

FEBRUARY 2005

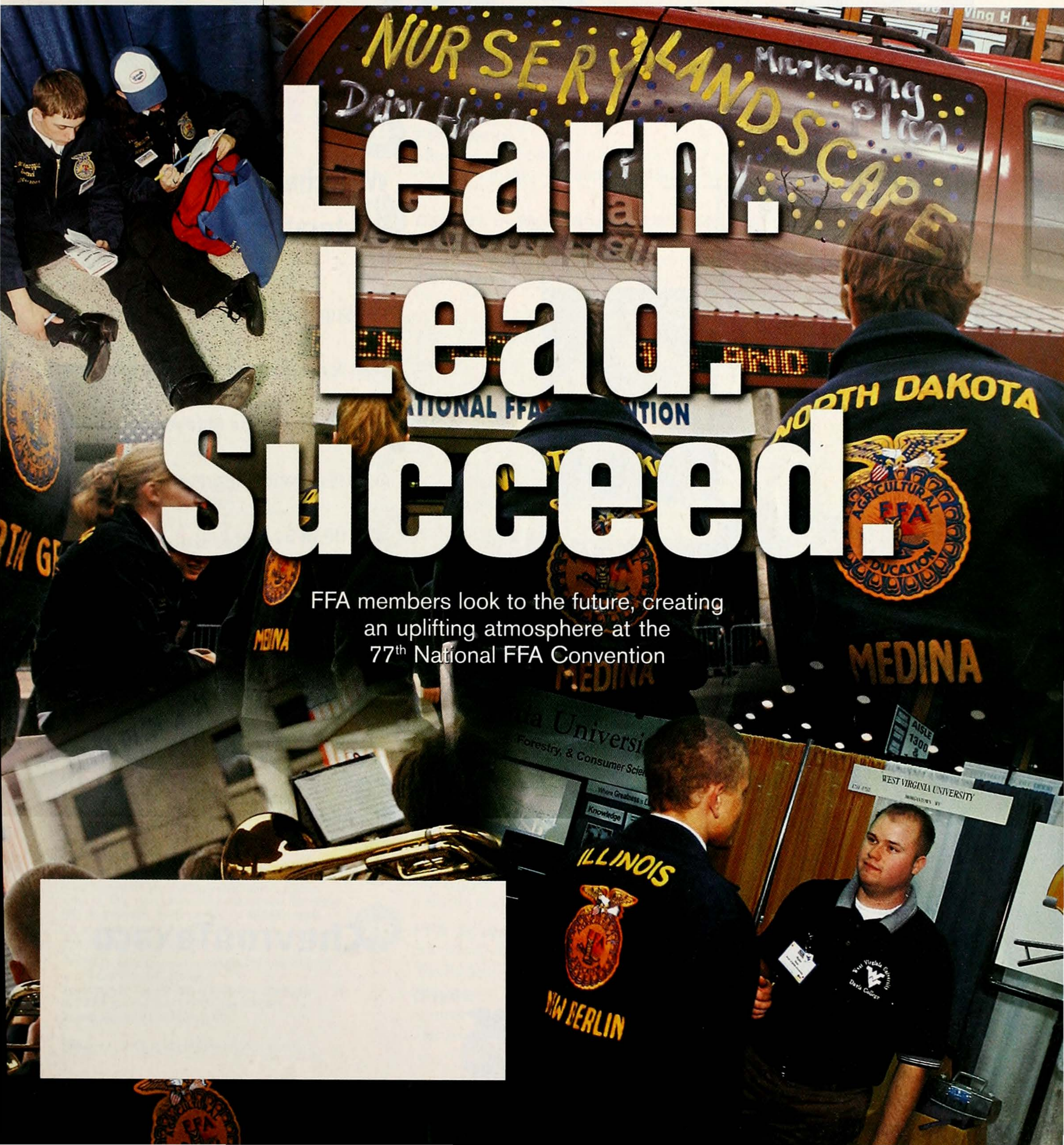
ffa *new horizons*



THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

Learn. Lead. Succeed.

FFA members look to the future, creating an uplifting atmosphere at the 77th National FFA Convention





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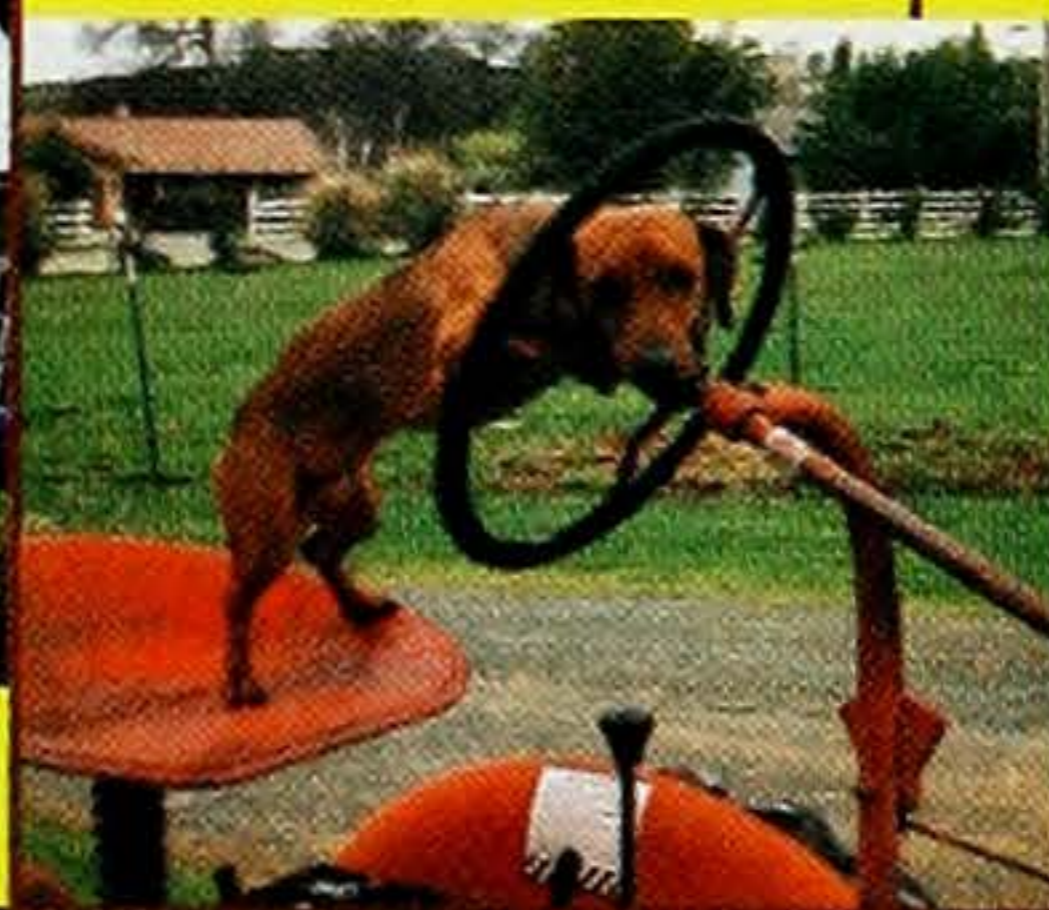
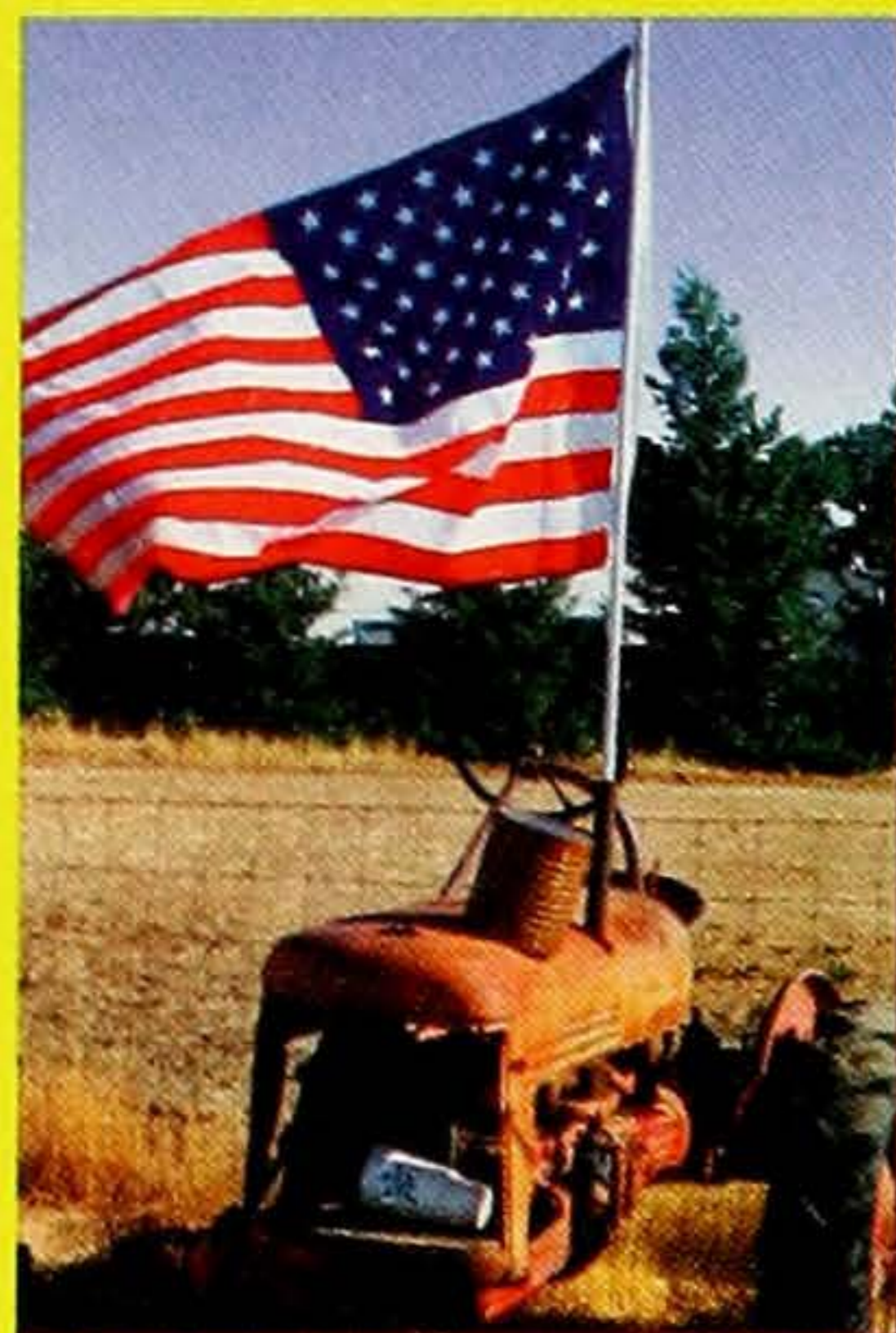
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See what's happening in FFA chapters across the nation. Who knows? Maybe you'll get new ideas you can use in your own chapter.

COVER

Scenes from the 77th National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky. The four-day event drew more than 53,000 visitors and guests.



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FFA Talk

What's on your mind?

YOUR LETTERS

In my FFA chapter, I noticed that official dress had lost some of its respect. People weren't wearing it like it should be worn. They had their jackets unzipped, blue jeans on and T-shirts underneath their jackets. So here is something I wrote that I thought might help members see importance of official dress:

Dressed with Pride

Dressed in Black and Blue and Gold,
These are the colors I am told,
That belong to a group,
Which to failure they will not stoop.
There stand ever so tall and proud,
As the largest American youth crowd.

Blue is the sky the flag and the jacket.
Gold is the corn the sun and the emblems.
Black is the shoes the pants and the belt.

For when I step into this Black and Blue and Gold,
It makes me feel a sense of warmth,
Which will never grow old.
With the jacket zipped to the top,
No one can now stop,
The love I feel for this here mess,
Of which FFA members call, Official Dress.

*Derek Plowman
Ellinwood, Kan.*

The **BIG** question:

What is your dream job?

Here is your chance to respond to an FFA- or agriculture-related question. Please tell us—in 50 words or less—your answer to the following question: **How is technology changing agriculture where you live?** Send your responses to the address at the bottom of this page. We'll print some of your answers in future issues.

Here are some of your responses to the question we posed in our December issue: What is your favorite career development event (CDE) and why?

My favorite CDE is agronomy. Since I live on a farm and help my dad farm, it is interesting to me. I think it is fun to look at samples and try to figure out what they are. I started the competition a few years after I took crops to the fair. My advisor thought it would be a good idea if I could get some people to compete with me on the team. Besides getting up early in the morning to go compete for the event, it is fun and interesting.

*Brooke Ruffing
Monroeville, Ohio*

My favorite CDE is parliamentary procedure. Not only did I experience

the best and hardest times while competing, but I experienced it with my two favorite people: my advisors, Mr. Epler and Mr. Schweer. I learned many life lessons throughout the year, and although I shed many tears, I wouldn't give up those four years of my life for anything.

*Damanda Musgrove
Arkansas City, Kan.*

Show us your sign

Is there an FFA emblem painted on your neighbor's barn? Or outside your school? Or maybe there's a sign that says "FFA" on the highway just outside of town. Wherever it happens to be, we want to see it. Snap a photo and send it to us at the address at the bottom of this page. We'll feature one photo in every issue.



Keiko Osumi, reporter for the Nipomo FFA Chapter in California, writes that her chapter "is proud to have an FFA sign at the entrance of town. The Nipomo FFA Chapter continues to grow, just as the town itself, due to great amount of people being attracted to the rural setting and agricultural opportunities."

Address all correspondence to:
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e-mail: newhorizons@ffa.org
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Blue & Gold

News from the National FFA Center

Design a T-shirt

The National FFA Organization is sponsoring its fourth annual FFA Chapter T-shirt Design Contest. Winning designs will be featured on T-shirts to be sold in the 2005-2006 National FFA Blue Catalog and online store, beginning September 1, 2005. FFA chapters are invited to submit designs. Chapters whose designs are used receive 50 percent of the profits from the first year's sales. The deadline for designs is March 15. For rules and guidelines, visit www.ffa.org/chapters/html/tshirt_contest.html.

A record year

At the 77th National FFA Convention, 2004 FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board Chairman John Rakestraw announced that the National FFA Foundation had raised a total of \$9,329,000 in 2004 to support annual projects and programs for FFA and agricultural education—an all-time record. Rakestraw, chief executive officer of Midwest Precision Molasses Supplements, says the record contributions from sponsors help prepare future agricultural leaders. "We have a vested interest in these young people," Rakestraw said. "Today's FFA members are learning to be the employees, managers, suppliers and customers who will lead and succeed in tomorrow's agricultural and food manufacturing industries."

Three FFA members win trip to Japan

Robert Bialozynski, Cortney Timmons and Abby Ongley—all participants in the Agriscience Fair at the 77th National FFA Convention—were

selected by FFA and Toyota to attend the 2005 World Exposition in Japan. The theme of EXPO 2005 is "Nature's Wisdom," and it will bring together people from more than 125 countries, to explore,

share and determine ways people can coexist with nature and each other.

Convention dates set

The 78th National FFA Convention takes place Oct. 26-28, 2005, in Louisville, Ky.

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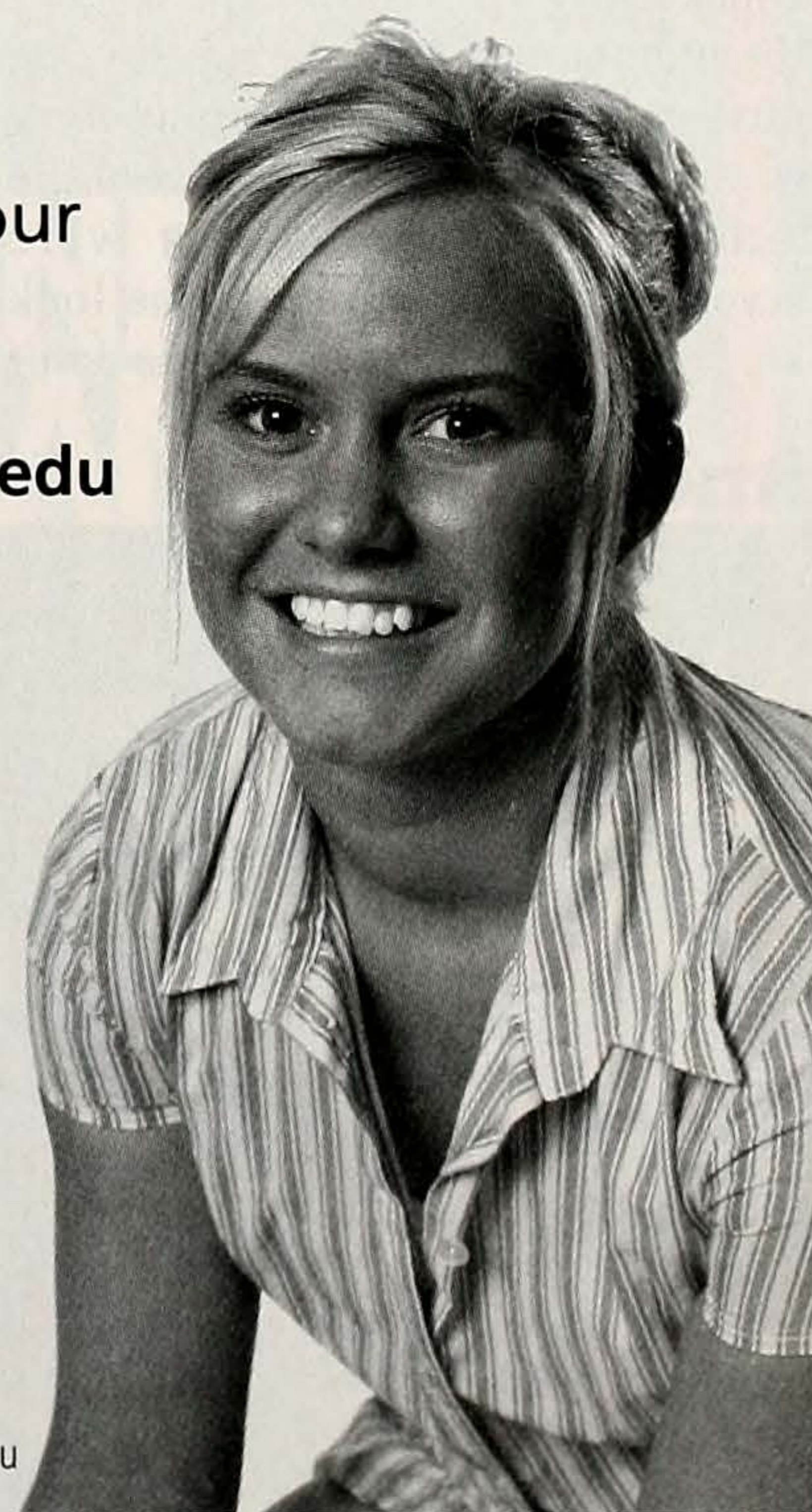
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—Karen Blankenship
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National Officer Q&A

Meet National FFA President Jackie Mundt

Why are supervised agricultural experience programs (SAEs) so vital to the FFA experience?

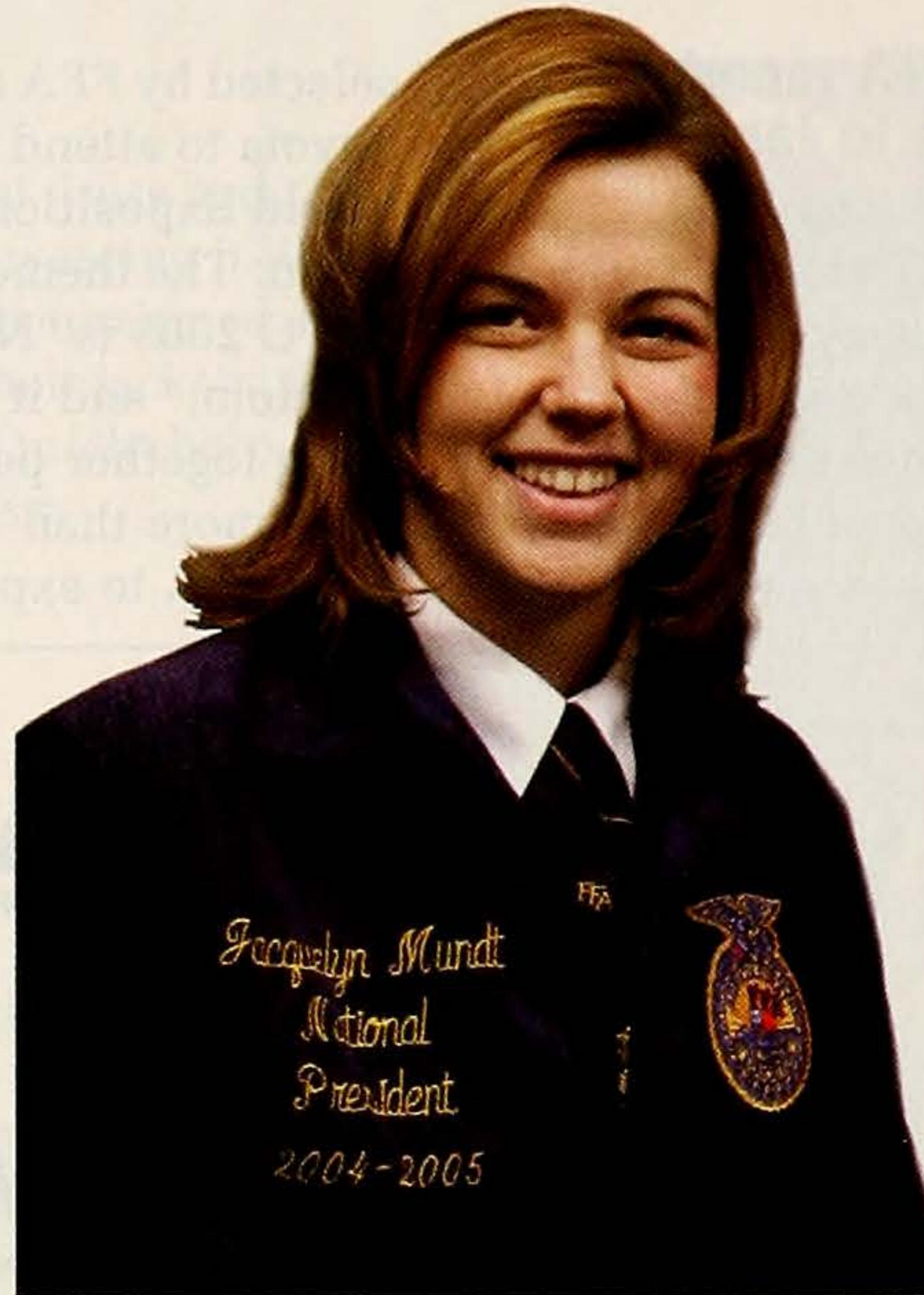
The National FFA Organization wants to help students set themselves up for successful careers, and SAEs are a great way for FFA members to do that. Hands-on learning is something you can't get from a book or a lecture, and employers want people who have skills and experience. I feel strongly that SAEs will give FFA members the edge in the workforce.

Describe your SAE program.

I started by stocking shelves and working the checkout counter at the local hardware and farm supply store. I gradually learned about customer assistance and how to market products and, by the time I graduated from high school, I was putting together most of the advertising material and could consult customers on our entire product line. My SAE helped me realize how much I love marketing and helping people solve problems.

How did you become a strong believer in the FFA Food for America program?

FFA members from my chapter took fourth grade students to see cranberry marshes and dairies. We showed the students how the berries were harvested and what real farms look like. I realized that many people don't



A native of Pittsville, Wisc., 19-year-old Jackie is a member of the Pittsville FFA Chapter and is a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Marshfield.

know where their food comes from. By showing kids, at a young age, how the food they eat gets to their table, we can make them better consumers and friends of agriculture.

Any advice for first-year members just getting started in FFA?

Don't be afraid to try new things. Just because you didn't grow up on a farm doesn't mean you can't judge livestock. By the same token, don't feel that just because you grew up on a farm, you have to judge livestock. FFA offers something for everyone, whether you live in a city, a suburb or a rural area. Doing something new and different can be scary, but it can also be fun.

How did the Made for Excellence (MFE) program help you grow as a leader?

I attended Made for Excellence as a sophomore. At the conference, we were asked to define values, prioritize our lives and develop mission statements—something I found very useful. I also learned that a leader

Jackie's 5 Secrets of Success

1. Think positively.
2. Set goals.
3. Be yourself.
4. Accept that some situations are out of your control, so be flexible.
5. Find what you are passionate about and stick with it.

never asks more of others than they are willing to do themselves. The conference helped me realize that actions speak louder than words and that if you want someone to follow you, first set an example.

FFA Week is coming up. How does your FFA chapter celebrate?

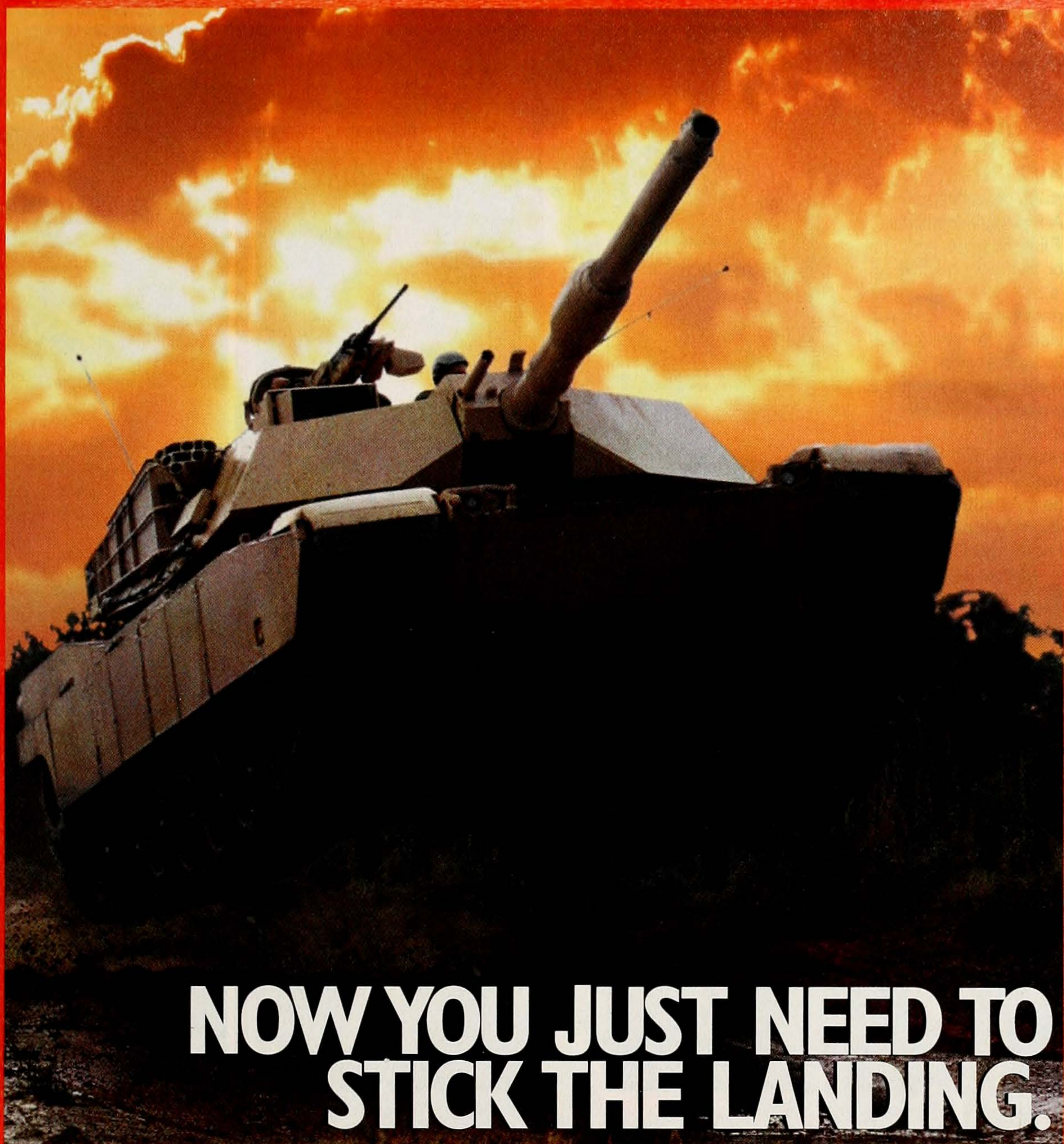
In my hometown of Pittsville, FFA Week has become a collaboration between all of the career and technical student organizations in the school. Each sponsors its own event, so our FFA chapter organizes a daily eating competition. I was the "milkchug" champion" my sophomore and junior years. The week comes to an end with "Ag Olympics," where participants compete in such events as the bale toss and sundae races.

What are some of your goals for the upcoming year?

My primary goal is serving the National FFA Organization's members. I want to help them find their place in the organization and help them find out what they're passionate about. I also am excited to help FFA build relationships in business and industry. I'd like to see collegiate FFA programs continue to grow across the nation. ●

timeline

age	
12	● joined FFA
13	● lost FFA state creed speaking competition
14	● named FFA chapter Star Greenhand
15	● attended FFA Made For Excellence conference
16	● lost FFA chapter president election
17	● elected FFA chapter president ● received state FFA degree ● placed first in state FFA discussion meet ● graduated from high school ● elected state FFA vice president
18	● state FFA agricultural sales (placement) proficiency award winner ● served as a national FFA delegate committee chair
19	● earned American FFA Degree ● elected national FFA president



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large quantity of entries, we can't use every entry we receive, nor can we return or acknowledge submissions.



Kansas



SHAYLAN ENNIS

In her first career development event (CDE) competition ever, Shaylan's land judging team won first place. She serves as Paola FFA Chapter vice president and FFA district treasurer. She raises and trains pintos, works at a local sale barn and recently competed for county rodeo queen. Shaylan is a National Honor Society member, is active in Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) and spends much of her time volunteering.

Kentucky



COLE WILLS

A member of the George Rogers Clark FFA Chapter, Cole raises Boer goats for his supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program. As an extension of his project, he is working with a neighboring county to develop a youth market goat program. Cole, the chapter chaplain, has attended a local FFA camp and the state and national FFA conventions. In addition to goats, Cole also enjoys raising rabbits and purebred dogs.

Pennsylvania



JENNIE MAULFAIR

As her state's first female FFA Star Farmer, Jennie is now a freshman at Pennsylvania State University, majoring in agricultural education. She served for two years as Northern Lebanon FFA Chapter president. She participated in more than 80 FFA activities, including parliamentary procedure team. Her extensive SAE program includes 10 different areas, including dairy beef finishing, soybeans, corn, alfalfa hay and barley.

Texas



RUBEN SANCHEZ

A freshman member of the Sabinal FFA Chapter, Ruben has already made the most of his involvement in the organization. He has received the Texas FFA Association's certificate of merit and competed on the chapter's entomology team, which placed 16th in the state (he placed 42nd individually). An honor roll student, Ruben is student council secretary, performs in band and competes in football, basketball, band, track and tennis.

Florida



STEPHENIE BAAL

Even though she has not been elected an FFA chapter officer, Stephenie emerged last year as a important leader in the agriculture department and the Palmetto FFA Chapter by participating in nearly every chapter activity. She has become a leader in the classroom, as well. A junior this year, Stephenie challenges herself with some difficult honors courses and still manages to maintain an "A" average.

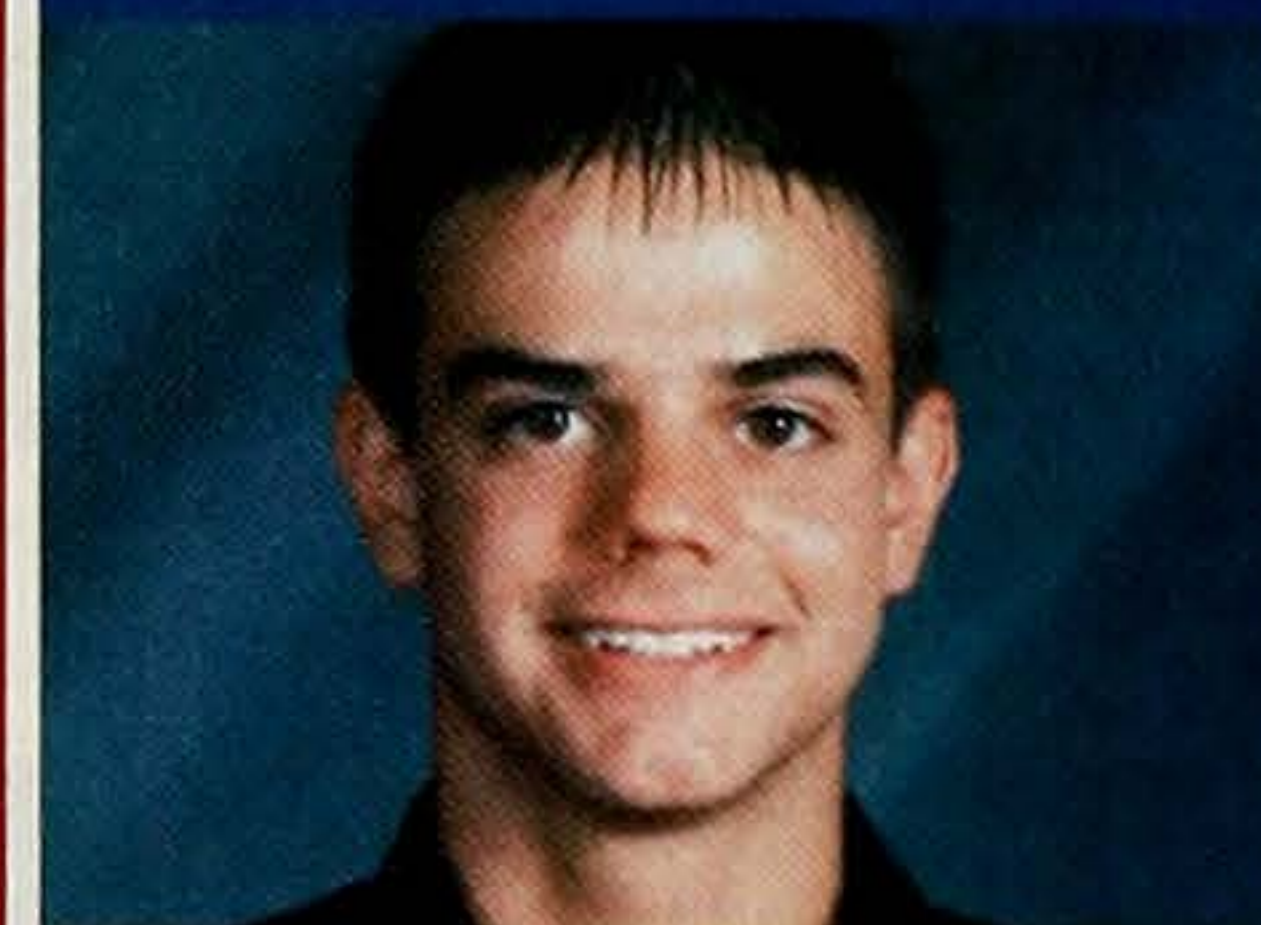
Ohio



DANA WORKMAN

Now on an academic scholarship at Wilmington College, where she is a freshman, Dana is still regarded as a leader in the West Muskingum FFA Chapter. She served as both vice president and president and earned second place in the state equine science (entrepreneurship) proficiency awards program. Dana also competed in parliamentary procedure and rural soils career development events (CDEs) and the state Envirothon competition.

Oklahoma



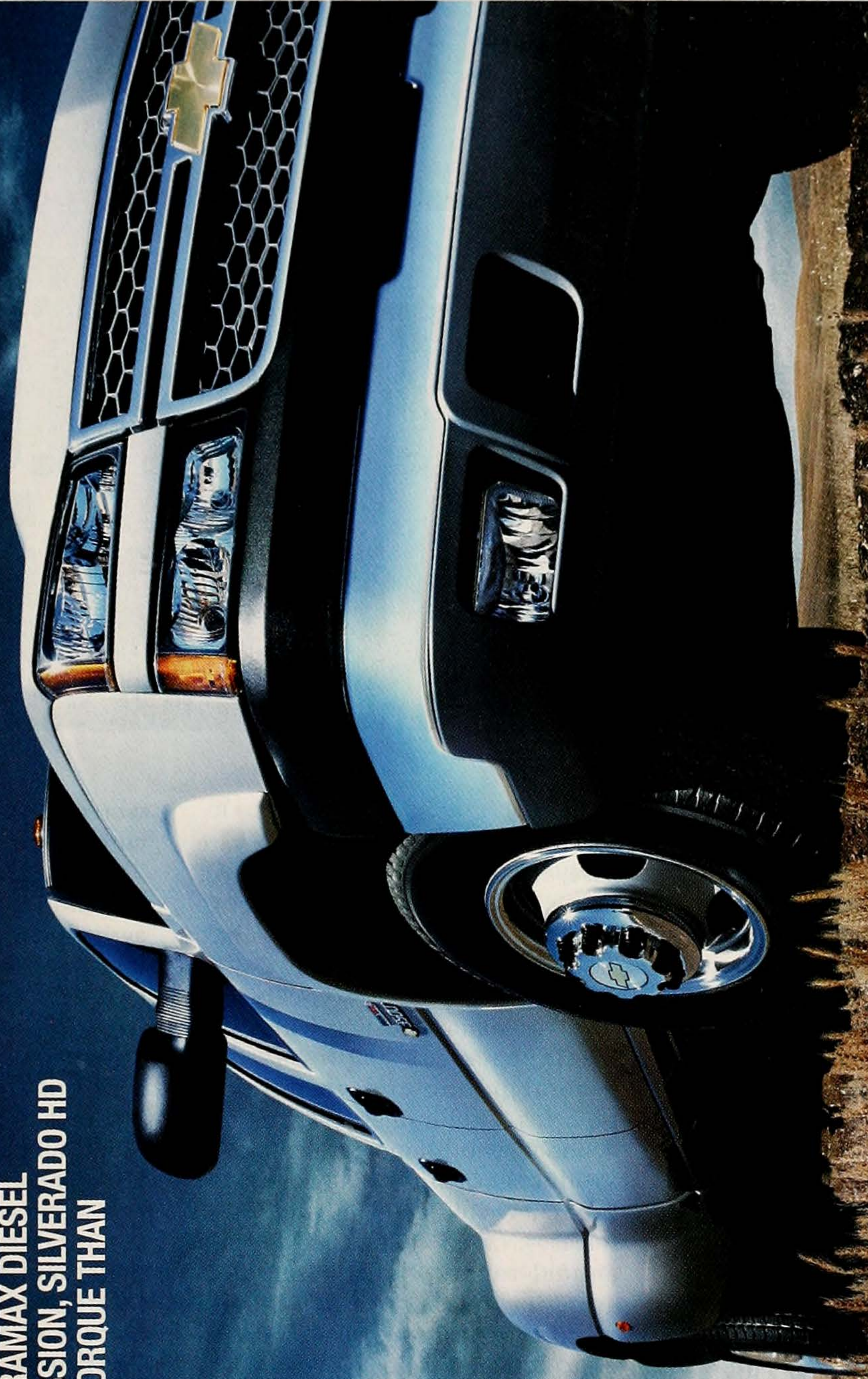
STEPHEN ELLER

As vice president of the Haskell FFA Chapter, Stephen is working to make his chapter more active and successful by developing a stronger program of activities. His goal is to have his chapter earn a three-star rating in the FFA National Chapter Award program. Stephen, a junior this year, has maintained a 4.0 grade point average throughout high school and is a member of the National Honor Society and the student senate.

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A career guide
for FFA members

Agricultural public relations

By Stephen Regenold

People don't just walk onto "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." The guests who appear on Leno's show—and most other entertainment and news programs—are sometimes invited simply because the show staff wants them. More likely, however, someone like Tom Cruise, Mia Hamm or Jamie Foxx has hired a publicist or public relations firm to act as media liaison, who contacts the show and proposes an appearance.

That's exactly what John Dutcher did last year for Welch Foods, Inc. Dutcher, a former FFA member who works in Des Moines, Iowa, with the international public relations firm Fleishman-Hillard, specializes in pitching ideas to the news media. In Jan. 2004, he made a successful pitch that landed five-year-old Russell Levering, Welch Foods' child spokesperson, a seat next to Leno for a five-minute interview.

Welch Foods, which had hired Dutcher's firm to garner publicity, was happy with Russell's appearance because it got the company some coveted media exposure. Leno got an entertaining and unusually young guest. It was a win-win situation.

PR DEFINED

Though the Leno example is a rare case, it demonstrates the power of public relations. A sister industry to advertising and marketing, public relations—often shortened to PR—is a multidisciplinary career that involves communicating with news media, company employees, the general public and government agencies. Public relations firms are contracted to promote a company's products in the media, organize events, write speeches and press releases, create brochures, develop annual reports, build computer-graphics presentations, handle company crises and take charge of other communications-related tasks.

Like any industry, agriculture has a big need for public relations. Companies ranging from John Deere to Dow Chemical need people who are familiar with agriculture and who specialize in writing, speaking and general communication. Large PR firms like Fleishman-Hillard have special divisions devoted to handling public relations for clients in the food and agriculture industries.

In general, writing and interpersonal communication skills are stressed in the PR industry. A sense for knowing trends and what's news-

worthy is necessary. A good dose of curiosity about the world is a big plus.

"I love to learn about new things," Dutcher says, "And working in agricultural public relations is great because the industry is always evolving. There's always something new, and news organizations have an appetite for information on agriculture."

Dutcher can trace the beginnings of his public relations career back to high school, at which time he served as a reporter for his FFA chapter. In 1983, taking a break between his junior and senior year at The Ohio State University, he did an internship at the National FFA Center, where he worked to promote FFA in the media. In 1985, back at Ohio State, Dutcher finished up a Bachelor's degree in agricultural journalism and went to work for the Meredith Corporation in Des Moines as an editor at *Successful Farming's Farm Computer News*.

Using experience gained in journalism, Dutcher switched sides and got a job at a PR firm in 1987. During the next 10 years, he worked as a copywriter, a PR account executive and the manager of a PR division within an advertising agency before starting his own consulting



What's this five-year-old doing in Jay Leno's parking spot? Ask agricultural public relations guru John Dutcher, who landed the young corporate spokesperson on the show on behalf of his client, Welch Foods.

business. In 2002, he went to work for Fleishman-Hillard, where he currently serves as a vice president.

PR CAREER PATH

Since working with journalists and the media is such a big part of a PR practitioner's job, a college degree in journalism is often recommended. However, it is not the only choice. Many colleges now offer four-year degrees in public relations, and students who major in communications or marketing often go on to work in the PR field.

Beth Forbes, the news and public affairs coordinator for the college of agriculture at Purdue University, says a Bachelor's degree in journalism is usually the best choice for students wanting to get into the PR industry.

"Even if you don't love to write, a journalism degree will teach you how to be a great communicator, and that's exactly what you need in public relations," she says.

Forbes says people looking to specialize in agricultural public relations may want to investigate programs like Purdue's agricultural-communications degree. It's a four-year degree from the university's college of agriculture that focuses on communication, but adds a core load

of science and agriculture classes.

Prior to college, both Forbes and Dutcher recommend that students prepare for a career in PR by writing for the high school newspaper, working on the school yearbook, getting involved with FFA-related communications and taking lots of science and writing classes.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

One thing that attracts people to public relations is the career's variety of activity. At most companies, no two days are alike, as you're always dealing with new people, new products and new ideas. There is a fair amount of time spent behind a desk e-mailing newspaper and magazine editors about new products or calling TV stations to set up interviews. Writing press releases, which are two- to four-page articles that sum up company news, is a big part of the job. Some PR people travel the country or the world for days or weeks at a time, attending trade shows and press events.

PR is a fairly high-pressure job. A driven, independent personality is a must. While there are some collaborative facets, a lot of your time in PR will be spent working on your own projects. It's normal for PR people to

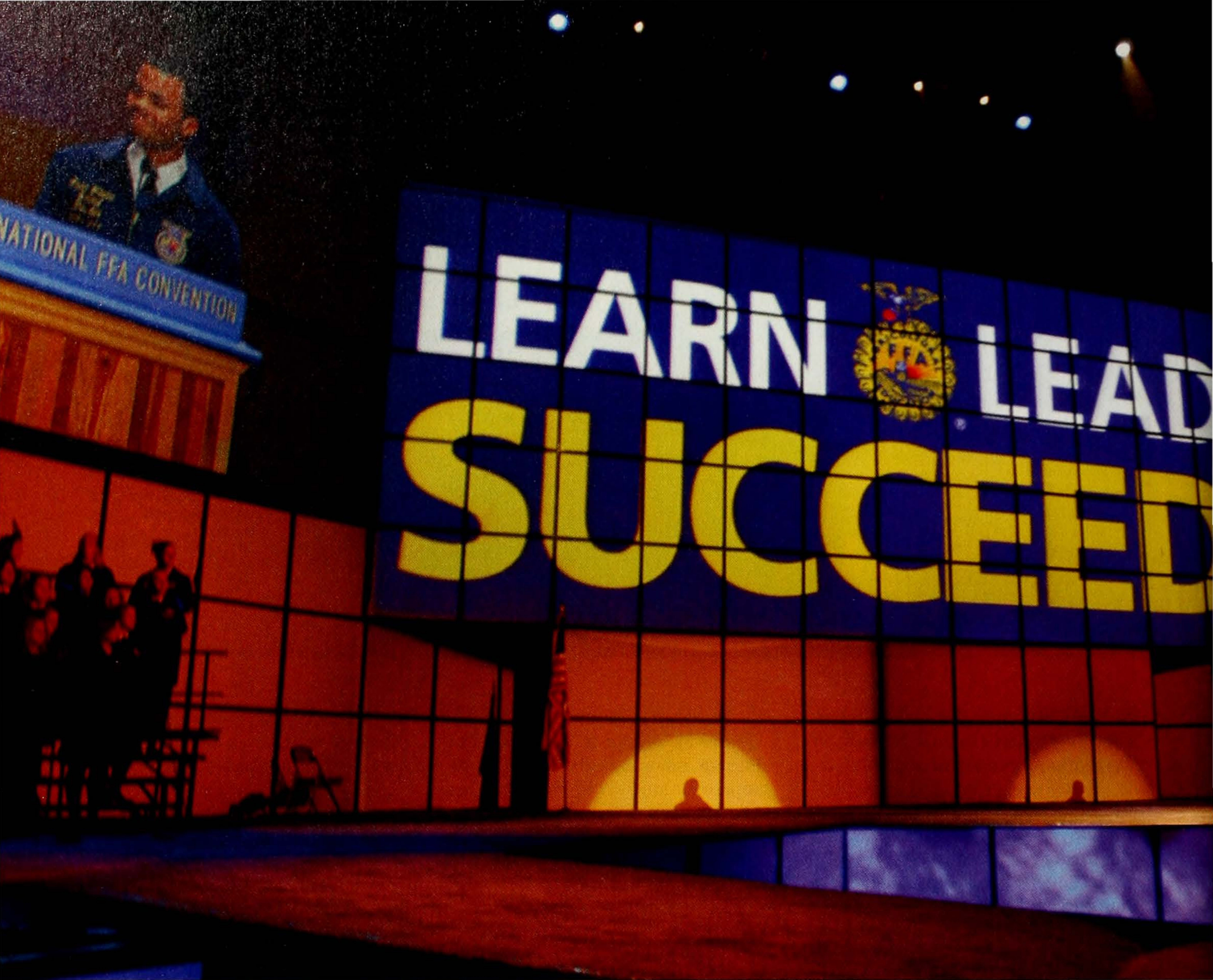
be responsible for coming up with and pitching their own ideas without much help from co-workers.

But, for the right personality, the job offers a great combination of creativity and independence, balanced by personal accountability.

As John Dutcher noted, a career is something that must hold your interest for 20 to 40 years. He says he's found his interest in PR. ●

WEB LINKS

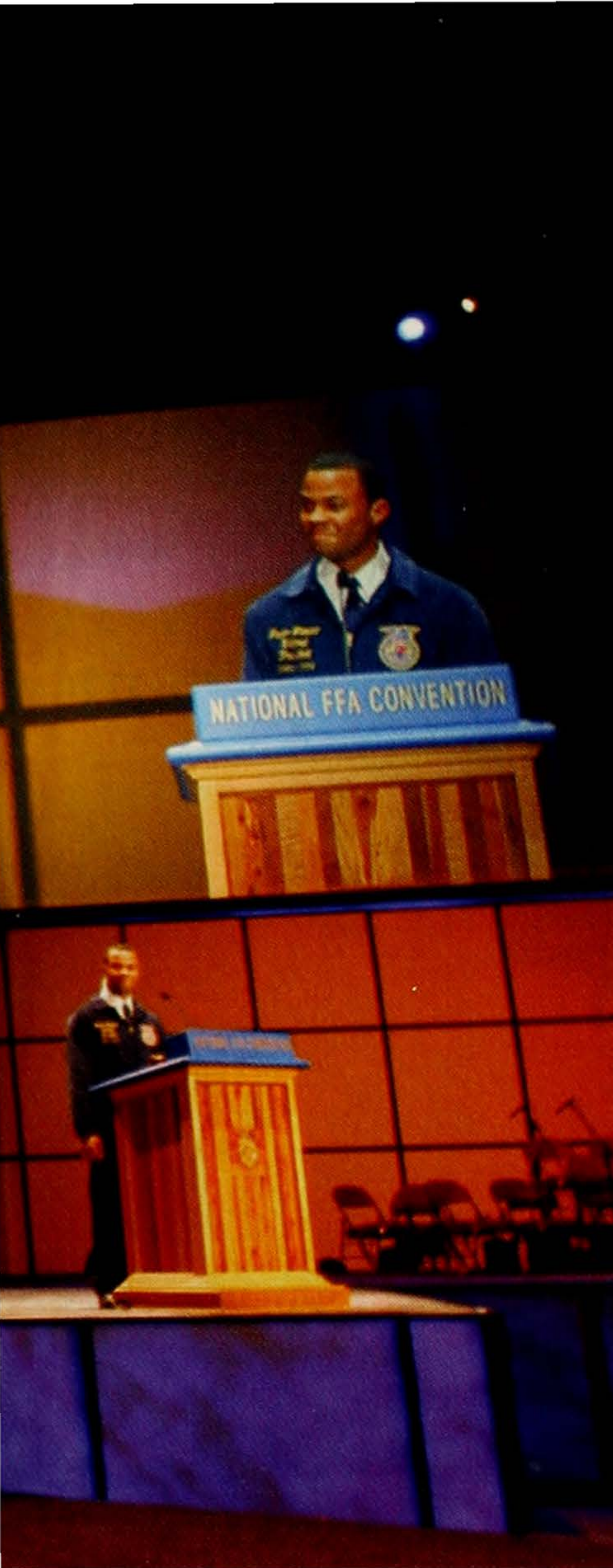
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The 77th National FFA Convention

More than 53,000 FFA members and guests look to the future, creating an uplifting atmosphere at the four-day event

By Erich Gaukel



a blast . . . It's so amazing. All of the things you can get here—there's shopping, there are sessions, there are speeches, you can do contests, you can go to leadership workshops."

Christin's excitement, optimism and energy seemed to be contagious, because those same feelings prevailed throughout the convention. And it wasn't just the FFA members who felt the buzz.

Rolling Stones keyboardist Chuck Leavell, who has strong roots in agriculture, performed at a general session and afterward said, "it's as good as any audience I've ever had, I can tell you that."

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, speaking before a general session, said, "I can tell you that there is no better sight for the secretary of agriculture than thousands of blue

audience, as he pointed over his shoulder at a hoop. The object of the game: if you throw the football through the hoop, you get to keep the football. While the FFA members took their throws, others stood at a table, filling out requests for more information from the university.

Ryan said that things were going quite well at the booth, which was situated near other colleges' and universities' displays, just around the corner from the USDA's sprawling space. "We're trying to recruit students to West Virginia University," he explained, "but we're also promoting the Davis School of Agriculture, promoting agricultural education and trying to get recruits for that." With more than a thousand requests for more information, Ryan was "very happy" to see so many students excited about attending college.



FROM NEAR AND FAR

FFA members arrived by jet, bus, van, car and SUV. Nobody is quite sure who drove the farthest to get to Louisville, but a pickup with Zillah FFA painted on the side was spotted in the parking lot. From Zillah, Wash., to Louisville, Ky., is 2,267 miles—one way.

Timmy Poe, a Powell County FFA Chapter member didn't have to leave his home

As she waited for a shuttle ride back to her hotel from the convention, FFA delegate Christin Riordan, an FFA state officer from New York, looked like she needed a nap. She had been in town almost a week, working long hours with other delegates on such issues as official dress, increasing non-traditional student participation and the creation of a bicameral delegate body.

When asked about her convention experience, her apparent exhaustion vanished, and she gave this enthusiastic summary of her week: "This is my second convention, and I've had



jackets stretching as far as the eye can see. It is great for me to be back on this stage . . . there's always something about seeing FFA students when I travel around. There's a spark, an energy that's unique and inspiring."

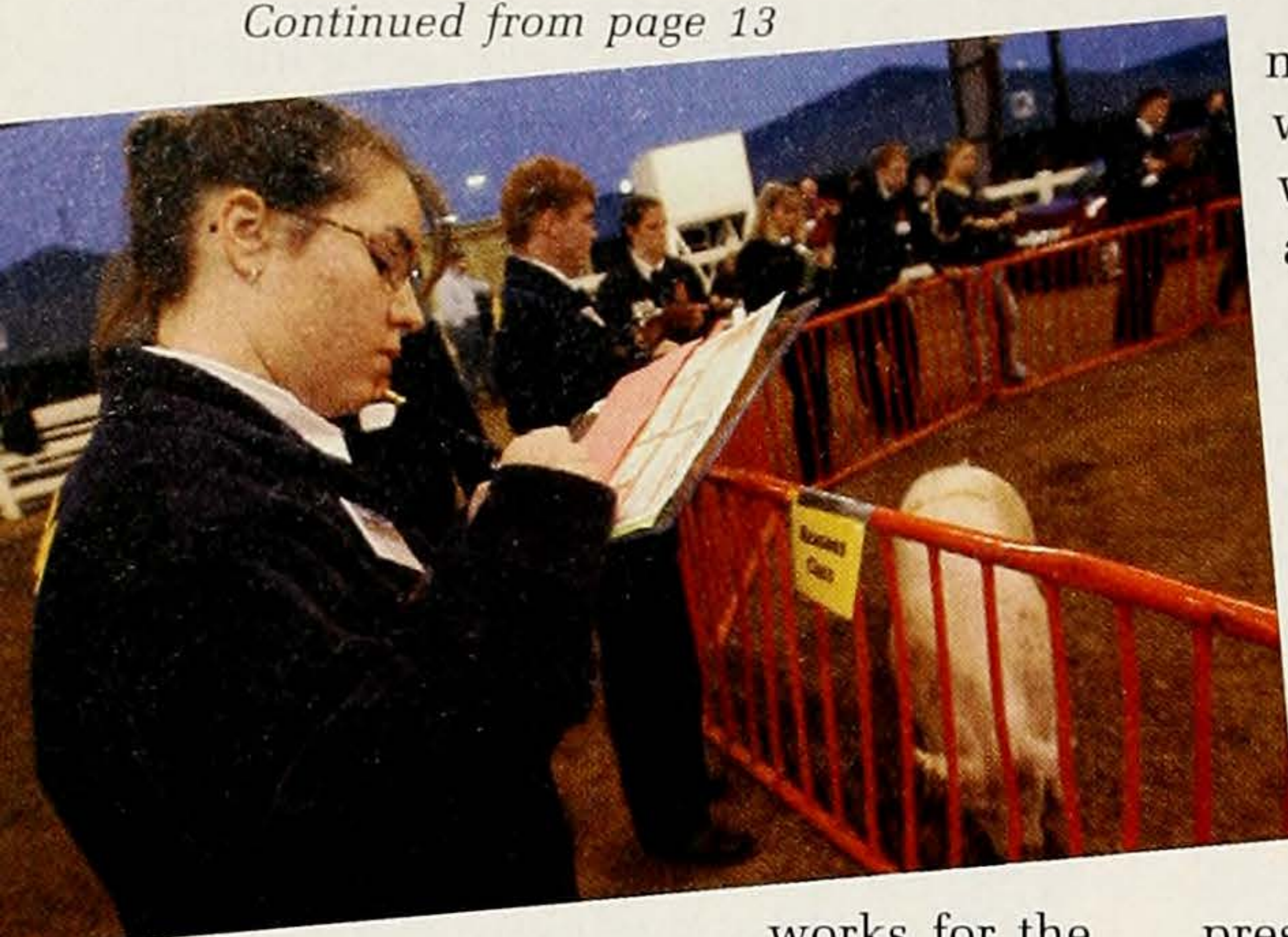
Meanwhile, a short walk away, at the FFA National

Career Show, Ryan Saxe, a former FFA member who's now an agriculture student at West Virginia University, held a foam football as he spoke to a handful of FFA members. He was working at the university's information booth, and he was busy explaining the rules of a game to his small

state to attend the convention. He and 30 of his friends made the short drive to the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center. So, we asked, what's it like hosting the national FFA convention in your own backyard? "It's pretty fun. You get to meet a lot of people."

Natasha Nenow, Eric Mack and other FFA members from Medina, North Dakota, endured a long drive, but the trip seemed shorter, they said, because of stops along the way at The Corn Palace in South Dakota, Field of Dreams and a John Deere factory in Iowa and the National FFA Center in Indiana.

One convention guest traveled 6,566 miles to attend the convention. His starting point: Baghdad, Iraq. The long flights didn't seem to bother the recently retired U.S. Marine Corps Major General Arnold Field, who now ►



works for the U.S. government's Iraq reconstruction effort. The drive to the airport in Baghdad, however, *did* to rattle him a bit.

"There were bombs placed on the road that we would normally use to get to the airport," he explained, "so we took an alternate route. Twenty or 25 security personnel, just to get one person to the airport. We ran into a significant traffic jam in downtown Baghdad, a very dangerous situation in which to be, with so many terrorists and insurgents around, so we had to go back. But we tried it again the second day, and, of course, we were successful."

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES

Field was a national officer in the New Farmers of America (NFA), a vocational agricultural organization for African-American students, which merged with the Future Farmers of America in 1965. He made the long and dangerous trip to speak to FFA members at the National Chapter Award dinner. He advised members to seize the opportunities before them, just as he had.

Growing up in poverty in rural South Carolina, where his home had no electricity or phone, Field explained how his NFA and FFA experiences gave his life direction and purpose, helping "catapult" him into his career.

"I'm going to ask that each of you take full advantage of the opportunities that your parents and your advisors are making for you. I was pleased to hear [key-note speaker] Joe Theismann say that this is a team effort. We can-

not do this alone, even though we would like it to be that way, but we cannot. We must learn to live and work together."

Recognizing that the room was full of hundreds of FFA members who had put in long hours in the areas of community, chapter and student development, Field left them to ponder a poem he had heard the national FFA president deliver at the convention 45 ago in Kansas City, Mo. It went like this: "Do all the good you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, To all the people you can, As long as you ever can."

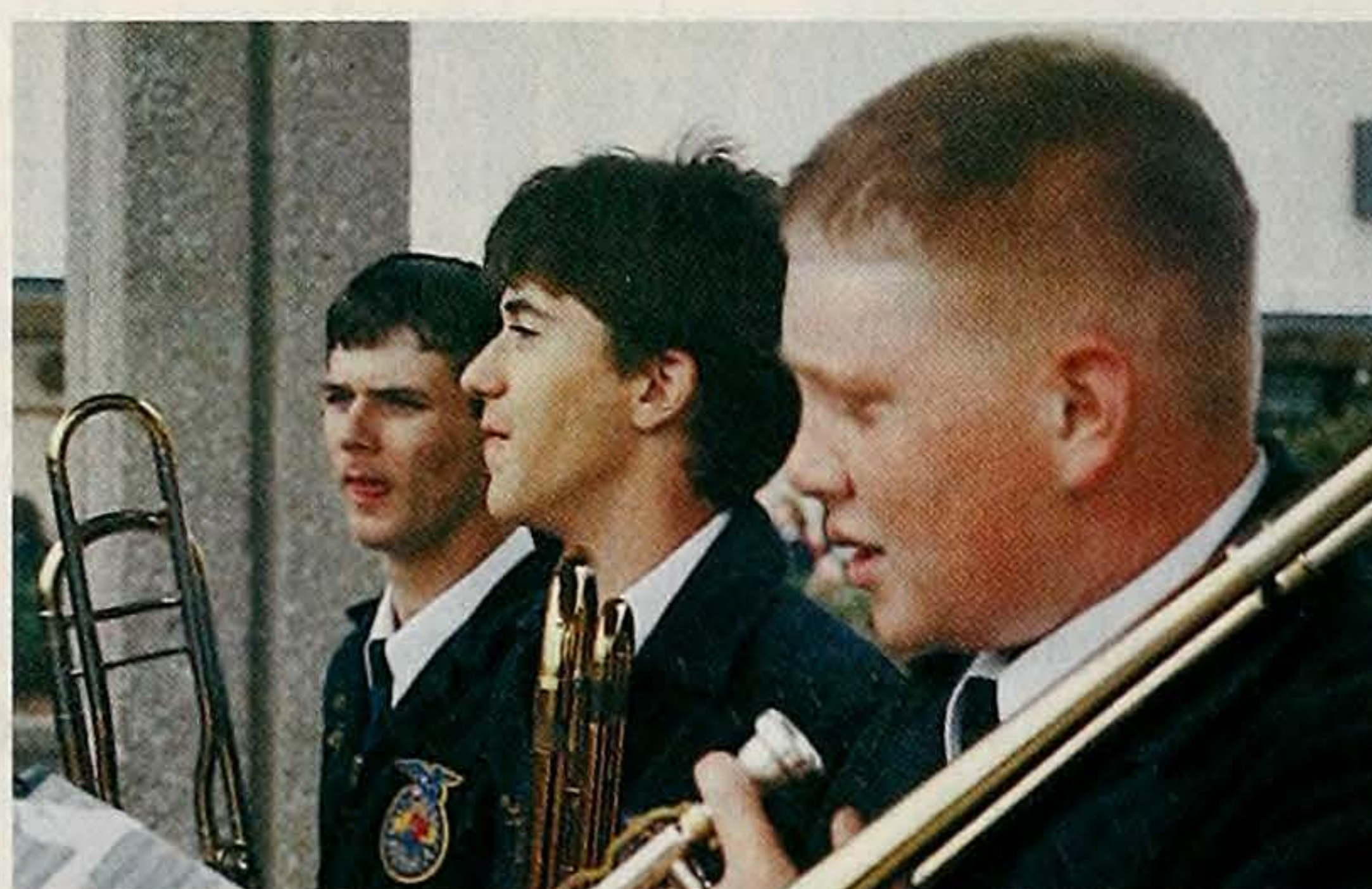
THE COMPETITION

FFA members from across the nation came to the convention to compete in career development events (CDEs), proficiency awards, national chapter awards, the agriscience fair, the Stars Over America program and more.

Even though the competition is always tough, and winners are always glad to take home the top prize, FFA members who didn't come away as winners were glad just to be participating.

Kenton Abrams, a Star in Agribusiness finalist, didn't dwell on the fact that he didn't win. Instead, he glowingly described the experience of being a finalist. "The interviewing went really well. The judges were nice and asked good, positive questions, and they were really interested in our SAE programs."

Shanna Krall, a Star Farmer final-



ist, echoed those sentiments. "I definitely find it a privilege just to be a girl and to be here because we're kind of proving, through FFA, that women are out there and are interested in agriculture and can do it if the men can do it."

Nathan Schaffler, Diana Phelan and Amber Finn—all members of Washington state's Sumner FFA Chapter, worked their way through the career show after hearing that they didn't make the finals of the marketing plan CDE.

As they stuck pushpins in the approximate location of their hometown on a huge U.S. map, Diana explained how she felt. "It was just doing the competition. It was awesome. We're not in the finals, but it was just the experience that counts." Amber added, "It was just fun getting to know people and seeing everyone."



The *Impact* Indiana FFA

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Indiana FFA Shines at National Convention!

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HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

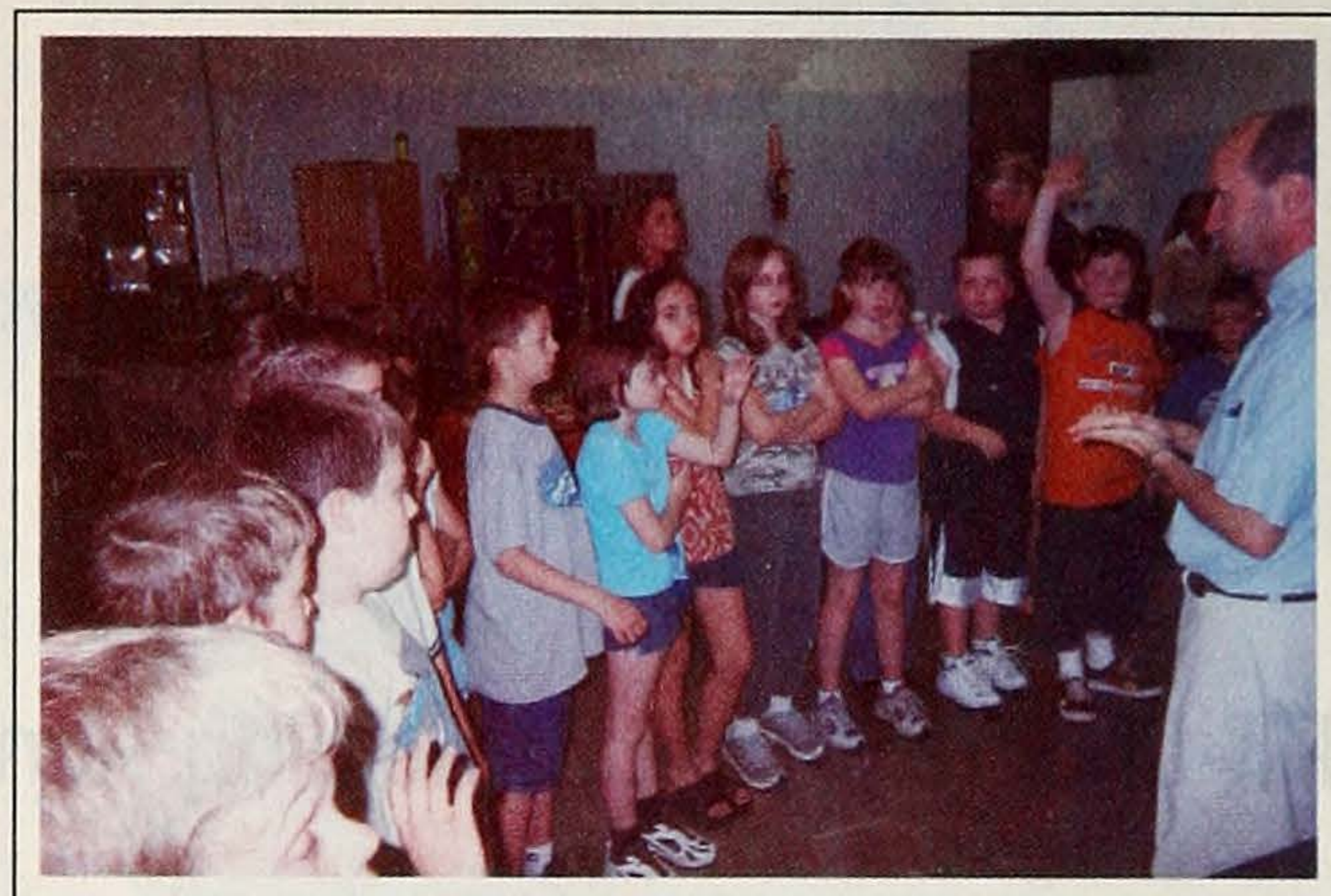
By Eric Barnard

The FFA has been a significant part of Mr. Greg Curlin's life. Tucked away in the southeast corner of Indiana, Mr. Curlin, one of the agriculture teachers at Switzerland County High School, developed a life-long love for agriculture while growing up in the beautiful hills near Vevay, Indiana.

Mr. Curlin feels he's extremely fortunate to be able to teach at the same school corporation he used to attend. While Mr. Curlin was in high school he was very involved in the Switzerland County FFA. His favorite FFA activity was Dairy Evaluation, as he spent a great deal of his younger years working on his family's dairy farm. After graduation from Switzerland County High School, Mr. Curlin attended Purdue University for one year as an agriculture economics major. He was then elected the next summer as the 1985-86 Indiana FFA State Treasurer. Mr. Curlin's experience as a state officer led him to change his career vision to agriculture education. After four more years at Purdue, Mr. Curlin graduated and accepted his first teaching position at Switzerland County High School. Mr. Curlin is currently now in his 14th year of teaching.

"It has been a generation of change," he said of his time spent so far as an ag teacher. "The changes in curriculum, in FFA, and in CDEs have been a challenge to incorporate."

When Mr. Curlin started teaching at Switzerland County he was in charge of the junior high classes and the horticulture class. Bill Simon was the senior teacher in the department and he worked with the ag mechanics classes. Since then a variety of classes have found their way into the newer



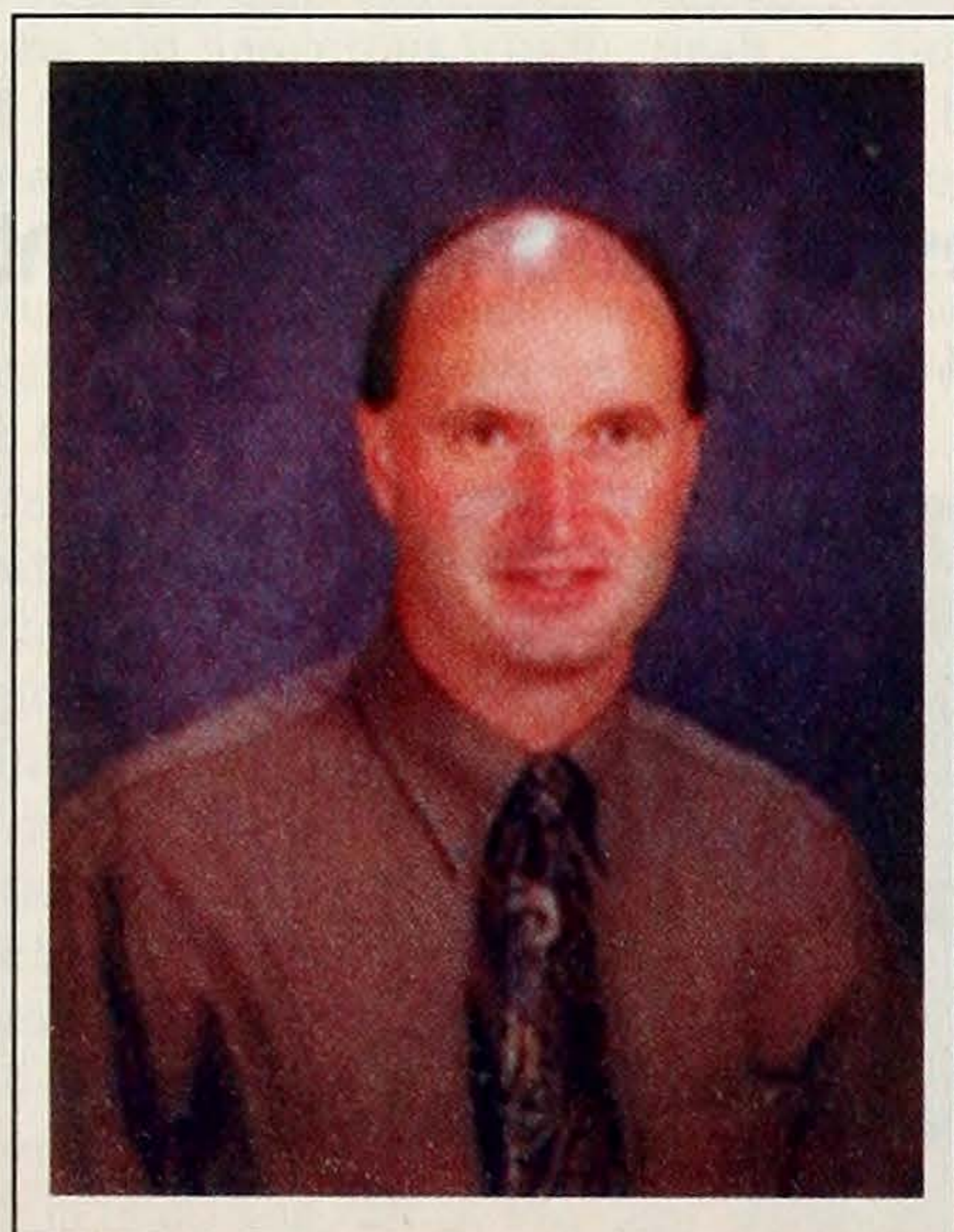
curriculum that comes from the progresses in modern agriculture and gives the students more choices when it comes to an education in agriculture.

The Switzerland County FFA has moved forward a great deal under the instruction of Mr. Curlin. He tries to keep the FFA chapter activities fun and beneficial to the students. A trip to the Washington Leadership Conference is usually in the works with Mr. Curlin as well as chapter retreats to new places around the tri-state area. The FFA chapter has worked with the Special Olympics, Relay for Life, and has done a special program for community awareness of homeless people. Mr. Curlin has many goals for the FFA chapter. He would like for his members to see the opportunities FFA has to offer and to be successful in their involvement of those opportunities.

"I would like for them to see the opportunities of FFA in a wide scope and not focus on activities that have always been concentrated on," says Mr. Curlin. "I would tell all FFA members to try something new and look at the big picture of FFA."

Even though FFA is a very large part of Mr. Curlin, it is not the most important aspect of his life. The Curlin family, which includes Mr. Curlin's wife, Becky, and his two-year old son, Ethan, are very supportive of his involvement in the school. Currently Mr. Curlin and his wife are in the process of adopting a second son, named Levi, from Guatemala. Mr. Curlin hopes to have Levi home by March to enjoy the wonderful Indiana spring.

Mr. Curlin is very thankful for his choice to become an ag teacher and for all those aspiring Ag Teachers he says, "Be ready to accept change! As the education requirements grow, if you want a good program you have to be willing to put the time into it."



Lending a Hand

By Sara Egan

It is evening and all of your friends are out having a good time. Where are you? Well, if you are following the trend of the Indiana FFA, you are with your chapter having a great time, enjoying fellowship, food, and community service. That's right, community service. One segment of the FFA Organization is based around community development. And with all the support our communities give to the national, state, and local FFA, why not show a little gratitude by lending a helping hand in return?

This year is filled with enthusiasm from members and advisors as they venture into a large variety of community service projects. The first conference of the year, Summer Challenge, revolved around the idea of community service, with members working toward improving the Indiana FFA Leadership Center, and the service has yet to cease. Just within the last few months Indiana FFA chapters such as Switzerland County, McCutcheon, and Rensselaer have taken part in projects throughout their communities.

This past summer at the Jasper County Fair, Rensselaer FFA members opened the annual Young McDonald's Farm so that young children could come and interact with farm animals, but a newer addition to the Young McDonald's Farm was the second annual Penny Hunt. Young children, in different age levels, were given a small shovel and had to dig through sand to find pennies.

"It was a chance for our members to work one-on-one with the younger kids," said Lindsey Crawford, a Rensselaer FFA member. "Besides having a little fun in the sand, we were able to show them the types of animals raised on a farm and give them a small taste of what agriculture really is. Plus it was an opportunity for the parents to sit back and watch their kids have a good time at the county fair."



Trick or Treat - a very common saying among young child - became the McCutcheon FFA Chapter's favorite saying as high school students were given the chance to revisit their childhoods. On Halloween night, members dressed up in their favorite Halloween costumes and stormed the subdivisions of the McCutcheon school district in Lafayette. But instead of saying "trick or treat," they said, "Would you please donate canned goods for the Food Finders Food Bank?" Approximately 25 members set out to collect food for a local food pantry.

"Being able to help out the less fortunate people is a good feeling," said Seth Gish, a McCutcheon member. "Our chapter collected over 1,090 cans for the Food Finders. Going door to door was an enjoyable, yet very rewarding experience."

Another member, Travis Tater added, "Collecting the canned goods was satisfying enough, but the reactions of the adults and their gratitude really made it a worthwhile evening."

Project: Homeless is the title of Switzerland County's annual community service project. One Saturday a year in November, the members of Switzerland County gather at the school and set out through the town of Vevay with shopping carts collecting canned foods, followed by an eventful, outdoor night at the school. Following the food drive, members go back to the school, but the catch is, they aren't allowed into the Soup Kitchen - aka High School - unless it is during the regular hours. So in the meantime members gather together outside to experience just what it would be like to be homeless, complete with fire barrels and cardboard boxes.

"Project: Homeless is a great community activity as well as great learning experience," state Emily Hehe, Switzerland County FFA President. "I truly think that the members grow as individuals just by taking part in this amazing project."



Broadcasting Her Impact Across the FFA...

By Jennifer Shepherd

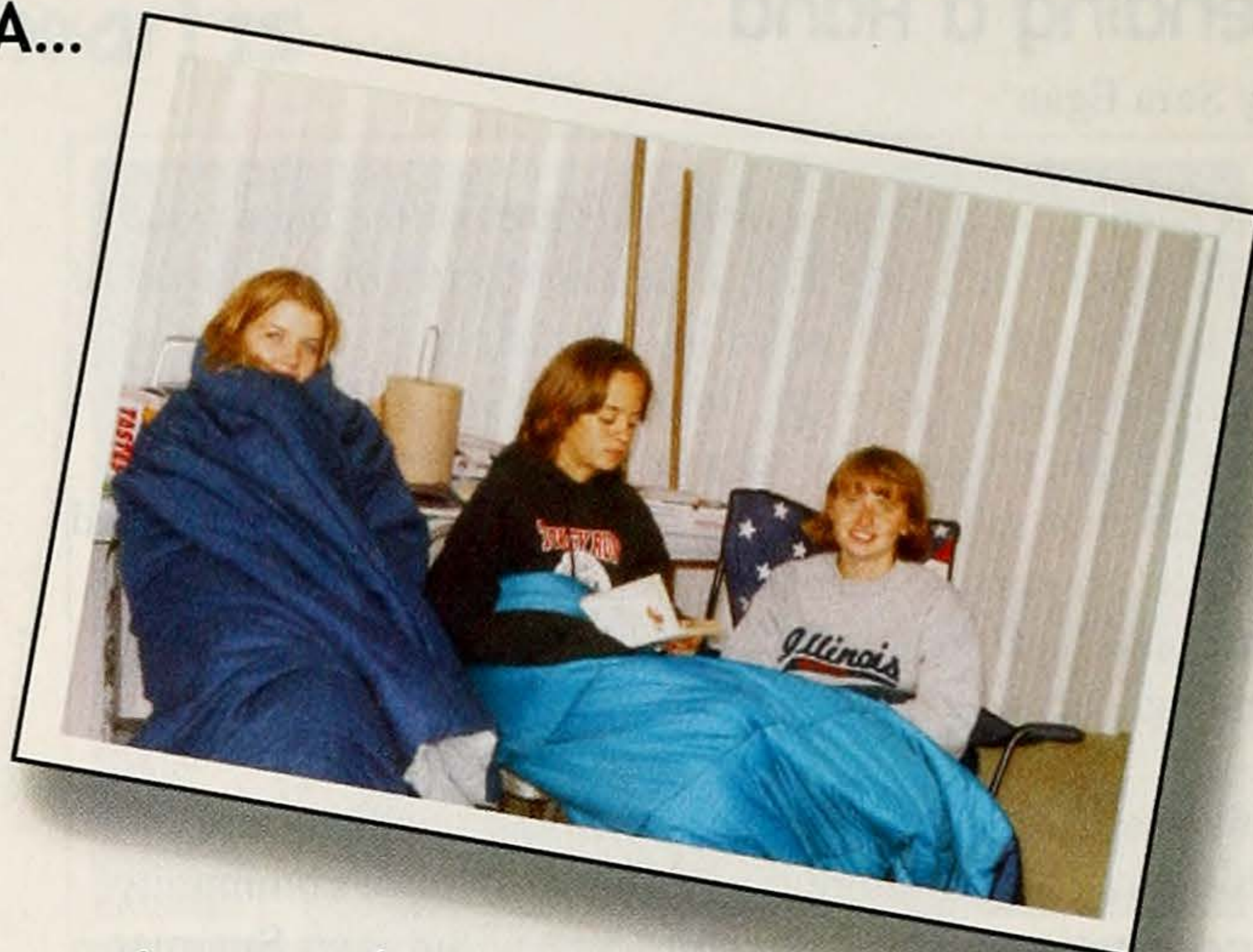
Whether Elise Brown, the District VII reporter and member of the Turkey Run FFA is playing her baritone in the National FFA band, writing stories and plays, or working with her Shorthorn cattle and Shropshire sheep, she is always there to lend a listening ear to those closest to her.

Elise gives her father, Andrew Brown, credit for her joining the FFA as a freshman. "We are so much alike, and he is the one who got me involved with agriculture, livestock, and the outdoors." Upon joining the FFA, Elise was prepared to learn more about the farming and livestock industry, and did not realize all of the other opportunities the FFA would present to her. From traveling the state, judging livestock, and participating in the Forestry, Prepared Public Speaking, and Creed Career Development Events, "The FFA has built my self-confidence," said Elise. "It makes me want to excel and step outside of my comfort zone."

Elise has done just that! Serving as this year's District VII reporter, she publishes a monthly newsletter which highlights successful students and chapters, displays upcoming events, and urges students to participate in upcoming events. "Elise is a great girl," said Sawyer Sparks, a fellow district officer. "I am glad to know her not only as an officer, but as a friend."

It is no surprise that she has placed 2nd in the state with her Multi-Media Presentation, and plans to pursue a career in the agriculture industry under agricultural communications, agricultural education, or animal science.

Elise is also very active in her local chapter by having served as both the secretary and president. She has big plans for FFA week, as she will participate in spirit dress up days, the

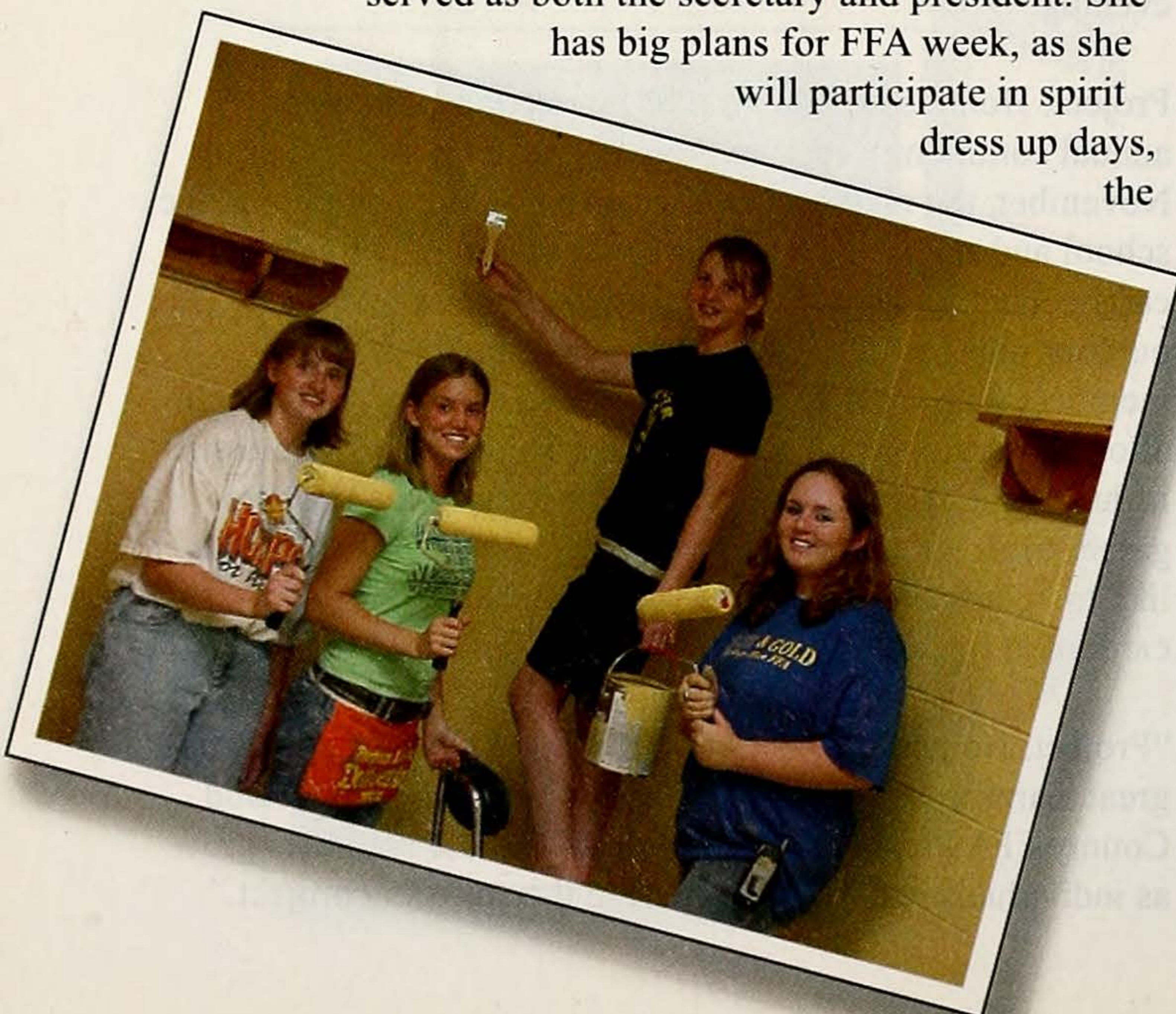


petting zoo, and the "kiss a pig" contest, where all proceeds will go towards Purdue University's Breaking New Ground project.

In her home and community, Elise participates in the Turkey Run band, the Academic Super Bowl team, tennis, peer tutoring, and shows Shorthorn cattle and Shropshire sheep within 4-H. Her willingness to assist others and lead a crowd is not hidden. She was given the honor of receiving the 4-H citizenship award through her local 4-H club for her outstanding leadership.

Elise is a goal driven person. "I have so many things to do, that I must prioritize everything so that I can get to it all...the FFA taught me how to do that." She recently submitted a five page application for a Supervised Agricultural Experience grant, which will allow her to improve and expand her SAE area of Beef Cattle and Sheep Production using \$1,000.00 awarded to those who hold a strong SAE. By working sixteen hours a week with her livestock, Elise has built her SAE up to that standard.

Elise has grown as an individual and as a leader," said her advisor, Miss Sorg. "I am looking forward to seeing what the next year and half has in store for her."



STAR CHAPTER...DANVILLE FFA

Taking Service Beyond the Ag Rooms Walls

By Jennifer Sheperd

Every other Wednesday, you find the members of the 45-member Danville FFA Chapter, advised by Mr. Aaron Neblett in a meeting. They are not hanging out before a long day at school, they are working, highlighting upcoming events and planning even more!

"The members of the Danville FFA are the engine that drives our chapter, said Mr. Neblett. "They are imaginative, caring, energetic and passionate about agriculture, their community, and having an impact.

Danville is a fairly new FFA chapter, receiving its charter just eight years ago in 1996 when people in the community saw how many were involved in agriculture, and saw the need for a chapter. "I am extremely glad that our school has an FFA chapter," said Nick Blinn, chapter reporter. "Without FFA I wouldn't have had the vast experiences, and opportunities for leadership development that I've had."

Today, the 45 member chapter, comprised of students of all ages and backgrounds, focuses on community service and recruitment. A unique characteristic about Danville is that not all of their members are farmers, instead students are interested in agriculture and enjoy the activities Danville participates in. Recruitment is such an essential part to the chapter; they have an officer whose task is to focus on recruitment.



Once a month between August and May, six to eight FFA members and officers participate in the PALS program.

They teach a second grade elementary class for one hour, developing a curriculum which corresponds with the goal of the teacher and the FFA chapter. In October, they helped the children carve pumpkins, and then educated them on its seeds and how plants grow. This PALS program not only allows FFA

members to get involved with their community, but also gives children a chance to connect with agriculture and the opportunity to be involved in the FFA upon entering high school.

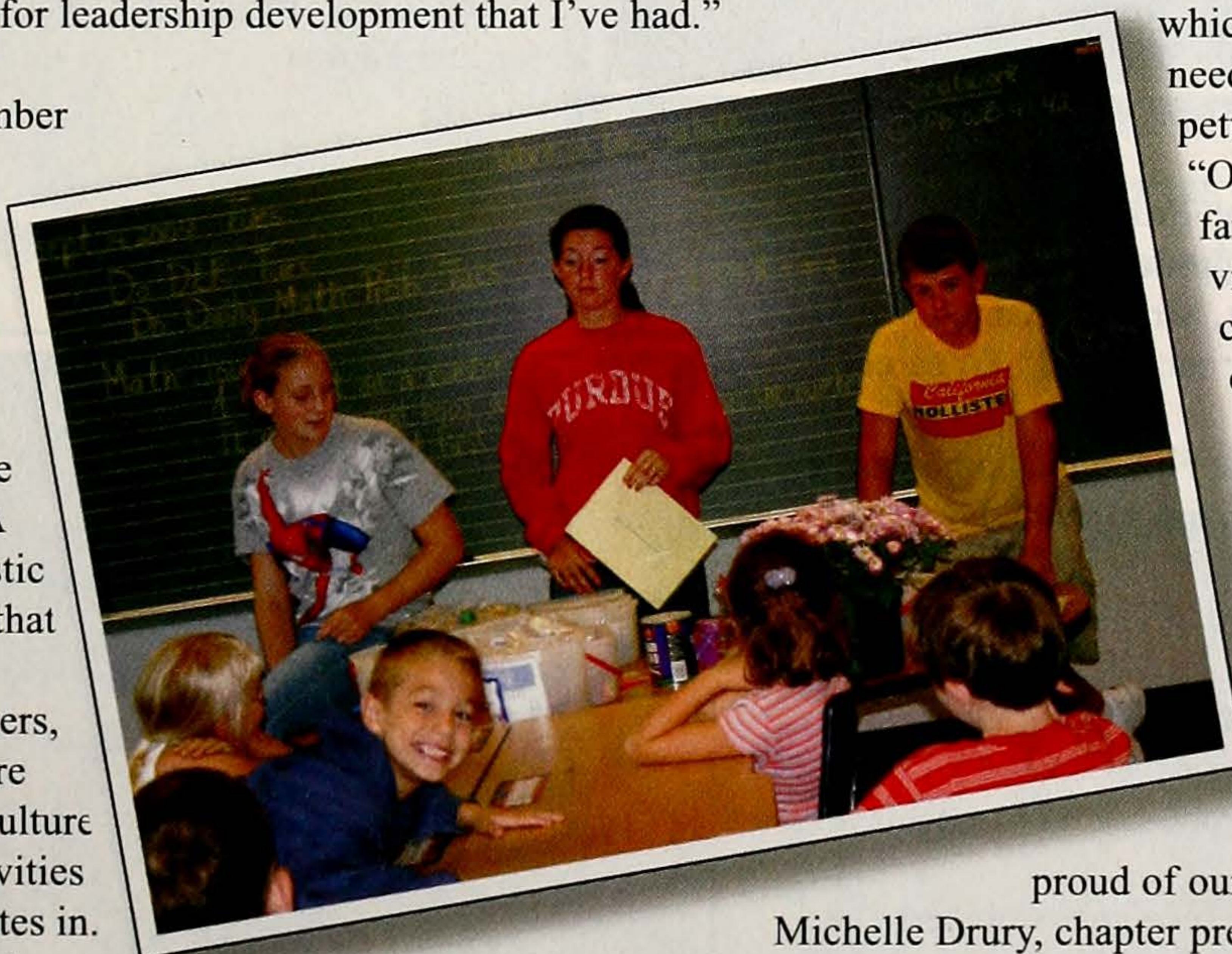
As the Christmas season approaches, Danville has big plans to support their local community through Christmas projects. This year they plan to fill shoe boxes with gifts which will be distributed for those in need. They also participate in a small petting zoo, "Santa's Barnyard."

"Our chapter is like one big family," said Kelsey Stegemoller, vice-president of the Danville FFA chapter. "We take care of our community."

Whether this chapter is recruiting new members, practicing for upcoming Career Development Events, or helping their community, they are constantly working for the betterment of their chapter. "I am extremely

proud of our chapter members," said

Michelle Drury, chapter president. "Each member is truly committed to what they are involved in."



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Nathan put the experience in a larger perspective. "It's been great, being able to know that there are tons of people who share common interests all around the nation."

An experienced FFA member who has worked his way up the achievement ladder, Chris Nelson hopes his experience as a Star in Agriscience finalist can help younger FFA members find their way: "My advice to young students is to get involved and find out all the activities available to

you in FFA, because there is something there that you can enjoy, be passionate about and sink your teeth into."

THE FUTURE IS YOURS

In his retiring address, called "Detours," outgoing National FFA President Javier Moreno began by talking about the car accident last winter that left him with, among other injuries, two broken ankles, two broken knees and a broken jaw. In rehabilitation, he explained, his negative attitude changed after he met another patient who always had a positive outlook, even though he knew he might never walk again. The man told Javier that his attitude helped him deal with the rehabilitation of his mind and body.

Everything changed for Javier after that conversation. By viewing his own accident as a detour in life, instead of something that defined him, Javier was able to move on with his life and role as FFA president.

"Perhaps you applied for a proficiency award and didn't get it," he explained to the thousands of FFA members in Freedom Hall. "It might even be that your SAE program has not been as successful as you thought it would be."

"As humans," Javier continued, "we go through detours constantly. What you think of your situation largely determines if you'll do anything about it, and what you'll do."

CUT LOOSE THE SANDBAGS

Keynote speaker Scott Greenberg, a cancer survivor, delivered a similar message earlier in the week. Like Javier, Greenberg experienced a life-threatening experience. He, too, thought his problems were insurmountable, until he came to the realization that you can't always control what happens to you. "But," he said, "you can control your reaction. Your reaction is your choice. That's where you have control."

"Every one of you is absolutely powerful," he continued. "You are strong. You are intelligent. You already have everything you need to be unbelievably successful. You guys are like hot air balloons—if you're left alone, you're just going to rise to

great heights. But most people don't because they sandbag themselves. They do things, and think things and believe things that hold them down—fear, insecurity, worrying about what people think, having a bad attitude, being judgmental, being jealous—all of these things hold us down. What



I've learned is that when you cut loose those sandbags and make different choices, that is when you'll rise to incredible heights. We've got to cut loose our sandbags, you guys, and we've got to believe in ourselves."

Before adjourning the convention Saturday night, newly installed 2004-05 National FFA President Jackie Mundt took the microphone, wearing her new national FFA officer jacket. "Each of you has a choice in front of you," she said. "You can go home and remember this day, or you can go home and take all of the things you've learned here, and you can use them to help set your future."

After the sound of the gavel faded into the far reaches of the Freedom Hall's balcony, FFA members left Louisville, ready to return home and ready to learn, lead and succeed. ●

The 2004-05 National FFA Officer Team



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Visit www.ffa.org for extensive coverage of the 77th National FFA Convention. You'll find audio interviews, news releases, awards results, photo galleries and more.

Shade of Blue

The United States Secretary of Agriculture makes a stop at the convention

Former national FFA officer Abbie (Kammerzell) DeMerleer served as personal host to Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman during the convention. Abbie, who studies agricultural communications and journalism at Washington State University, had the opportunity to ask the secretary about the agriculture and FFA. Here is Abbie's report:

When she arrived at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky., Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman had been on the road for nearly two weeks.

Normally a trip of that length could seriously hinder a person's wardrobe, but the secretary said she knew exactly what she was wearing to the convention. "I remember the first time I was at the FFA convention and how amazed I was at all the blue . . . blue jackets everywhere," she recalled. "I wore a navy suit that fit in well, but this time I wanted to stand out a bit," so she arrived wearing a glowing, bright blue outfit.

Onstage at the general session, Veneman spoke of the importance of FFA and agriculture. "American food and agriculture continue to offer a tremendous future and I'm glad there are organizations like FFA that are helping students learn, lead and succeed in this industry," she said. Then she announced \$162,500 in grants that the USDA would be providing to the National FFA Organization to help fund career development events and develop students' agribusiness

marketing and leadership skills.

While Veneman was not an FFA member herself (girls weren't allowed when she was in high school), she did participate in 4-H, and explained that she believes it is necessary that students, especially those interested in agriculture, be able to demonstrate key technical skills like public speaking, effective sales techniques and the evaluation of things from animals and soil type, to equipment and even personal development.

"Learning leadership and having strength of courage, those are the qualities of those students who wear your blue jacket," she said. "That serves as an inspiration to us all and makes us feel good about the future of this nation."

After her speech in Freedom Hall, Veneman's schedule included a press conference with local media and an interview on RFD-TV, which covered the entire convention live.

Then she decided to visit the career show. So, surrounded by an entourage of eight, she weaved her way through booths and blue jackets, shaking hands and posing for pictures along the way. After a stop at the SPAM booth, she made her way to the only green carpet in the entire career show, the USDA island. Stopping at every agency's booth to say hello, Veneman said that "these are



the people who help make the USDA run." Then she walked to the nearby FFA Agriscience Fair. "I can't believe the complexity of some of these projects," she said. "Imagine how this kind of thinking will help agriculture in the future."

Making her way out of the career show, Veneman noticed that some of the FFA jackets she saw were a slightly different shade of blue. When told about the recent change in the corduroy color, she commented that she liked the change. Then, just before getting in her car to go to the airport, where she later caught a flight to Arizona, she once again said that she was impressed by her visit. "There is so much potential here." ●

Editor's note: Two weeks after her convention appearance, Veneman announced that she would not be returning as secretary of agriculture for President Bush's second term in office. Bush has since nominated Nebraska Governor Michael Johanns, who grew up on an Iowa dairy farm and is a strong FFA advocate.

Words from The White House

Before her speech to convention attendees, Secretary Veneman read a message to FFA members from President Bush

I send greetings to those attending the 77th National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. For more than seven decades, FFA has helped many young Americans develop their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. By preparing our next generation for the challenges and opportunities ahead, your organization plays an important role in shaping the future of our nation. I commend FFA for providing the environment for youth to come together to learn, exchange ideas and build character. I also encourage your members to continue setting high goals and working hard to achieve them. Your commitment to excellence can strengthen our nation. Laura joins me in sending our best wishes.

-George W. Bush

A Rolling Stone

Rolling Stones keyboardist Chuck Leavell, one of Secretary Veneman's good friends, performs for FFA members and discusses his involvement in forestry, conservation and FFA

When Chuck Leavell finished performing in Freedom Hall, before thousands of FFA members, he had this to say in an interview with FFA: "It's a very special night for me." In addition to performing in front of an enthusiastic crowd, Leavell had the opportunity to see Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, someone he considers a colleague and a good friend.

So, why is a professional musician who has played keyboards for The Stones, Eric Clapton, The Fabulous Thunderbirds and The Allman Brothers, tight with the U.S. secretary of agriculture?

Well, it's not only music that runs through Leavell's blood. It's also a passion for agriculture, the environment and conservation. Leavell and his wife, Rose Lane, own 2,200-acres of timberland in the heart of Georgia, and the experience of managing the land had made Leavell a self-proclaimed activist when it comes to environmental issues. He has spent time in Washington, D.C., working with lawmakers and government officials in an

effort to help shape policy in these areas.

Leavell first got involved in land stewardship when he bought his land, which is known as Charlane Plantation. Because he's still a working musician who's on the road a lot, owning timberland was something he could manage effectively. In 1999, he was named the National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, and he has hosted the Georgia FFA Association's forestry career development event, which helped solidify his relationship

with FFA.

Leavell has a strong message about setting goals and finding a passion in life. He decided he wanted to play piano for a living after attending a Ray Charles concert at age 14. "I set a goal for myself at that time—that that was my dream and that I was going to follow it."

But it's something his father told him—"you make your own luck"—that helped make the dream a reality. "It means you have to learn how to look for opportunity," Leavell explained. He took the advice, worked hard on his piano playing and did whatever it would take for him to get noticed, including standing outside of recording studios for hours on end, just waiting for a chance to get invited in for a chance to show others what he could do. His persistence paid off, and he's now doing what he loves.

Leavell's appearance at the convention was made possible by STIHL, Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. ●

By Erich Gaukel, with additional reporting by Brandon Braaten



The start of something

big

Six FFA members attend the convention as part of a new effort by FFA to include a larger number of non-traditional students in FFA activities and programs

Isiah Sein is the president of his FFA chapter in San Antonio, Texas. He'd never had the opportunity to attend a state or national FFA convention, until now. "It's awesome. It's a great experience. I had my first plane ride out here, so it's very exciting."

Isiah is part of new program, sponsored by The National FFA Foundation, Toyota, Texas A&M University and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), that is working to get more minority students involved in FFA programs. It's part of a larger effort by the National FFA Organization to have FFA membership better mirror the communities it serves.

"Our goals are simple but the challenges and opportunities are significant," said Anna Melodia, division director of educational programs at FFA. "We want to recruit and retain students who have not traditionally participated in agricultural education at the local level, improving their opportunities for career success in the growing food, fiber and natural resource industry."

In San Antonio's FFA chapters, the funding for student trips has been difficult to come by, so it's been equally difficult for students to attend conventions and leadership conferences. Texas A&M officials involved in this project helped identify three schools for this program. Isiah and five other FFA members—Erika Perez, Herlinda Ibarra, Katheryn Gonzalez, Jesus San Juan and Jenna Jones—were among the first participants in the program.



FFA members from San Antonio, Texas, meet with executives from Toyota, sponsor of the program that enabled them to attend the convention. At right, Jesus San Juan.

Erika, who has career interests in veterinary medicine, learned a lot at the career show, and she's now hoping to attend Texas A&M. And Isiah, whose SAE program includes raising and showing three hogs, one duroc, one hamp and a cross, also plans to attend Texas A&M, where he hopes to study agricultural engineering.

The students also heard the keynote speakers (they liked Joe Theismann best) and attended workshops that covered premier leadership, personal growth and career success, plus other topics, as Jesus found out at a community development workshop. He came away with an idea for a project he hopes he can start back home—to visit a middle and tell students about the benefits of FFA membership.

During their convention trip, the group also went on an educational

tour to the Toyota factory in the nearby city of Georgetown.

Jesus, a skateboarding enthusiast, found the tour worthwhile because back at the school's ag shop he's learning about relevant topics. "We're learning tool safety and shop safety."

For the students, the experience was an eye-opener because Toyota is set to open a new plant in the San Antonio area. The students observed the teamwork that makes the plant run smoothly, and their ears perked up when they heard that Toyota offers good-paying jobs and encourages its employees to further their education by attending college.

Because Toyota is the financial sponsor of this \$500,000 program, which will send many other students to FFA conferences and conventions over the next four years, the students later had the opportunity to spend time with Toyota executives from Georgetown and from the company's U.S. headquarters in Torrance, Calif.

The goals of this FFA program closely match those of Toyota, according to Michael Rouse, Toyota's corporate manager of philanthropy and communications. "Toyota believes in helping people improve the quality of life in their communities, partnering with organizations, schools, universities and other businesses to support programs that help make our world a better place." ●

By Erich Gaukel, with additional reporting by Josh Hawkins



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Your Money

Tips for building your financial standing

Controlling your cash

Wise money management
requires planning and patience

By Chris Hayhurst

A new MP3 player. The latest camera phone. A new car at graduation. We all have things we want to buy. The reality, though, is all these things are expensive. And finding a way to afford them, at least for most of us, is a challenge. Whether you hope to save enough money for next year's Christmas presents or sock away funds for college tuition, one thing is certain: To meet your financial goals, you need a plan.

WHAT, WHEN AND HOW MUCH?

Before you begin, lay it all out. What do you want, when do you want it, and how much will it cost? Be specific here. If your goal is to pay your way to next year's national FFA convention, for instance, calculate all your anticipated expenses: transportation, lodging, meals, entertainment . . . everything. Add it all up.

Then—and this is important—put everything on paper. “Write down your goals,” says Susan Wyderko, director of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Investor Education. “By writing down exactly what you want to accomplish, you'll remember why you started saving in the first place.”

MAKE A PLAN

How much money do you already have, and how much do you need? Take a look at that number you wrote down. Need \$2,000 for college and have two years to save it? If you started now and put \$20 away each week, you'd easily meet your goal.

Once you have the numbers worked out, factor a savings plan into your budget. If you have \$100 per week in income, how much of that can you put aside? If you can't afford to save enough to meet your goal, why not? Maybe you need to prioritize and cut unnecessary spending. After all, isn't \$2 toward a college education more important than spending \$2 on another slice of pizza?

START SAVING

Don't put your savings in piggy bank or under your mattress. Instead, take it to a real bank and let it earn interest. Open a savings account or buy a certificate of deposit and your investment will actually make money just sitting there. If you put \$100 in a savings account with an interest rate of six percent, and never add another dime, interest alone will double your money in 12 years.

Other investment options can earn even better rates of return, but often come with added risk. Stocks, for example, allow you to own shares of

companies that you believe are strong. Own a company that does really well over time, and your share may go up in value. You can then sell that share for a profit. If, however, the company does poorly, you may lose everything.

A way to decrease the risk that comes with buying stocks is to invest in a mutual fund. Mutual funds include stocks in many different companies. That way, if one company tanks, others in the fund can balance it out. “Mutual funds are a great way to diversify,” Wyderko says. “You don't have to put all your eggs in one basket.”

So, as you develop your money plan, weigh all of your options and make choices that fit your situation. Then make a plan and stick with it. ●

WEB LINKS

For more information and links relating to personal finance, including saving money, preparing tax forms, learning about savings bonds and more, visit FirstGov for Kids (www.kids.gov/k_money.htm), a website provided by the Federal Citizen Information Center, an agency of the U.S. government.



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From FFA member to U.S. Marine

Joel Holmes learned valuable skills as an FFA member in California

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalin

As a youth growing up in a rural Northern California community, it was one country boy's dream to experience more of what the world had to offer.

It wasn't a surprise to friends and family when, at age 18, Joel Holmes left his home in Chico to become a United States Marine. Eight years later, the 6-foot-3-inch Marine Corporal attributes his success as an adult to what he learned as a teen.

While attending Hamilton City Union High School in Hamilton City, Calif., Holmes was proud to be an FFA member. There, Holmes developed skills in farming, ranching and farm equipment operation and repair. According to Holmes, FFA allowed him to use his imagination to accomplish several shop projects, enriched his passion for the outdoors and helped prepare him for what was yet to come.

"I was looking for something new and exciting in life, so I chose to join the best fighting force in the world," Holmes said. "When I left the FFA for the Marine Corps, I already had a lot of skills to work with."



Since joining the Marines, Holmes has earned two military occupational specialties, the first of which was as a vehicle operator in the motor transportation field. The second is as a telecommunications technician, where he currently serves.

While assigned to a telecommunications facility aboard Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Va., Holmes helps manage the switching and connecting of phone communication for more than 16,000 users.

Within his unit, Holmes has proven his dedication

to duty. His peers and supervisors have acknowledged his efforts as being a valuable Marine. "He's a hard worker and is always real helpful," said Staff Sgt. Jennifer N. Schager, Technical Control Chief for Holmes' branch. "In a way, it's a reflection of his personal work ethic."

During his career as a Marine, Holmes has seen far corners of the world and experienced new cultures> he was stationed in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and was later deployed to Okinawa, Japan.

In 1999, when Holmes' four-year term was over, he left the Corps—but it was only temporary. Less than a year later, he realized that being a Marine was more than just a job. It was a way of life, much like FFA had been during his high school years.

"While being out of the Marines for a while, I was able to see both sides of the coin," Holmes said. Like FFA, Holmes said, "the Marine Corps offers people more values, more pride and more overall support than any other organization I can think of." ●



Marine Cpl. Joel Holmes, of Chico, Calif., works as an electronic switching equipment technician at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va. Holmes joined the Marine Corps in 1996 and attributes some of his successes in life to his FFA experience.

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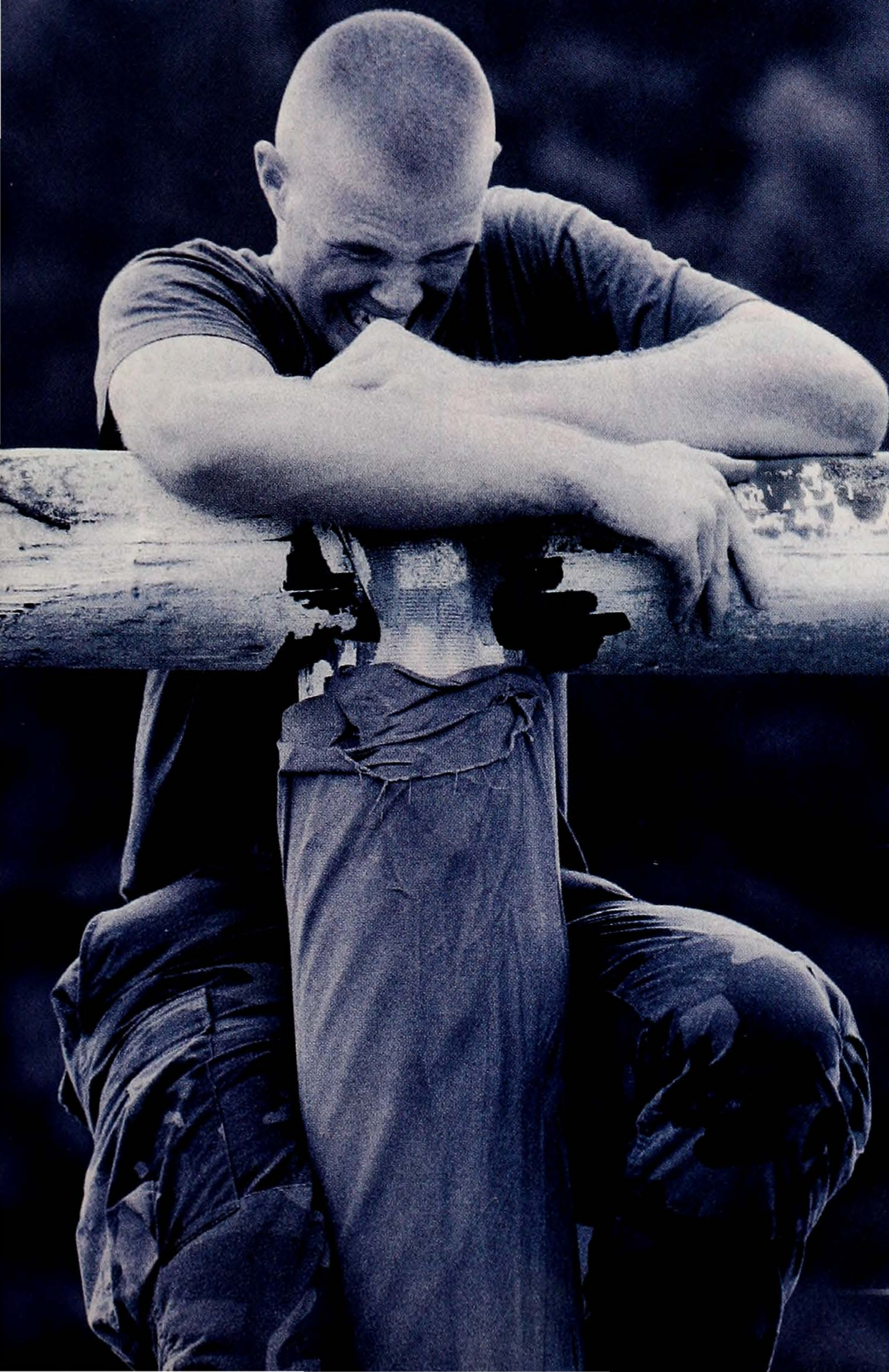
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Q: Why were the soldiers so tired on April 1?

A: Because they had just finished a 31-day March.

Jenny Warner
Allen, Nebraska

Q: How are a riddle and a pencil alike?

A: Without a point, they are no good.

Alyssa Bentley
Clark, Wyoming

Q: What did the cat say when somebody stepped on its tail?

A: Me-OWW!

Kristi Henson
Dresden, Tennessee

Q: What do you call the story of an automobile?

A: An autobiography.

Eric Hilton
DeMotte, Indiana

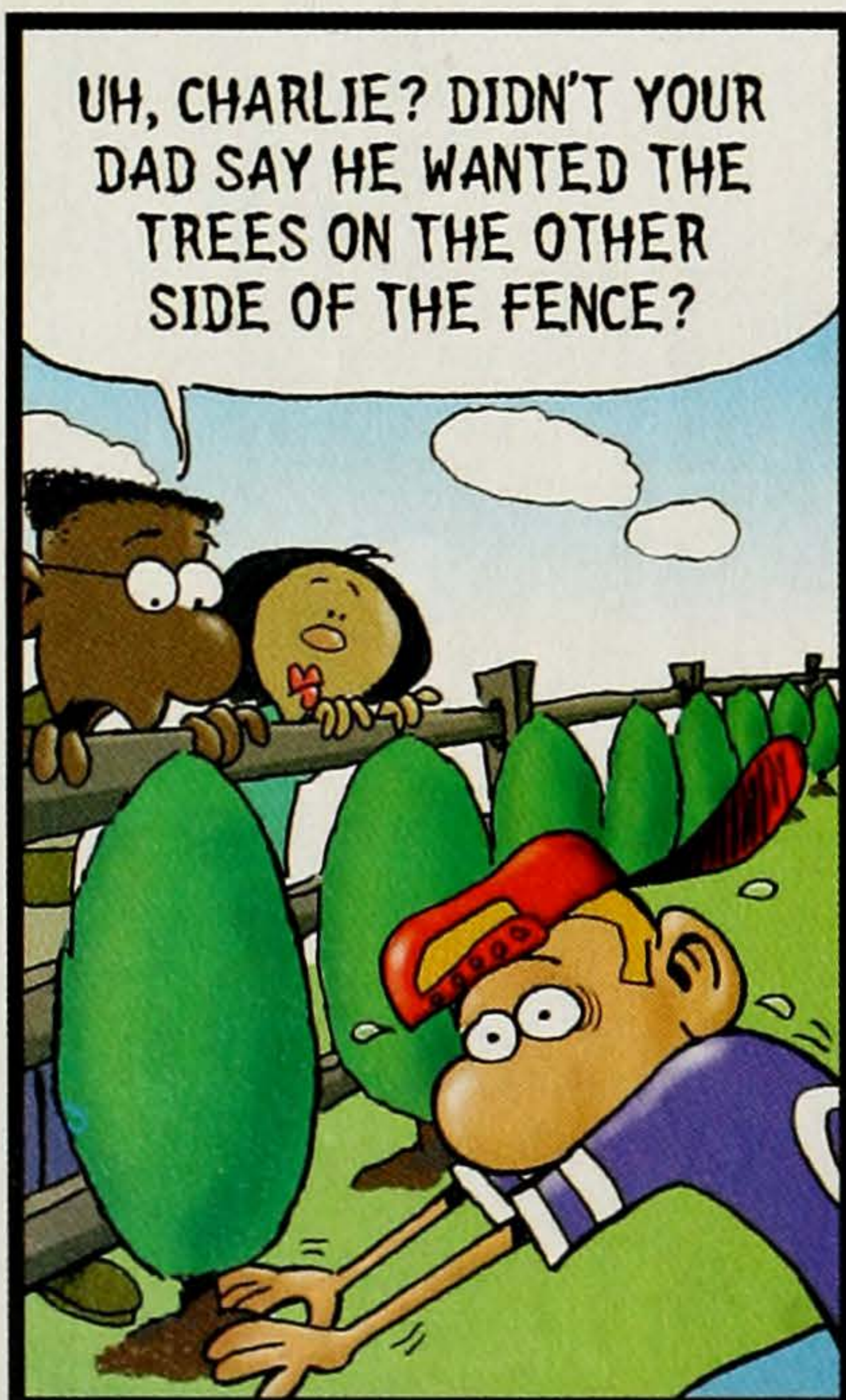
Q: Why couldn't the monkey use his bicycle?

A: He ate the banana seat.

Sarah Lubin
Old Town, Florida

The Agrinuts

By Jim Bradshaw and Michael Bettendorf



Q: What's a computer's favorite snack?

A: Chips.

Sarah Holdenried
Union, Missouri

Q: Why didn't people on Noah's Ark play cards?

A: Because Noah was standing on the deck.

Brantley Bell
Bonaire, Georgia

Q: What did one volcano say to the other?

A: I lava you.

Julie Shuey
Lakeview, Oregon

Q: Some months have 30 days, some have 31. How many have 28?

A: All of them.

Anabel Viera
Peoria, Arizona

Q: What is a cow's favorite motorcycle?

A: Cowasaki.

Francisco Anaya
Estancia, New Mexico

Q: Why did the man stay in debt?

A: Because he couldn't budge it (budget).

Liana Kuehn
Granton, Wisconsin

Q: Why does a gardener detest weeds?

A: When you give them an inch, they take a yard.

Heidi Moon
Des Arc, Arkansas

Q: What do a clothes hamper and chromosomes have in common?

A: They both carry genes.

Michael Schoon
Manson, Iowa

Q: Why do firefighters carry dalmations to fires with them?

A: The help find fire hydrants.

Jessica Jones
Snow Hill, North Carolina

Q: Why didn't Noah do much fishing?

A: Because he didn't Noah how.

Jason Stanley
Cincinnati, Ohio

Q: What do you call a goat without a job?

A: Billy idol.

Sheldon Donovan
Port Orchard, Washington

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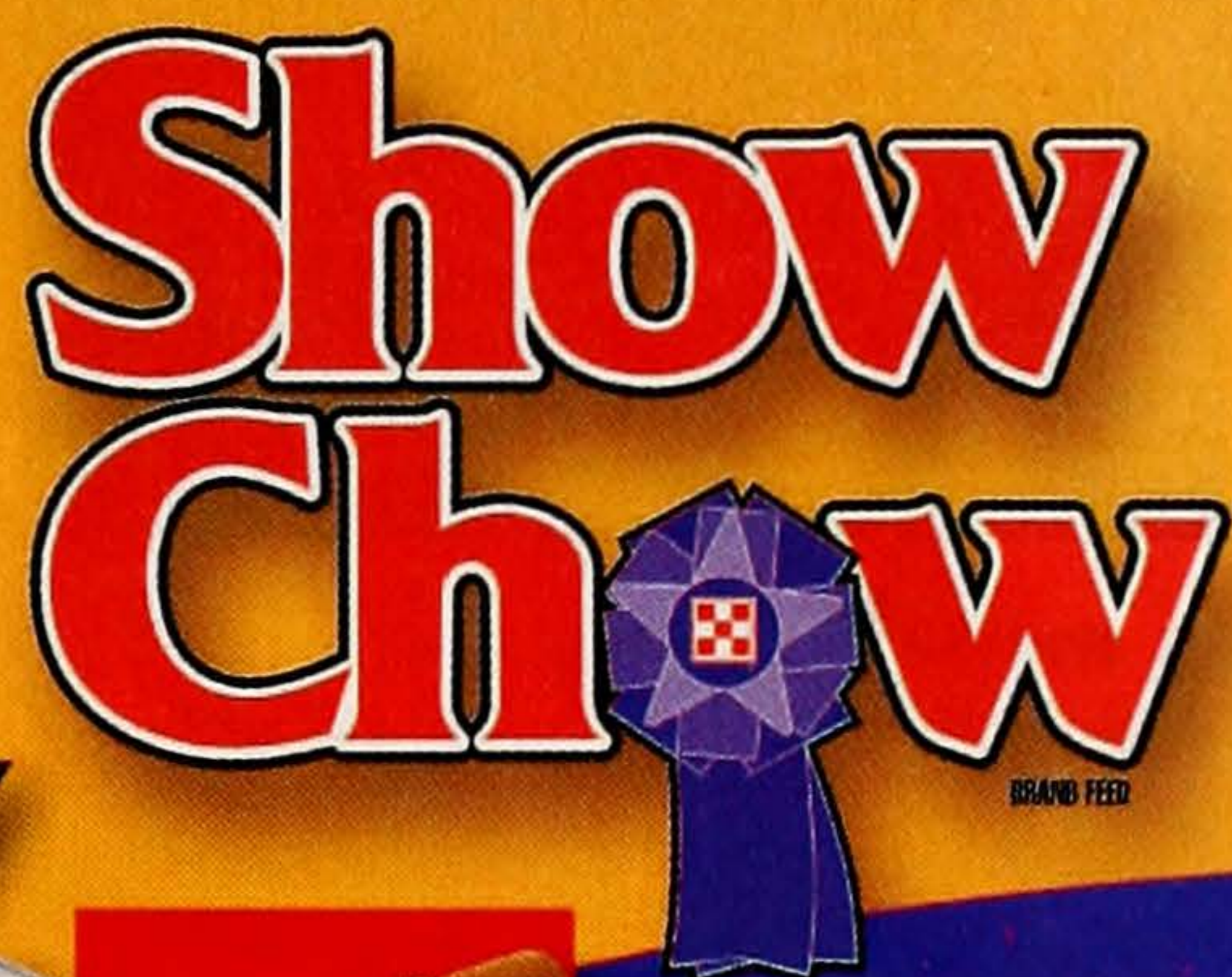
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FFA Across the USA

Dispatches from FFA chapters across the nation

California



Board the taco bus

Each year the Pitman-Turlock FFA Chapter tries to add a little fun to its meetings. The taco bus meeting is just one of the hooks the chapter uses to keep attendance high. After the meeting business is resolved, the chapter members are invited to take part in whatever activity is planned (Pitman FFA is proud to report that 274 hungry FFA members showed up for the meeting featuring the taco bus). Other post-meeting activities include Christmas caroling, volleyball, an FFA auction and a swim party. *Reporting by Heather Paul, Pitman-Turlock FFA Chapter member*



New FFA chapter on the move

Basha High, a new school in city of Chandler, has a new FFA chapter, which has received its official FFA chapter charter and has already sent students to the state leadership conference and the state parliamentary procedure CDE. They have organized a Basha FFA Alumni Chapter to support and promote FFA activities and agricultural education on the local, state and national levels. They're looking forward to growing in the years to come. Pictured here, from left, are Michelle Roessler (sentinel), Kim Ruhland (reporter), Jono Campbell (secretary), Jessica Hilleboe (president), Jackie Bateman (treasurer) and Hunter Williams (vice president). *Reporting by Kim Ruhland, Basha FFA Chapter reporter*

Wisconsin



Saying goodbye

Merle Ven Rooy served as FFA advisor at Winneconne High School for 30 years, until his retirement last summer. Mr. Ven Rooy's special interests as an advisor included the parliamentary procedure CDE, the Wisconsin Trees for Tomorrow program and witnessing student success at fairs and in other competitions. He has collected FFA dues from multiple generations of Winneconne families, made countless friends and positively altered the lives of many students and retired as an icon in the community. *Reporting by Alyssa Paulsen, Winneconne FFA Chapter student council representative*



Oklahoma

A grandma and a mentor

Katherine Urban has been known as Grandma Katherine around Waynoka, Oklahoma, for many years. She has not only raised three boys who were very active in the Waynoka FFA, but has served as mentor and grandma to countless 4-H and FFA members around the state. Katherine has been known to sponsor students attending leadership camps, clip newspapers articles for students' scrapbooks and speeches, as well as buy new jackets and show equipment for students who need help. She is also widely recognized as one of the best bakers in the country. She has won numerous state and national cake baking competitions. She once drove as far away as Omaha, Nebraska, to deliver a wedding cake. One of the highlights of the Waynoka FFA Awards Banquet is when Katherine brings in her newest FFA-themed cake. This year's edition was a red velvet cake with blue and gold frosting with the 2003-04 FFA "Living the Legacy" theme. Katherine is seen here with chapter officers and her one of her famous cakes. *Reporting by Kourtney Childers, Waynoka FFA Chapter reporter*

What's happening in your FFA chapter?
Send your news, along with a photo, to:

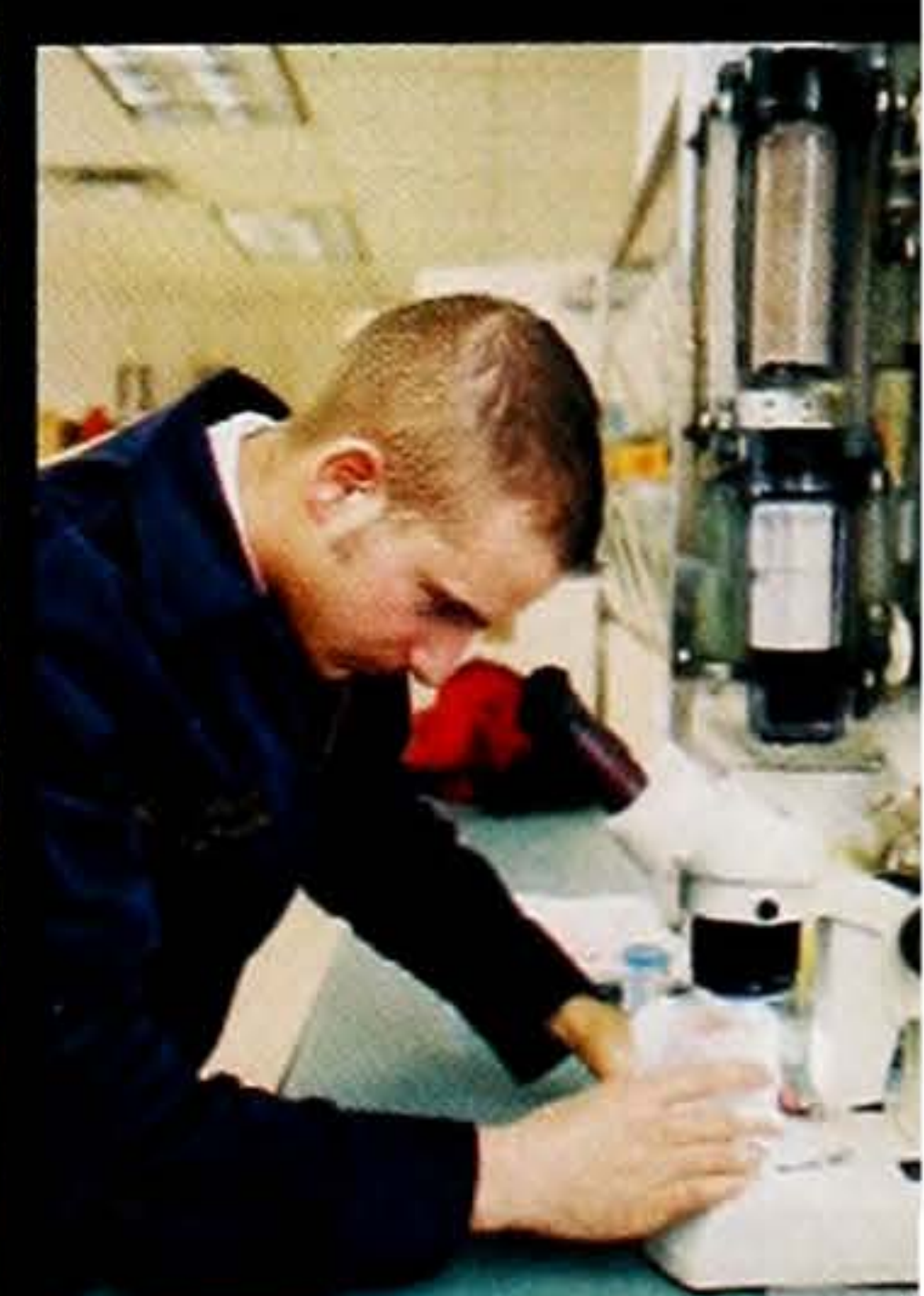
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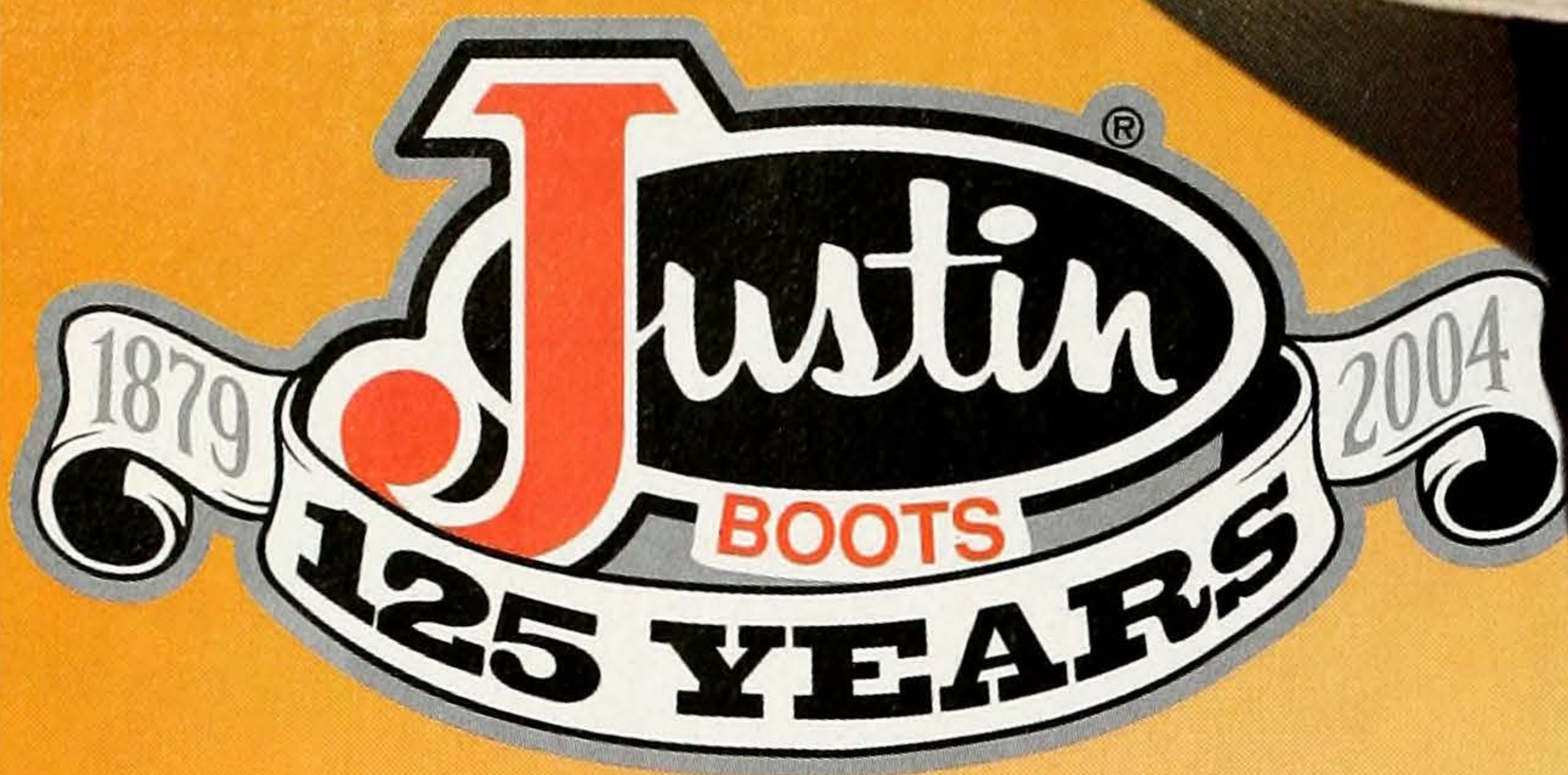


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