



# BRIEFS TO AG EDUCATORS

April 2002, Volume X, Issue 8

## NEW/BEGINNING TEACHER COLUMN

by: *Billy Krill, Ag Educator*

*“New Job, New Town, New Life”*



Graduating from Penn State last May, I knew my life would soon be changing. Even though I would have to get a new job in a new town,

I thought I had an idea of what I was getting myself into. That was until I told friends and family that I was taking a job at W. B. Saul HS in Philadelphia. My new job would be at the largest agricultural program in the state and in a city that is quite bigger than the one I grew up in (Wilkes-Barre). My mind was flooded with questions. Now, with over half a school year under my belt, I would like to share a few thoughts for new and beginning teachers thinking of teaching at Saul or in an urban setting.

The biggest question I had was, “Could I be an effective teacher, teaching students with backgrounds quite different than my own?” It hasn’t been easy but I have learned a great deal and feel that I am becoming a pretty good teacher. A big reason for that has been the support of my fellow teachers at Saul and another is by applying some ideas that I have picked up here and there. The key is having diverse teaching strate-

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## Working Hard in Puerto Rico - Really!

by: *Thomas Bruening, PSU Associate Professor*

For most students, spring break evokes ideas of surf, sand, and free spirits. This mental picture was not a reality for 11 Penn State undergraduate and graduate students who worked though their spring break to learn how to complete agricultural problem solving activities in sunny Puerto Rico. Sure, on the week-ends students had some free time to explore the beaches, but the major task was to first learn about the culture, tropical agriculture, and the needs of limited resource farmers in western Puerto Rico.

This spring break marks more than 25 years of Penn



*No pineapples don't grow on trees!*

State traveling to the tropical environs of Puerto Rico to learn more about their agricultural problems. On March 1, eleven students, three course instructors, two extension agents and a translator traveled to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico to

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Sites of Interest

## Help Us Help Grants

Oracle Corp's Help Us Help Foundation is a nonprofit organization that assists K-12 public schools and youth organizations in economically challenged communities through grants of computer equipment and software. Funding comes from Oracle Corp., as well as from other charitable donations. Grant recipients will receive internet appliances from the New Internet Computer Co. and Kyocera Mita laser printers to outfit ten, six, or five classrooms with five computers and one printer each. Eligible schools must document that their school is designated low-income or provide test scores that show their students are struggling to meet achievement standards. In addition, schools already must have in place a technology infrastructure to support the internet appliances. Application deadline is May 31, 2002. <http://www.helpushelp.org/index.html>

## Grant Information

The George Lucas Educational Foundation does not give grants but welcomes visitors seeking grants or grant information to check the resource page on its website. <http://www.glef.org/grant.html>

## Win a Laptop

Educators who demonstrate the effective use of technology in the classroom are eligible to win a laptop computer through this brand-new program from the National Association of Education Technology Specialists (NAETS). The organization will grant its first annual Alan Shephard Technology in Education Award to an educator who has demonstrated innovation, commitment, and excellence in the teaching and development of technology programs in schools. The award is open to all educators and technology personnel at the school or district level who have demonstrated exemplary use of technology either to foster lifelong learners or make the learning process easier. The winning nominee will be flown to an awards ceremony where he or she will be presented with a commemorative trophy engraved with his or her name and a laptop computer. A school principal must nominate the candidate from the school, and an associate superintendent or superintendent must nominate all district-level personnel. Nominations for the award are to be submitted to the NAETS office between February 1 and April 30. The selection committee will make a final choice by May 27. [http://www.naets.org/national\\_award.htm](http://www.naets.org/national_award.htm)

## SMART Board Grant

This program was created to help educators research the effects of technology on teaching and learning, and to publish the results of these studies. Each participant conducts a 6- to 8-month study of a learning environment that includes a SMART Board. The project culminates with a final research paper that details the study's outcomes. Projects most likely to be chosen are those that have a clear research goal and that focus on learning processes. Contact Information Services at 403-245-0333, [info@smarterkids.org](mailto:info@smarterkids.org) or at <http://www.smarterkids.org/research/details.asp>. Deadline is May 31, 2002

## Discounts for NEC Visual Presentation Products

The Smarter Kids Foundation announced \$65 million in grants for NEC Visual Presentation Products. Successful applicants will be able to purchase NEC products — including projectors and multimedia displays — for 39 percent of the suggested list price. Applications must be received by August 31, 2002 and used by Sept. 30, 2002. <http://www.smarterkids.org/k12/nec/appform.asp>



# 2002 AEE Summer Courses

The Department of Agricultural and Extension Education will be offering the following graduate level courses Summer 2002. A series of different graduate level courses will be offered during Summer 2003 in an effort to help interested individuals secure course work needed to complete a graduate degree. Interested individuals can obtain registration and enrollment information through Continuing Education

at <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/CE/> or 814-865-3443. Information relative to graduate degrees offered in Agricultural and Extension Education can be accessed at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/> or contact Dr. Joan Thomson, AEE Graduate Coordinator - [jthomson@psu.edu](mailto:jthomson@psu.edu) or 814-863-3825.

*June 17 – July 5, 2002*

8:00 – 10:30 AM - AEE 501 – Foundations of Agricultural and Extension Education (3 credits) Dr.

Tracy Hoover – [tsh102@psu.edu](mailto:tsh102@psu.edu) and Dr. Ed Yoder – [epy@psu.edu](mailto:epy@psu.edu)

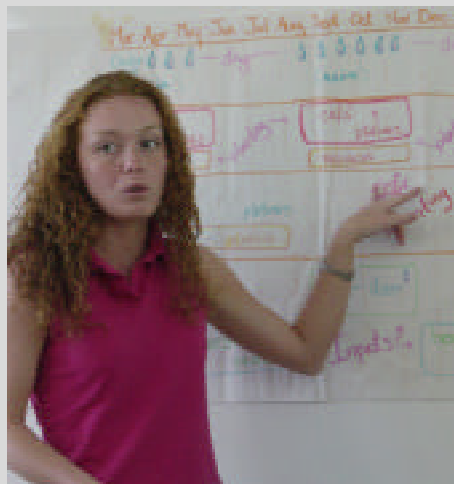
10:30 AM – 1:00 PM - AEE 465– Leadership Practices: Power, Influences and Impact (3 credits) Dr. Phyllis Adams – [padams@psu.edu](mailto:padams@psu.edu)

2:00 – 4:30 PM - AEE 450 – Methodology of Extension Education (proposed new title - Program Design & Delivery) (3 credits) Dr. Rama Radhakrishna – [brr100@psu.edu](mailto:brr100@psu.edu)

(Puerto Rico...cont'd from p. 1) complete a participatory rural appraisal with local farmers. Prior to this activity, the team reviewed dairy, citrus, fresh shrimp, tropical root crops, pineapple, and banana production in three separate locations in western Puerto Rico to gain a better understanding of production practices. Since most of these crops were new to the students, they took copious notes to support their learning efforts.

As in the past, students actively learned about the most pressing needs of farmers in a tropical environment. Carlos Morganiti from San Sebastian NRCS helped by selecting the farmers to interview and made arrangements on site. As we discussed the impact of the experiences gained there, students remarked that it was

so impressive to stand on the 60% slopes and to contemplate

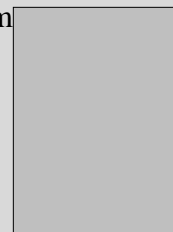


*Danielle Cowden explaining the seasonal calendar in Puerto Rico.*

trying to carry bunches of plantains or bananas up to the top of the hill. Students also discussed how difficult it would be to keep the soil on these steep slopes with the onset of a hurricane. Students gained a greater appreciation of the culture and the island lifestyle

and the problems and opportunities of the limited resource farmers that we met. Finally, the students remarked how valuable it was to get out of the classroom and learn firsthand about how to grow crops in a tropical environment.

Increasingly we are seeing more agricultural education students take courses that emphasize international content. Hopefully the "hard work" in Puerto Rico of these future teachers will help to broaden the experiences and content knowledge that they can take into agricultural classroom



# What Does "FFA" Stand For?

FFA faces a continuing challenge from the public and the news media in answering the questions, "What do the letters 'FFA' stand for?" and "What is FFA?" With input from the current and past national officers, the Marketing and Communication Services Team developed answers to these questions, and the text was approved at the January board of directors meeting.

When providing information to the general public and media in news releases, brochures, website postings or in general conversation, the following language is suggested to help position the organization and its proper name.

- **"What is FFA?"**

FFA is a dynamic youth organization within agricultural education that changes lives and prepares students for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Although FFA was created in 1928 as Future Farmers of America, the name was changed in 1988 to the National FFA Organization to represent the growing diversity of agriculture. Today, almost half a million student members are engaged in a wide range of agricultural education activities, leading to over 300 career opportunities in the food, fiber and natural resources industry. Student success remains the primary mission of the

FFA.

- **"What do the letters F-F-A stand for?"**

The letters FFA stand for Future Farmers of America; however, the official name of the organization was changed in 1988 to the National FFA Organization. Over the past 75 years, the FFA and agricultural education have grown to encom-

pass all aspects of agriculture, from production farming, agribusiness and forestry to biotechnology, marketing and food processing. (UPDATE. March 2002)



*(New & Beginning...cont'd from p. 1)*

gies to match the diversity of the learners. Students can learn more when they are challenged by teachers who have high expectations of them. Motivation can be enhanced when teachers elicit their students' experiences in classroom activities and listen to what they have to say. And, in order to create the most effective learning environment, a teacher should not tolerate any type of sexist or racist comments. These things can be used in any school in any city, no matter how diverse the student population is.

Another question I had was, "Would I be able relate to the students?" Here I think being a new and young teacher is an advantage. Students may feel more comfortable being themselves, more likely to talk about classroom and private issues with someone in their generation. However it's important to establish early the student-teacher relationship. Otherwise

students will think of you not as a teacher, but only as a friend, and try and take advantage of you.

Finally, I would like to make a comment about urban agriculture. Is there a need for an agricultural school in a city like Philadelphia? The answer is YES. Saul HS is highly thought of in the school district and the community because of its high academic standards. Saul students choose from a wide variety of agricultural courses that will help them land a job out of school or further their education in college. At few other schools can they receive an education from a more competent and caring staff. That is what makes Saul so special. I see all that they do for the students. And they have gone out of their way to make me feel welcome. So much so that I am really enjoying my new life and I can't imagine wanting to teach at another school.

## Introducing...Dave Howell

David Howell, Professor of Agricultural Education from the University of New Hampshire at Durham, is spending his sabbatical at Penn State. David received his MEd degree at Penn State in 1968 and was an assistant professor at the university. He is enjoying the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues. It has been 13 years since his last sabbatical, which was also at Penn State with Bill Williams and Barbara Wade.

Dave's special interests are international agriculture, teaching methods and research. He will be working with Tom Bruening and Harry Carey on the international agriculture program. He will also be visiting some of the student



teachers to observe their progress and the changes in Pennsylvania's Agricultural Education programs. Last of all, he will work with Ed Yoder to conduct an evaluation of the Ag in the Classroom program.

Last summer Dave participated in the National FFA's trip to Costa Rica and he would be happy to share his slides of the trip, as well as those from earlier trips to Egypt and Russia, with high school agriculture classes. David can be contacted through the main office in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education or by email at [hld2@psu.edu](mailto:hld2@psu.edu).

## Proposed FFA Constitutional Amendment

The FFA Board of Directors has asked that the delegates at the 75<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention consider the following constitutional amendment.

- Article 16 – Parliamentary Authority  
The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the National FFA Organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws, any special rules of order the National FFA Organization may adopt, and any statutes applicable to this organization that do not authorize the provisions of this constitution and bylaws to take precedence.

It is important to note that this is not a change, just a constitutional recognition. The FFA has always operated under *Robert's Rules of Order*. It is also the parliamentary authority followed in the Parliamentary Procedure career development event (CDE). Dr. James J. Connors, superintendent of the National FFA Parliamentary Procedure CDE, made this recommendation to the board. (UPDATE. March 2002)



## 2002 Ag Education Conference - Lake Placid Resort

The New York State Agricultural Education Outreach Staff, NYAAE Executive Council, New York Agri-Tech Prep, and the New York State Education Department invite you to attend the 2002 Regional Agricultural Education Conference June 23-26, 2002 at the Lake Placid Resort in Lake Placid, NY. We have worked hard to include activity based workshops and tours that address the needs of our constantly changing agri-

cultural and agri-science programs. Each participant will receive materials and supplies valued at over \$450. The complete cost for the event is \$495 per person based on double occupancy. For more information on the conference visit [http://www.nyag-ed.org/2002\\_regional\\_conference.htm](http://www.nyag-ed.org/2002_regional_conference.htm) or contact Shari Lighthall at [slighthall@oswegatchie.org](mailto:slighthall@oswegatchie.org) or 315-346-1222.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....**

- April 10..... PAAE South Central Regional Mtg., Dinner/Inservice - Hoss's in Carlisle, 5:00 PM; Cumberland Valley HS, 6:30 PM
- April 17..... South Central Regional Judging Events, Farm Show Complex
- April 18..... PAAE North Central Regional Mtg., Restless Oaks, McElhatten, Inservice - 5:00 PM; Dinner - 6:00 PM; Meeting - 7:00 PM
- April 20..... Penn College Earth Science Center Landscape Design Workshop, Williamsport, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
- April 27-30 ..... 5-Star Consortium Student Teacher Professional Development Retreat, Delaware
- May 17..... FFA Association Board Mtg., PSU, 6:30 PM
- May 17..... PAAE Executive Board Mtg., Coudersport HS, 7:00 PM
- June 11-13..... FFA Activities Week, PSU
- July 9-10 ..... State Young Farmers Conference, Potter County
- July 8-11 ..... PAAE Conference for Agricultural Science Education, Coudersport
- July 22-25 ..... Governor's Institute for Agricultural Sciences & Advanced Manufacturing Careers, Blair County Convention Center, Altoona
- August 13-15 ..... Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs

**TEACHER DEADLINES.....**

- April 10..... Landscape Design Workshop Registration due to Tiffany Hoy
- April 15..... Dairy Showmanship Applications due to Doug Brown, Central Columbia
- May 1..... PAAE Summer Conference Hotel/Campground Reservations Due
- May 5..... Regional Contest Quota results due to Regional Coordinators (Public Speaking, Chapter Procedure, Small Gas Engines, Tractor Driving & Dairy Showmanship)
- May 6..... FFA Week/Entries due at Penn State (P. Hoy)
- June 11 ..... Chapter Award Applications due at registration desk, FFA Activities Week, PSU
- July 1 ..... Big E and National Convention CDE trip winner registration forms due to CTSO
- July 11..... National FFA Convention CDE Certification Forms due
- September 30 ..... National FFA CDE Student Waiver, Release of Liability and Consent to Medical Treatment form due to the National FFA CDE coordinator.

**Changes in Center Personnel**

Dennis Scanlon announced that Carol Hodes left the Department in early February because funding for a project that she worked on was no longer available. During her tenure in the Department, Carol worked on various projects for the Center for Professional Personnel Development. Faculty and staff thank Carol for all of her contributions for the Department. They also wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

Briefs to Ag Educators is a publication of the Center for Professional Personnel Development, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, The Pennsylvania State University, 323 Agricultural Administration Bldg., University Park, PA 16802. Editors: Tiffany Hoy and Thomas Bruening. Phone: 814-863-7876; Fax: 814-863-4753; email Tiffany at tmr175@psu.edu

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