

AGGIE ANNEX

OCTOBER 2010

CENTRAL REGION NEWS

BY JESSALEE GOEHRING

The Central Region is ready for another busy and rewarding year. Regardless of any bumps in the road we may face, our teachers remain dedicated to the success of our agriculture education students! We wish you all a successful school year!

Yolo Section:

Pioneer High School in Woodland would like to welcome two new additions to their rapidly growing program. With over 1,000 students in the program this school year, the ag department houses approximately 60 percent of the student body! *Scott Stephens, Holly Whitworth, Jenni Pareas, and Mary Park* would like to welcome *Luke Van Laningham* and *Erin Sweet* (formerly McGowan) into the Pioneer family! They would also like to welcome their UC Davis student teacher, *Javier Gutierrez*.

Delta-Cal Section:

Tokay High School would like to welcome *Rebecca Freeman*. She is heading the ag department at Tokay and is excited for her new venture! Congratulations.

Lodi High School would like to congratulate *Brent Newport* on his Teacher of Excellence Award he received this past summer at CATA Conference.

The school farm and new shop for *Manteca Unified School District* is almost in place. They are hoping to move in during December. On another note, Manteca schools will surely miss *Tom Perez*. Tom was liked by all here and they want to express their heart felt sorrow to Tom's family and the ag community.

Linden High School has a few changes this year to their ag department. This past summer, *Heather Borgia* married Daryl Dyk in July. Congratulations Honeymooners! *Dean Archer* is also engaged and will be getting married this October. They would also like to welcome the new ag mechanics teacher *Mark Powell* from Cal Poly and their fall student teacher from Cal Poly, *Ashley Rupp*.

Marlene Hepner of *Merrill West High School* would like to invite all of you to the *San Joaquin County Friends of the Fair Dinner Dance* that is scheduled for *March 26, 2011*. There will be great food, silent auction, and a dance with a DJ. Dinner tickets will go on sale in January, so please save the date. The Friends of the Fair is a great group of local supporters. This group works hard to cover award costs and collect donations. All proceeds go to provide the students with buckles, embroidered chairs, and additional class awards. We hope to see you there! If you are interested contact any Delta-Cal officer or teacher.

Stanislaus Section:

Mark Nower of *Grace Davis High School* and *Natalie Stevano* have moved to the newest school in Modesto, *Gregori High School*. Things are very busy for them, from starting a new FFA chapter to opening a new department. We wish you all good luck!

Grace Davis High School would like to welcome *Tammy Burris* and *Patrick Frazier* as the new agriculture teachers. Congratulations!

Merced/Mariposa Section:

Gustine High School would like to congratulate *Kelly Sanches*! He and his wife welcomed their first baby, Kai Bella this June.

Congratulations are in order to *Danny Silva* of *Le Grand High School*. He will be flying to London to be one of six presenters at the Google Teacher Academy. After being selected to the Academy, he also became a Google Certified Teacher. This program emphasizes the use of technology in the K-12 classroom. Great job Danny!

The *Merced College Agriculture Division* wishes you greetings and a great start to a new year. *Bryan Tassej*, the Landscape Horticulture instructor, and his wife *Erin*, are proud parents to *Jenna Rose Tassej* who joined the Division on June 17th. *Darol* and his wife took a 3,800 mile motorcycle trip to Yellowstone, Mt. Rushmore, and more. They were able to see the beautiful country from the saddle. *Jaime Farao* took a trip to Massachusetts to see some relatives who were visiting from the old country, the Azores. According to *Jaime*, it was a great time as they all sat around speaking Portuguese and drinking homemade wine. *Karen Wallace*, the division secretary worked with her 4-H group putting in an award winning garden at the Merced County Fair (the Ag Division thinks she should have been an ag teacher)!! Merced College is ready for the new year, planning events and looking forward to working with all of you and your students!

The *Central Region* and *Denair High School* would like to recognize a man

CENTRAL REGION (CON'T)

who has truly made an impact in agriculture education. *Thomas (Tom) Alfred Perez*, age 56, passed away on August 13, 2010, in San Francisco, CA, surrounded by his loving family. Tom was born in Clovis, CA, on December 15, 1953.

He grew up on his grandfather Cipriano's ranch in Clovis, where he gained a lifelong love of agriculture and livestock. He studied at Reedley College and at the California State University at Fresno, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture education.

For more than thirty years, Tom served his community as a dedicated and

highly regarded high school agriculture teacher. He educated, supported, and inspired students at Coalinga, Modesto, Patterson, Manteca, and Denair High Schools, and at the Clatsop Area Vocational Center in Astoria, Oregon. He was an instrumental leader in the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and, in 2005, was awarded an Honorary American FFA Degree by the National FFA Organization.

Tom loved to garden, read books, listen to music, spend time with his family,



and play with his dogs, Porter and Stella. Tom is survived by his wife, Sharon (Pankratz) Perez, and his two daughters, Melissa and Erin. Tom and Sharon married in 1974 and enjoyed more than 36 years of loving marriage and parenthood together. Tom was a great man who truly enjoyed his work, life, and family. His relatives, students, colleagues, and friends will all miss him very much.

Donations can be made in Tom's name to: Denair Education Foundation, P.O. Box 213, Denair, CA 95316.

He will be greatly missed!

CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

Our very own *Merlin Welch* was honored as the Contractor of the Year at the Land Improvement Contractors of America's (LICA) annual winter meeting in Phoenix, Arizona.

Merlin was recognized for his leadership role in the national association as well as his role in educating students to fill employment needs of the industry.

The West Hills College instructor heads the heavy equipment program at the college where he has worked for more than 25 years educating students from all over the country. Under his instruction, the students learn the latest techniques in equipment operation; surveying and use of GPS equipment; maintenance and repair; and information on the history and future of the

construction industry.

Working with LICA in various leadership roles and area industry leaders, Welch assists student in helping them find industry jobs. With his connection to the industry he also insures that students are receiving the most current training possible.

Congratulations Merlin - great job!

SHASTA COLLEGE UPDATE "THE BRAND"



What a positive note to start the year on...a new Dean, Eva Jimenez from the Business Career Technical Education side of campus. She brings enthusiasm and a desire to learn about the "Ag" world. So far she has participated in A.I. of sows, farrowing, and preg checking cows.

Their new full time farm manager is familiar to many of you, BJ Macfarlane. His wealth of experience and his connections to the industry are vital pieces in their refocus efforts.

Also the administration made the commitment to hire Trena Kimler-Richards in the Agriculture Science position as a one year full time temporary. This is certainly a start in the right direction.

As you get your *GOLDEN SLATE* this fall they will have just finished their first fund raising event, The Harvest Fest "Bids, Bites, and Brews." Their goal is to establish a foundation account in which they can fund more student opportunities.

Also new this fall is their Ag Business and Sustainable Ag Science degrees are in full implementation.

The Ag Leadership team will be out recruiting this fall and the "newly" formed livestock judging team will be hitting the road to several contests. We appreciate the quality students that many of you are sending our way.

The momentum has started....get on board!

SOUTHERN REGION NEWS

BY DESIREE TRAPP

Summer has come to an end and the school year begins. It is that time again where the teachers of the Southern Region are getting the facilities back into shape, preparing for FFA activities, fairs, conferences, and more. The calendars are lit up with dates to attend and events to accomplish. Southern Region is well on their way to a fun-filled year!

Since the conclusion of last school year, the Southern Region has had to say "Happy Retirement" to many great teachers, mentors, and friends. Leaving Elsinore High after 13 years is *Debbi Clark*. From Hemet High after 15 years of ag education is *Jody Baker*. Jurupa Valley High has said farewell to *Jeff Rhiner* who taught agriculture for 32 years. And we have *Dave Pritchard* retiring from Southwest High with 33 years of teaching under his belt. We are sorry to see you leave but very happy that you now will have time for enjoying your family, friends, and start a new life path of even more excitement.

Budget cuts won't keep the Southern Region down! A lot of programs are in fear across the state but Southern Region is not afraid, we have been able to add to five of our programs this year.

With the old leaving our sides the new start coming in, this year we have *Sam Urie* at Southwest High, *Megan Sebesta* at Elsinore High, *Linda Cardenas* at Coachella Valley High, and *Angie Seaman* at Covina High starting their first year in ag education. We wish you the best of luck and lots of fun for the new year.

Returning into the profession are *Kelsey Finneum-Helferich* at Rubidoux, *Richard Montgomery* at Bloomington, *Brian Kantner* at Jurupa Valley, *John Ventuleth* at West Valley – Hemet, and *Phil Bentz* at Westminster. Welcome home!

Love was in the air over the summer. Congratulations go out to the former *Jessica Weisbart* who shall be known

as Mrs. Jessica Fernandes. Working together is hard to do, however the newly wedded couple of *Ralph Mosqueda* and *Sara Diefenbach* will rock Hemet High this coming year. Congrats to Mr. and Mrs. Mosqueda!

Southern Region has been making sure that our teachers stay in the spot light. It is my honor to report that *Jody Baker* will be walking across the stage at National Convention to receive the Honorary American Degree. Along with Jody, we are proud to say that *Abdul Mohamed* is in the CATA Hall of Fame, and *Kim Miller* received the Teacher of Excellence and the Don Wilson Memorial – Outstanding Teacher awards this year. We in the Southern Region are honored to be a part of this great family! Congratulations to all!

The *High Desert Section* is ready for a new year. They have been blessed with their family growing by one with *Rochelle Miser* having a baby girl this past June. Her name is Madison and she weighed 6 pounds 15 ounces at 19 ½ inches long. *Bloomington High* is creating a new beginning. The officer team met over the summer and has made plans for construction of a new facility. With the addition of Richard Montgomery to the team, they have numerous great ideas for the upcoming year. *Palmdale FFA* is busy with fair and community service. They are so proud of their students' participation in their community. On August 3rd, students worked tirelessly at the Painted Turtle Ranch with other local youth to prepare the camp for another great summer session. Great job young people! Their theme for his year is "Living the Moment" and they intend to do just that.

Under the guidance of longtime advisor *Al Irwin* and three time president David Jaime, the *Winterhaven FFA Chapter* has experienced some of its most successful years. A handful of their

chapter's members spent the 2009-2010 school year hard at work fundraising with plans to attend the 2010 National FFA Convention. By the end of the school year their members had reached their goal. Six Winterhaven FFA Chapter members, one advisor, and one chaperone will travel to Indianapolis, Indiana in October with their entire trip paid for; including travel, lodging, and meals. Winterhaven started the year with their annual Welcome Freshman and Parents pool party and Greenhand Conference in the state of Arizona. Being located right on the California and Arizona state line, their chapter has the unique ability to take part in some of Arizona FFA's events. *Holtville FFA* is already off to a great start. The officer team worked really hard in planning the year at the officer retreat in Julian which was a great success. The 2010-2011 officer team is extremely motivated and kicked the year off with an ag awareness day and farm bash. They have eight of their best students attending the National FFA Convention and Washington DC trip. The students worked all summer fundraising for the trip and are very excited about representing the Holtville FFA back east!!

Orange Section has great news from the area. After saying goodbye in June to a graduating Agriscience Academy class of 48 four year members, the biggest single class to date, the *Mission Viejo FFA* members enjoyed another great Orange County Fair. Junior Breeding week was especially fun as the chapter brought home both the Reserve Supreme and the Supreme champion breeding ewe. And there is no rest for the weary as a large part of their club ewe flock delivered 23 lambs which will be headed to 2011 mid-winter and early spring fairs across California and Arizona. *Don Lugo Chapter* had a great officer retreat and set goals for the coming year. They had lots of very positive

SOUTHERN REGION (CON'T)

press this past year with community volunteers making a HUGE difference for their students. The new orchard is growing very well, while the irrigation timer for the greenhouse is also operating very well. Chino Fair was exciting with more than 50 student entries.

Buena Park has added *Mary Kerr* to the team full time as their second ag teacher. They had an awesome Orange County Fair with multiple champions, showmanship winners, and an advanced master showmanship winner! Their officers have many new plans and are excited about hosting the Buena Park Opening and Closing Invitational on Monday, October 25th at 4:30pm, and their first ever turkey raffle!!

The *Riverside Section* is preparing for the SoCal Fair with lots of animals, plants, ag mechanics, landscapes, and more. *Perris High School* is starting the year off with an "oink"! They have increased their swine projects from six to 25 for the SoCal Fair in October. They are also in the process of getting a brand new barn. Perris High School District just had their floral class UC approved which should help out tremendously. They are also running, for the first time, a Horticulture course as well as an Arboriculture course which are both articulated with the local community college. They currently have 17 sections and are going strong!

The *San Diego Section* has completed another successful San Diego County Fair. Chapters were represented during the entire 21 day run of the event. Areas exhibited included open divisions in rabbits, cavies, chickens, dairy cattle, and breeding beef cattle, landscaping, and all aspects of market week. The FFA students were awarded many ribbons and champions over the course of the fair. Chapters in north county were also able to exhibit at the Ramona Junior Fair the first part of

August. The FFA exhibitors had a great fair. We are looking forward to a successful and exciting school year.

Southern Region is ready for a great year with exciting events to come. New

teachers, returning teachers, growing families, new students, and new tasks to complete for this year and everyone is ready for the new adventure. Have a great year to all!

IT'S PRETTY CORNY AT LE GRAND!

BY MONICA BINCHI

Ag Biology and Horticulture students at *Le Grand High School* begin their year with a popcorn and pinto bean seed trail. Students address the basic biology standards of life processes and living cells. Every student is given a Petri dish, a paper towel and 10 popcorn and bean seeds to germinate. In the first week of school students conduct a seed germination trial to compare the four varieties of corn used. Red, white, blue, and yellow corn coronals are grown. Commercial popcorn is purchased at the store and must be tested by the teacher to insure that the corn has not been irradiated or biochemically modified to be sterile.

During the second week of school the best six kernels of corn are planted in a six pack container and used for a growth trial. Bi-weekly, every student documents their plant changes in their science journal. During week two, students learn about the parts of the seed and plant as they compare a monocot to a dicot. By week three the corn and beans are ready to be planted outside in a raised bed garden. Every variety is kept in a separate bed. The students continue to report their plant growth in their science journal.

Four colors of popcorn are used so that cross breeding may occur in late October. Popcorn is usually a warm season crop but it can produce going into winter if it has some help with pollination. Students use paint brushes to mix and match their favorite colors. Our seasons seem to be mild enough so this activity has worked for the past three years and unless we have a severe cold snap it will be successful. Our raised beds are situated at the southwest end of the campus and they have

some protection by the ag shop and greenhouse from prevailing easterly winds.

In the fall the students learn the history of popcorn and about the main varieties of corn. Students are exposed to genetic changes and the bioengineering of corn that has occurred over the last 20 years. Every student is required to do a scientific report at the end of the first semester. Using the data collected over the first four months they report on their germination rates, growth and fertilizer use. Every person counts the number of ears on their plant and then they predict the color variations possible.

This would be a wonderful project for the spring but it doesn't work into my lesson planning. By beginning the year with a simple germination and growth trial I am able to get my students engaged and they are able to learn to measure with metrics using millimeters with seedlings and then advancing to centimeters and then meters when the corn is growing in the outdoor beds. Students get to prepare their own fertilizer mixtures so they learn to use a balance and how to measure with milligrams. In every class there are dozens of different trials being conducted so no two are exactly alike.

As corny as it may seem, our mainstay crop began as a simple ear in a tropical area of the Americas and then was bred for centuries by Native Americans into the 100's of varieties we now enjoy. From a mainstay to a bio-fuel, cross breeding has made corn a leading commodity that Americans can't live without. Corn is an ingredient in almost every processed item that we eat so it is well worth learning and teaching about.