



# BRIEFS TO AG EDUCATORS

October 2002, Volume XI, Issue II

## NEW/BEGINNING TEACHER COLUMN

by: Chris Gabela, Ag Teacher  
Garden Spot HS

*“Never Forget the Firsts”*

Well, let’s see...a reflection as a first year teacher. Hmm...so much to reflect, so little time... three weeks and quite the plethora of firsts. Ahhh...that’s it! All the firsts. Do you remember your firsts? Maybe some of mine will spark a memory or two.

The first time I went to the school: I was asked if I was a new student. (No joke.)

The first time I drove to the school, it took me 32 minutes: (It now takes me 17.)

The first time I ate lunch with other teachers: I took someone’s seat. (Heaven forbid.)

The first time a student called me Miss Gabela: I forgot that was my name.

The first time I had a study hall: I was late because I couldn’t find the room.

The first time I tried to unlock any door: It didn’t work. (And I have 9 keys.)

The first time a student was called down to Mrs. Hudick: I didn’t know who she was. (She is the assistant principal.)

The first time a student was late: The door was already shut: (He was never late again.)

The first time I gave a quiz: I

*(Continued on page 5)*

## IN THIS ISSUE...

PAGE 2... SITES OF INTEREST

PAGE 3...CELESTE BALL NAMED 2002 DISNEY’S AMERICAN TEACHER AWARDS HONOREE, INTRODUCING...CARLEEN VORISEK

PAGE 4...CDE - UPDATE COLUMN, NEW ARRIVAL

PAGE 5...PA STATE DUES & DEADLINE

PAGE 6...CALENDAR



### Rich in Tradition

*Mt. Union HS*

*Mt. Union, PA*



*Sam Hooper feeding rough cut boards into the planer.*

*Jackie Morgan takes planed lumber and stacks in a finished pile.*



Nestled in a rural area about 50 miles from State College, PA lays the Mt. Union High School. Clifford McElrath engages 53 students on a daily basis in the agricultural education program, which concentrates on production agriculture with some focus on ag mechanics and natural resources.

Clifford has been teaching agriculture at Mt. Union HS

for the past 27 years and has found tradition plays a major role in the events that are still taking place today. “This is a student driven program – for instance, they are currently working on a float to be used in the Mt. Union and Three Springs Halloween Parades; however, the students develop the theme and construct the float. The students also nominate and

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Sites of Interest

## The Repository

Standards are used as benchmarks by educators who are designing—or redesigning—their schools, programs, curricula and assessment strategies. The push to teach higher level academics in a real world context has encouraged individual educators to explore standards:

State and national academic standards,  
State and national skill standards, and  
Employability standards.

Because educators are being encouraged (or mandated) to design their curricula based on standards, or align their current curriculum with specified standards, the need arises for a convenient way to find copies of these standards.

Standards are available from many different sources—some public, some private; some free, some for a fee, some not at all—it is often difficult for end users to locate them and ensure they are available to be used. Standards have been developed by many different groups across the country, often only for the use of members of a specific industry group. Some have been developed by government-funded projects available for public dissemination. Many individual states are developing their own

sets of academic and skill standards for use across their states.

In response to the need for a more cohesive and comprehensive source of information, the Dissemination Center's Repository of standards will serve as a "one-stop" location for secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators; state-level governing boards and staff; as well as other interested parties.

This electronic Repository will store and/or provide links to various sets of standards. Log onto <http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/repository/>.

## Calendar Online

Looking for information on workshops, conventions, etc. go to <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/center/calendar.htm>. The calendar is updated once a month and contains information for contact people, costs, directions to locations and more. If you have an event that might be of interest to other teachers, please forward the information to



Tiffany Hoy at [tmr175@psu.edu](mailto:tmr175@psu.edu) or by phone at 814-863-7876

and she will enter the information into the calendar.

## Disney Teacher Center

Check out the Disney Learning Partnership Teacher Center!

Free lesson plans, workshops and examples of outstanding student projects as well as advice from master teachers. They're all here along with a host of other resources.

Volume Two of The Creative Classroom Series, "The Power of the Creative Classroom," is now available at <http://disney.go.com:80/DisneyLearning/>.



## No More Waiting

Don't wait for the mailing of the Briefs – Get the Briefs online at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/ctrnews.html>.



## PA FFA New Address

Pennsylvania FFA Association new website address – <http://www.paffa.state.pa.us>.

*If you know of any interesting websites and would like to share them with other educators, please email the website to Tiffany Hoy at [tmr175@psu.edu](mailto:tmr175@psu.edu).*

## Celeste Ball Named 2002 Disney's American Teacher Awards Honoree

Celeste Ball, a 9-12 grade agricultural science teacher at Kutztown HS, has been selected as a Disney's American Teacher Awards honoree for 2002. Celeste is one of 32 teachers selected from more than 185,000 nominees. She will be flown to Los Angeles with other outstanding teachers from across the country who collectively will be receiving awards totaling \$515,000, and who will be honored for their talents, skills and commitment to their profession in July 2003.

Celeste's classes, which range from horticulture and floriculture to environmental science, involve hands-on interactive projects in order for student to truly understand the science at work. "My classes provide both the book learning and the interactive experimental components. By providing a diverse mix of opportunities in each field of study, I try to get students to apply what they have learned to real life. If we are talking about poultry, then we incubate and hatch various types of chicks. We candle eggs, we break out eggs and judge them, we fry eggs and we eat eggs. In short, we study all the different components of poultry. I want students to truly understand and experience every aspect the farm-to-table

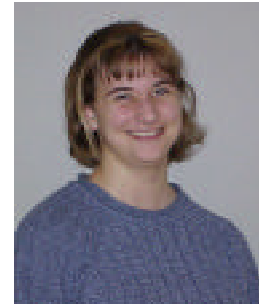
food connection and the environmental impact that humans make on their environment," says Celeste. It is the constructive engagement, combined with her genuine enthusiasm to teach, that has earned Celeste Ball a Disney's American Teacher Award.

The 32 honorees, chosen by a national selection committee comprised of distinguished educators, are nominated in one of the 10 teaching categories. In July, one finalist will be selected in each category, and the Outstanding Teacher of the Year will be chosen by the honorees from among the 10 finalists.

In addition to the awards ceremony and monetary contributions, honorees will participate in a unique professional development program focused on innovative approaches to teaching and learning and leadership development. The teachers and their principals will attend a workshop in October 2003 at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, FL, where they will learn how to share their creative teaching practices, and also develop an action plan focused on improving professional collaboration and teacher learning in their schools during the 2003 – 2004 school year.

## Introducing... Carleen Vorisek

Carleen Vorisek's career choice



to be an agricultural educator was inspired by her personal experience and

achievements while attending Linesville High School in Crawford County. She achieved national recognition for her SAE program in apiculture (beekeeping) and attending numerous events. But Carleen says what really inspired her to pursue a four-year degree in Agricultural and Extension Education from Penn State was Ellen Aurand, her agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor. "Ms. Aurand encouraged us to try our hardest and not to be afraid of going out on a limb."

Recently, Carleen accepted a job at United High School in Indiana County. She is responsible for 71 students in grades 9-12. "The primary focus of the program at this point is animal science, plant and soil sciences, forestry, specialty animals and agricultural mechanics. However, the program also promotes independent research based on the students' interests and needs." Carleen plans to make some changes over the

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Introducing...cont'd from p. 3)*

next few years to make sure the program is benefiting the community as well as the students.

As the years go forth, Carleen hopes to be an active member of the professional organizations to further her understanding of the teaching profession. She also strives to continue her education in a variety of areas to not only strengthen her program, but all Pennsylvania's agricultural education programs.

Please help the Center in welcoming Carleen Vorisek to our agricultural education family.



**New Arrival**

Michelle Miller and her husband were delighted on August 18, 2002 when their second child, Sarah Michelle Wessel, was born. She was 7 lbs 9.9 ozs. Congratulations!

*If you know of any births or weddings and would like to share them with other educators, please email the website to Tiffany Hoy at [tmr175@psu.edu](mailto:tmr175@psu.edu).*

## Career Development Events Update Column

*by: Cliff Day, PA CDE Chairperson*

Career Development Events serve a variety of purposes for teachers and their FFA members. One of those purposes is to provide both teachers and students with up-to-date information that is relevant to both in preparing for a career. In an effort to upgrade some of the CDEs that are currently being run in Pennsylvania, we will be bringing this column to you in each issue of the Briefs.

Proposed changes that will assist you in preparing your students for CDE competitions will be included. Your feedback is invited and in fact encouraged. Please feel free to let us know what "red flags" you see with proposed changes.

For many of you teachers, you have been hearing of the need to make some significant changes in some of our CDEs to make Pennsylvania more of a contender in National competitions. For others, you want to see the CDEs relevant to what we do in the state. Both goals can be achievable. The most important goal that we must keep in our focus is "What's best for our students?" Let's work together to create the most beneficial Career Development Events that Pennsylvania can possibly produce and then prepare our

students so they can experience success in those areas.

The first CDE that will offer some minor changes is Small Gasoline Engines. There are changes in scoring that should better reflect the importance of not only getting the engine running, but also being able to adequately explain to a customer exactly what you did to get the engine repaired.

As we look to prepare our students to work in a real life career, the importance of being able to verbalize what diagnosis and procedures were used to correct the engine problem cannot be over emphasized. Scorecards reflecting changes will be made available in a later mailing from the PA Department of Education. The SGE state committee would like to encourage local, county, and area competitions based upon the latest scorecards. Teachers should share their concerns and any "red flags" with Clair Witwer at [clair\\_witwer@pvdsd.k12.pa.us](mailto:clair_witwer@pvdsd.k12.pa.us)

*Refer to Small Gasoline Engines C.D.E. Insert in this Issue of the Briefs!*

*(Rich in Tradition...cont'd from p. 1)*

elect their own officers. I only offer guidance on officer responsibilities and the tasks which need to be completed over the year. Just like most advisors, I may not always agree with the choice of the members, but I support their ideas as long as they benefit the membership."

Tradition has carried through the years – even as the school's populations diversified from rural students to rural, suburban and urban students learning in the same atmosphere. Clifford has adapted his program to include all students, no matter their background or career choice. "You can see the diversification in the students' SAE programs. It use to be only market animals; now students have projects which range from small scale gardening to placement to the traditional market animals sold

during the Huntingdon County Fair Livestock Sale."

One tradition that really makes this school stand out from any other is the PA Farm Show Square Dancing Team. "Every year (as long as were not snowed in) we take one or two teams to the Square Dance Competition held after the PA FFA Mid-Winter Convention. Dorothy Corson, a local Radio Shack dealer and roller rink owner, serves as the coach for these teams. Students meet every Sunday from 1:00 – 3:00 PM to learn the calls and steps to compete in the state event. We do fairly well, and the students have a great time."

When Jackie Morgan (Chapter Parliamentarian) and Sam Hooper (Chapter Vice President) were asked what they thought made their agricultural education program

unique, they simultaneously answered, "Our teacher." They continued on to say, "he makes learning fun and really cares about us, not just as students in his classroom, but as young adults. Mr. "Mac" is always encouraging us to strive for our best. He also has a way to make every topic in class interesting by adding humor to his lesson."

When one walks through the doors of the Mt. Union agricultural education program he/she can see how tradition has shaped the program seen today. Clifford McElrath demonstrates that tradition can be intertwined with new concepts and ideas.

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

made it ridiculously hard and then threw it away. (The students really started studying after that.)

The first time the FFA class misbehaved: I told them how far I had to come just to be THEIR teacher. (The story took 45 minutes.)

The first time I taught an FFA officer something he didn't know before: He started to pay attention in class.

The first time a student asked me questions about SAE: I didn't know all the answers. (So we learned together.)

The first time I hit with the tennis team: They thanked me at least 10 times.

The first time I went to a football game: Students ran me down to say hello. (They even waved from the field.)

The first time a student said I was a good teacher: It felt really good.

Never forget the firsts.

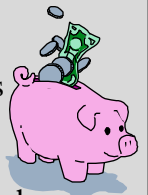
## PA State Dues & Deadline

The Dues for the 2002-2003 year are \$15.00 each.

Also, there has been a change in the deadlines with the first deadline scheduled for

November 15th so as to have verification for Keystone Degrees and also to participate in the Farm show in January.

The rosters are coming in e-mail form on the excel program and will be sent out to you shortly as Penny Brammer hopes to have them from Nationals soon.



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

- October 1-7 ..... K.I.L.E. Invitational Livestock Judging, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg  
 October 3 ..... PAAE North Central Region Mtg., Williamsport Hoss's, 7:00 PM  
 October 9 ..... PAAE South Central Region Mtg., Northern HS, Dillsburg, 6:30 PM  
 October 11 ..... FCLPD, Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM  
 October 11 ..... FFA Foundation Mtg., Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, 10:15 AM  
 October 17 ..... PAAE Western Region Mtg., Allison Park Hoss's, 7:00 PM  
 October 19 ..... AEE Homecoming Extravaganza, 301A Ag Admin. - Tickets reserved through  
 D. Mayes at 814-865-1688  
 Oct. 30 - Nov. 2 .. 75th National FFA Convention, Louisville, KY  
 November 12 ..... PAAE Eastern Region Mtg., Twin Valley HS, Elverson, 7:00 PM  
 November 15 ..... PA Keystone Degree Review - 301A Ag Admin.  
 December 6..... PA FFA Board Mtg., 301B Ag Admin., PSU, 6:30 PM  
 December 10-14 . NAAE Convention, Las Vegas, NV  
 December 12-15 . ACTE Convention, Las Vegas, NV  
 December 12-15 . NYFEA Institute, Oklahoma, City, OK  
 January 11-18 ..... PA Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg  
 January 13..... PA FFA Mid-Winter Convention, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 4:00 PM  
 January 16..... FFA Foundation Mtg., Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg  
 January 24-25 ..... Food Science & Technology Workshop, Conrad Weiser HS, 6:00 PM  
 Jan. 31 - Feb. 1 ... Food Science & Technology Workshop, Derry Area HS, 6:00 PM

**TEACHER DEADLINES.....**

- October 16 ..... Farm Show Landscape display entries & sketches due to CTSO  
 October 30 ..... Farm Show Market Swine feed & ear tag number sent to Farm Show Office  
 ..... Rate of Gain entries due to Farm Show Office  
 November 1 ..... Farm Show Window Exhibit due to CTSO office  
 ..... School Demonstrations due to CTSO Office  
 ..... Keystone FFA Degree applications due to regional coordinators (Project books  
 required)  
 ..... Farm Show Scholarship Applications due  
 November 5 ..... Farm Show Dairy, Poultry & Breeding Animals Entries due to Farm Show Office  
 November 15 ..... FFA Dues due to Penny Brammer (All rosters and accompanying dues must be  
 submitted to be eligible to receive the Keystone Degree or to participate in Farm  
 Show  
 ..... PYFA Award Applications due to Denise Sanner, Kutztown  
 November 20 ..... Regional Coordinator Deadlines for Keystone Star Applications due to CTSO  
 December 2..... Program of Work & Budget for National Chapter Award Program due to CTSO  
 ..... Farm Show Preregistration for Vocational Horticulture Exhibits due to C. Weller

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