



VATAT

News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2012 Volume III, Issue VII

"From the Duck Blind"

By: *Russell Thomas, Gilmer*

It is over until next year! Sad, disappointed and a little discouraged. Yes, duck season has come to an end. It seems like yesterday that the season opened. The preparation and anticipation was well worth it. I am a little depressed, because I didn't get to hunt as much as I wanted. But I think I always feel this way at the end of each season.

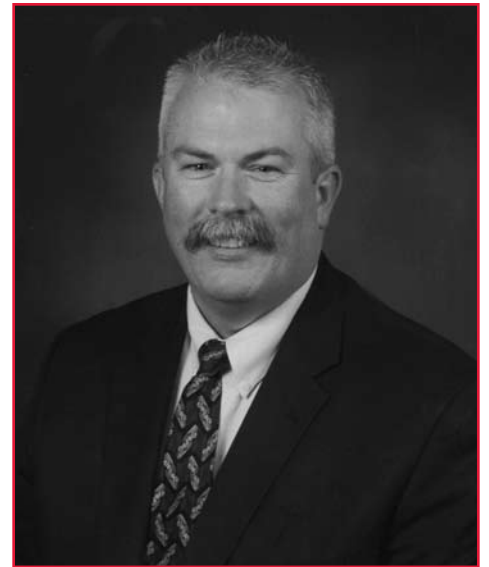
I do think that hunting seasons are comparable to agricultural science teaching. There are different seasons to hunt: deer, squirrel, turkey and waterfowl. And in teaching we go through seasons each year. As school starts, the teaching of SAEs and LDE training is a season, followed by a season of stock shows and CDEs. As the end of the year approaches, the season of conventions and degree checks begins. The summer season brings leadership camps and conferences, as well as the State FFA Convention season. I know most of you understand this, and sorry if I'm preaching to the choir! But when someone outside of the "Ag. teacher world" asks about a certain date or month, you are probably like me and begin thinking about the various upcoming activities, trainings and events.

Ecclesiastes says, "There

is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven." I believe we are in a time (season) to elevate our profession as agricultural instructors. It is our time to be proactive and tell our story as agricultural science teachers, because there is so much to share about agricultural education and the FFA. This may prove to be vital in the next few years as we have seen the financial problems with education, higher expectations with EOC exams and the STARR test and the uncertainty that lies ahead in the legislature. It is time to elevate our profession.

The Texas FFA Foundation and the VATAT have the perfect opportunity for you to learn how to elevate our profession: Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute (TASLI). It was started for agricultural science teachers to learn how to promote and become leaders in agricultural education. The mission of the institute is to further the effectiveness and professional stature of agricultural science instructors and the FFA programs in Texas.

This is a four-day intensive leadership training to help teachers grow through workshops, hands on training and keynote speakers. I had the opportunity of attending



the second institute training, and it was an awesome experience.

The knowledge I gained from the institute was "second-to-none" and the training was outstanding. I can truly say that I still implement what I learned from the institute into my classroom and community in Gilmer. I believe that I am a better individual, teacher, advisor and servant because of the Institute.

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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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DO YOU KNOW YOUR PASSWORD?

Make registering for workshops easier this summer by knowing your e-mail address and password for the VATAT Online System. VATAT members will also renew their membership through VATAT Online, so it is imperative you know the required login information. The Association cannot see your personal password, so in the event you cannot remember your login information, your password will have to be reset.

Are you receiving email blasts from the VATAT? If not we may not have your correct email address. Please login to the VATAT Online and check your current email address on your membership profile and update it if necessary.

You may also need to add karen@vatat.org to your safe senders list in order for it not to be considered spam. To do so open a message from karen@vatat.org. Select Actions | Junk E-mail and then Add Sender to Safe Senders List or Add Sender's Domain (@example.com) to Safe Senders List.

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. The completed application and supporting materials must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2012, and sent to the VATAT office. Late applications will not be accepted.

“From the Duck Blind”

Continued from page 1

The fourth Institute will be held this summer, and I encourage each of you to take the time to complete the application and apply. The Institute will be beneficial for you, your students and your community, whether you have taught three years or 33 years. This is a time for you to promote and elevate our profession.

As one season closes, another season opens. The summer season is just around the corner and so is the opportunity to elevate our program.

Conference Timeline March 15

Reserve Conference Housing

Register for Pre-Conference Workshops

Pay 2012-2013 VATAT Membership Dues

Visit www.vatat.org for all
your conference news!

Contract? What Contract?

Barney McClure, VATAT Executive Director

As we reach this time of year, school district contract questions increase. Some teachers have made the remark that, “We really don’t have much of a contract anymore.” I agree that teachers don’t have all the protections they previously had, but there are safeguards in place. Generally speaking, school superintendent contracts are dealt with in January, campus administrators in February and teachers in March.

The most drastic and scary situation occurs when a district declares a financial exigency or emergency. In this case, the financial stability of a district is in jeopardy. A reduction in force (RIF) is often part of this process. A school district must formulate a policy and follow it during the RIF. This situation can occur during a school year, regardless of any teacher contract in force at the time. Teachers have little recourse as

long as the district follows the legally adopted criteria for the RIF. Fortunately, these cases are rare.

Another fairly rare situation occurs when a school district decides to make a change in a program. In this scenario, an administration can decide to downsize or eliminate a program. These changes would occur at the end of a school year, and not during the year. If a teacher is eliminated in this case, the district cannot turn around and hire someone to replace them in that same position. There has to be a program change; not a personnel change.

A probationary contract is one that most first, second and third year teachers have. They are in force for one fiscal year. A teacher may not be terminated without cause during that contract, but may not be renewed for the following year. The school district may decide not to renew, “for the good of the district.” This is a catchall phrase that gives school boards latitude to replace a teacher.

A term contract is the type most often seen by experienced teachers. Again, it is most often for the length or term of that fiscal year, although it can be for multiple years. To non-renew this type of contract requires a very specific set of guidelines be met, which usually requires a teacher be given the right to remediate or improve perceived shortcomings.

An action I deal with on occasion involves not termination, but reassignment, of a teacher. All contracts I have seen include a clause that says something about the person being subject to assignment and other duties as assigned. A school district can do this legally, and often the only thing that can be done is to bring local pressure to reverse such a decision. That is why it is so important to be an advocate for your program and have a group of supporters on an advisory committee.

Under normal situations, a school district has until 15 days before school is out to inform a teacher they won’t have a job for the next year. The teacher has until 45 days before the beginning of school to inform the district they aren’t returning. If a teacher wants out of the contract after that point or anytime during the school year, the school district has a right to put a hold on your teaching certificate for up to two years, effectively making you unemployable to another district. Many districts will try to work with you on this if they can find a suitable replacement.

In the current school financial climate, we are subjected to all kinds of cost-cutting issues. Losing budget money is tough, cutting travel is tough, but facing the loss of a job is one of the most gut-wrenching issues a person can face professionally. Please don’t hesitate to call me if contract issues arise. That is a major part of my job, and I take it very seriously.

A new face in Team Ag Ed

Rebecca Saathoff, VATAT Intern

Raised in a big, red barn, agriculture greatly influenced Rebecca Saathoff's academic, social and community involvement. From competing in FFA LDEs and CDEs to participating in Mission Devine, Saathoff developed a passion for agriculture and helping others. As a student at Devine High School, Saathoff had many memorable experiences in the FFA.

"I competed in several agricultural communications-related contests, which helped me build confidence in myself and my teammates," she explained.

Saathoff is the spring VATAT intern and a junior Mass Communications and Advertising major, with a minor in agriculture, at Texas State University in San Marcos. Throughout her collegiate career, Saathoff has obtained communication and leadership skills through organizations and campus involvement. She is the Public Relations officer for the Golden Key International Honor Society and Phi Alpha Delta. Saathoff is also a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America and Ad Club.

Upon graduating from Texas State University, she plans to attend law school and pursue a career as a water and property rights lawyer.

"I care deeply about agriculture and want to help agricultural producers by fighting for water and property rights," Saathoff said.



VATAT TRIVIA

Post the answer on our Facebook wall!
What type of contract do most new teachers have?

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 Award recipients and giving the winning nomination 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 at the VATAT Spring Board meeting.

Awards

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

VATAT Updates

- Survey results are in! There were 661 responses to the 26-question survey. The results will help the Association better serve you, the VATAT members. Thank you to all who participated in the survey. Visit the VATAT website to view the complete survey results.

- The Animal Industries Committee of County Extension Agents and Agriculture Science Teachers prepared a list of recommended major show judges for the 2012-2013 major livestock shows in Texas. This list, along with contact information for the Animal Industries Committee, is available on the VATAT website.

VATAT News

and the benefits of advertising

Do you know of a company interested in advertising in the *VATAT News*? It is the perfect opportunity to promote a product or service to more than 4,000 VATAT members, Young Farmers, FFA Alumni, FFA Foundation partners and other agricultural and FFA supporters in Texas. Members use the *VATAT News* to receive important information about agricultural education, ag teachers conference, legislation and much more. Advertising prices are reasonable, and it is the only way to reach Texas agriculture science teachers in their homes.

Advertisers will save money on labor, postage and the announcement will not get lost in the school mail!

We welcome advertising and hope to foster a lasting relationship with every company who advertises in the *VATAT News*. Please share this information with a company you think would be interested in advertising with us. For information regarding advertising formats, size requirements and deadlines please email Julie Vrazel at julie@vatat.org.

Notes from NAAE



National Teach Ag Day

March 15, 2012

- There is currently a national shortage of agricultural educators, and NAAE has taken the lead in recruiting students to think about a career in agricultural education. Join the Teach Ag Campaign, find resources to help you talk to your students about a career in ag ed, or help your students find a college or university with an ag ed program. There is also National Teach Ag day each year – a day set aside to celebrate the profession of agricultural education.

- NAAE's online professional networking community for agricultural educators has more than 3,000 agricultural educators from all over the United States sharing ideas, philosophies, lesson plans and resources. This is a great way to connect with other enthusiastic, supportive ag educators and improve your program in the process. www.naae.org/communities.

- Ag teachers never have the same day twice. One day they might be in a classroom or laboratory, the next visiting students in the field, preparing teams for a FFA Career Development Event or leading a community service activity with their FFA Chapter. So, teach by doing, not just telling and share your passion for agriculture.

- Get quick updates on current initiatives and news through these popular social media platforms. Find NAAE on Facebook at National Association of Agricultural Educators or on Twitter @NAAE.

Follow the VATAT on:

facebook

&

twitter

WHY TEACH AGRICULTURE?

NEVER HAVE THE SAME DAY TWICE

-- teach in a classroom or laboratory, visit students in the field, prepare teams for FFA Career Development Events. Have fun and love your work.

- Teach by doing, not just telling.
- Create lessons that are hands-on.
- Reach students, including those who might not thrive in a "traditional" classroom.
- Share your passion for agriculture.
- Teach about cutting-edge topics, such as cloning, satellite mapping, biofuels, green technologies, and more.

"I BECAME AN AG TEACHER because of the impact my ag teacher made on me. I wanted to be the same positive role model for students that she provided for me. I enjoy watching my students experience personal growth and learn to make smart life choices."

Nick Brown, Ag Teacher
Jenks High School, Jenks Oklahoma



IT IS ESTIMATED that there will be hundreds of unfilled positions across the United States this year because not enough students are choosing to be agricultural educators.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS are often on extended contracts, which means they get paid during the summer months and can earn a significantly higher salary than other teachers.

WHAT'S MORE, agricultural educators' salaries are increasing faster. In 2006, agriculture teachers' salaries increased 12.5% compared to other secondary teachers, whose salaries only increased 2.5%*

"I AM PROUD to be an ag teacher because I know I make a difference in the lives of my students. I am able to provide them with skills and opportunities they would not have anywhere else."

Jeannie Layton-Dudding, Ag Teacher
Giles High School, Pearisburg, Virginia



DON'T WAIT. Talk to your teacher, advisor or guidance counselor today about teaching agriculture. Need help getting started? Try one of the following tips:

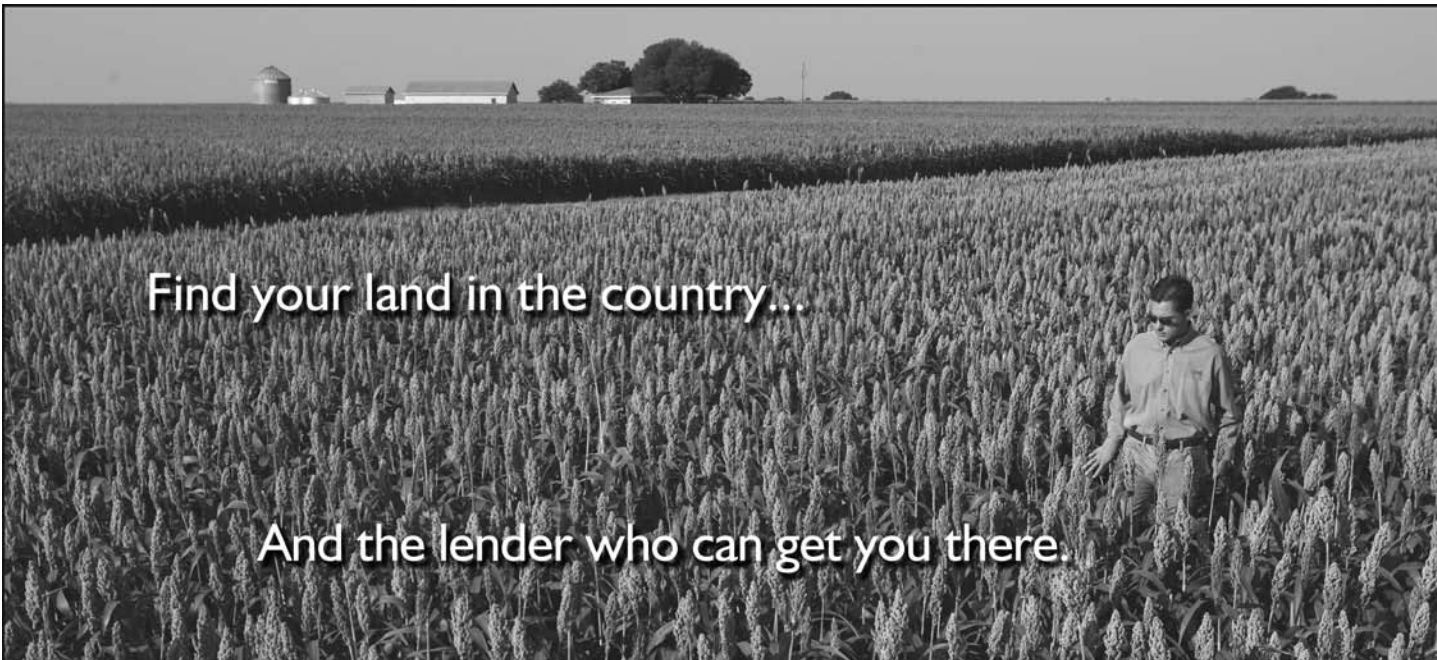
TALK to your ag teacher about what his or her job is like.

Ask your teacher to schedule a job shadowing or internship experience for you.

DEVELOP a SAE involving ag education and participate in the FFA ag education proficiency event.

CHECK OUT colleges and universities that offer an ag education degree. (The career show at the National FFA Convention is a good place to start.)

VISIT www.naae.org/teachag for links to universities and colleges with ag education programs and more tips on choosing ag education as your career.



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Texas FFA

Update

BELIEVE

FFA Week February 18-25, 2012



I Believe is this year's theme for National FFA Week, and it celebrates more than 80 years of FFA traditions, while eagerly anticipating the organization's future. More than half a million nationwide members will participate in National FFA Week activities at local, state and national levels.

FFA members are the innovators and leaders of tomorrow. Through agricultural education and hands-on learning, they prepare for the more than 300 career opportunities in the food, fiber and natural resources industry. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

National FFA Week is sponsored by Tractor Supply Company and Carhartt as a special project of the National FFA Foundation and annually encompasses February 22nd, George Washington's birthday.

In the next 50 years, we'll need to produce 100 percent more food than we do today, in order to feed a much larger world population. National FFA Week celebrates the future farmers, scientists, business leaders and teachers who will someday lead the worldwide effort to provide safe and affordable food to all.

With their optimism, enthusiasm, leadership skills and knowledge, FFA members' potential for success is infinite.



Share your activity ideas and tell us your stories by posting videos, pictures and comments on the Texas FFA's Facebook and twitter, and e-mail us at julie@vatat.org.

Want to tweet about FFA Week? Use hashtag #ffaweek12.

You Tell Us...

Agricultural education and the experiences provided through classroom instruction, SAE projects and the FFA play a key role in the development of our youth.

By now you have received the package containing five posters from the Texas FFA Foundation. These materials can serve as a resource in your classroom and community.

Each poster describes an aspect of the agricultural educator position, the FFA experience, the FFA Foundation and supporters of the programs.

We want you to tell us how you shared your posters. Share your creative, fun, unique and informative ways of displaying your posters to your students, administrators, peers and community.

Send us pictures and updates on the feedback you are receiving from your displays to Julie Vrazel at julie@vatat.org or post them on our Facebook wall. We want to hear from you!





Foundation Update

Aaron Alejandro, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Director & Joanne Shelton, Texas FFA Foundation Executive Assistant

A great motivational author Zig Ziglar once said, "If you help enough other people get what they want, you'll get what you want." Zig must know something about this because he created a great company and brand helping others reach their maximum capacity, both personally and professionally. Like Zig, our Texas Team Ag Ed (FFA, Foundation, VATAT, AFNR) is working together to provide leadership development opportunities for teachers and students. One such leadership development effort is held annually during the state FFA convention and focuses on servant leadership through the Texas FFA Foundation Ambassador program.

The Texas FFA Foundation Ambassador program was established in 2009 to provide face-to-face hosts to special guests, sponsors and dignitaries during convention. Joanne Shelton, Executive Assistant and Scholarship Coordinator for the Texas FFA Foundation said, "With 2011 being my first convention I had no reference on the Ambassadors, but it only took me a couple of hours to rename them the Texas FFA Foundation 'Golden Nuggets.' The 50 students who served as 2011 Foundation Ambassadors along with Andy Christensen, Ambassador Coordinator, were a tremendous value-add to our VIP's and every attendee." What Joanne was really referring to is the leadership development of "servant leader."

Servant leadership is a philosophy and practice of leadership, coined and defined by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904–1990) and supported by numerous leadership and management writers. Servant-leaders achieve results for their organizations by giving priority attention to the needs of their colleagues and those they serve. Servant-leaders are often seen as humble stewards of their organization's resources.

In 1977, Mr. Greenleaf wrote: "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."

According to Greenleaf, "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser,

freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

Since its humble beginnings, each year we have grown the Ambassador program. Plans are being made to create a "second tier" for Ambassador leadership development. What's most amazing about the program, and the young people that serve, is the attitude of service above self. A focus on telling the Texas FFA story by making themselves available and making our guests feel extraordinary. The successful Ambassador learns that they too must accomplish the task of learning and being prepared to share their knowledge and passion for the Texas FFA while recognizing the needs of the sponsor to which they are assigned.

Beginning with a very competitive application process, pre-convention preparation and then a full week of LONG days, our Texas FFA Foundation Ambassadors get the job done, all while having fun. Each day is a new day at convention and Ambassadors are directly interacting with high-level executives, under-pressure to meet event stage times and keeping their commitments as a convention participant.

Ms. Shelton continues, "There probably has not been a week gone by since the 83rd Texas FFA Convention that I have not told someone about these 'golden nuggets.' My fondest memories are the friendships I witnessed being developed between the ambassador team and the special guests they hosted – friendships that will last a lifetime."

As you prepare for the summer and think about what role you could serve, we want to encourage your consideration in applying for the Texas FFA Foundation Ambassador program. Applications will be sent soon, so check often with your advisor. United we stand ... Divided we're stuck. Help us serve others so they too understand "servant leadership" and the Texas FFA.



2011 FFA Ambassadors



TEXAS AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

*A special project of the Texas FFA Foundation
in collaboration with the VATAT*

You are invited to attend the 4th Annual
*Texas Agricultural Science
Leadership Institute*

June 25-29, 2012
Hyatt Lost Pines Resort
Bastrop, Texas

Apply for the Texas Agricultural Science Leadership Institute at www.vatat.org
under Leadership Institute. The deadline to apply is April 3, 2012.
Full scholarships will be awarded to each participant!

Mission

To Further the Effectiveness and Professional Stature of
Agricultural Science Instructors and the FFA Programs in Texas

Institute Underwriters through the Texas FFA Foundation

San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo ● Jim Prewitt and Landmark Nurseries, Inc.
CEV Multimedia ● Friends of the Institute ● Ag Workers Mutual Auto Insurance



Texas Young Farmers Update

From the President's Pen

Connie Koopman, Texas Young Farmers President

Seems like the year 2012 is just rolling along, so I hope each of you are ready for the ride. The Texas Young Farmers held their State Convention in Austin on Jan. 12-15, 2012. The attendance was not what we were hoping for, but the members and guests who did come had an enjoyable time.

The group boarded a charter bus Friday morning for a day of touring agricultural sites. The first stop was Stay Tuff Fencing with Randy Lenz, a past State President, who greeted us and gave us the tour. We saw how rolls of fencing wire are made and learned which type of fencing is more durable than others. They treated us to a delicious barbecue lunch and gave away door prizes. The Texas Young Farmers thank Randy for the hospitality and for sharing knowledge of the fencing industry with us. Our next stop was the Alamo Group, who is responsible for making all the shredders and booms that you see the county and highway departments using. They take pride in their craftsmanship, and their products have to meet certain criteria. We were divided into groups and taken through their production plant with each step being described by their employees. Thank you Alamo Group for a very interesting tour.

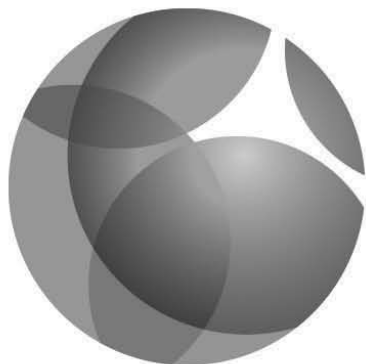
Our final destination for the day was the Texas Heritage Center, better known as The Big Red Barn. Here we were met by a group of tour guides who

divided us into groups and took us around their facility. The center has equipment, living quarters, a school, a chapel and various other buildings that were used way back when. They also have a museum of different areas of agriculture. They had a honeybee demonstration, wildlife, pecans, dairy animals and many more. While everyone was out enjoying the tours, there were a group of Young Farmers from Gonzales who were busy cooking our dinner. Thank you Ken Hedrick and members of the Gonzales Young Farmers for the delicious rib eye steak dinner you prepared for our members. Thanks to Area VI and Joyce Kirby for taking care of the desserts.

After the meal, the members enjoyed the Ag Olympics, which included a women's nail driving contest, washers and nuts and bolts. The first, second and third place winners each received a basket of goodies. Then, the time came to board the bus back to the hotel where bingo and 42 dominoes were played.

The delegates met Saturday morning for a question and answer session before the General Session was called to order. Our guest speaker for the session was Rick Rhodes, Administrator in the Office of Rural Affairs. He updated members on issues taking place at the Capitol and how farmers might be affected. We heard a speech from the President Elect Candidate Barry Choate from Athens (Area VIII). Being the only candidate, Barry was elected by acclamation into the position of President Elect.

Troy FFA students gave us a presentation about Facebook. Joyce Kirby presented the financial report, and Connie Koopmann presented the Program of Work.



MATHESON

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Executive Secretary Don Beene gave us a membership update, and he also introduced Barney McClure, who is our VATAT representative. We were much honored to have a special guest in attendance, Carol Corman, who serves as the 2012 National Young Farmer President. She gave us a report on the NYFEA that was held in Kansas City, Missouri, and what will be happening in the near future. Then, we went into our scholarship auction. The afternoon was spent in various workshops and contests. We had a chapter roundtable, a floral workshop, a CEU Pesticide course and a Farm & Ranch Management Contest.

In the evening, we held our awards banquet. We recognized the Star Young Farmer, Outstanding Member, Sundowner, Outstanding Chapter, Public Relations Award, Advisor Tenure Award and Family of the Year Award. We also announced the winners from the Ag Expressions Essay Contest, the Photography Contest, the Farm & Ranch Management Contest and the Spokesperson for Ag Contest.

It was then time for the new board to be installed. Janet Bulger, 2011 President, installed the board members and new president. Your new board members are: Area III - Jason Benson, Area V - Brad Peyton, Area VI - Joyce Kirby, Area VII - Terri Young, Area VIII - President Elect Barry Choate and from Area IX - Dean Hill. Your new President, Connie Koopmann, is from Area III. Connie Koopmann then presented Janet Bulger with her special gift and President's Plaque. This concluded the awards banquet, and we hope that everyone will be at next year's state convention.

My year as President has been busy. I have had numerous e-mail conversations with different organizations and people interested in the Young Farmers. I was invited to attend the Young Farmer and Rancher Leadership Conference sponsored by the Texas Farm Bureau. It was exciting to see several young men and women interested in the farming business. They are faced with many challenges today, including the Child Labor Law and animal welfare activists. These are not the only two issues that we all face, but they are areas of concern for both organizations. I was able to talk with their district representatives, and we discussed ideas that could be beneficial to both organizations. Thank you Joy Davis for inviting me and for the great hospitality.

The major show circuit has started, which means we will be seeing numerous trailers moving into the major cities to see how their animal will fair in the competitions. Good luck to all those who show and may God keep you safe in your journey from show to show.

Until next time... Take Care and God Bless.



TX YF Convention



Sundowner Award Winners. L-R: James Alford, Gonzales Young Farmers Area VII; Randal Jacobs, Area VIII Limestone County Chapter; Patrick J. Janda, Schulenburg Area III.



Ken Hedrick of the Gonzales Young Farmers, Area VII Star Young Farmer of Texas.



Young Farmer Board for 2012. **L-R (Front):** Amy Hartman, advisor of the President; Joyce Kirby, Area VI and Treasurer; President Connie Koopmann, Area III; Terri Young, Area VII. **Back:** Steve Black, advisor of Past President; Don Beene, Executive Secretary; Brad Peyton, Area V; Janet Bulger, Past President; President Elect Barry Choate; Area VIII; Dean Hill, Area IX; Jason Benson, Area III and Secretary.

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SAE Marketplace is an online resource designed specifically for agricultural science teachers and FFA members to locate livestock sales and breeders, purchase equipment and supplies and find the perfect Supervised Agricultural Experience project.

The SAE Marketplace is a venture of the VATAT and is simple and easy to use. It is divided into three categories, which contain agricultural products and services including: The Show Source, Ag Service and Supply Shop and the Greenhouse.

Advertising on SAE Marketplace is a great way to target Ag Ed Family members! Advertisements run for 12 months and include up to 50 words of text, company logo, website and e-mail links -- all for only \$100 per year.

Visit www.SAEmarketplace.com to find your next SAE project or to advertise one!

www.saemarketplace.com

We've got a brick with your name on it.



Make your mark on the VATAT brick campaign. Purchase your personalized brick to be placed in the front walkway of the Agricultural Education Ford Texas FFA Leadership Center in Austin. Pay \$100.00 for a brick today, and enjoy it for years to come.

Each brick comes with a commemorative brick certificate which is perfect to frame and present as a gift! Fill out the brick order form and send it in with payment, which includes tax deductible checks, to the Texas FFA Foundation * Attention: Brick Campaign * 614 East 12th Street * Austin, TX 78701. You may also purchase your brick with a credit card through VATAT Online. For more information about the brick campaign, please contact Barney McClure at 512.472.3128 or barney@vatat.org. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!



Texas FFA
Alumni

Update

"Attaboy"

Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President

I am sure most of you have received, or even presented, the "ATTABOY AWARD" sometime in your life. I present this award several times a day during my classes. Let me explain for those of you who are not familiar with this acclaimed honor. When I have students who perform well on a project, an assignment, etc., I pat them on the back and tell them "Attaboy."

The Texas FFA gives more than "Attaboys." We give money. The Texas FFA Alumni awards 10, \$500 grants annually for chapter affiliates. These grants can be for a large variety of projects that may be student oriented, for program improvement or community service.

How do you qualify for these grants? To receive a grant, the local affiliate/chapter must be in good standing with the National FFA Alumni and the State FFA Alumni. This is defined as having at least 10 members who have paid their National FFA Alumni member dues and State FFA Alumni dues. They must have constitution/bylaws in harmony with the National and State FFA Alumni Bylaws and have a council of elected members. Too easy...

Money for projects such as the Local Support Grants, scholarships, support of the Texas FFA, the Texas FFA Foundation and the VATAT Family Night is raised at our annual Texas FFA meeting held in conjunction with the State FFA Convention. Major contributors such as Jim Pruett - Landmark Nursery, McCoy's, Rusty Morgan Livestock Equipment, Priefert, Ag Worker's Insurance and LaQuinta work with us. Fundraising vendors are also strong supporters of our organization. Our local alumni affiliates contribute items to the auction. They also compete in the Penny-A-Vote Basket contest. The winner will win a traveling

trophy and have those bragging rights when their baskets are auctioned off on Thursday night of the convention.

So if you are looking for funding options or wanting to spend some money on a squeeze chute, scales, airline tickets, hotel stay, etc., the Texas FFA Alumni may be for you. Check us out at <http://www.texasffaalumni.ffa.org> for more information. The site is always a work in progress.

One more thing... When was the last time you were given the prestigious "Attaboy Award?" Well, allow me to give you one if it has been a long time or if you have never received one. Pat yourself on the back and say the word, "Attaboy!"

Alumni membership is open to anyone is interested in supporting and promoting agricultural education and the FFA on the local, state and national level.

The Texas FFA Alumni is always looking for testimonials of the hard work that your local affiliate does for your FFA Chapter.

Contact Kelly White via the website to submit your testimonials.

www.texasffaalumni.ffa.org



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TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

March 2012

1st-8th - Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo - Houston

9th-18th - Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show - Mercedes

9th-24th - Star of Texas Livestock Show and Rodeo - Austin

12th - State Tractor Technician CDE - HLSR, Houston

16th-18th - Ag Mechanics Project Show - HLSR, Houston

24th - CDE Clinics - Texas A&M University

April 2012

3rd - Leadership Institute applications due

3rd - Stephen F. Austin Invitational CDEs - Nacogdoches

11th - Sam Houston State University Invitational CDEs - Huntsville

14th - Areas 3&7 CDEs - Texas A&M - College Station

15th - State FFA Chorus Applications Due

15th - Foundation Ambassador Applications Due - Austin

15th - Convention Chronicle Applications Due - Austin

17th - Deadline for Steer Tag Orders - Texas A&M, College Station

18th - State Woodlands (Forestry) CDEs - Nacogdoches

19th - State CDEs - Tarleton, Stephenville

21st - State CDEs - Texas Tech, Lubbock

24th-27th - TAKS Testing - Grades 10 & 11

Vocational Agriculture
Teachers Association
of Texas

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