now gaining popularity as more and more people are trying it for the first time.

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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.

On the cover: Kenny McFarland (left) and Mitchell Bloxham. Photo by Shane Morgan

Check
out National
FFA Online
www.ffa.org

one on one with Chris Vitelli

cvitelli@ffa.org

How did it feel to become the first national FFA president to be elected in Louisville and the first to serve in the new century? Wow! It was a great feeling running wildly down to the stage to greet the rest of the team when my name was called out. Having the opportunity to serve on the first team elected in Louisville and the first team of the new century is incredible. I am just very thankful for my blessings and will always value the history we made at the 72nd National FFA Convention.

Describe your most rewarding experience prior to becoming a national officer. Prior to national office, my most rewarding experience would definitely be my year of service as a state FFA officer. I met some of the most amazing FFA members, advisors, business and industry representatives, and parents. It's very rewarding to know that in one year, you can impact so many lives.

Of all the places you've been, what is your favorite, and why?

This past August I participated in a mission to Italy, where I shared my religious faith with thousands of Italians. Italy has to be one of the most beautiful and romantic countries in the world. It was awesome to

spend time in devotion by myself in the mountains and pray about my life. Both of my dad's parents are originally from Italy, so I felt proud to be a descendant from that country.

How would you describe agriculture in your home state of Florida?

Our agricultural industry is very diverse. North Florida's agriculture consists of forestry, peanuts and cotton, while South Florida is known for citrus, fruits, vegetables and horticulture. I'm proud to live in Plant City, the world's winter strawberry capital. When most people think of Florida, they think beaches and Disney World, but our agricultural industry brings in more revenue than tourism.

What does the exclamation point mean?

As we enter the millennium, we will all create new goals and standards for ourselves. It is my challenge to myself and others to put an "exclamation point" on those dreams and make the beginning of the Millennium memorable and successful. In order to take it to the next level, we must take it to the extreme.★

VITALS

Hometown:

Plant City, Florida

Age: 20

Chapter: Plant City FFA

Advisor: Ray Clark and Jane Bender

SAE: Ag communications and feeder steer and swine

Education: Sophomore at University of Florida

Major: Agricultural education and agricultural leadership

Last good movie:

The Green Mile

Last good book: Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

Favorite kind of music:

Christian rock and pop

TIMELINE

Age

- 13 • joined FFA
- 15 • elected FFA chapter reporter
- 16 • lost FFA district president election
- won FFA district extemporaneous public speaking competition
- elected FFA chapter vice president
- 17 • elected FFA chapter and district President
- won FFA state extemporaneous public speaking competition
- elected state FFA vice president
- 18 • won FFA national extemporaneous public speaking competition
- 20 • elected national FFA officer



National president: Chris Vitelli

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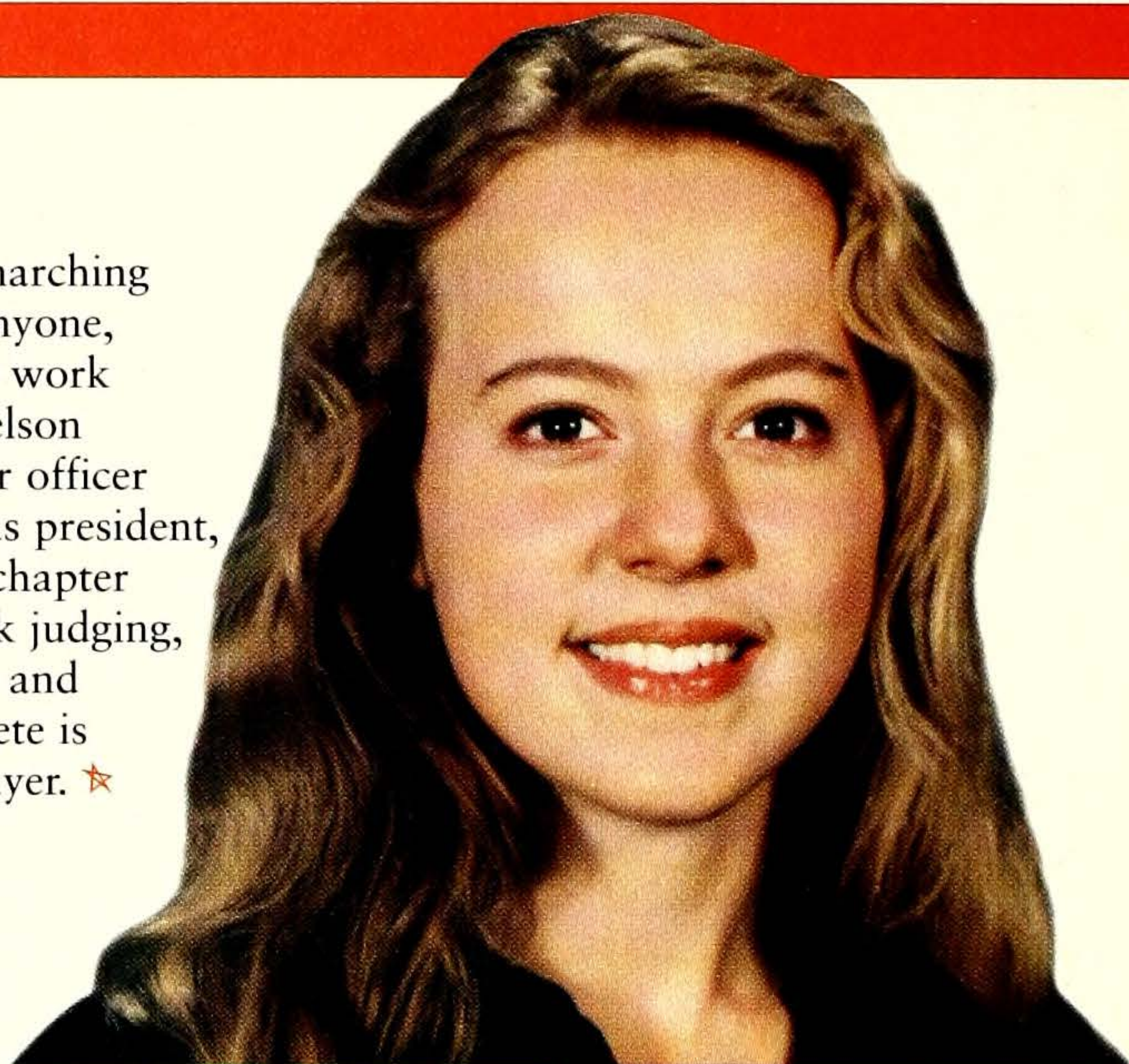
To nominate yourself or another FFA member for "FFA Stars," drop us a detailed note telling us why you or your nominee is a star. Include a photo and the nominee's name, address, phone and birthdate. If nominating someone else, include your name and phone number.

Mail to:

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Kathryn Watts

As a drum major in the high school marching band, Kathryn, perhaps better than anyone, knows what it means to get people to work together. That's why she's now the Nelson FFA Chapter President. This third-year officer leads by example. Besides her duties as president, Kathryn gets involved in all kinds of chapter activities, such as FFA camps, livestock judging, soil judging, parliamentary procedure and public speaking. This three-sport athlete is also an accomplished French horn player. ★

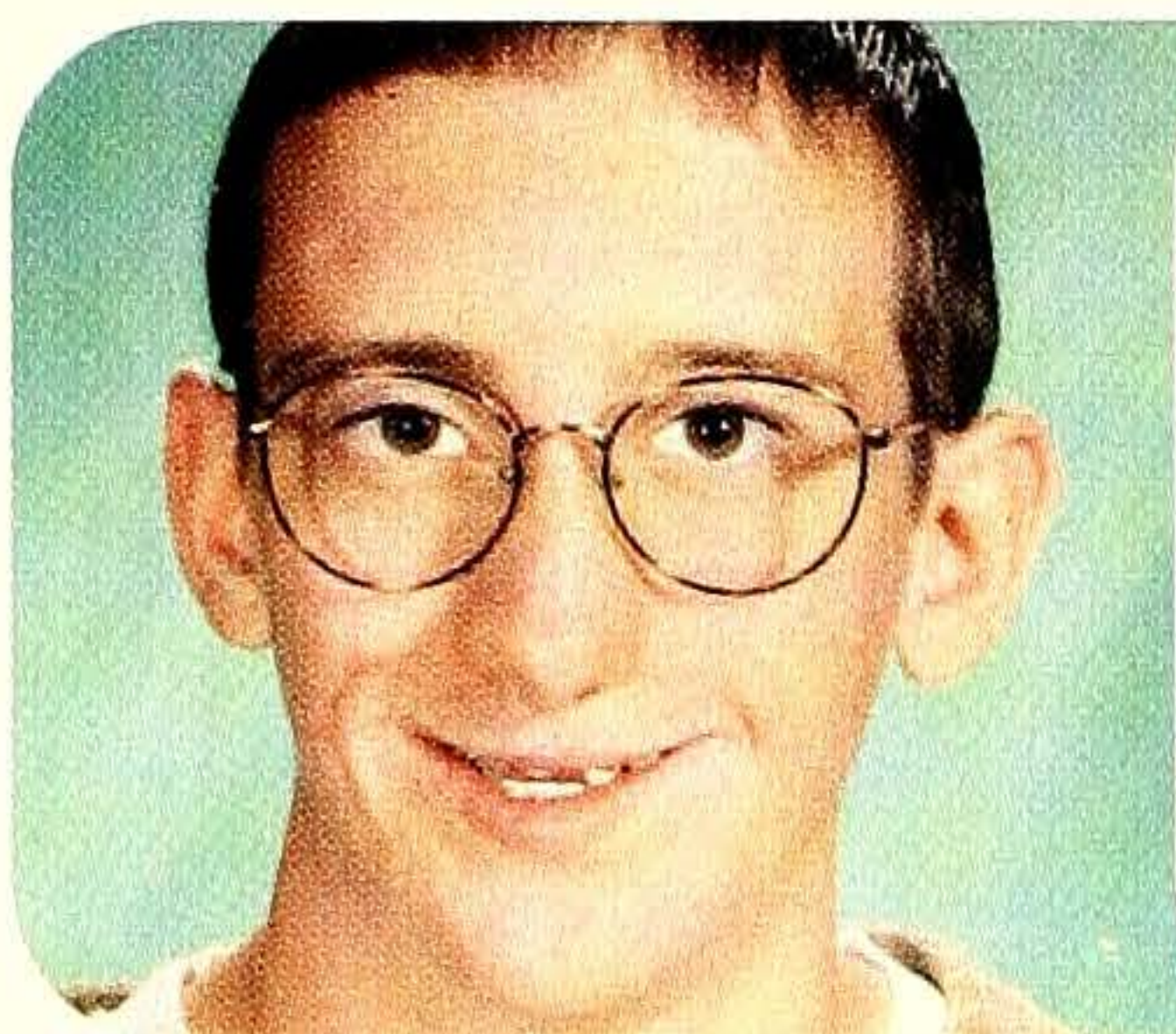


ILLINOIS

CALIFORNIA

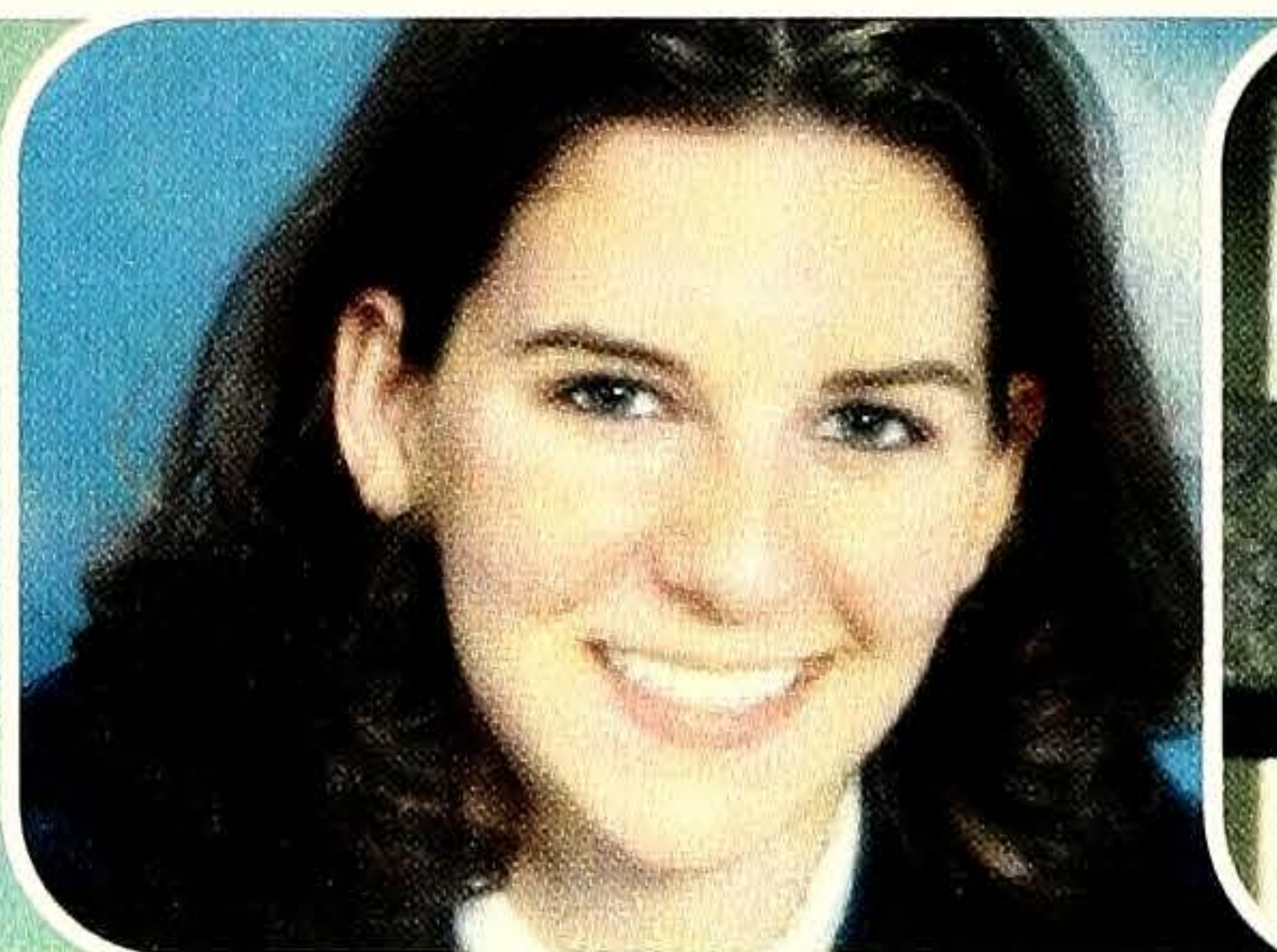
VIRGINIA

OREGON



Brandon Oxley

Seventeen-year-old Brandon is frequently seen at FFA events carrying around a camera, looking for a shot to use in the school yearbook. This Northwestern FFA Chapter member has an eye for success. He made the trip to the national FFA convention last year and works hard on his SAE projects in crop production and home and community development. He spends the remainder of his time with a youth choir, student council and honors band. ★



Molly Fagundes

Running is what Molly likes to do, whether it's for the school track team or for FFA office. At 17, this Atwater FFA Chapter member has accomplished a lot in both areas, but she also takes a great amount of pride in her SAE projects, which she maintains at two local ranches. Molly competes in horse judging, parliamentary procedure, and her stellar reporting skills recently earned her the State Star Reporter title. Molly also volunteers at a local hospital. ★



Billy Manuel

This Sherando FFA Chapter member restores rusty pickups for fun. But 17-year-old Billy is all business when it comes to leading his chapter. Billy worked his way to chapter vice president, a role that allows him to motivate and help others. Besides his involvement in multiple CDEs, Billy spends countless hours on his horticulture SAE, and expanded his leadership skills last July, when he represented the Virginia Council of Farmers Cooperatives at their national convention. ★



Cassie Crow

At 18 years of age, Cassie is already a working journalist. As part of the "Young Voices" project at the Albany Democrat-Herald newspaper, this Scio FFA Chapter member enjoys writing about FFA news, such as her chapter's recent trip to the National FFA Convention. Cassie maintains 26 goats as part of her SAE project. A state FFA degree recipient, Cassie is also a top-notch speaker, which comes in handy when she teaches Sunday school to local youngsters. ★

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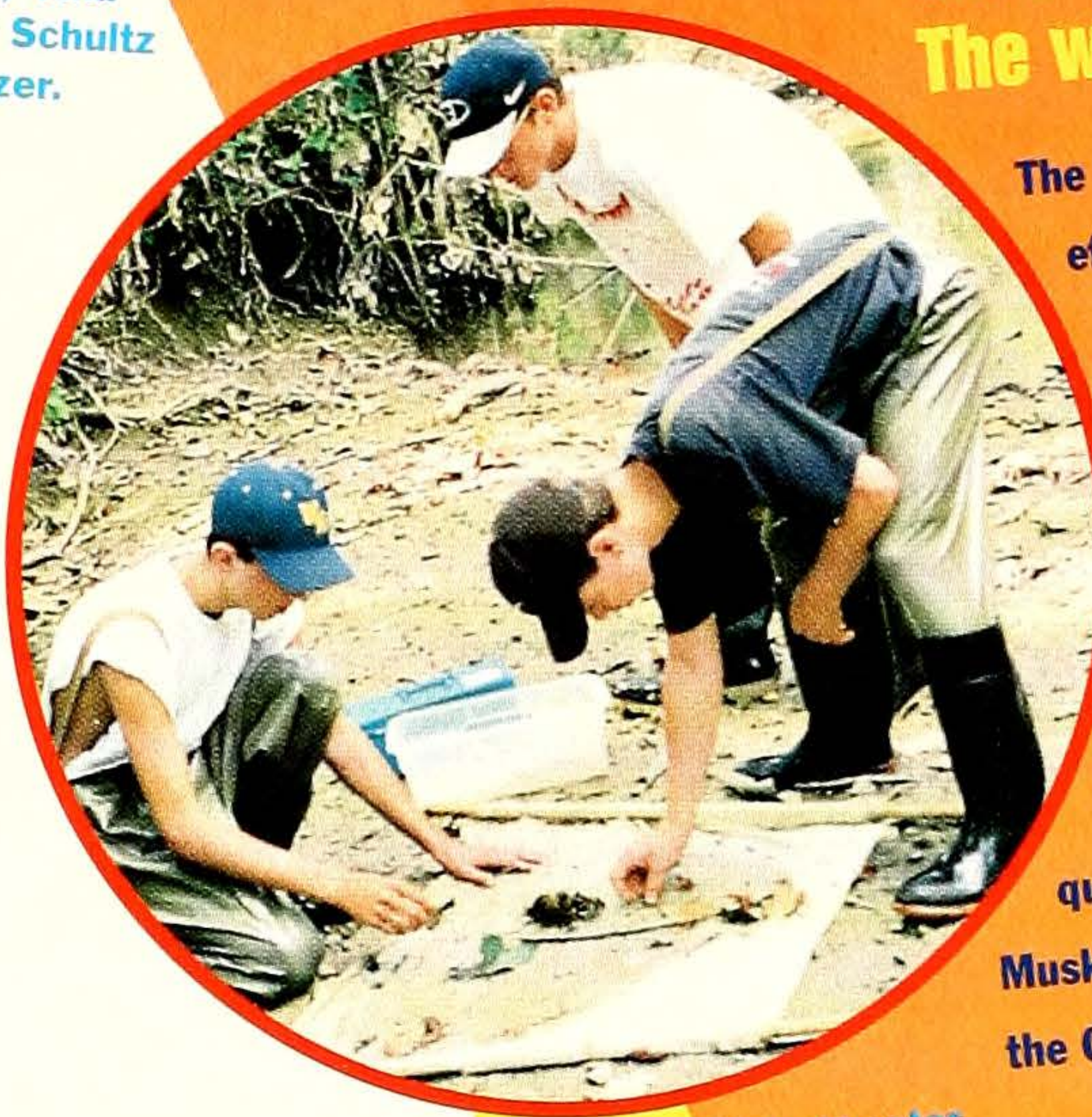


Debbie Hartman (far left), director of the Augusta County SCPA, receives a \$1,000 check from Beverly Manor Middle School FFA Chapter members Emily Conroy, Gina Smith, Jason Schultz and Cole Hiezer.

VIRGINIA

FFA Week for the animals

Members of the Beverly Manor Middle School FFA Chapter decided to use FFA Week to help out the August County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A week of schoolwide activities included a Prettiest Pet contest, in which students voted on animals with their spare change. The chapter members also encouraged homeroom classes to donate 25 pet goods and/or dollars. The chapter then presented SPCA with a check for \$1,000 and a pickup load full of pet supplies and food.



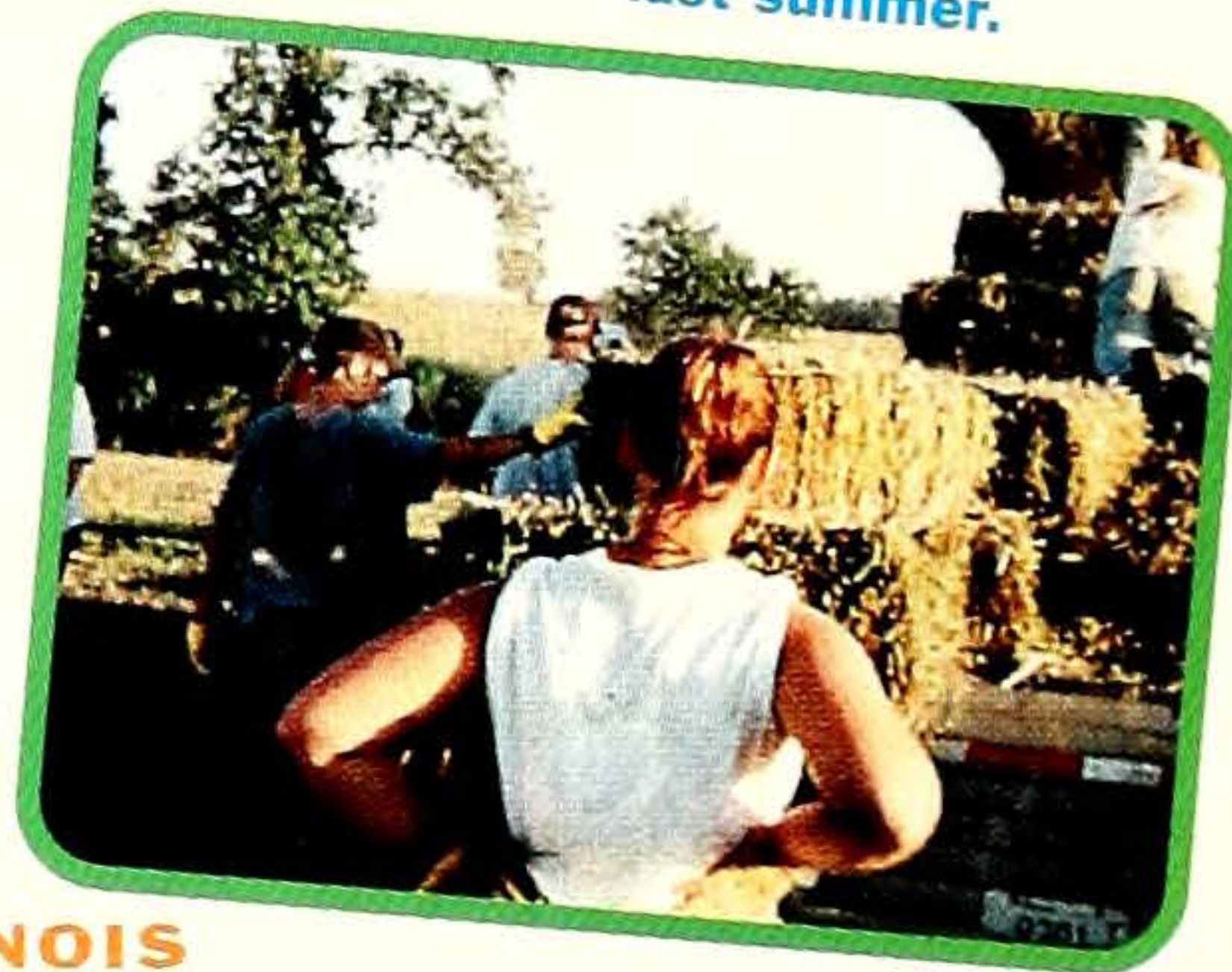
West Muskingum FFA Chapter members search their net for aquatic life to be used in the data collection on water quality in local streams.

OHIO

The waterboys

The West Muskingum FFA Chapter continues its efforts in helping to keep Ohio's waterways clean. They recently performed stream quality assessments on five local streams: Licking River, Timber Run, Kents Run, Poverty Run and Barkers Run. For each assessment, members take water samples for testing, then collect macroinvertebrates and aquatic insects, which will also help determine stream quality. The data collected is submitted to the Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District and the Ohio Environmental Protection Administration.

Olney FFA Chapter members load hay bales onto a truck headed for drought-stricken Oklahoma last summer.



ILLINOIS

Hay on the way

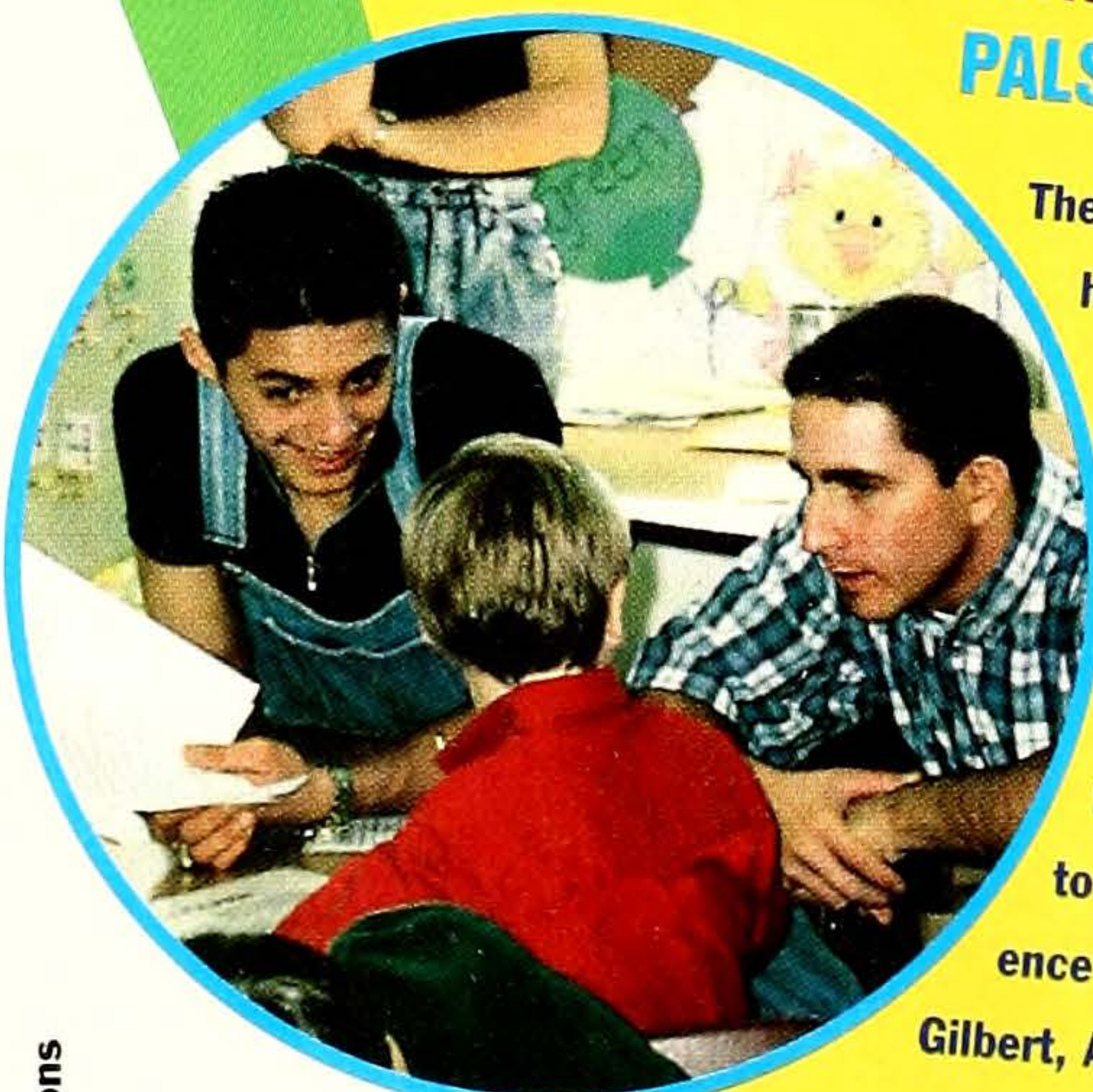
Led by member Mark Scherer, the Olney FFA Chapter spearheaded a hay relief effort last summer for the drought-stricken farmers in Oklahoma. In a cooperative FFA effort that crossed state lines, the Olney members collected hundreds of hay bales and delivered most of them directly to Oklahoma FFA chapters, from where the bales were dispersed to local farmers and ranchers in need.

Submitted by Shawna Coleman, Olney FFA Chapter Reporter

ARIZONA

PALS program a hit

The FFA chapters from Gilbert, Mesquite and Highland high schools in the city of Gilbert are making a splash in the elementary schools with their PALS (Partners in Active Learning Support) program. As Andrea Hackenbracht, an elementary teacher whose class participates, says, her students are 'psyched' about the program because they get to hang out with high school kids, whom they look up to very much. For the FFA members, it's an experience that builds maturity and self-worth. A win-win for Gilbert, Arizona.



Two Gilbert FFA members get to know an elementary student through their participation in PALS.

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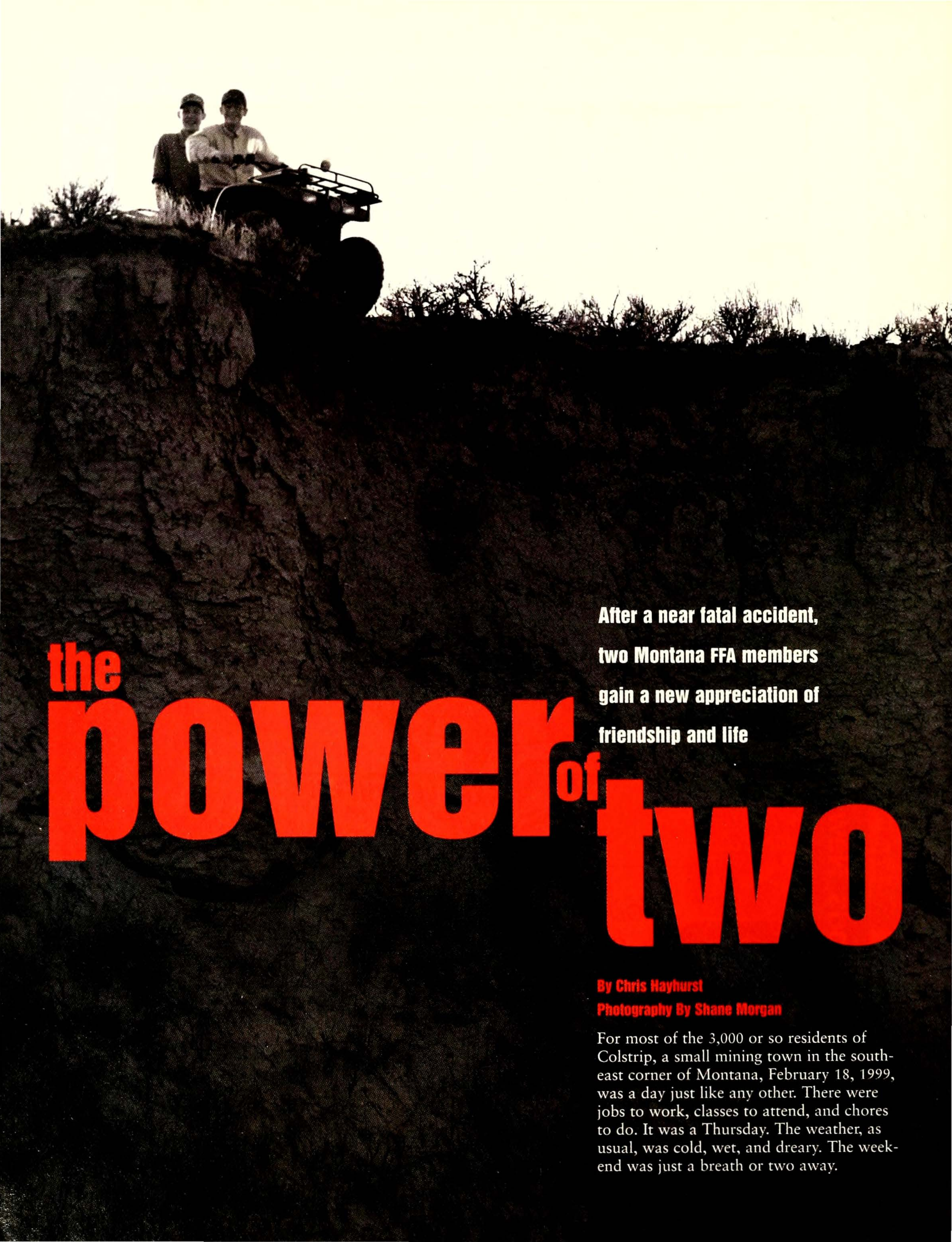
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the power of two

**After a near fatal accident,
two Montana FFA members
gain a new appreciation of
friendship and life**

By Chris Hayhurst

Photography By Shane Morgan

For most of the 3,000 or so residents of Colstrip, a small mining town in the south-east corner of Montana, February 18, 1999, was a day just like any other. There were jobs to work, classes to attend, and chores to do. It was a Thursday. The weather, as usual, was cold, wet, and dreary. The weekend was just a breath or two away.

As the day drew to a close for Colstrip High School juniors and good friends Mitchell Bloxham and Kenny McFarland, however, things were anything but normal. Mitchell, an FFA member interested in ag mechanics and livestock, was face down and unconscious in an icy creek. Kenny, also in the FFA and contemplating a future career in the Air Force, was, in fact, airborne.

Routine turns into rescue

Seconds earlier, with the school day over and time to kill before their FFA ag mechanics practice, the two were riding across a friend's cattle pasture on a borrowed four-wheeler. Mitchell was at the wheel with Kenny just behind him. "It was pretty rainy and muddy and hazy out," recalls Kenny. "You really couldn't see very far ahead." Mitchell took them down a hill, turned the vehicle around, and began to ascend another hill. Then, on a whim, he turned to the right. Kenny, looking over Mitchell's shoulder from the rear, sensed trouble. "I just had this gut feeling that it wasn't right," he recalls. "I could see treetops just ahead. So I bailed."

As Kenny jumped from the four-wheeler, he grabbed at Mitchell in an attempt to take him with him. But Mitchell didn't budge. He was, as Kenny puts it, "going for the ride." A split-second later he and the four-wheeler launched into the air and disappeared over the edge of a 48-foot embankment.

What happened next is anybody's guess, as Mitchell blacked out and Kenny was too far from the cliff's edge to witness the accident. When Kenny did manage

to peer down through the fog, however, he could see that he had to act fast. Mitchell was face down in an icy stream, and he wasn't moving.

"I thought he was dead," recalls Kenny. "I had to go

"I just had this gut feeling that it wasn't right."

off after him." So he did. After a 12-foot vertical drop, the dirt embankment tapered to a steep ramp, and Kenny tumbled to its base without hurting himself. But there, he ran into another obstacle. "Mitchell was too far off the bank for me to reach him," he remembers. "So I jumped in." Chest-deep in the freezing water, Kenny managed to reach Mitchell and drag him back to shore. As he did he whistled as loud as he could using a coyote call made from a pen cap in his pocket.

Rapid response

Out of the water and on the bank, Kenny finally got a decent look at Mitchell. He had a pulse. Good. But he wasn't breathing.

"I wasn't mentally ready to give him mouth-to-mouth yet," recalls Kenny, who had recently completed a first-aid course. "I wasn't giving up." He smacked Mitchell on the face then tapped his chest with his fingers. Miraculously, Mitchell coughed and began to breathe again. Kenny tipped him on his side and ran for help.

Meanwhile, three-quarters of a mile away, the boys' friends heard Kenny's shrill whistle, hopped in their truck, and sped out toward the creek. Before long they had Mitchell, who was now awake, back at the

house and awaiting an ambulance.

Recalling the accident today is difficult for Mitchell. His mind has erased everything from the moment he lost control to the time the ambulance

arrived. He does know, however, that he's fortunate he didn't get seriously hurt. In fact, he escaped with little more than a minor concussion, a few scrapes and bruises, and hypothermia. "I'm lucky," he admits. "Kenny definitely saved my life."

As classmates again for another year, Mitchell and Kenny remain good friends. They go on FFA trips together, and can often be found eating lunch together or cheering on the Colstrip Colts football and basketball teams. Life, once again, is business as usual. ★

Safe Riding

Take some precautions before you ride

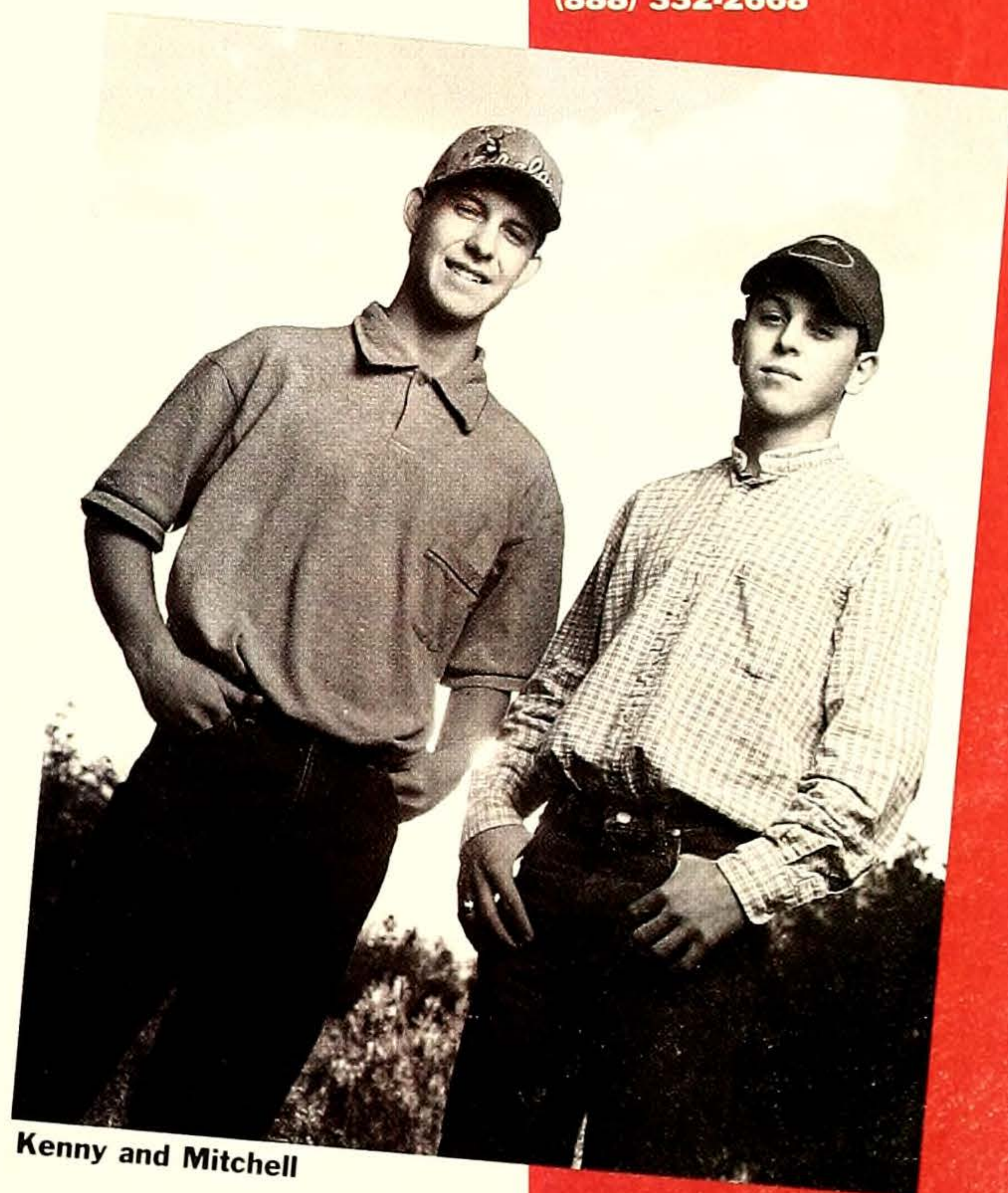
All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are very popular for farm use and recreation. But a quick look at some statistics shows that more safety precautions need to be taken. Estimates indicate that 3,200 ATV-related deaths occurred from 1985 to 1997. Many deaths and injuries could be avoided if riders simply wore helmets. Other safety hazards include high-speed riding and children and young adults riding ATVs that are too large for them to handle. For more information on ATV safety, contact the following organizations:

ATV Safety Institute
(800) 887-2887

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety
<http://research.marshfieldclinic.org/children/>
(888) 924-7233

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
www.nohvcc.org
(800) 348-6487

FFA's Partners for Safer Community
Call for a PSC kit \$20.00
(888) 332-2668



Kenny and Mitchell

body & soul

This is the start of a new section on Healthy Lifestyles where we share information and thoughts on issues you face everyday. We want to know what issues are important to you. Right now, the National FFA Healthy Lifestyles committee is focused on five issues but this can be changed based upon your feelings.

The five issues are drug and alcohol (including tobacco) prevention, crime and violence prevention in schools, AIDS/HIV and STD awareness and prevention, agricultural safety and nutrition. Write to fsaldana@ffa.org and share ideas about what your chapter is doing in any of these areas or ideas you might have for other issues you think that we should address. And if you are interested in agricultural communications, consider entering our PSA contest with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Your work can be used for your CDE in 2000 or as your SAE project. You can win the chance to have your public service announcement (print, radio, television, website or billboard) appear in national media including on Channel One television. Write to ppryor@ffa.org for your free PSA kit with application and Check out the FFA website www.ffa.org/activities/healthy/body.html

Jenny was so happy about the house they had found.
For once in her life 'twas on the right side of town.'

She unpacked her things with such great ease.
As she watched her new curtains blow in the breeze.

How wonderful it was to have her own room.
School would be starting, she'd have friends over soon.

There'd be sleep-overs, and parties; she was so happy.
It's just the way she wanted her life to be.

On the first day of school, everything went great.
She made new friends and even got a date!

She thought, "I want to be popular and I'm going to be,
Because I just got a date with the star of the team!"

To be known in this school you had to have a clout,
And dating this guy would sure help her out.

There was only one problem stopping her fate.
Her parents had said she was too young to date.

"Well, I just won't tell them the entire truth.
They won't know the difference; what's there to lose?"

Jenny asked to stay with her friends that night.
Her parents frowned but said, "All right."

Excited, she got ready for the big event
But as she rushed around like she had no sense,

She began to feel guilty about all the lies,
But what's a pizza, a party, and a moonlight ride?

Well the pizza was good, and the party was great,
But the moonlight ride would have to wait.

For Jeff was half drunk by this time.
But he kissed her and said that he was just fine.

Then the room filled with smoke and Jeff took a puff.
Jenny couldn't believe he was smoking that stuff.

Now Jeff was ready to ride to the point
But only after he'd smoked another joint.

They jumped in the car for the moonlight ride,
Not thinking that he was too drunk to drive.

They finally made it to the point at last,
And Jeff started trying to make a pass.

A pass is not what Jenny wanted at all
(and by a pass, I don't mean playing football).

"Perhaps my parents were right...maybe I am too young.
Boy how could I ever, ever be so dumb."

With all of her might, she pushed Jeff away:
"Please take me home, I don't want to stay."

Jeff cranked up the engine and floored the gas.
In a matter of seconds they were going too fast.

As Jeff drove on in a fit of wild anger,
Jenny knew that her life was in danger.

She begged and pleaded for him to slow down,
But he just got faster as they neared the town.

"Just let me get home! I'll confess that I lied.
I really went out for a moonlight ride."

Then all of a sudden, she saw a big flash.
"Oh God, Please help us! We're going to crash!"

She doesn't remember the force of impact.
Just that everything all of a sudden went black.

She felt someone remove her from the twisted rubble,
And heard, "Call an ambulance! These kids are in trouble!"

Voices she heard...a few words at best.
But she knew there were two cars involved in the wreck.

Then wondered to herself if Jeff was all right,
And if the people in the other car were alive.

She awoke in the hospital to faces so sad.
"You've been in a wreck and it looks pretty bad."

These voices echoed inside her head,
As they gently told her that Jeff was dead.

They said "Jenny, we've done all we can do.
But it looks as if we'll lose you too."

"But the people in the other car!?" Jenny cried.
"We're sorry, Jenny, they also died."

Jenny prayed, "God, forgive me for what I've done
I only wanted to have just one night of fun."

"Tell those people's family, I've made their lives dim,
And wish I could return their families to them.

"Tell Mom and Dad I'm sorry I lied,
And that it's my fault so many have died.

Oh, nurse, won't you please tell them that for me?"
The nurse just stood there—she never agreed.

But took Jenny's hand with tears in her eyes
And a few moments later Jenny died.

A man asked the nurse, "Why didn't you do your best
To bid that girl her one last request?"

She looked at the man with eyes oh so sad.
"Because the people in the other car were her mom and dad."

This story is sad and unpleasant but true,
So young people take heed, it could have been you.

Drinking and driving is not cool.
Be careful of your habits and
who you're hanging with.
Give everything a second thought.

The latest surveys are in. Once again, Titanic is the big loser. Eddie Murphy's career sees a resurgence, as does farming. Anchovies, anyone?

hot

varsity blues

movie

titanic

not

hot

drew barrymore

female actor

kate winslet

not

hot

will smith

actor

leonardo dicaprio

not

hot

eddie murphy

tv personality

drew carey

not

hot

pepperoni

pizza topping

anchovies

not

hot

summer

season

winter

not

hot

earth

planet

pluto

not

hot

stephen king

author

r.l. stine

not

hot

pizza

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spaghetti

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artist

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not

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talkradio

By Erich Gaukel

Horticulture hits the airwaves
in Chicago



Mike at the mike

You're trying to decide on a career. Well, let's see, you've got a knack for public speaking, but you've always wanted to be involved in horticulture.



You might have to choose one and go with it. But not so fast. In today's information age, you can combine these two areas of interest and come up with an entirely new kind of career. Mike Nowak, the host of the "Let's Talk Gardening" show on WGN Radio in Chicago is a living example of this.

We recently caught up with him at the WGN studios in downtown Chicago. It's a warm fall Saturday night. Mike stares at his uncooperative computer. He's trying to print something and it's not working. It's just minutes before the start of his show.

With no time left to spare, he grabs his pile of gardening-related books and papers and heads for the air studio, where a long narrow table crawling with microphones and computers fills the room. He grabs his chair and throws on his headphones. A woman on the other side of a window reads a news update. Kathy O'Malley, the show's co-host, is back after making a coffee run across the street. The news ends and the "On Air" light is switched on. "Let's Talk Gardening" is underway.

On the air

In this cozy, isolated air studio, it's hard to believe that if every household within 100 miles of Chicago turned their radios to 720-AM at this moment, Mike's and Kathy's voices would be heard by several million people.

Mike, eager to get things

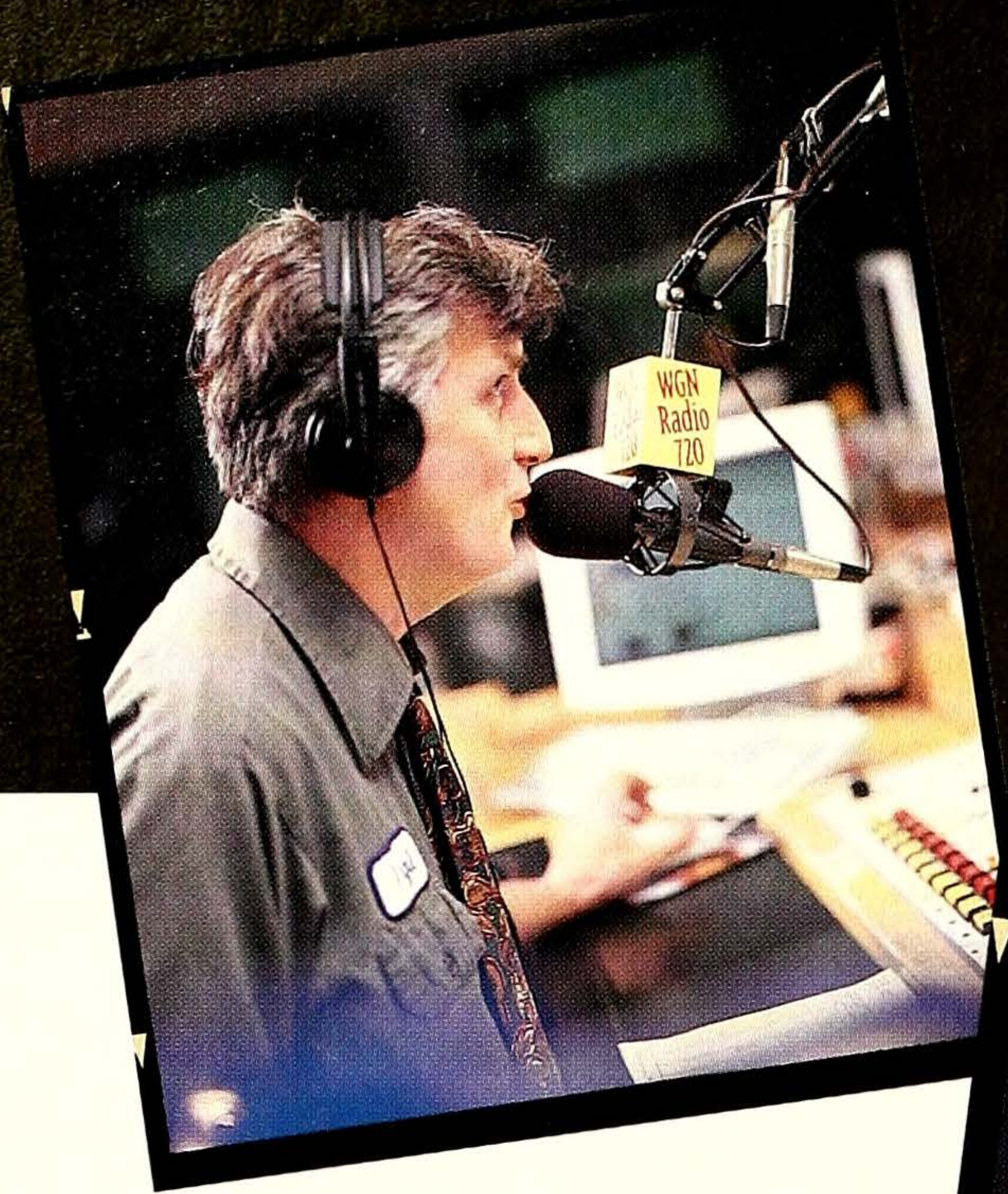
rolling, introduces the show and soon he and Kathy are discussing the recent infestations of Chicago's trees by a beetle that made its way here from China. The dialogue then moves to a common summertime problem in the city: vacation abandonment, where plants are neglected due to vacationing owners. Mike had recently lost three ferns while spending time in Washington State.

Soon, the phone banks light up. Callers from around the city and neighboring states are waiting to throw in their gardening questions. Mike and Kathy aren't horticulture experts, but they have plenty of hands-on gardening experience. When they can't answer a listener's question, they invite other listeners to call in with their solutions. "We know that a lot of our listeners know a heck of a lot more than we do," says Mike, who is just thrilled to get paid for talking about gardening.

Sure, listeners tune in to get gardening tips. But the real reason they're listening is to be entertained. Mike and Kathy keep the show lively, and the callers keep the topics, well, interesting.

Skunks and stumps

Jill is the first caller. She wants to know how to get skunks out of her garden. Mike and Kathy throw out a few skunk jokes, then Kathy admits she doesn't mind the smell of skunks. Mike, groaning in disgust, prepares to bring in two callers who have just buzzed in with their skunk solutions. Amy, the first to chime in, says skunks don't



like the smell of urine, so she advises Jill to send a dog out to the garden to “mark” the territory. She says moth-balls work too. The next caller says skunks don’t like light, so she recommends showering the garden with floodlights at night. Case closed.

The conversation now moves to tree stumps. Alice, the next caller, is having trouble removing a 6-year-old tree stump. Mike and Kathy throw out a few suggestions, like having a stump remover come in and

do the job. Alice says that’s impossible because the stump is wedged between a wood fence and a garage. Andy, the first caller to get through, says Alice should burn some charcoal on the stump and burn it down to the ground. No good. Too close to fence and garage. Valerie, the next caller, recommends sprinkling rock salt and water on the stump. Carolyn calls next and suggests digging around the stump with a shovel to cut off the roots. One last caller

says Alice needs to drill the stump out.

Satisfied that Louise has enough possible solutions to her stump problem, Mike moves on to such topics as water gardens, grub worms, compost and storing geraniums in the winter.

After a commercial break, the news anchor gives an update. As the

voice drones on about an earthquake in Taiwan and a local robbery, Kathy uses the breather to look over her notes and gardening reference books. Mike is fishing some gardening information off the Internet.

Back on the air

“Can I transplant my daylilies now?” says John,

What can I do now to prepare for a job like this?

We’re glad you asked. There are lots of fun ways to start building your resume right now. Start with a generous helping of horticulture in your Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Here, you can strive for proficiency awards in, of course, horticulture, but also related areas like floriculture, landscape management, turf grass management, nursery

operations, and fruit and/or vegetable production (some fruits are horticultural fruits). You can also go the Career Development Event (CDE) route in floriculture and nursery landscape. An FFA member doing research based in horticulture is also eligible for the Agri-Science Student Award program. Students with ideas for horticulture-based businesses

(or those who have businesses already in operation) are eligible for the Agri-Entrepreneurship program.

You can also take the agricultural communications path. Again, you can go with an SAE or CDE. Since communicating is an integral part of any career, you’ll do yourself a favor to also get involved in public

speaking competitions and just about any CDE (they all help you hone your speaking skills).

Check with your FFA advisor on the specifics of programs in your chapter. Find more information in your FFA student handbook or at www.ffa.org

If this sounds like a great job, here are FFA activities that will help you get there:

You can find out more about radio careers by visiting the Career Center at www.ffa.org or by contacting the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) at 26 Exchange Street East, Suite 307, St. Paul, MN 55101 (www.nafb.com).

You can listen to "Let's Talk Gardening" on the Internet most Saturday nights at www.wgnradio.com

the next caller. "Yes, do it now," Kathy says. Dan is next. He wants to know if he can use pressure-treated lumber to line the perimeter of his vegetable garden. Mike advises against this because the chemicals in the lumber can seep into the soil and, eventually, will end up in the food. Mike and Kathy agree that John should scrap the idea altogether or else line the lumber with plastic.

Mike and Kathy field several more calls before the show is over. All the while, it's like they're leaning on the backyard fence, talking to the neighbors, with dirt in their fingernails and the sun in their eyes. Not a bad way to make a living. ★



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FFA members who attended the 1999 National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, were treated to a spectacular fireworks show following the Reflections program.



lighting up Louisville

By Jeri Mattics

You're clapping and laughing with your new friends from across the country when, all of a sudden, the lights go down and laser beams start flashing across the auditorium. Your heartbeat quickens to match the pace of the pounding music. Just when you think the place can't rev any higher, a booming voice announces the national FFA officer team's arrival and Louisville's Freedom Hall absolutely erupts. Welcome to the 72nd National FFA Convention!



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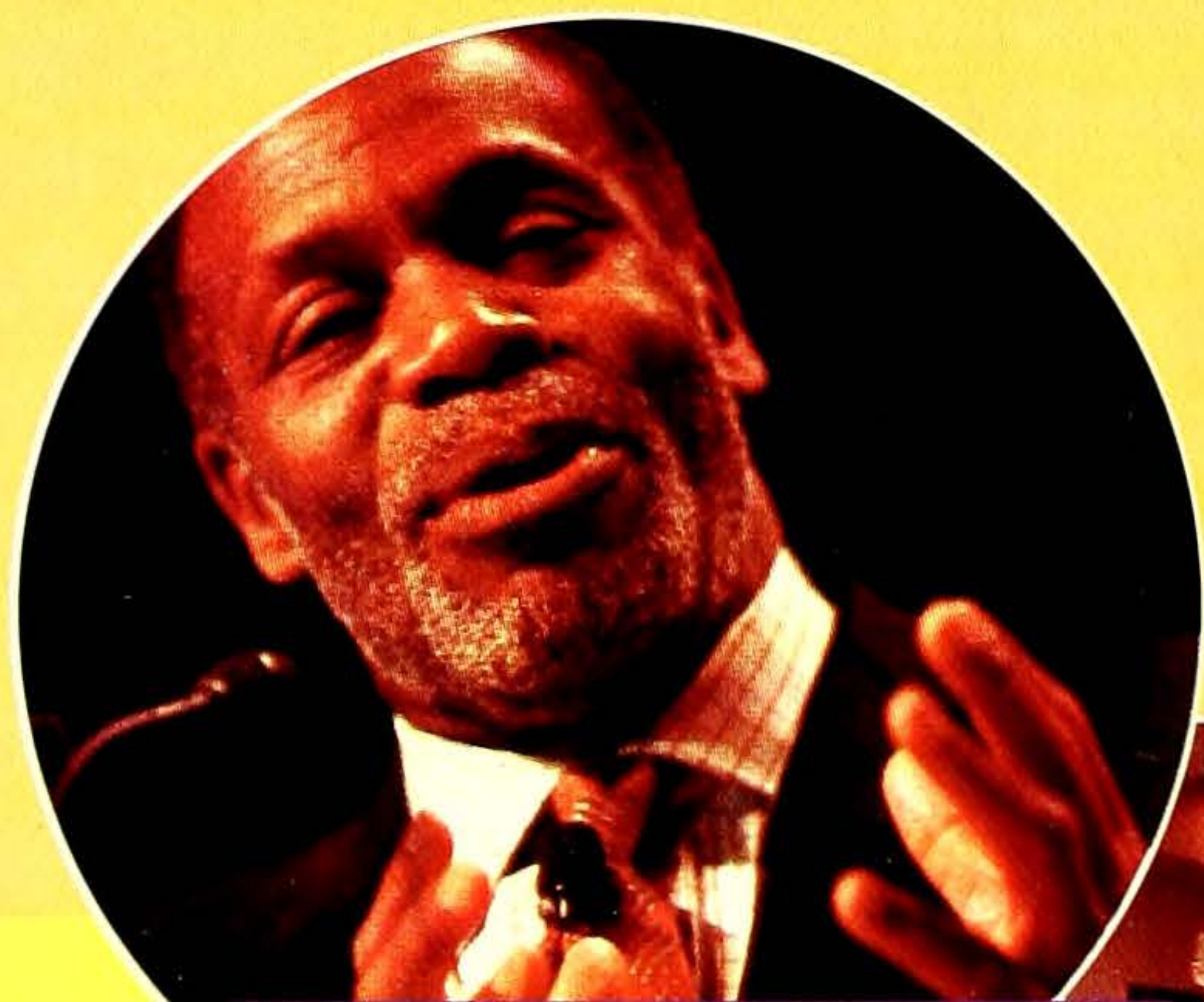
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The laser shows that opened each session weren't the only shining moments. As a way of welcoming FFA members to town, a fireworks extravaganza exploded across the night sky as FFA members departed Freedom Hall following the Reflections program. The fireworks exhibition entitled, "FFA-Lighting up Louisville," was sponsored by Fastline Publications as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

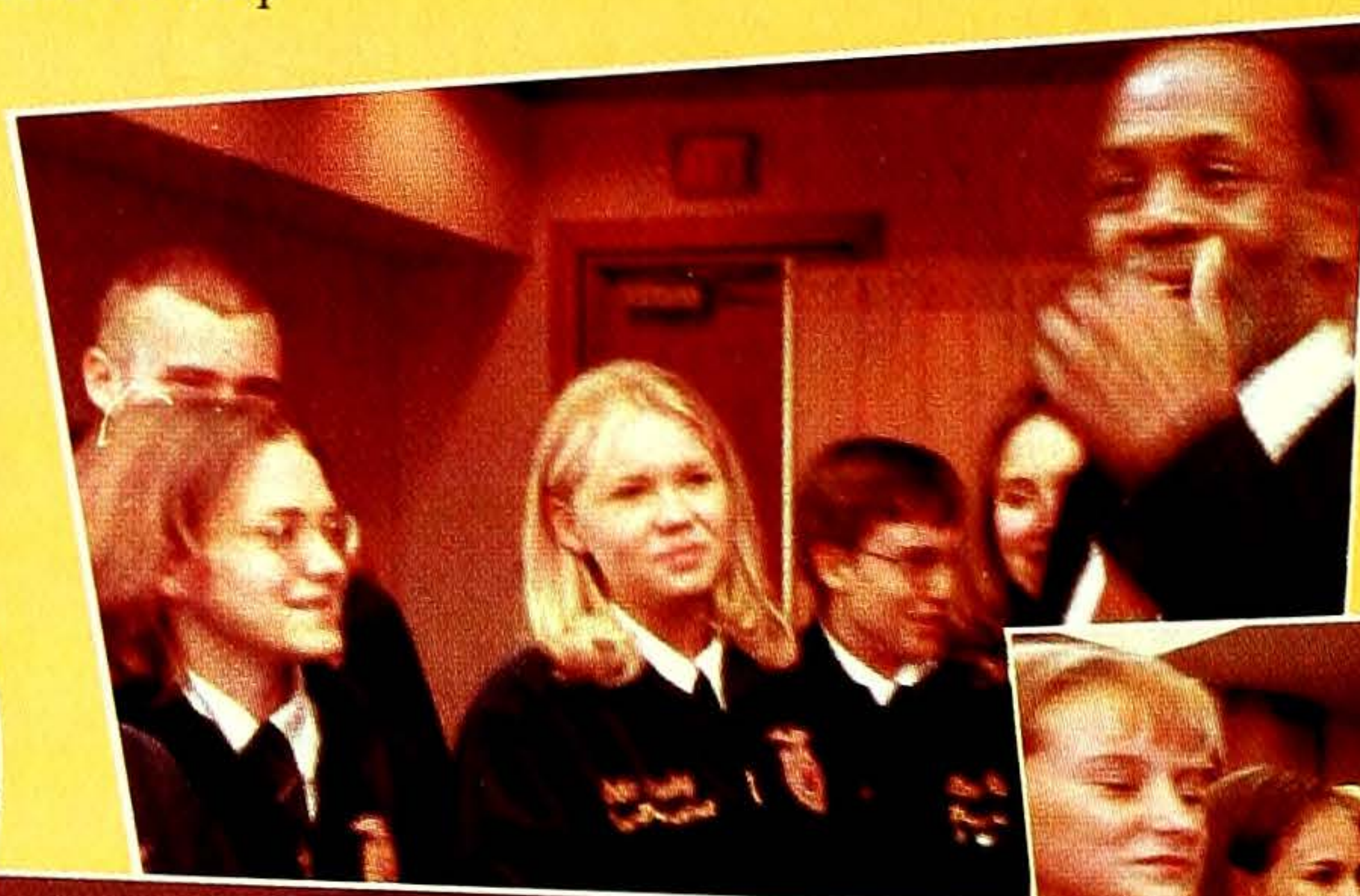
speakers, a great choir and band, an enormous Career Show, legendary leadership workshops, awesome educational tours, dynamite dances and, best of all, FFA members from all over the country! In addition to all the regular happenings, this year's convention featured several new items including concerts, an agricultural literacy foray into the Louisville community, and a food drive to help feed the hungry.

is perhaps best known for his role opposite Mel Gibson in the Lethal Weapon movies, spoke of the importance of integrity, character and education. He reminisced about spending summers on his grandparent's farm in Georgia and how those experiences helped him develop into a strong person.

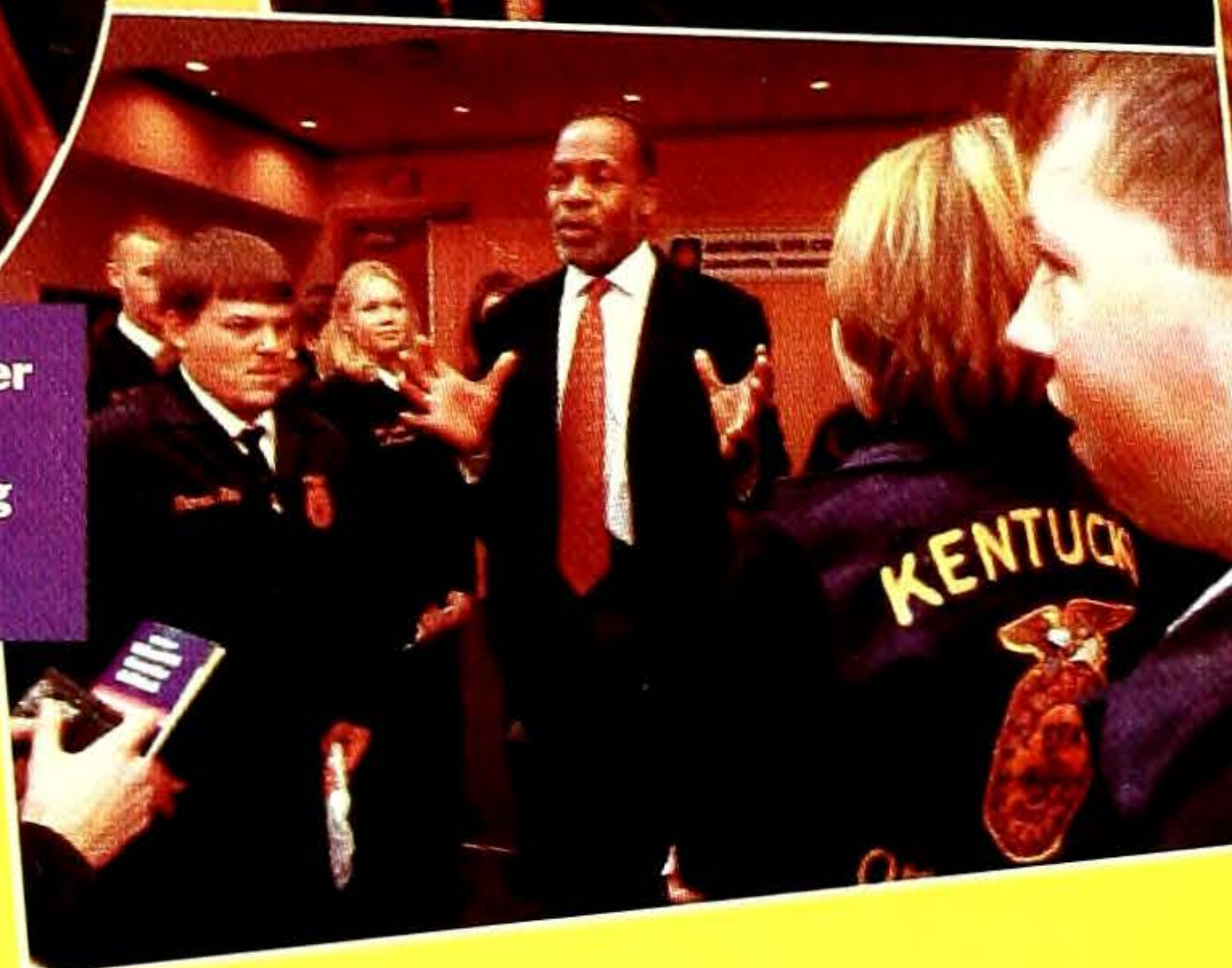
understanding. The distinguished star left students with a plea to make thoughtful decisions. "The choices we make to be selfish or self-centered are just that—choices," Glover said. "But we can make different choices. Choose to be caring, to have compassion, to have patience and understanding. As individuals, we owe it to our community and to ourselves."



International film star Danny Glover spoke about the importance of honoring your heritage and making caring, compassionate choices.



The convention stage also hosted Dave Roevers, a Vietnam veteran who touched many with his stories that bounced between horror and humor. Roevers, who was per-



Danny Glover took time to chat with FFA members and share his insights.

That was the scene at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in late October when the 72nd National FFA Convention landed in Louisville. After calling Kansas City home for 71 years, FFA members poured into Louisville to explore their new convention home. They liked what they found—everything from an amusement park within walking distance of the auditorium to lots of new choices in the food court and the shopping mall.

Of course, all the usual convention components were in place: exciting sessions, thought-provoking

FFA members donated more than 30,000 pounds of food during the drive, which is enough to feed Louisville's homeless for six days and is the most ever contributed by an outside group!

Words of Wisdom

Even though his brother had passed away two days before, internationally renowned actor Danny Glover decided to keep his commitment and speak to FFA members. Glover, who

"There was a lot of turmoil in rural Georgia in those days," he said. "My grandparents were often publicly humiliated because of the color of their skin. However, their humanity stood tall and negated the humiliation. They were beacons in their community. Their values helped shape my life and make me into the person I am."

Glover encouraged FFA members to honor their heritage and value other people by showing more compassion and being more

manently disfigured when a grenade he was holding exploded, spoke about surviving hardships and the importance of family and values. "As much as I hate war, I love freedom more," Roevers said. "I'm proud of my scars and stripes. I'm proud I served my country. I'm proud to be an American," he exclaimed, bringing roars of approval from the audience.

Both speaker's appearance at the convention were special projects of the National FFA Foundation with Glover being sponsored by the Humana

Foundation and Roever being sponsored by United Parcel Service.

FFA members also heard from Emory Austin, a humorous speaker from North Carolina who focused on how to use your differences to set yourself apart from the crowd, and Jamie Clark, an adventurer who has scaled Mount Everest. One of Clark's

during their retiring addresses. José Santiago inspired many with his story on the true meaning of giving and forgiving. You can read all of the officers' retiring addresses—their signatures of success—online at www.ffa.org.

Sights to See

This year's edition of the FFA National Agricultural Career

State Stuff

"The Thing" in The University of Arizona's career show exhibit attracted a lot of attention as did the cool cow costume in Massachusetts's booth. The Ohio State University display proudly featured the first

Find It, Fix It!

Of course, many FFA members would rather restore "ancient iron," than shell out the bucks for the new stuff. For those folks, the Chevron booth was the place to be with its tractor restoration competition. To find out how to compete for up to \$2,500 and be recognized at next



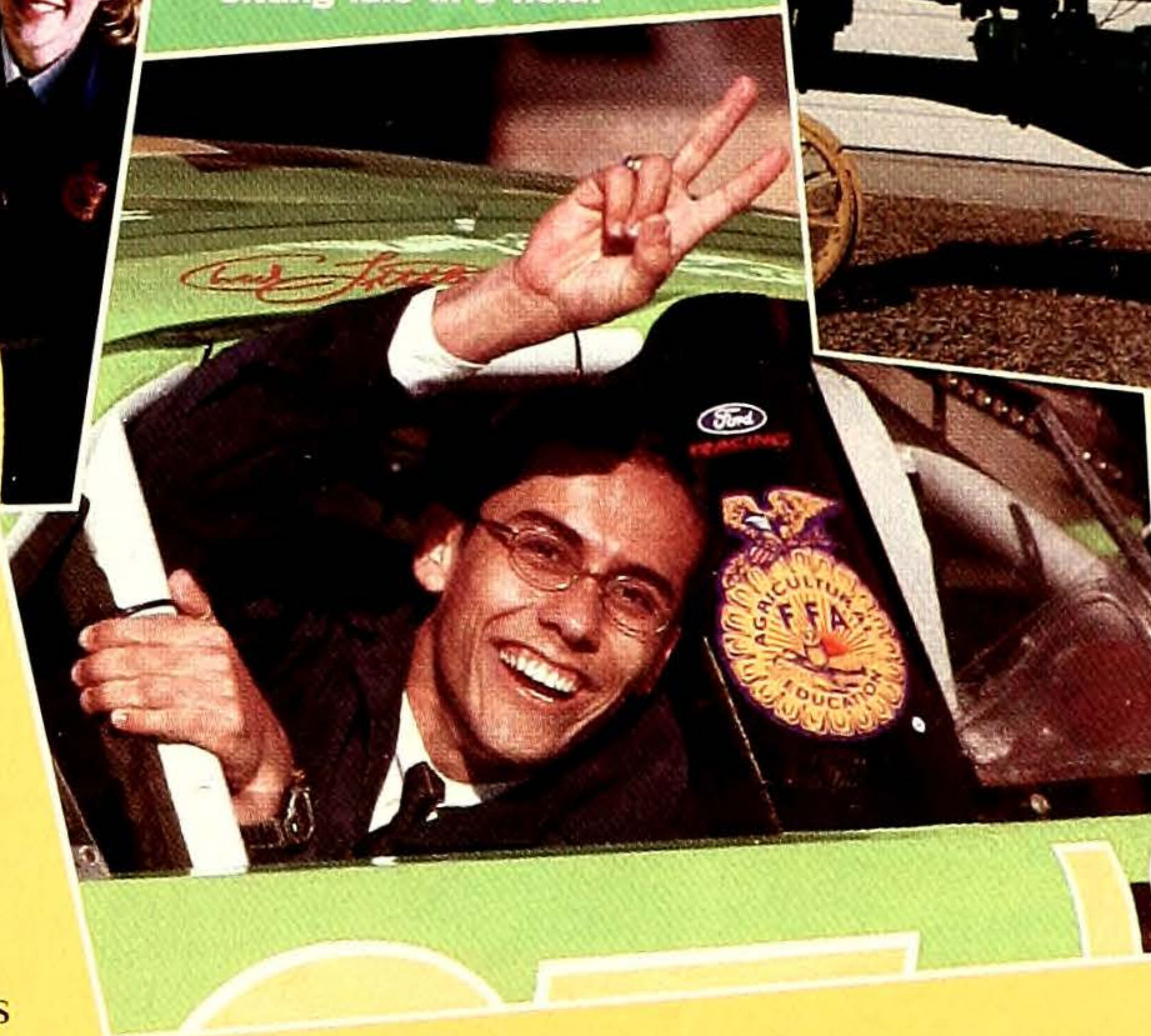
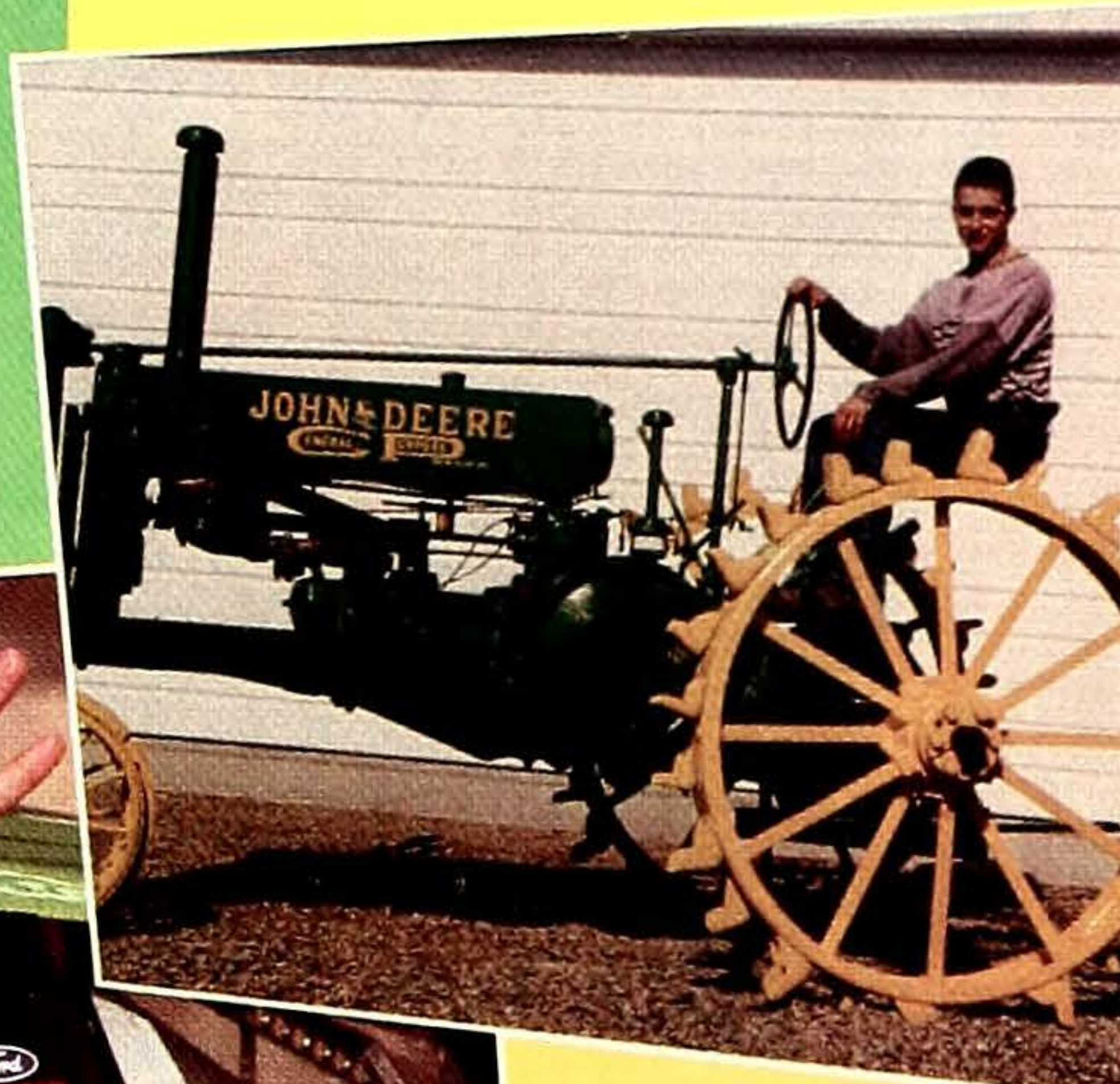
The 1998-99 national FFA officers gather around the John Deere Winston Cup racecar. The car, which features an FFA emblem on the hood, will run in the Coca-Cola 600 in May. The car's driver, Chad Little, made a special appearance at the convention.

key points was the importance of planning, noting that on his first attempt at the mighty mountain, his group had to turn back because, among other difficulties, it had not estimated the right amount of toilet paper. Think about it . . . it's not like you can just run right down to Wal-Mart!

It wouldn't be an FFA convention without some of the most memorable remarks coming from young men and women in blue and gold jackets. The national officers each shared thoughtful and motivating messages

Show was the largest ever with 349 exhibitors filling almost 108,000 square feet! That's about the same size as two-and-a-half football fields! The show included representatives from every phase of the agriculture industry who were sharing information about careers and companies, scholarships and schools. There were even people from Walt Disney World at the career show looking for students interested in horticulture, aquaculture and biotechnology internships at the world's best-known playground!

Trevor Gottschalk of Kimball, MN, walked away with \$2,500 as the 1999 Individual Grand Prize Winner of the 1999 Tractor Restoration Competition offered by Chevron. He spent almost 100 hours restoring this 1934 John Deere "A" which had spent the last 20 years sitting idle in a field.



FFA jacket ever made, which was designed by the high school band director from Fredericktown, Ohio.

Trucks and Tractors

Ford, Chevy and Dodge all had their latest heavy metal on display. And speaking of heavy metal, lots of FFA members took the opportunity to check out the latest from John Deere, Case IH and Caterpillar.

year's convention, call Chevron at 415-894-2820, or point your browser to www.chevron.com. You can also find information on National FFA Online at www.ffa.org.

Reaching for the Stars

Everyone knows that FFA members have a knack for building cool businesses. The two selected as FFA's Stars Over America are no excep-

tion. Say "hello" to Michael Springer, 21, from Independence, Kansas—the 1999 American Star Farmer—and Jay Harris, 20, from Alexander, Illinois—the 1999 American Star in Agribusiness!

to success. "Leadership is the key to production agriculture's future," he says. "Our business is a people business."

After he completes his degree in agricultural economics at Kansas State

advertises in 46 states and publicizes his product via the Internet.

Harris is the sole proprietor of a farm equipment dealership with more than 500 customers in 24 states plus Canada, Australia, Mexico and New Zealand. He employs four part-time

while he continues operating his business.

Investing in the Future

Aahhhhh . . . membership does have its privileges. Since 1944, the National FFA Foundation has provided more than \$85 million to FFA members for awards, scholarships and achievement programs—that's a lot of cash! As National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board Chairman William Boehm announced a new fundraising record of \$7,310,000 for 1999, thousands of faux greenbacks fluttered to the convention floor. Eager hands grabbed for souvenirs as the bogus bucks floated by.

Boehm, who is Vice President-Logistics for The Kroger Company, said, "The food and agricultural industry continues to change rapidly. These funds help to ensure that new generations of leaders will be available to meet those challenges of change." ★

STARS OVER AMERICA



Michael Springer (left) and Jay Harris (right) took home the convention's top honors, being named American Star Farmer and American Star in Agribusiness, respectively. The two were selected from the 2,324 FFA members who earned the American FFA Degree in 1999.

Michael is a typical entrepreneur—always thinking about ways to build his business and better manage his operation. He started with 15 bottle calves. Now, he has 40 sows in a farrow-to-finish enterprise and farms 460 acres of wheat, corn, milo and soybeans. That's growth that even an Internet start-up business would be proud of!

Michael, who served as the 1996-97 state treasurer in Kansas, believes leadership and people skills are critical

University, Springer plans to return to the farm and expand his operation.

Jay is like many FFA members who feel just as comfortable in coveralls as in official dress (okay, okay, so a lot of members feel *more* comfortable in coveralls). "When I was old enough to turn a wrench," he says, "I started building planters." And he hasn't stopped yet! In fact, Jay actually designed, built, tested and is marketing his own line of planters. He

mechanics and a truck driver. "With today's ever-changing farm economy," Harris says, "most farmers can't afford a completely new planter. That's where I fit in."

Jay served as the Illinois FFA vice president in 1998-99 and was named the state's Agricultural Sales and/or Service proficiency winner. After graduating from Lincoln Land Community College, he plans to complete his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics at the University of Illinois



FFA members grabbed for souvenirs as thousands of "FFA bucks" floated to the floor after National FFA Foundation Sponsor's Board Chairman William Boehm announced a new fundraising record of \$7,310,000.

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FFA Homepage: www.ffa.org

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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 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. 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. Produced by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies. Sponsored by the Monsanto Company as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



Leaders for the New Millennium

The six newly elected national officers are a high-energy group of talented individuals eager to work for and meet with FFA members. Each officer will spend the upcoming year traveling across the country representing FFA members in meetings with leaders in business, agriculture, government and education. Here's a little more about each officer.

Chris Vitelli

National President

Plant City FFA Chapter

Plant City, Florida

SAE: feeder steers and swine, lawn maintenance and placement in curriculum writing

Chris, 20, is a sophomore agricultural education and agricultural leadership major at the University of Florida.

Jodee Ruppel

National Secretary

Manchester FFA Chapter

Manchester, Indiana

SAE: Shropshire sheep production and agricultural communications

Jodee, 20, is a freshman agricultural education and telecommunications major at Purdue University.

Joe Shultz

Vice President—Eastern Region

Indian Lake FFA Chapter

DeGraff, Ohio

SAE: purebred Rambouillet sheep

Joe, 20, is a sophomore agricultural education and agricultural economics major at The Ohio State University.

Leslie Small

Vice President—Central Region

Arkansas City FFA Chapter

Arkansas City, Kansas

SAE: beef and diversified livestock production

Leslie, 19, is a sophomore agricultural economics major at Kansas State University.

Carol Spruill

Vice President—Southern Region

Jackson County FFA Chapter

Hoschton, Georgia

SAE: hay production, boarding and showing horses

Carol, 19, is a sophomore agricultural economics major at the University of Georgia.

Marshall Baker

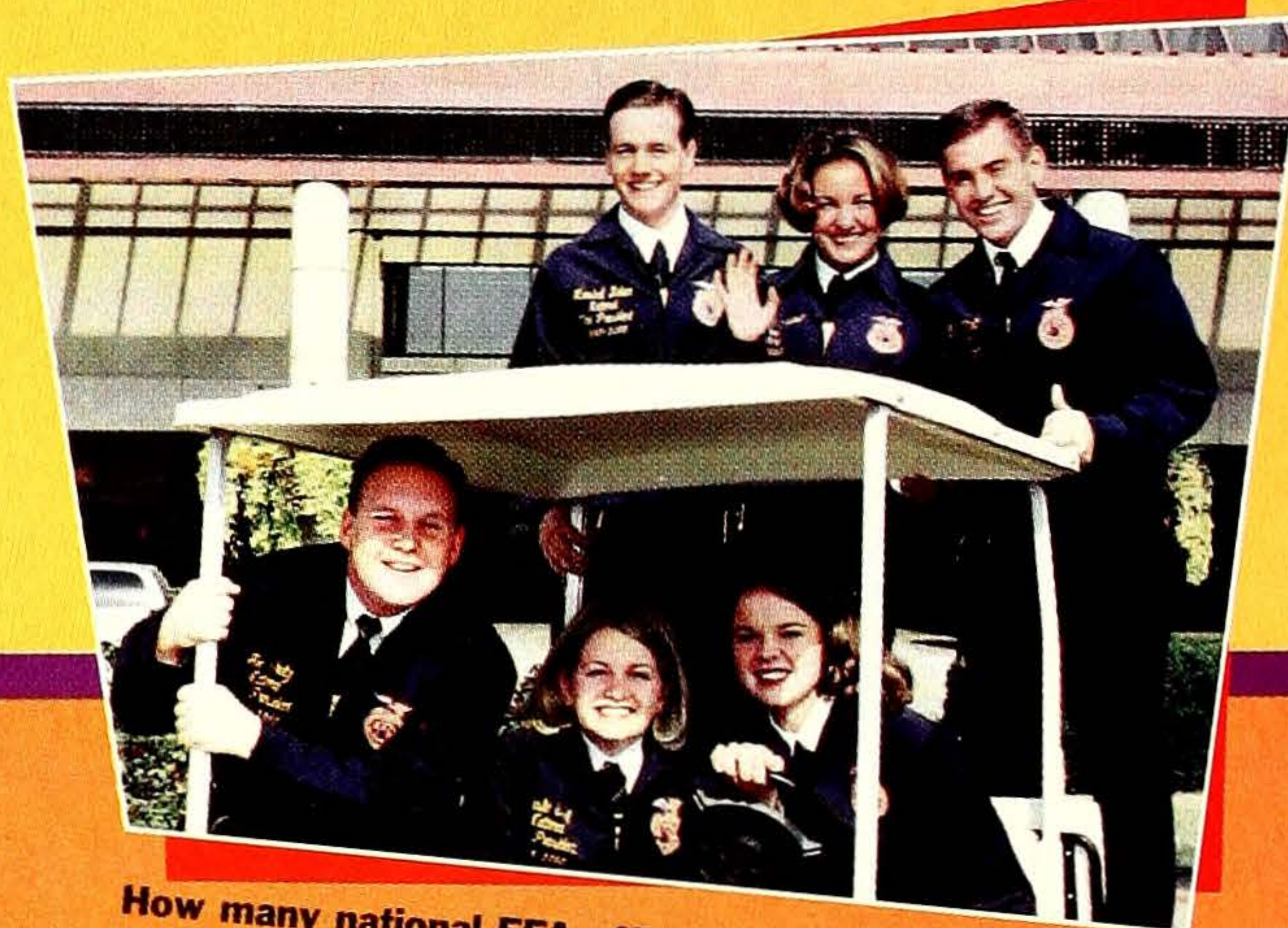
Vice President—Western Region

Texico FFA Chapter

Portales, New Mexico

SAE: oil and beef production

Marshall, 19, is a sophomore biology major at Austin College.



How many national FFA officers can fit in a standard golf cart? All of them! From left to right, seated, Joe Shultz, Leslie Small and Carol Spruill; standing, Marshall Baker, Jodee Ruppel and Chris Vitelli.



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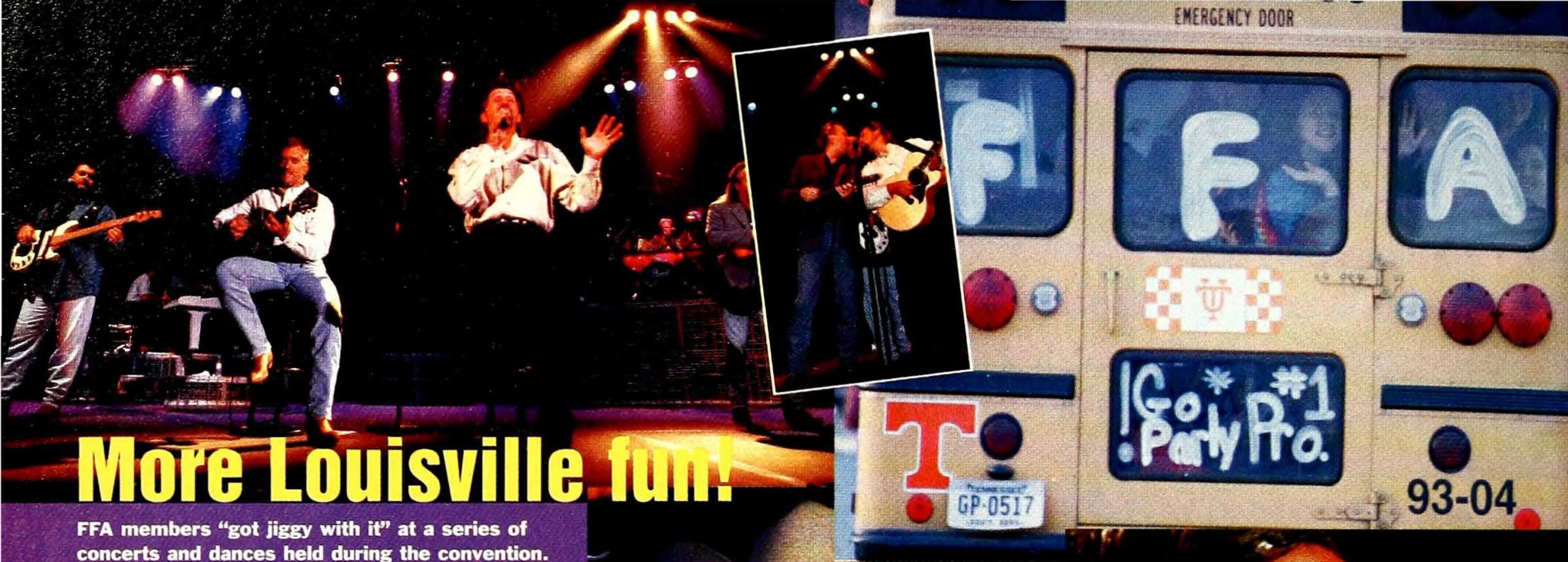
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More Louisville fun!

FFA members "got jiggy with it" at a series of concerts and dances held during the convention. Diamond Rio (pictured here) drew rave reviews as did Sawyer Brown. "It was loud! It was awesome!" exclaimed Keshia Lind, an FFA member from Missoula, Montana. "I love the convention," added Amber Sedlock from Sherrard, Illinois. "There is no other place where you can meet this many people who have so much in common. There is no other place you can go and have this much fun!"

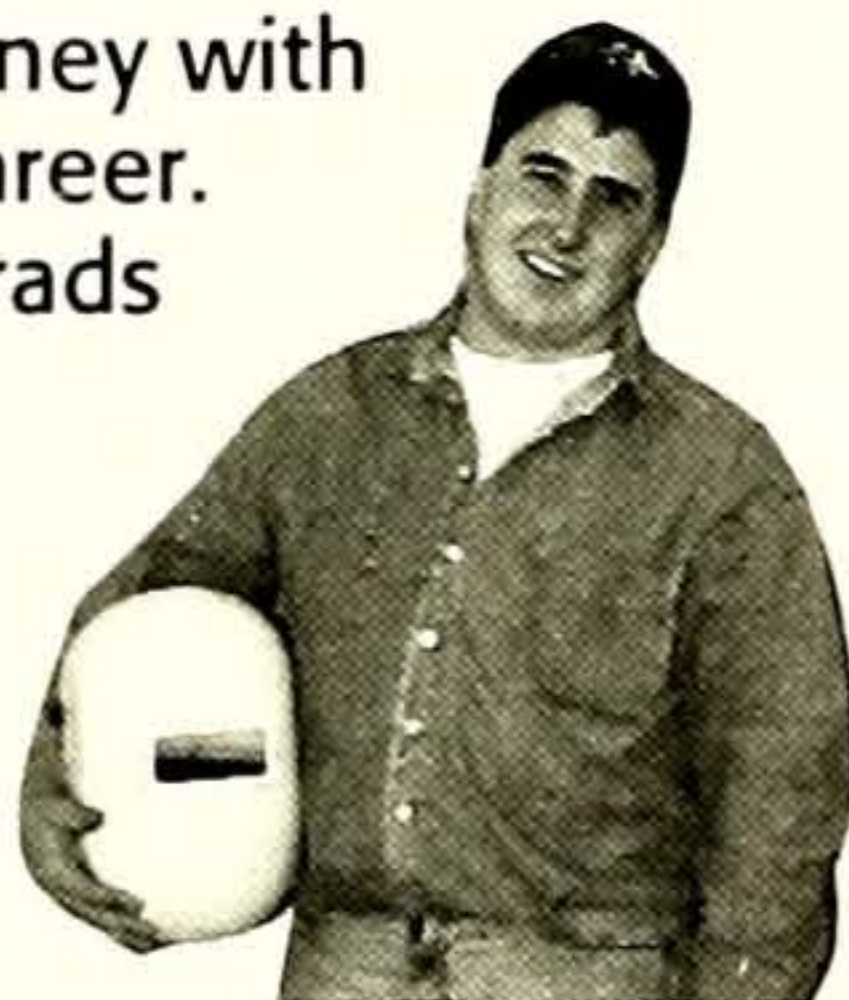


More than 700 Louisville elementary students were matched with FFA members from across the country during the Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) conference held during the convention.



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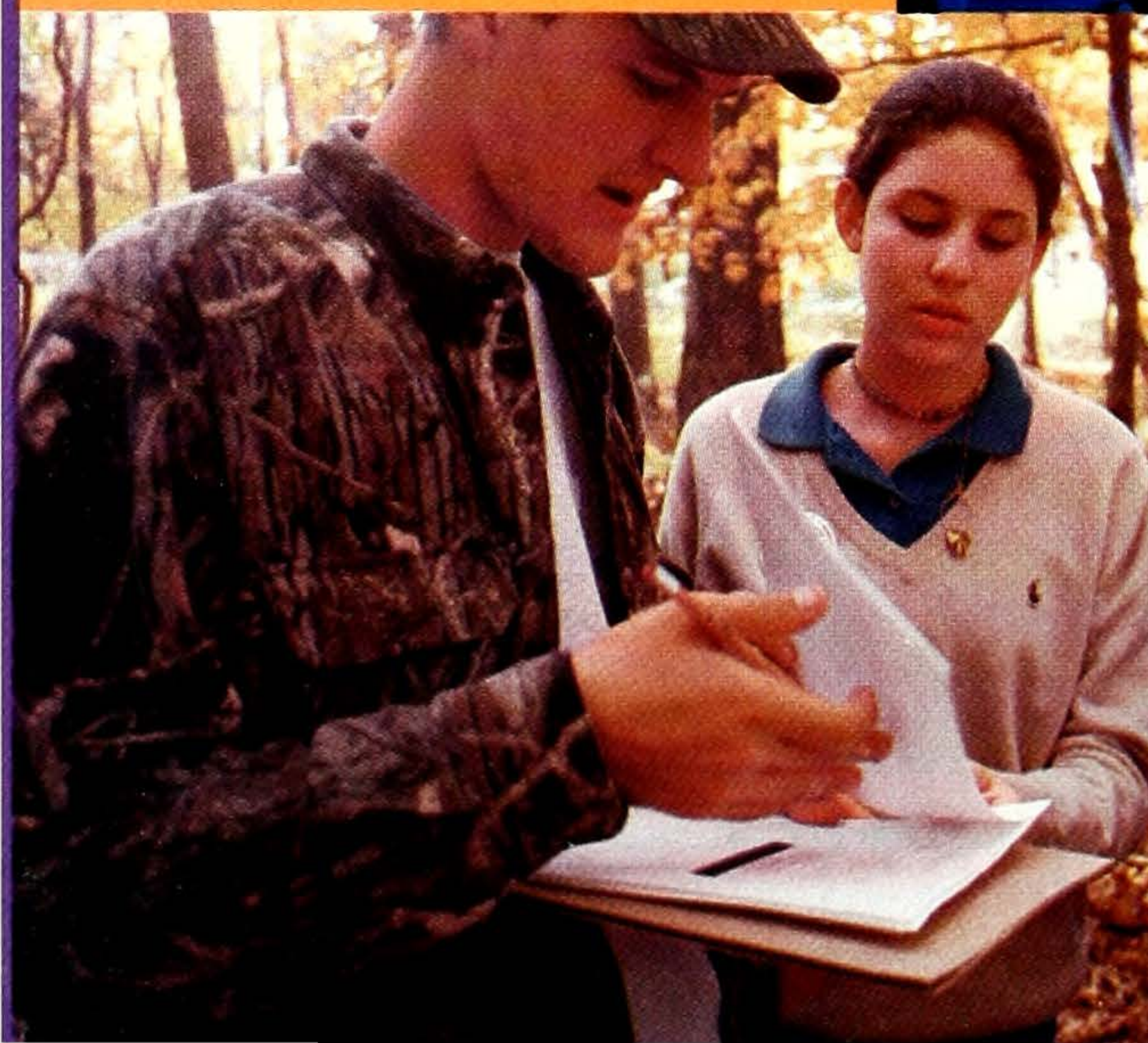


Jason A. McCoy, FFA—West Virginia

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A record number of FFA members participated in this year's career development events. More than 800 teams representing 51 state associations competed for top honors in 19 different events.



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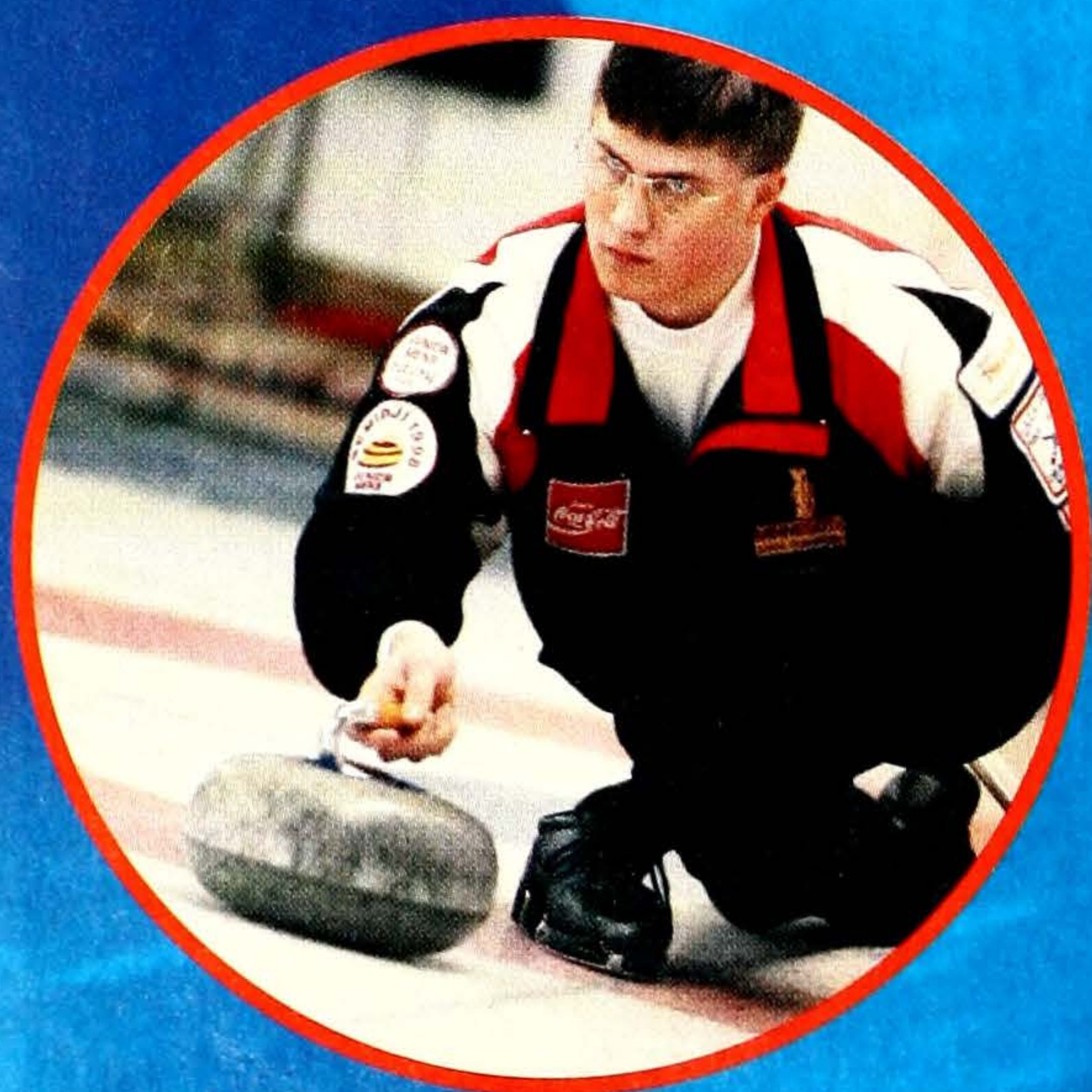
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art of the CURL

brooms, stones and ice—the makings of a sport



When curling made its first Olympic appearance in 1998, it took the world by surprise. Many viewers—especially Americans—had no idea what they were seeing. But now the game is gaining popularity as more and more people are trying it for the first time. What's the sport all about? Here's a quick rundown:

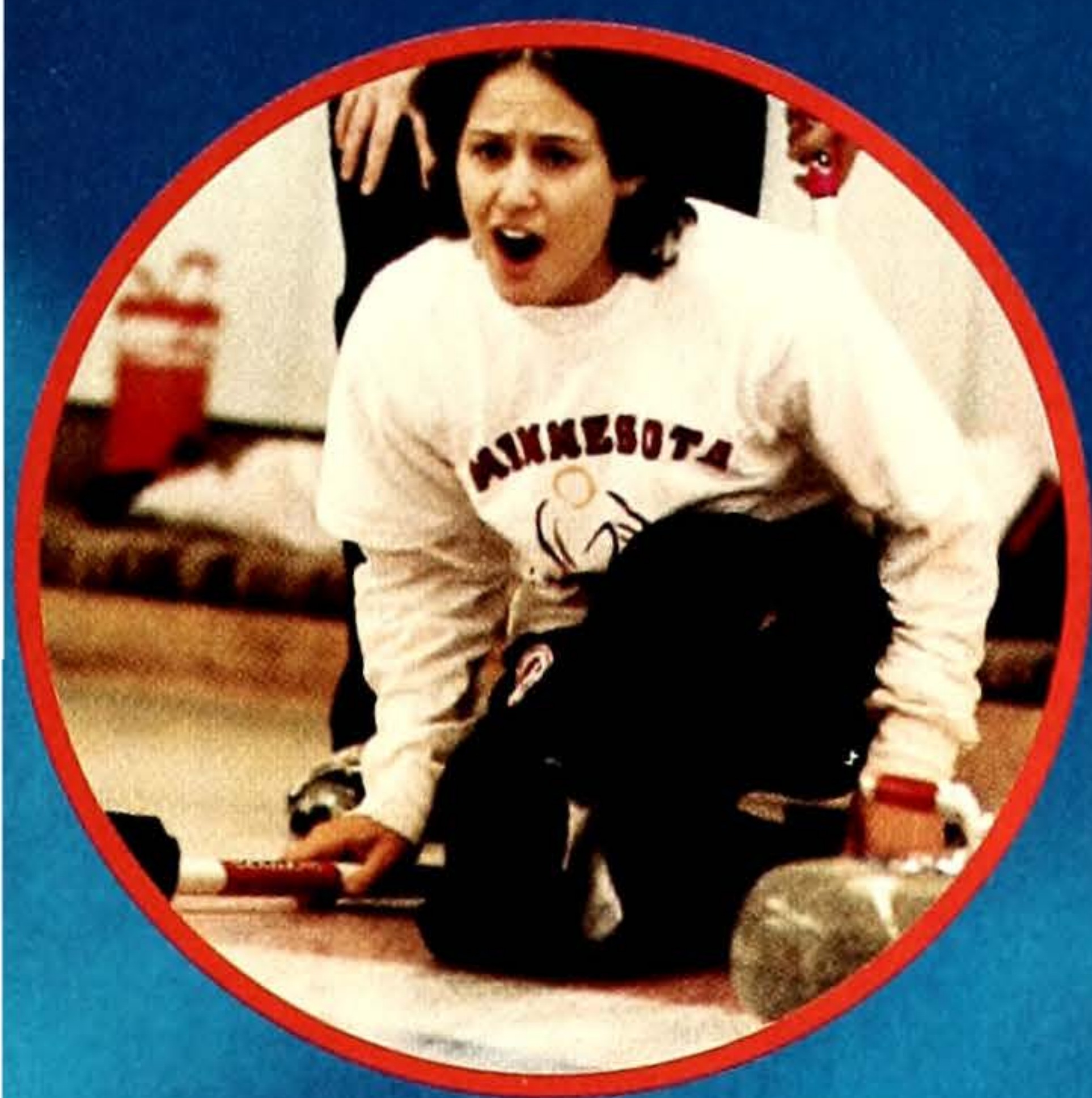
Rules of the ice

The game is divided into 10 inning-like “ends” and unfolds on a 146-foot field of ice called a “sheet.” Colored circles and lines on the

sheet mark boundaries and a scoring area called the “house.” Two four-member teams take turns sliding their stones across the ice toward the house. Each team member takes two shots, and teams alternate turns, so 16 stones are played over the course of each end.

What ultimately matters at the completion of each end is which team's stones are closest to the “tee,” or bull's-eye of the scoring area.

It sounds simple, but in real-game situations there's



a lot more to it. Strategy, fitness, and teamwork are all important. Shooters can make the stone “curl,” or bend like a banana across the ice, by twisting the stone’s handle as they shoot. This allows it to sneak around other stones and in for a score. “Sweepers” use brooms or brushes to polish the ice in front of a delivered stone so that it (hopefully) glides to exactly the right position. The “skip,” or captain, keeps a close eye on the stone’s path and calls out directions to the rest of the team. If they sweep harder, the ice becomes faster and the stone travels farther.

“It’s a hard sport,” says

Beverley Behnke, a curling coach with ten years of national and international experience. “It takes lots of practice and mental toughness to be a good curler.” But unlike many other sports, you don’t have to be a jock to keep up with the competition. In fact, just about anyone can have fun with the game. “You can play at any level you want,” says David Garber, the executive director of the United States Curling Association. “In curling, even if one team is a lot better than another, you don’t get beat up.”

Sweeping through history

Curling has been around in one form or another since the early 1500s. The rules

were first drawn up in Scotland, where players slid stones of all shapes and sizes across the frozen ponds and lakes of their countryside and used brooms to clear snow.

Scottish immigrants introduced the game to the United States in the 18th century. Since then, things have changed significantly. Games are usually played indoors, the stones are standardized and include metal handles, and techniques and strategies have been refined to an art. Today more than 1.5 million people participate in the sport worldwide. ★

Gear

Most clubs provides curling stones, made of polished Scottish granite and weighing in at a hefty 42 pounds. The only other thing you need is a bristle- or fabric-head brush made specifically for sweeping. If you decide to get serious, you’ll also want a pair of curling shoes designed for easy slides across the ice when you make a shot.

Go!

Curling is, for many, an addictive sport. The more you work at it the better you get. But as three-time U.S. national women’s champion Pam Finch points out, “You’ll never know if you like it until you step out on the ice and actually give it a try.” For information on how to get started in your area, contact the United States Curling Association at 888-CURLERS or visit their Web site at www.usacurl.org.

Last Laff

Q: Why don't horses vote?

A: The answer is always "nay."

Nikki Blitzkie

Lincoln, Nebraska

Q: Why did Mickey go into space?

A: To find Pluto.

James Hollifield

Toccoa, Georgia

Miss-ouri lent Mississ-ippi her New Jersey. What will Dela-ware? Da-kota.

Jeremy Dankert

Reedsburg, Wisconsin

Q: If athletes have athlete's foot, what do astronauts have?

A: Mistle-toe

Bethany Snyder

Athens, Wisconsin

Q: How do you make a door into a jar?

A: You open it.

Melissa Wilkins

Hanna City, Illinois

Q: What is a witch's favorite subject?

A: Spelling.

Jennifer Wilson

Columbus, New Jersey

Q: Who's super clean and lives in cave?

A: Bathman.

Amber Meadows

Bergersville, Indiana

Q: Why were the elephants kicked out of the pool?

A: They couldn't keep their trunks up.

Kila Williams

Royal, Arkansas

Q: What did the rabbit use to fill his lamp?

A: Carrotsene.

Mary Workman

Alamosa, Colorado

Q: What did the snail say to the police officer after the turtle ran over him?

A: I don't know, it all happened so fast.

Amanda McCrary

Dubach, Louisiana

Q: Why did the goat receive an "F" on his homework?

A: He and the dog ate it.

Christopher Bryant

Epes, Alabama

Q: Why do potatoes cry?

A: Their eyes are in the dirt.

Amy Helland

Emmons, Minnesota

Q: Why did the skunk stink up the courtroom?

A: The judge said, "Odor in the court!"

Shawn Georg

Sabetha, Kansas

Woman: This coffee tastes like mud.

Man: Well, it was ground this morning.

Antonio DeRamces

Prattville, Alabama

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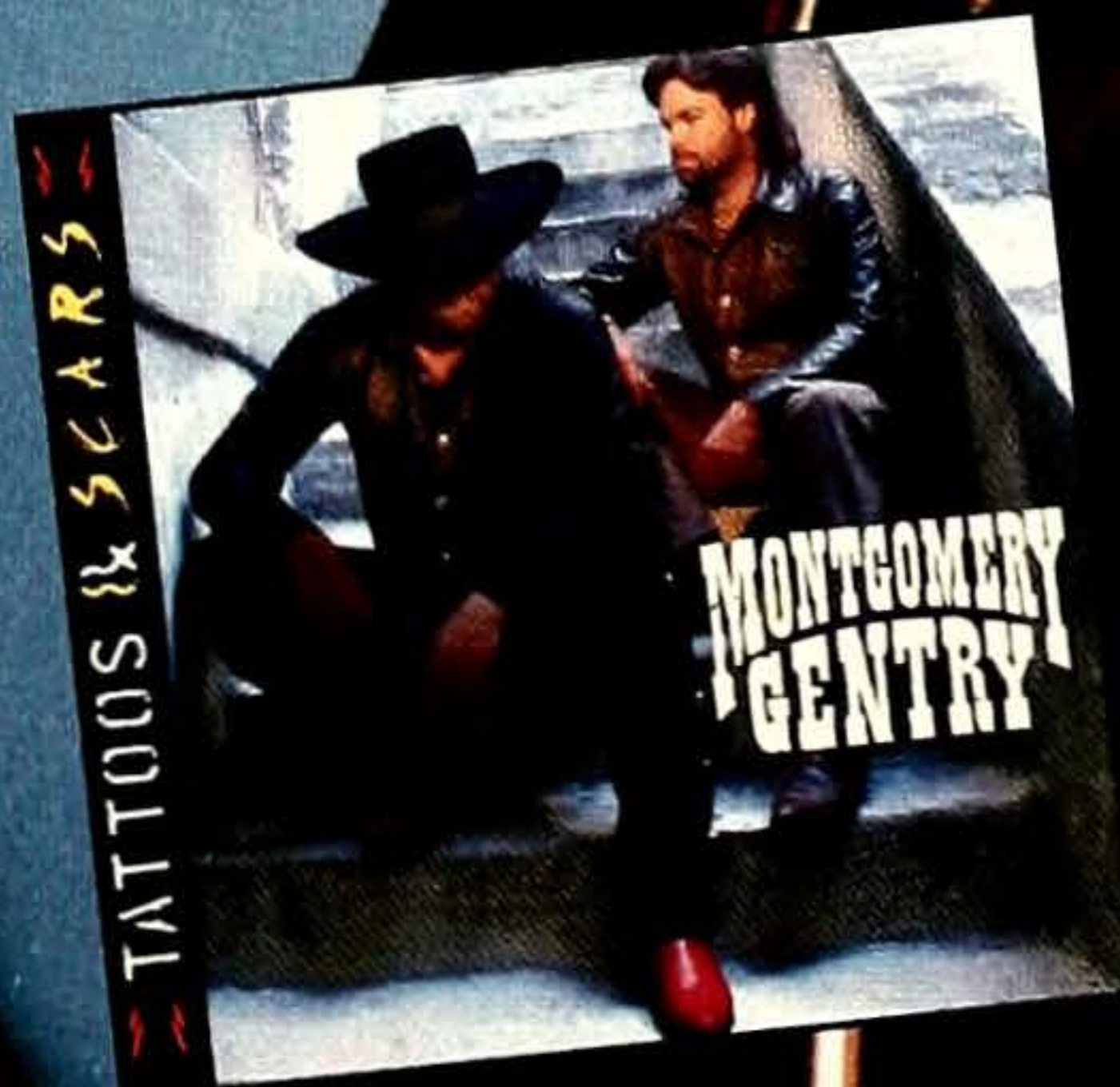
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