

Fuel Your Fire

By: Julie Vrazel, Communications Coordinator

Your alarm clock ringing breaks the quiet morning. You stumble out of bed and turn on the coffee machine. A mental to-do list begins forming in your mind. It's barely 6 a.m., and the day you make is awaiting you.

Some days it feels like the world is against you. Deadlines, administrators, budgeting, training teams – how exactly are you supposed to accomplish all of this in 24 hours? Just remember, you control your destiny.

Along the way, maybe by 9 a.m., you might fail at a particular task – left your lesson plans on the kitchen table, forgot to email an update to your administrator, anything. But failure is what makes us human and motivates us.

When, not if, you fail, use the experience as a life lesson. Don't let your failure define you. Let it teach you.

Adapt. Regroup. Develop a plan of action, and approach the situation once again. It's okay to ask for help. Utilize your teaching partner, advisory committee and colleagues to help determine the best avenue.

Some days are more difficult than others, but maintaining passion and motivation for your career are essential to being your best.

Bill Gates said, "Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose."

Each person has their own definition of success. I believe success is functioning outside of your comfort zone, while serving as a mentor and motivator to those around you as you strive to achieve your goals.

Agricultural science teachers are a different breed of passionate role models with difficult demands and daily responsibilities placed upon their shoulders. Passion is the lifeblood of success and fulfillment, a quality many agricultural teachers possess, and anyone can develop.

Decide you want to be more passionate; develop a vision for your passion, and act upon that fuel.

Challenge yourself with each day to share your passion and to work diligently to accomplish your goals. Your passion will fuel yourself and others. As a teacher you want to share your enthusiasm with your students in the classroom and with your fellow teachers as you pass each other in the hall.

If you are passionate and learn from your failures, you are more apt to deliver on your goals and improve in your daily activities. You may not be the best teacher in your school, but with a strong ambition and a positive, passionate attitude, you can be successful in any situation.

As you continue with this spring semester and prepare your students for CDEs and livestock shows, while

What drives you to be passionate?

Use these questions to help you identify your greatest passion:

- 1. If I could accomplish one thing in my life, it would be...
- 2. If I could make an important contribution in my work, it would be

incorporating innovative lesson plans, remember the words of Charles R. Swindoll.

"Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."

Remain positive and fuel your fire with the desire to improve and learn from your mistakes.

TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

VATAT pages 1 - 3 Texas FFA pages 4 - 5 Foundation page 8 Texas FFA Alumni page 9 Young Farmers pages 10 - 11

Saathoff Joins Team Ag Ed



Rebecca Saathoff grew up in Devine, Texas, one of five kids born to Gary and Nancy Saathoff. She was an active member of the FFA during her time at Devine High School, serving as an officer and competing in multiple events.

She currently attends Texas State University, where she is a Mass Communication-Advertising major and Agriculture minor. Saathoff considers herself a proud Bobcat and loves being involved in campus organizations. She serves as the president of the Texas State chapter of Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity and the Regional Summit Committee Chair for Golden Key International Honour Society. In 2012 she represented the Texas State Collegiate FFA chapter at the State FFA Convention and competed in the collegiate speech contests, placing in three events. In her free time Saathoff enjoys traveling, painting, cooking and adventure running.

Saathoff is looking forward to graduating in May 2013 and was recently accepted to law school for the fall. Agriculture is important to Saathoff and she wants to serve as an advocate for the future of agriculture. She hopes to someday be a legal consultant to Texas legislators on the development of water rights and agricultural policy, issues that combine her interests of agriculture, the environment and ownership rights.

VATAT AWARDS ARE ONLINE

The award applications and procedures are available on the VATAT website. Check out the following award categories and make plans to apply or nominate someone!

Each area is responsible for selecting its VATAT Awardrecipientsandgivingthewinningnomination forms to the VATAT area executive committee member at your area convention. The executive committee member is responsible for turning in the area award winning nomination forms to Julie Vrazel, Communications Coordinator.

Awards

Outstanding School Administrator
Outstanding Cooperation Award
Outstanding Newspaper
Outstanding Radio Station
Outstanding Television Station
Teacher's Media Award
Texas Turn the Key
Ideas Unlimited
Teacher Mentor Award
30-Minute Club

VATAT Scholarship

The Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association offers VATAT scholarships to members' children upon their graduation from high school. Scholarships are awarded to all eligible applicants as long as VATAT membership requirements are met, and the application meets all scholarship requirements.

Download a scholarship application at www.vatat. org under Association>VATAT Awards & Scholarships. The completed application and supporting materials must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2013, and sent to the VATAT office. Late applications will not be accepted.



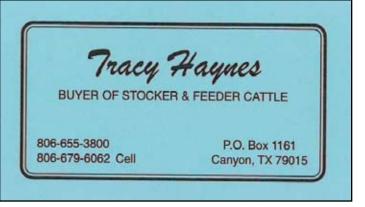


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March 16, 2013 - El Paso, Texas

March 23, 2013 - Dallas, Texas

April 13, 2013 - San Antonio, Texas

View more information and registration forms at http://www.tsfa.org/default.aspx?p=EducationalClassesWorkshops.

A Life Filled with Purpose

Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director

It's that time again. The time immediately following the Christmas holiday is the start of an agricultural teacher's busiest period. County stock shows, major stock shows, Career Development Events, award and degree applications, scholarship applications, District and Area FFA Conventions and the chapter banquet. If you stop to think about all of these responsibilities, they can appear to be overwhelming. How do successful teachers cope with all these duties on top of the classes taught, lesson plans prepared, purchase orders completed and travel arrangements that must be made?

First, try to remember teachers are charged with the greatest responsibility in the world. Educating someone's child is a noble effort in which the reward is often not immediately seen. There are times when you aren't appreciated by students, parents and even your own administrators. I believe teaching is a "calling" more than a job, or even a career. There must be an inner voice reassuring you that you are doing the job because the students need you. Very few people in your school or community have the knowledge that you have about agricultural education. They may see parts or snippets of agricultural science and FFA, but they rarely see the whole picture. A good teacher sees the strategic picture.

Second, attempt to break down each activity and work on each task independently until completion. I have recently been working on a fencing project with my son, Mark. About one and a half miles of fence needed to be built, with brushy fence rows and old fencing to be removed. We have been working on it part-time for a couple of years. I found we could do it one stretch at a time. Somehow, building 500 or even 1,000 feet seemed to be workable. The same process can work for all the spring activities. Focus on the most immediate task. That doesn't mean forget about the other tasks, but keep them in the back of your mind.

Third, you don't have to do everything yourself. In multi-teacher departments, divide responsibilities. Great departments have this down to a science. There is no need to trip over one another trying to accomplish the same task. In single teacher programs, utilize trusted adults in your community to help. This could include members of your advisory committee, FFA Alumni, Young Farmers, booster club or even administrators.

Finally, keep in mind why you are doing your job. Someone probably had a positive influence on you. It is now up to you to have that same influence on others. At the end of your career, there will be hundreds or even thousands of successful adults whom you influenced in a positive way. I once heard a man who was diagnosed with cancer asked if he feared dying. He said no, what he feared most was a life without purpose. An agricultural science teacher truly has that "life filled with purpose."



Texas FFA Update

Texas FFA Board Tackling Big Issues

Texas FFA Board of Directors took up a number of issues with potentially far-reaching impacts in January during its second quarter meeting.

Delegate Task Force

The board discussed issues related to the ongoing dialogue concerning the student delegate process. Local chapters have indicated a strong desire to maintain chapter representation in the state's presidential election process but have struggled in generating interest in the annual business sessions. Some discussion centered around a split model that features an assembly of chapters for election processes and a smaller assembly of state delegates for the business functions.

The state association anticipates logistical issues in some venues with a delegate body as large as 2,300. The delegate floor at Corpus Christi can accommodate only 1,303.

Concerns persist regarding preparedness of delegates to effectively participate in what should be a hands-on leadership experience in conducting the business of a multimillion dollar association. Creating a two-tier delegate system would allow areas to seat a full delegation for the business session, allow for extending training and electronic voting and elevate the office of state delegate.

The delegate task force, composed of student officers, agricultural educators and industry professionals, is expected to submit final recommendations at the board's third quarter meeting on March 25.

Degree Requirements

The board of directors approved a preliminary recommendation to amend degree requirements related to earnings to make degree requirements consistent with the supervised agricultural experience definitions recently developed and released by the Texas Education Agency.

The current state degree requirement includes a minimum of \$200 in earnings, which is inconsistent with stated outcomes of research and experimentation SAEs. The board recommends supplanting current language with national language, which simply requires a minimum of \$1,000 in earnings, 300 hours in excess of scheduled class time or any combination thereof. The new language would allow a student to earn a state degree based entirely on unpaid hours.

Contingent on the approval of the constitutional

amendment, the state advanced degree and award committee will recommend policy changes to accompany the constitutional language.

Area Realignment

The board received, and referred to a committee, a policy draft related to area realignment.

The Texas FFA Association Bylaws require the board of directors consider area realignment once every 10 years. This mandate has been in the bylaws for nearly 10 years, and there has been no policy mechanism to make it happen.

The policy draft simply describes how such an alignment would be done—who would be involved, what would be considered, timelines and transition procedures related to finances, officers and calendars.

The current areas, once the product of TEA staffing for area supervisory functions, have been static since the mid-1950s. Dramatic population shifts have created significant inequity between areas. Area II currently contains 78 schools and 3,899 members. Area III has 160 schools and nearly 16,000 members. Harris County is home to 58 chapters and 6,383 members.

Population explosion in certain areas has also created travel barriers, requiring some schools to drive across entire metropolitan areas to participate in area events. Realignment could alleviate some travel woes for these teachers and students.

Convention Registration

An ad hoc committee of the board of directors will be studying options regarding state convention registration and housing.

Texas FFA maintains a housing block because documenting what is called "pickup" in the meeting business is required to secure certain services and benefits from local convention and visitors bureaus. Additionally, housing contracts contain a rebate for the FFA, which is used to offset facility costs, complimentary rooms allocated per rooms occupied, and commission to offset the cost of a contract meeting planner who arranges catering and a host of other vital convention services.

Texas FFA loses at least \$30,000 annually having to pay cash for convention volunteer and contractor housing and through lost revenues from groups who book rooms outside of the housing block.

The National FFA Convention has addressed this issue with a split registration system that grants a discounted rate to those chapters booking rooms within the established housing block and exempting those chapters that are considered local to the convention.

Texas FFA is also the only organization that requires the financial burden of the convention to be borne solely by students. The convention has an overall attendance of 11,000-12,000, but only 6,000-7,000 of the attendees are students. Currently, the adult attendees do not pay any admission, but create overall attendance which requires the convention to be held in more expensive venues.

There is also no provision for a convention day pass. Students who attend for one day to receive a scholarship or award are required to pay the full convention registration.

There is also a need to simplify convention credentials. The current system produces multiple entry credentials, which creates confusion amongst usher staff and potentially compromises security.

At \$35, Texas FFA Convention registration is still a bargain, especially when one considers the all-inclusive registration fee allows for admission to a concert, dance, rodeo performance, trade show and access to some of the

nation's top youth and agricultural speakers.

Some state FFA conventions charge more than \$100 per attendee for similar services. The Texas FFA Convention also has the lowest registration fee of any Texas career and technical student organization.

State Award, Degree and Scholarship Selection to be in Waco

The Texas FFA Board of Directors endorsed the Executive Director's recommendation to place the state advanced award, degree and scholarship selection process at McLennan Community College in Waco.

The meeting has been hosted by Angelo State University over the last two years, but with schools finishing the school year later, it became necessary to move the date back one week, which put the event in conflict with a major football coach's conference, which occupies most of the city's hotel rooms.

Part of the Interstate 35 Corridor, Waco boasts of easy access from nearly anywhere in the state and plenty of hotel rooms. McLennan Community College has a significant agricultural program and currently hosts an invitational CDE meet.

JumpSTART

Throughout December 2012 and January 2013 Leadership Development Coordinator Austin Large and several state FFA officers hosted JumpSTART Academies across the Lone Star State. The JumpSTART Academy is a conference designed specifically for the officers of chapters going through the charter/re-charter process. The conference offers dynamic team building exercises, a chance to learn the roles and responsibilities of chapter officers, discover the qualities of effective teams, identify strategies for hosting effective meetings. In addition, students get the opportunity to learn about and craft their own Program of Activities. JumpSTART was created to help student leaders "jump start" their new chapters, and create a legacy that will live on in their schools and communities for years to come.

Chapters that participated in the 2012-2013 JumpSTART Academies are:

Waco JumpSTART – December 11, 2012 – Texas Farm Bureau Leadership Center, Waco

Facilitated by: Jordon Bien, State Vice President, Area VIII College Station FFA Killeen ISD Career Center FFA

Katy JumpSTART - December 12, 2012 - Houston Community College, Katy

Facilitated by: Clayton Dumesnil, State Vice President, Area III & Madeline Minchillo, State Vice President, Area V

Benjamin O. Davis FFA Damon FFA Dubiski Career High FFA

Kingsville JumpSTART – December 13, 2012 – Texas A&M University, Kingsville

Facilitated by: Jackie Lee, State Vice President, Area VI & Tama Robinson, State Vice President, Area X

Grulla FFA Lasara FFA Taft FFA

Lubbock JumpSTART – January 10, 2013 – Plains Cotton Cooperative Association

Facilitated by: Holton Westbrook, State Vice President, Area IV Hart FFA





2013 HALF-PRICE CARNIVAL PACKS

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Discount Food Card	Ø \$20 each = \$
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Select "Tickets" icon at the top of page; Click "Half Price Carnival Packs"; Click "Buy Now". Enter Key Code 1076585 or Select name Jim Soule or direct link

https://secure.rodeohouston.com/carnivalticliets/7salescode=1076585

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ORDER BY Fri. Feb 22, 2013 (Allow 7-10 business days for processing)

For more information, please contact HLSR volunteer: JRM SOULE 892-287-3528 <u>Inscale@pdq.net</u>
The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization.



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For information contact HLSR volunteer: JIM SOULE 832-287-3528 jpsoule@pdq.net

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National FFA - Time to "Recognize" Avoid the Belly Buster

Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director

"Anyone can dabble, but once you've made that commitment, your blood has that particular thing in it, and it's very hard for people to stop you." – Bill Cosby

Ever experienced a "belly buster" or "back buster" at the swimming pool? I remember growing up at Boys Ranch where we had an indoor swimming pool with a low diving board and a high diving board. This was a rather large pool and could accommodate quite an audience to watch the antics of young men who liked to dare one another.

In a dorm of 24 teenage boys, you can assume the dares were frequent and on the verge of crazy. Once while enjoying a dorm trip to the pool, a young man dared me to do a flip off the side of the pool – which I did. He then increases the dare to include a flip off the low diving board, which I did. Finally, he challenged me to do a flip off the high diving board, which I accepted. After climbing to the top of the high dive, I noticed it was a lot further looking down than when I was on the ground looking up. I walked to the edge of the high dive, closed my eyes, and leaned forward. Have you ever been half way through a flip and lost commitment? To that end, a belly buster or back buster is there to welcome your fall.

Losing commitment can be a dangerous thing. If prepared, most challenges can be faced with confidence in knowing the resources exist to accomplish the task. In 1928, 33 young men had an idea, a big idea, of what could happen if a shared interest in agriculture and leadership development were coupled with a passion to serve others. The result was the FFA organization. February provides a time to stop and reflect on the vision this group provided, the history of the years in FFA to date, and the role we can play in ensuring the longevity of the Texas FFA.

For many of us, the FFA jacket may not fit but the memories still do. The memories of the FFA are captured in the experience we had. The Texas FFA Foundation is working diligently to provide for the development of Texas agricultural education and FFA programming so future Texans can too share the stories of their experience. During the week of Feb. 16–23, 2013, we have an opportunity to recognize, share and honor the experience we know as the

Texas FFA. Knowing the impact of the FFA on our own lives is not enough – we have to share it with others. To those who helped us along our way, a simple thank you or honor gift recognizing their investment in your experience goes a long way in stewarding future opportunities for those who will follow in our footsteps.

We want to encourage current members, educators and former members to be committed to the future of agricultural education and Texas FFA programming rather than just be involved in it. Commit by asking a parent to make a financial gift to honor a family member. Commit by asking fellow FFA chapter members to join together in collecting loose change to make an honor gift in the name of a teacher. Commit as a former FFA member to remember the FFA memories and share resources so others can walk the same paths of opportunity left for you. The Texas FFA never was, and never will be, a solo project. The experience giving initiative is a way to share the Texas FFA experience while saying thank you, honoring, or memorializing those who made our experience timeless.

We must remain committed to this task. The belly busters and back busters in life hurt a lot worse and last a lot longer than those at a swimming pool. We can ensure we are prepared to hit the diving board and deliver a 10 point performance. If you are a current FFA member, teacher, parent, former member or sponsor, you know too well the positive effect of the Texas FFA program. We dare you to take a moment, go online and make a gift to ensure others are prepared to the face the leadership demands of business, our state and our country.

Gifts can be given securely online at www. texasffafoundation.org (Donate Now). Additionally, you can help tell the Texas FFA story by sharing with your family, friends and colleagues: www.MYTEXASFFA.org. Remember gifts to the Texas FFA Foundation are tax deductible and become a part of *A Mission that Matters*.





Washington Leadership Conference

Kelley White, Texas FFA Alumni President

Each year, FFA members from all over the United States travel to Washington, D.C. to attend the Washington Leadership Conference (WLC).

During the five-day event, attendees learn how to become effective leaders by understanding their purpose, valuing people, taking action and serving others. This is no ordinary leadership experience.

You will spend a week putting these skills into practice as you make new friends from across the United States, tour the nation's capitol and visit with members of Congress. This action-packed week will help you gain self-confidence and leadership skills to take back to your FFA chapter and share with other members. Attendees leave WLC with the knowledge and the confidence to act in ways that help their schools, community and their country

The Texas FFA Alumni has traditionally granted four \$500 scholarships to deserving FFA members whose local affiliate are in good standing with the Texas FFA Alumni. We are currently awaiting word from the National FFA more scholarship information.

Eligibility and Deadlines:

- Only one FFA member per chapter can submit an application for the WLC scholarship.
- The WLC scholarship will cover at least \$500 of the registration fee for an FFA member to attend the WLC conference. Travel to and from the WLC conference site and incidental expenses are the recipient's responsibility.
- Recipients must attend a WLC workshop for the year the scholarship is awarded.
- Applications are due postmarked by Feb. 15 of each year. WLC scholarship recipients will be announced by

March 1 and winners notified by March 15.

• Each recipient is expected to attend the Texas FFA Alumni Association's Annual Meeting in July. (The FFA Alumni Association Annual Meeting is held in conjunction with the State FFA Convention.)

Applications can be found online at http://texasffaalumni.ffanow.org under Applications.

More info about the Washington Leadership Conference can be found at www.ffa.org.

Don't forget state and national FFA Alumni dues are due by Feb. 15 to be considered for this scholarship. Roster information can be found online at the National FFA Alumni website. They have updated their website with some AgCN resources for your use and to which you can start:https://www.ffa.org/GetInvolved/Alumni/Pages/MembershipRosters.aspx.

This page includes:

- 1) "How to" guides for:
 - Individual FFA Alumni AgCN users
 - Local FFA Alumni Admins
 - State FFA Alumni Admins
- 2) Directions for submitting new affiliates paperwork and excel roster (We've developed a new excel roster ONLY for new affiliates and posted it online)
- 3) Directions for submitting dues payment if you're not participating in the PayPal program.

NOTE: Please update your contact information. This could be the reason that you (the Advisor) are not receiving Alumni information.

Register at http://texasffaalumni.ffanow.org to receive information about deadlines and other Alumni news.

State FFA Alumni dues (\$5.00 per member) should be paid to: Texas FFA Alumni

> Attn. Tricia Sullivan 614 East 12th Street Austin, Texas 78701



From the President's Pen

Barry Choate, Texas Young Farmers President

NEVER MISS AN OPPORTUNITY

It's almost springtime. Is anyone busy? Many of us are trying to fit 28 hours into a 24 hour day. If someone figures it out, please share with the rest of us who are still chasing our tails. It's the middle of stock show season, calving season and many are getting ready to start planting crops. We have a legislative session going on in Austin, and the farm bill has been extended by one year. We have numerous local activities taking place in our own communities.

As hectic as our schedules are, let's not miss the opportunity to send a positive message about agriculture. This spring, different venues will provide ample opportunities to explain to someone about basic agriculture. You will be able to find them in the crowd, just look for the blank stare.

This will be an important session for Texas agricultural producers and Texas educators. It is important for you to contact your representative and discuss the important issues affecting you to be sure your voice is heard and that there is an understanding for both parties. Agricultural producers are small in numbers, but growing in production.

Most of the congressmen are not producers and may not have a clear understanding on the voting issue. We don't want to hear at the end of the day, "That's not what I thought I was voting for." Remember, never miss an opportunity.

The Texas Young Farmers had a great convention in Sugarland. 2013 is also an important time for this organization; during this year we will be looking for new ideas so we can grow the Texas Young Farmers. Our roots come from education and we will need fresh ideas from all levels of membership, leadership and teachers to be successful. This growth is important to the success of our organization. The direct line to the state director is dbtxyfa@gmail.com. Remember, never miss an opportunity.

The key for having a positive outcome is having positive input in the form of communication and education. Pay attention to what is taking place around you in your local communities and tell the agriculture's story every chance you get. Remember, never miss an opportunity.



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The seeds you sow today will cultivate the next generation of Texas farmers and ranchers, who will lead our communities and grow our food for years to come. From Texas Farm Bureau, thank you for your tireless dedication to the future of Texas agriculture.





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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

February 2013

7th - 24th - San Antonio Livestock Exposition

9th - Southwestern Exposition **4th** - TAKS Testing (Grades 10 and Livestock Show - Fort Worth

9th - SALE Public Speaking Contest - San Antonio

16th - 23rd - National FFA Week

22nd - 24th - SALE Ag Mechanics Show

25th - HLSR begins - Houston

March 2013

1st - Spring Semester FFA Dues Deadline - Austin

& 11)

4th - STAAR Testing - English Language Arts

8th - 23rd - Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo

11th - State Tractor Tech CDE - HLSR

15th - 1'7th - Ag Mechanics Show - HLSR

20th - McClennan Community College Invitational CDEs - Waco

21st - Tarleton State University Invitational CDEs - Stephenville

22nd - WTAMU Invitational

CDEs - Canyon

23rd - CDE Clincs - TAMU

23rd - Clarendon College Invitational CDE - Clarendon

26th - Stephen F. Austin Invitational CDEs - Nacogdoches

April 2013

1st - 4th- STAAR Testing

1st - Swine Tag Order Begins

15th - FFA Chorus, Chronicle, and Ambassador applications due

24th - Deadline for Steer Tag Orders - TAMU

27th - State CDEs - TAMU

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