



BRIEFS TO AG EDUCATORS

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NEW TEACHER COLUMN

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“An Educational Boost”

I just returned from the National AAAE/NAAE Conference in Orlando! It was exciting to be together with high school teachers, teacher educators, and administrators from across the country. The trek to the National Research and Teaching Conference is “An Educational Boost” that each of us needs every year!

Pennsylvania was well represented. We enjoyed our first (in awhile) annual Penn State Breakfast. It was great to have Sam Wagner and his wife join us. Sam was representing PA as a recipient of the Outstanding Service Award from NAAE! Willy Sole and daughter, Michelle joined us. Willy is a member of the FFA Foundation Board and was also a recipient of the NAAE Outstanding Service Award. At the breakfast, we were found by Carol Conroy, Dale Layfield and Rama Radakirishna. We were pleased that they could be with us. Dr. Bowen brought greetings from the Department and shared with us some highlights of the previous year.

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It's a Zoo at Twin Valley High School

Agricultural diversity is the theme of the program at Twin Valley High School in Elverson, southern Berks County with Ron Frederick and Harold Dietrich. Many of their “mostly suburban” students are interested in small companion animals, and you can find lots of them on a typical day. Their Burmese python visits elementary schools. Other inhabitants are an iguana, mice that are used for genetic studies, and of course gerbils and guinea pigs “for fun.”



In addition to animals, they monitor a plethora of their students' enrichment activities including monitoring streams, maintaining the environmental

education area, managing the wood lot, and working with the Game Commission. These teachers also inspires learning through special service projects. Students organize events such as “Food for America,” which can involve 50 students per month, pet therapy, Christmas tree recycling, baking for homeless shelters, and an Ag-day breakfast for parents and faculty. The 245 students also are involved in the “complete gamut” of SAE activities according to Frederick. Twin Valley FFA also is very active and the chapter has 27 officers and committee chairs. “These kids always have lots of new ideas and they keep me on my toes,” says Mr. Frederick.

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Probably the most pleasurable part of the trip for me was seeing many of my former undergraduate students from Ohio, Idaho and Pennsylvania. It is always a proud moment for teachers when we see our students advancing the profession. This is "An Educational Boost" that we all need and deserve. I hope that more PA teachers will plan to attend in December 2000 in San Diego.



(It's a Zoo cont'd from p. 1)

In the near future, Mr. Frederick and Mr. Dietrich anticipate moving into new facilities where his program not only will have space for more classroom animals, but also a 1500-gallon tank for hydroponics, and improved connectivity for their technology. After they settle in, plans for the Twin Valley ag-ed program include a curriculum that is more science-based with more student experiments and independent study in the areas of horticulture and plant tissue culture, aquaculture, animal science, and ag mechanics. Twin Valley's traditional scheduling allows the college-prep and advanced placement students to take agricultural science electives. Although about three-fifths of their students attend college and one-third pursue agriculture careers, the hope is that more students will be able to pursue post secondary education once an articulation agreement is in place.

We Welcome New Teacher.... Jaci Harner



The Center for Professional Development welcomes Jaci Harner, a first-year teacher at Lion Mountain High School. When Jaci graduated from Penn State with a degree in animal science, she returned to the family farm. The family farm consisted of market hogs, 250 sows in a farrow to finish operation. In addition to market hogs, the family farm raised crops for the animals and made all their own feed. After farming for 8 years, Jaci decided to become certified to teach. Jaci says that her first semester teaching has been "more challenging than she expected." Her family, the farm and teaching responsibilities keep her very busy. In order to juggle the various responsibilities, Jaci's advice to all is "to be patient with yourself and to allow things to happen as they will." Currently the agricultural department at Lion Mountain High School is changing. The program is trying to appeal to not only the traditional agricultural students, but the nontraditional. In order to accomplish this, Jaci is currently teaching horticulture and small animal care. Jaci, we wish you the best in all your endeavors.

PVEC 2000



The PA Vocational Education Conference, Re-Tooling Pennsylvania's Career and Technical Education, is planned for August 13-16 in Hershey, PA. The program committee is soliciting proposals for sessions. The deadline for proposals is March 17. Full information is in the "Call for Presentations" inserted in this issue.

Surf & Turf 2000

At the recent 5-Star Consortium meeting, members set dates for this summer's Surf & Turf event. The consortium is planning another great sequence of educational programs for the year 2000. Dates have been set for August 8-10. Registration information will be available in a few months.

Vicki Lantz on National FFA Board

One of the three agricultural science teachers on the National FFA Board is Big Spring's Vicki Lantz. She has been named to a three-year term where she will attend national board meetings to work on policy decisions, review grant awards, and oversee FFA business. With her two counterparts, Vicki advocates for the High School Agricultural Science programs.

Although Vicki's program of 300 students with multiple offerings at Big Spring keeps



her busy, she has plenty of energy for her new FFA national responsibilities. She was immediately impressed by the board's high level of dedication and by the student-centered nature of the organization. "They are always looking for the best thing for students. The FFA feels that it's an organization for the kids and they make an effort to do what's best for the student," she noted. The FFA National Board is lucky to have a dynamic person such as Vicki Lantz for the next three years.

Take a Look!

The College of Agricultural Sciences and Agricultural and Extension Education at Penn State have new web pages. The URL is <http://www.cas.psu.edu> and the Agricultural and Extension Education Department is found at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/>

The Center's link can be found under the "Department Overview" button. Let us know what you think about the new Websites.



Conservation Websites

The Federal Resource for Educational Excellence (FREE) website (<http://www.ed.gov/free>) compiles on-line resources for students and teachers. Listings are available for most content areas. Under the Sciences, Vocational and Social Science areas, the following websites seemed to be especially helpful:

EPA Environmental Center has both curriculum resources and a student center with a database of activities and information on a broad array of topics such as health, recycling and ecosystems. <http://www.epa.gov/students>

The evolution of the conservation movement: 1850-1920 presents an historic database of our national parks and main legislative events. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>

Consumer's Resource Handbook is the general Services Administration's basic information source for the public. <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/crh/respref.htm>

Country Analysis Briefs, Energy Information Administration, and Dept. of Energy give maps, facts and statistics on each country's natural resources and population. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/contents.html>

Learning Web of the US Geologic Survey has a database of K-12 lessons and activities on topics such as ecology, geology, hydrology and geography. Activities include map and navigational skills. <http://www.usgs.gov/education/>

Neighborhood Networks website for students and researchers from Housing and Urban Development has an interesting section on rehabilitating brownfields. <http://www.hud.gov/student.html>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

- January 8-13 Pennsylvania Farm Show – State Farm Show Complex – Harrisburg
 January 10..... FFA Mid Winter Convention – Large Arena, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg,
 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
 January 13..... FFA Foundation Meeting – Farm Show Complex
 February 8-10 Pennsylvania Young Farmer Convention – Kutztown
 February 10-12 ... State project book evaluation – Penn State
 February 13-19 ... Vocational Education Week – State Capital Rotunda
 February 19-20 ... ACES Leadership Conference, Marriott, Harrisburg
 February 19-26 ... National FFA Week
 February 25..... FFA Association Board of Directors meeting – 301 Ag. Admin. Building,, Penn State,
 6:30 p.m.

TEACHER DEADLINES.....

- January 1..... PYFA Advisor Deadline – PYFA spokesperson application due- Carla Witter – Shippensburg
 February 4..... Project Books due to regional coordinators
 February 15..... National FFA Scholarship Applications due to National FFA Center
 February 26..... Membership roster and dues payment due to Mary Johnston, Adult Treasurer

**!Attention! !Attention! !Attention!**

!Attention Ag Teachers! Mac Legault, Research Associate, and Dennis Murphy, Extension Safety Specialist, have developed the Agricultural Safety and Health Best Management Practices (ASHBMP) Manual. The ASHBMP Manual has been designed as an injury prevention tool that can be used by farmers, insurance company representatives and agricultural educators alike. Use of the ASHBMP will allow everyone concerned with farm safety and health to give the same consistent message regarding hazard identification, evaluation, and correction.

You are invited to a day long, hands-on educational workshop based on the new ASHBMP Manual on Saturday, February 5th. This introductory workshop will begin in Room 114 of the Agricultural Engineering Building. Activities will begin at 9 a.m. sharp and conclude by 4 p.m. Coffee, doughnuts and a lunch will be provided.

As a thank you to all those that participate, a free copy of the ASHBMP Manual will be sent to participants as soon as it is released. They anticipate this will happen sometime during the summer of 2000. To help prepare for the workshop, a firm commitment to participate is needed by Friday, January 14th. Please notify Mac Legault at 814-865-7151 or mll13@psu.edu if you are willing to help out with this important evaluation effort. Feel free to contact Mac if you have additional questions about this workshop.

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