



Golden Slate

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Sacramento Scene

State Budget Crisis Enters Uncharted Territory

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

For the past several years, we've watched as our elected officials have fumbled, mumbled, stumbled in dealing with a very real, ongoing budget and spending crisis in California. Unable (or unwilling) to effectively forge solutions that would address the issues at hand, we've seen them rely on an interesting set of non-solutions and gimmicks that, in essence, "kicked the can down the road" — hoping that the problem would either disappear or somehow miraculously solve itself. Given their inability to come to grips with the reality of the situation, it should not be a surprise to learn that, once again, we've caught up with the can...

The difference this time though, is that the budget agreement churned out of the last legislative "sausage machine" contains a provision that requires mandatory cuts to a variety of programs in California if the revenue projections in the current-year budget fall below expected levels, including significant cuts to an already-impacted K-12 educational system.

As this edition of the GOLDEN SLATE goes to press, we are anxiously waiting to see how far out of whack this year's budget is expected to be, and what level of cuts will be "triggered" as a result of those shortfalls. Given the current economic situation, it is widely assumed that the "trigger" mechanism

will be implemented in some fashion — we just don't know the details yet.

Limited Choices

For many schools, the potential impact of these budget cuts has already been negotiated, and will most certainly result in a shortening of the numbers of days within the current school year calendar. Districts that have not yet reached those agreements are fairly limited in their choices, since the budget agreement also contained language that prohibits school employees from being laid off as a result of these mid-year cuts.

Given the limited choices at hand, we would expect almost all districts to follow the

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Officers' Corner

I'm a Failure... Plain and Simple

By Darol Fishman, CATA Past President

Once in a while I look back on my career and achievements/goals met/accomplishments, and I am without a doubt a failure. A colleague and I were discussing differences in teaching strategies for my Small Engines class. At one point, I was reminded of four State Championship silver bowls residing in an Ag office here in Merced. Of course, none of them belonged to any of my teams as no team of mine has ever won an FFA state championship.

I was also reminded of a string of seven second-place finishes in eight years...the one year was third by a single point. Bill King and his teams were responsible for five of them...three of them in a row from 1994-1996, and your current State CATA President Jake

Dunn was on one of those Petaluma teams. I am also the only Ag Mechanics coach to ever have a student disqualified from a State Finals contest... and they lost by 16 points.

The last team I coached as a

high school Ag teacher ended up second with the third, fourth and 10th High Individuals in the state. The next year they were State Champions under a new teacher/coach.

Other Failures

So let's take a look at the rest

of my career and the other failures I've had. Never once did I have a National Proficiency winner. There were two boys who qualified as National Finalists and ended up as runners up but not a winner in the
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Sacramento Scene

State Budget Crisis Enters Uncharted Territory

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"shorter year" path in dealing with these impending cuts.

Competing Proposals

As we look toward the future, there are lots of competing proposals and plans being formulated out there to deal with this "crisis," mostly centered on some form of tax increase to raise additional revenue. What remains uncertain is whether California's voters will be willing to buy into any of these "solutions," absent some fundamental change in the behavior and performance of our elected officials. Given the latest approval ratings, that may prove to be an insurmountable challenge.

So, where to from here? We really are in uncharted territory when it comes to predicting what might happen over the next several months.

We are starting to see some slight increases in economic growth, and some positive news on that front might go a long way in building voter confidence that the worst is behind us.

Conversely, if the economic picture tends to deteriorate over the next several months, expect more pressure to do more with less, given the dark mood of disgruntled voters.

For the remainder of this fiscal year, it's not a pretty picture.

Rumors

Beyond the immediate budget challenges for this year, we are also anxious to see what kind of budgetary plan the Governor's Office releases in mid-January. We're hearing lots of rumors about additional cuts to existing programs, but no one will really know until the Governor's 2012-13 budget is released. That event starts the annual "dance of the budget" process within the Legislature, so stay tuned — the drama will surely continue.

Outstanding Media Coverage

On a happier note, enrollments continue to grow statewide, and we've had some outstanding media and press coverage about the renewed interest in agriculture as a viable career option for young people. We like seeing those stories and articles, so don't be shy about sharing them with us — it's always nice to have copies of those available as I visit legislative offices in the Capitol.

If you have had any local feature articles published about your program or students, send them my way!

National Attitude Change

We are also encouraged by

the change in attitude at the national level toward reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act, which is tremendously important to Ag Education in California. We are now hearing that Perkins will be included as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which is certainly an improvement over earlier reports that Perkins funding might be completely eliminated.

We hope that this change in attitude is being prompted by a realization that Career Technical Education is extremely important to the health and growth of our economy, and that these programs do play an essential role in preparing students for their future. Whatever the motivation, we are encouraged by these latest developments.

Focus on Doing Best Job

I may sound like a broken record, but I hope that all of you continue to focus on doing the very best job you can with your students. It's pretty easy to get down about the immediate challenges we face, but you need to know that an increasing number of people are watching the tremendous impact you have on students' lives. We need to continue to

focus on meeting the needs of our kids, and helping them make positive choices about their future.

Despite all of the challenges, Ag Education remains a positive force in education because we do make a positive difference in the lives of young people, and we do it in a way that is unique and highly effective. Keep up the good work, sell those Ag License plates, and ramp up for this spring's competitive adventures! ❁

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Officers' Corner

Don't Forget to Read the Directions!

By Jake Dunn, CATA President

As we approached the holidays, many of us played the part of Santa and his elves assembling toys and other treasures for our loved ones. As someone who prides himself as being pretty handy, I usually dive into such activities with zeal and confidence, only to have a boxful of extra screws and nuts, which always begs the question from my wife, "Did you read the directions?"

Of course my pride gets in the way of this quite often and I have to go back and use those helpful little handouts that come in hundreds of languages it seems nowadays.

'Read the Directions'

Of course I know better, and I preach constantly in my classes to make sure to read the directions.

I have even taken this to the point of my annual direction

quiz that has the answers for all of the questions in the directions, just to see how many of my students actually read them.

I find myself in my shop classes beating my head against the wall as students try to rely on me for simple information that they should be gleaning from their project plans. So I utter the same

phrase to them: "Did you read the directions?"

Motivation

Recently I have noticed that I have slipped up and fallen in a fall rut, being lazy and not doing everything I would like to do in my shop, classroom and program.

Looking for a way to get myself motivated again, I looked for some direction. I

did not have to look far because I have them hanging on my wall next to my desk — The Agriculture Teacher's Creed.

If you haven't read it lately, take a look at it again; if you have, good for you.

It is full of great ideals that we should live up to.

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I'm a Failure... Plain and Simple

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bunch. One was in Ag Mechanics and one was in Ag Electrification... both pretty tough for a California kid to get into as the rest of the nation doesn't understand how we do it out here.

Twelve years of hauling stuff to Cal Expo... big stuff, stuff that had to be hauled in pieces... and one Golden Bear in the whole bunch. Then there was the year at State Fair my students filled every class with outstanding local fair winning projects and not a single class winner in the whole group. Hours and hours of tedious time spent getting ready and NOTHING... except the Chapter Group ribbon. It was almost as though the judge looked at everything and felt sorry for us so "Let's give them the Chapter Group."

There was one high point in the whole thing and that was the State Star in Agribusiness in 1997, but no one remembers that... but they remember the second-place finishes.

All that being said, when based on blue ribbons and silver bowls, I am an outright failure in my career. I didn't even serve a full term as a State CATA officer as there were two slots to fill that year and Jake

drew the full-term straw... I couldn't even get that right! Pretty pathetic when one looks at how many "Presto Log" plaques were never taken home by students I apparently didn't prepare thoroughly enough. I'm sure if I sit down and look real hard, I'll find more, but it's time to move on into the present and look at things in a whole new perspective.

Reconnecting

Facebook is a wonderful tool and I at times can be a Facebook junkie even at the spry age of 53. I tell students I Facebook and they seem taken back that an old fart like me would even know how to turn on a computer.

Where is this article going, you might ask? I have reconnected with many students from years gone by and it's amazing what they are doing after all these years.

There's the student from Exeter... 26 years ago... who now owns his own welding shop in Missouri. Most had Russell Fratti pegged as incorrigible.

And of course there are the three youngsters who went on to become Ag Mechanics teachers themselves... Emmett Schultz, Larry Dinis and Tim

Deniz. Two of that bunch went on to coach *National Champion* Ag Mechanics teams. Good thing they weren't on my Ag Mech teams... they did Small Gas Engines and they were on fourth-place teams, but who's counting. Tim is building a very renowned Welding and Fabrication program at Madera with some beautiful pieces going out on display.

I have another student who is a very successful extreme sports photographer, one who is a computer technician at a community college, and another who is a document reviewer with an English degree. However different, they all comment on how the skills I taught them have saved them money on their own homes and hobbies, and sometimes earn a little side fund.

Students from Exeter, Le Grand and Chowchilla are still playing with bee hives, holding down full-time work, farming and raising families. Oh, the State Star in Agribusiness, National Ag Mechanics Proficiency Finalist and second-place team member...he's farming full-time and running a land-leveling business with his father. There are more stories, but there are only so many

pages in the *GOLDEN SLATE*.

Teacher as Game Changer

We concentrate a lot on what makes a successful teacher and although the ribbons and silver cereal bowls are nice, they should not be the driving force of our career. We are game changers! Life makers! Career builders! The Agriculture curriculum is so diverse with all interest areas available, there is something for everyone. Of course I am especially fond of Ag Mechanics/Mechanized Ag! I may not be coaching second-place Ag Mechanics teams any more, but I am still making a difference in students' lives. If that's what it means to be a failure, then I want to continue to fail for the remainder of my career. Young teachers have a hard time looking at their career this way as there isn't that long line of "touched" students, but they will come. Build your classroom foundation, as that will affect more students than your judging or show teams. Look at what you are doing and how you are viewed by your past students and you'll understand! What a great career I have chosen, even though I am a dismal failure. Plus, I get to write articles for the *GOLDEN SLATE!* **DAMN I LOVE MY JOB!** ☼

Officers' Corner

Don't Wait for the Cows to Come Home!

By Cindy Rohde, CATA Secretary

When I was a kid, the party line out to my family's farm in Eastern Washington doubled as the top wire of the fences. I can remember more than once, my Grandma standing on the porch calling to my Grandpa, "Danny, the phone's gone dead; go fetch the cows home!"

It's a funny thing about cows, they get notional, and if you sit around and wait for them, they might never come home.

Life can be like cows sometimes. If you wait for the time to be right, it might never happen, like getting married, or having kids, or **running for State CATA Office!**

Stepping Up

June may seem far away, but time is flying by and now is the time to start thinking about stepping up and throwing your hat in the ring as a candidate.

You don't need to be a super star or have all the answers (look at me!). You just have to love your profession, have a

desire to serve those who share it, and have the determination to do what it takes to keep our profession and association the best that they can be.

Wonderful Experience

My first two years in office have been a wonderful experience. As I have traveled to different regions, I have met so

many wonderful people and everyone has been so gracious and welcoming.

I have also had the pleasure of seeing in action and working with some outstanding and admirable individuals, including my fellow officers and Jim and Kerry. They inspire and challenge me to learn and grow and to work hard to be the best that I can be. I have gotten as much as I have given and I'm sure everyone who has held office would say the same thing.

Share Your Talents

We are blessed in our strong professional family, but it takes dedicated folks like you stepping up to share your talents to keep it that way. So come on, the time is right. Make those cows happy and give them a reason to come home!

Don't Forget to Read the Directions!

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First of all, we are teachers by choice, not by chance! We shall strive to show our students how to be an American, Agriculturist and human by our DEEDS.

Finally, from my reread of the creed, I would add the sentiment of the last statement that says we will "Impart some-

thing from my life that will help make for each of my students a full and happy future."

Challenge Accepted

All of these are challenges to make us better teachers and people the way I read it. As an agriculture teacher, you have accepted the challenge, and hopefully you remember why you do what you do.

For my fellow CATA leaders, remember that you have a set of directions for your jobs too, but you have to read them to set them in action. Please browse the pages of the leadership binder! I look forward to seeing all of you around the state at our field days this spring and I hope that you have a Happy New Year! ☼



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Officers' Corner

Ingredients for Success

By Steve DeRose, CATA President-Elect

Recently I had the good fortune of greeting those teachers attending the New Professionals Conference. I had planned to share a few ideas with them, but those expanded a little after I arrived and saw their focus for session one, "Get Excited." That got me even more excited and pumped up as I started to reflect back on my own experiences. As they entered the room, I certainly felt their excitement and saw it on their faces as many resembled that of a fox who just figured out a way to get into the hen house. Good for them!

'Get Excited' Theme

When heading back home, I thought, why not share my comments with everyone? In my opinion, they are basic practices needed by all teachers no matter what your experience level. As an agriculture educator, I believe them to be vital for the continued success of Agricultural Education. So, here they are as food for thought: To take the "get excited" theme of their conference back and use it at the start of each day in the classroom. Excitement breeds motivation and motivation is at the foundation of all success. Things just don't happen; you make them happen, which stems from first and foremost, your motivation. It's not only the ignition that gets us started, but the force behind us that gives us the drive and will to do what it takes to see things through to completion.

Challenges

I then proceeded with four challenges:

- ✓ **To be committed!** Remember that you became a teacher "BY CHOICE" and to continue to be committed is also a choice. Your students will sense and feel your commitment and it will be reflected in their performance.
- ✓ **Truly believe that "all students can learn,"** and give them all equal opportunities. Don't decide which students you're going to work with simply by looking at their cumulative file. Our students are not all the same. They come to us from different social and economic backgrounds, learning skills, ESL's, and the list goes on. Because of these differences — don't become a cookie

cutter teacher. Reach out and make a difference to all students. Many are in need of your encouragement and support, not just the few.

- ✓ **Be a professional!** Look the part and act the part. Dress appropriately and know time and place. Impressions are made each day and remember what you're asking of your students. You need to be the role model.
- ✓ **Be active in our organization.** The fact is that you're here today because of the CATA. You are the faces and the future of Agricultural Education. What will it look like 10, 20 and 30 years from now? That will depend on you and your leadership.

Homework

I closed with a homework assignment. I told them of a song I listen to occasionally... as the need arises: "We are the Champions." I asked them to call it up on the web, read the lyrics and think about what's being said. I'm sure most of you can relate to parts, if not all of the song.

It's not any different for our students as most are challenged everyday. If given the choice, they would all choose to be a champion, but not all believe enough in themselves to get there. That's where we come in as teachers and advisors. Be a champion; your students are depending on it and the impact you make on them

will last a lifetime.

So there you have the nuts and bolts of it. Get excited, be committed, and believe that all students can learn, be professional, and be active in our organization — basic ingredients that shouldn't be overlooked.

I was impressed with this young group of teachers as I am with what I've been seeing from agriculture teachers and programs from around the state. Keep up the good work and together we can have that positive influence, second to none, that will help shape and keep tomorrow's California agriculture No. 1.

Enjoy your journey and have a productive, Happy New Year. ☼

Teacher Educator News

Giving Thanks

By Ann De Lay, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

This time of year always presents opportunities for reflection and gratitude. As an agricultural education family, we have so much for which to be thankful. As a department, we feel blessed to have enjoyed yet another incredible year.

The department currently has the highest enrollment it has ever enjoyed — 256 students! Additionally, we welcomed 74 new students, including first-time freshmen and transfers, which is the largest incoming group in our history.

The students have integrated quickly through their desire and willingness to participate in the various activities and events sponsored by the department and college. It is exciting to work with students who are passionate about agriculture and agricultural education.

New Major

This past spring, the department's proposal to offer a major in Agricultural Communications was approved! This newest major is the only one offered in the state of California! A big thank you is extended to everyone who shared their expertise and support to see this effort to its successful end.

The new major is currently open to current and incoming students. Please share this newest academic option with all of your students. We fully

expect the student numbers in this major to grow quickly.

Honors

The Agricultural Education and Communication Department was again honored by the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences end-of-the-year banquet. The CFFA received the Large Club of the Year award and the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) was runner up for Small Club of the Year.

Katie Titus received the pres-
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Teacher Educator News

Giving Thanks

(Continued from page 5)

tigious Soares Award, and Kelsey Rugani, Cassidy Nicholls and Jiana Escobar won Outstanding Senior awards. Richard Gearhart received the Outstanding Advisor award and Dr. Robert Flores received the Outstanding Professor award.

Agriculture Science students Katie Titus and Kaitlin Harr were elected to serve Cal Poly ASI through leadership positions in student government for the 2011–2012 academic year. Katie is serving as the chair of the Board and Kaitlin Harr is serving as vice chair of the Board. Their roles are to oversee corporate operations and how student fees are spent. We are extremely proud of the leadership these ladies are providing the university.

National Activities

Cal Poly continues to maintain a strong presence on a national level. Leslie Friend, Lauren Moss, Tatiana Prestininzi and Keyv Souza were selected as National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassadors.

They are spending the year speaking about a variety of agricultural topics at high schools, community colleges, universities and community organizations across the country. These ladies are ready to present in your classrooms.

If you are interested in hosting them, contact Marty Tatman at the National FFA to schedule a visit: mtatman@ffa.org.

Transitions

After serving a year in the department preparing documentation and evidence for our recent accreditation reviews, Dr. Glen Casey ended his participation in the Faculty Early Retirement Program and fully retired from Cal Poly.

Richard Gearhart also left the department, accepting a position as an associate professor in the Journalism Department. Gearhart will, however, con-



tinue to teach the Introduction to Agricultural Communications course.

We thank them both for their incredible service to the department and their commitment to students.

We are pleased to welcome Megan Silcott to the department. A Cal Poly graduate, Megan earned her degree in Agricultural Science in 2009. Megan interned with CoreClean Group, LLC and was hired full time after graduation.

As a member of Core's marketing team, Megan helped guide a company name change, customer outreach, trademarks and marketing efforts, as well as conference and expo preparations. She was the connection for the national sales team to its graphics artist and helped develop regional marketing concepts.

At Cal Poly, Megan currently serves as the Brock Center for Agricultural Communications director and assists the Western Bonanza Junior Livestock Show program. Her duties in the department include working with students who develop the *Ag Circle* magazine, advising course work, overseeing several senior projects, as well as managing the agricultural communication minor students. Megan also serves as a director at-large for the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bu-

reau. Within Farm Bureau, Megan and her husband, Dean, are involved with the Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

After 36 years with Cal Poly, Dan Lassanske entered retirement this year. Although housed in the Horticulture and Crop Science Department, Dan recognized the importance of agricultural education by sharing his expertise with teachers and students statewide. It has been said, Dan's impact on agricultural education has been more far-reaching than any other's due to his association with the department's masters program.

We wish Dan the best in his retirement. A retirement celebration will be held on June 16, 2012, so Agricultural Education can honor his contributions. Save the date!

Student Teachers

There are currently 14 student teachers completing their student teaching experiences across the state. Thank you to the following high schools for their assistance with student teaching placements: Bakersfield, Bakersfield-Foothill, Buhach Colony, Carpinteria, East Nicholas, Exeter, Hilmar, Hughson, Imperial, Le Grand, Lemoore, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria. We expect to place 15 for spring 2012.

Masters Program

The masters program con-

tinues to be a popular option for agricultural teachers due to its accessibility and practicality. Courses for the upcoming year will be available by mid-spring on the department website: <http://aged.calpoly.edu>.

Candidates interested in applying for the Masters of Agricultural Education (MAE) may do so any quarter except summer at <http://csumentor.com/>.

Meat Processing Center

Improvements continue on the campus as well. The state-of-the-art Meat Processing Center hosted its grand opening celebration and public tours on October 22, 2011. The meat industry provided the majority of the funding for this facility.

The facility will educate young professionals for the food industry, afford opportunities for research on safety issues and provide a site to communicate with consumers. The meat processing industry will also be able to work with Cal Poly in this "one-stop shop" for product innovation and packaging development.

Building Project

Area 52, the College of Science and Mathematics building project, showed major strides in progress over the summer. The steel structure of the building is up, providing form to the project's vision. The six-story building is due to be completed by spring of 2013 and will house classroom, laboratory, office and research space for science and mathematics coursework.

To follow the progress, visit: http://cosam.calpoly.edu/center_sci_math.html.

While funding and resources continue to be limited, it is wonderful to be part of such a talented, giving professional family. Thank you for the opportunity to learn and work with each of you. We wish you much success in the New Year.



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News and Views

Stay Connected with FFA Alumni

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

Do you provide opportunities for alumni of your program to become involved? I do not mean as a member of a booster club to raise money. Agricultural teachers are busy people. Do you look for opportunities to involve your program's alumni to lighten your work load? Surely you have graduates of your program who can assist with training members for career development events. Many of us have past students who have a greater understanding of how to select and feed livestock for competition at fairs and shows. Do you take advantage of those willing to help?

Other States

FFA alumni have not been used in California to the extent they are involved in many other states. Across the country many agricultural teachers rely on FFA alumni members to help get

more support from the community for their agricultural programs and to give more time and freedom to do what they do best — teach kids!

(Continued on page 12)

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Teacher Educator News

Teacher Education Programs Under Scrutiny and Will Be Ranked by U.S. News & World Report

By Lynn Martindale, Teacher Educator, University of California, Davis

All levels of education are under scrutiny to improve the level of student learning. Teachers are evaluated by how well the students in their class do on the standardized tests in the classroom, principals by the school's Academic Performance Index (API) and or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and superintendents by how well their district Report Cards appear to their communities, yet teacher education programs have evaded evaluation of their product "new teachers."

Almost 15 years ago, Schalock (1998) believed that teacher education programs should also demonstrate the "issue of accountability" though data collected on the graduates of their programs. "Research about student teachers over the last 40 years has found that 1) the combination of teacher and curriculum quality explains most of the school's contribution to achievement, and 2) access to a rich curriculum is a more powerful determinant of achievement than initial achievement levels" (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Research following preservice teachers during their student teaching and into their first year of teaching has been

difficult to find. This research is becoming more important as teacher education programs are being evaluated for their effectiveness of producing teachers that are effective in the classrooms to engage students and to increase the test scores for all students.

There are several areas that make effectiveness of student teaching difficult to study. First and foremost is that teacher education programs are unique in the delivery of service. California is the only state that has a fifth-year program; all other states have teacher education programs completed prior to graduating from college. So when students earn their col-

lege diploma, they also receive their credentials to teach.

The requirements are the same for all students to obtain a California Teaching Credential; the differences are in the teacher education program in respect to entrance requirements, when courses are taken, requirements of the courses, length of student teaching, selection of cooperating teacher, university supervisors' experience and expertise, and the overall experience of fifth year.

Whether teacher credential programs choose to give the information to the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) or the NCTQ obtains information by the Freedom of

Information Act, the NCTQ will obtain the information about the programs and rank them for *U.S. News & World Report*. The School of Education at the University of California, Davis has decided to participate in the "fact finding" and provide the information to the NCTQ. So watch for our ratings! ☼

Darling-Hammond, L. (2011, Winter). Soaring systems: High fliers all have equitable funding, shared curriculum and quality teaching. *American Educator*, 20-23.

Schalock, H. D. (1998). Student progress in learning: Teacher responsibility, accountability, and reality. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 12 (3), 237-246.

2011 Annual Fundraiser at Rominger-West Winery

The student teachers, yes all two of them, hosted a fundraiser at Rominger West Winery. The funds raised are used to pay for the State CATA Conference. The student teachers meet and greet supporters of the University of California, Davis Agricultural Education Program.

Brittany Whyler, from Wilhows High School, is student teaching at Elk Grove with *Shannon Welch* and crew. Brittany is teaching Introduction to Agriculture, Agriculture Biology, and working with the Agricultural Leadership Class.

Kaytie Ettl, from Nevada Union High School, is student teaching at Winters High

School with *Kent Benson* and *Donnie Whitworth*. Kaytie is teaching Applied Agriculture Biology, Agriculture Technology Class (Ag Mech 1) and the Agricultural Leadership Class.

Both Brittany and Kaytie will be attending various FFA and CATA events. Please help welcome them to the agricultural education profession. ☼

News and Views

Stay Connected with FFA Alumni

(Continued from page 11)

You can use your alumni to help recruit students and help to involve them in leadership development and SAEs. Through their commitment to FFA and agricultural education, FFA alumni help guide the young people in their communities down the path to success.

Alumni Pilot Program

The National FFA Alumni has asked California to pilot a new FFA Alumni Membership program. Rather than charging individual members a membership fee, there is a "Program Fee Membership

Option." There is one fee that includes unlimited membership.

All communication between the National FFA Alumni and the local chapters and alumni members will be electronic through the new Agricultural Career Network.

Plans were in place to move forward with the "Program Fee Membership Option" at the beginning of the school year. As you likely are aware, there were delays with the Agricultural Career Network.

We are now ready to move forward and each of your pro-

(Continued on page 16)



Brittany Whyler and Kaytie Ettl

News and Views

What Is in Your Luggage?

By Charles Parker, Consultant, California Department of Education

The plane is about to take off, your luggage has been stowed, and you are leaning back closing your eyes for a quick, well-deserved rest. As the plane lifts off the ground, you are already in dreamland, looking back to agriculture lore.

Before you left home, you thought about what you would need for this trip. Your choices were based on previous trips you had taken. You threw everything into your bag and zipped it up as you ran out the door. You knew you were ready for whatever was to come.

In Agricultural Education, teachers from previous years have helped you pack your education bag. In the early 1980s, Don Wilson, Jerry Davis, Ken Harris and a few others tried to vision what you would need for your bag in 2012. They made sure, through sponsored legislation, that you would have the basics for a successful program. They also threw in something extra for those cold nights, something that has enabled you to spend less of your time “searching” for resources and more time engaging students.

Outside the Box

Think for a moment, what would you do if there was no Incentive Grant! What about fewer Advisory Committees!

And, no standards to guide you! You may only look at the funds that you have received from the Incentive Grant, but there was much more to the vision created by some legendary agricultural education leaders. What about no Greenhand Conferences! No Sacramento Leadership Experience! And, maybe, part-time State Officers! Teachers in the late '70s and early '80s thought outside the box and created a system, that some 30 years later, is still creating opportunities for agriculture students.

As you continue in dreamland, the plan is flying at its desired altitude. Everyone is relaxed and enjoying the flight, not thinking about what those that traveled before encountered or what would be in the future. You begin to wonder if your luggage will arrive at your destination. And, if it does arrive, will it be open for the public to view what you have? Much like teachers, we look at the resources we have, not thinking about who made

them possible, and not worrying about what else might be needed to add for the future. We become very content.

Lasting Funding Source

This is the most important time, to move beyond being content into viewing what needs to be done to provide opportunities for teachers in 2025. An opportunity is at hand for us to do just that. To create something much like the early leaders did in the early 1980s. Just like the Incentive Grant has done for agricultural education, we can establish the agriculture license plate to create a lasting funding source for the FFA.

In 1980, teachers raised their CATA dues to pay for an Executive Director. This difficult decision led to the development and establishment of the Incentive Grant. Today, these same dues have led our current Executive Director to propose a way to create a system for funding the blue and gold we so proudly advise. Teachers before us made sacrifices

that have enabled each of us to relax for the ride. The question is, are we willing to be content with our current profession, or are we ready to embrace the opportunities that are at hand and soar at a different altitude?

Sell Ag License Plates

Time is running out! It is up to each of us, you and me, each teacher, to look at our bags and want more. We MUST sell 7,500 agriculture license plates in the next few months. If we fail in our efforts, we will be telling the future teachers that their luggage is full, there is no room for growth, no room for new ideas, no room to be creative.

I know we CAN exceed our goal. But will we desire to even meet our goal! I for one, do not want to disappoint those who have made it possible for me to be an agricultural teacher by failing to use the leadership they taught me, to look beyond myself, beyond what is here, and dream for what is possible.

All that is being asked, is for you to ensure that you sell license plates equal to at least 10 percent of your FFA membership—an easy task if one is committed to the effort.

As the plane comes to a stop at the gate, what will be in your luggage is up to you, not me, not other people, simply up to you. ☼

Important Tax Notice to CATA Members

Contributions or gifts to CATA are not deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes. However, CATA dues may be tax deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense. Please consult your tax advisor. ☼

Calendar of Activities 2012

January 12-13	Winter Governing Board	Galt
January 26-27	Student Teacher Conclave	Modesto
January 28	Natural Resources State Finals	Reedley College
February 4	Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning	CSU - Fresno
February 18	Superior Region Meeting	Dorris
February 25	Central Region Meeting	Merced College
February 25	San Joaquin Region Meeting	Bakersfield
February 27	South Coast Region Meeting	San Luis Obispo
March 23-24	North Coast Region Meeting	Santa Rosa
March 31	Southern Region Meeting	Pomona
April 18-21	NAAE Region I Meeting	Western Washington
April 21	CSU - Fresno Field Day	CSU - Fresno
April 21-24	State FFA Leadership Conference	Fresno
May 5	State FFA Judging Finals	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 17	Executive Committee Meeting	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 17	Pre-Conference Governing Board	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 17-22	CATA Summer Conference	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 22	Governing Board Summer Retreat	San Luis Obispo

New Professionals Institute and Power 3 Summit Throw Young Teachers a Life Jacket

By Bonnie Baxter, Los Molinos High School

We are taught never to give our students brief verbal directions and then walk away. We would never nominate one of our students for any level of FFA office without thorough preparation. We model, demonstrate, engage in dialogue, and evaluate student progress in the classroom. Ultimately, we are taught to set our students up for success; rather than throw them in the dog-pile of life and check on them from time to time. Are we following this same philosophy with our young teachers? Are they too being set up for success?

I have spent the last two weekends attending professional development events for young teachers: the Superior Region, Power 3 Summit (P3S), in Lake Almanor; and the New Professionals Institute (NPI), in Fresno.

At each of these events, I paid close attention to both veteran teachers and the new crop of young teachers surrounding me. I think each event can best be described by Dr. Bill Kellogg of Cal Poly as, "A continuum of recruitment and retention of teachers."

As I sat and listened to CATA President-Elect Steve DeRose at the NPI, I couldn't help but revel on the four challenges he presented to the novice teachers in the room:

- (1) be committed,
- (2) all students can learn,
- (3) be professional,
- (4) get involved with CATA.

I hoped at that moment that the young teachers in the room

wearing faded jeans would eventually accept his third challenge, but I digress.

The fourth challenge in particular was a theme at the P3S as well, addressed by CATA State Treasurer Mike Albiani. Mr. Albiani's session at the Summit was titled, "What really is CATA?" It was a session that truly (whether it intended to or not) shed light on the disconnect between young teachers and the CATA.

The reality is that our profession is filled with young teachers just trying to keep their heads above water in a demanding and evolving profession. Many of them aren't thrown a life jacket and eventually abandon ship.

I later saw a perfect example of this at NPI the following weekend. I introduced myself to Angie Verar, Clarissa Rowley and Daniel Villasenor, all currently teaching nearly five preps in their first year.

One of whom had already been nominated to sectional CATA office. I can't help but wonder if that is truly setting her up for success?

In the words of Richard Gearhart at the NPI, "Life is a group project." Sticking with this concept, the Superior Region began a casual mentorship of sorts at the P3S, a metaphorical life jacket. A veteran teacher is paired with a novice teacher, then to a first- or second-year teacher. Call it a mentorship, call it a buddy system or call it a threesome (actually, don't call it that), it's a modest formula to address an escalating problem... young teacher burn out.

The following weekend I spotted the first-year teacher in my "mentorship group" at NPI. I introduced myself and just started asking her questions about her school, program and experiences in our profession thus far. We ex-

changed contact information and made plans to exchange ideas. She seemed relieved and appreciative to be offered help.

Another teacher standing near us somewhat enviously said, "I wished someone had taken me by the arm at CATA Summer Conference three years ago and said, 'Follow me. I'll show you where to go and decode the Secondary Division Structure.'"

As a fourth-year teacher, I have had the infamous "burn out" days. I am not too proud to say that the learning curve has been steep, but I finally feel as though that curve is beginning to slightly plateau and I am gaining momentum in my fourth year.

I admit this because I saw all of the exhausted faces last weekend at NPI and it feels like just yesterday that I too was in the "survival" mode of my first year. Getting involved with CATA was the last thing on my mind.

If we truly want to address young teacher burn out in our profession, we need to continue professional development events such as the NPI and P3S. Young teacher CATA leadership involvement will follow, once they have their sea legs.

Whether it is attending a session on time management, touring the phenomenal technology-based Moonlight Packing facility, or trying to control your laughter during a competitive game of Pictionary against your regional colleagues, these professional development events are what strengthen our profession, simply by forging bonds between the individuals in it. ❁



News and Views

Meet California FFA Advisor Legend Jack Chappell

Darla Swanson (DS), a former student of Jack Chappell, shared with us why her FFA Advisor, “Mr. Chappell” is a “California Legendary Advisor.”

(DS) What can I say about Mr. Chappell?

You will look long and hard just to find another teacher/advisor who was able to accomplish half as much, even given twice the resources. He is a one-of-a-kind, a one-man show!

What type of classroom teacher was Mr. Chappell?

In the classroom, Mr. Chappell was an excellent teacher who was able to relate to kids of many different backgrounds on various levels. He was very knowledgeable with a knack for explaining the curriculum by relating it to local companies, ag-based businesses and student projects. He took a very hands-on ap-



Jack Chappell

proach, with a no nonsense policy. So many times he was able to see and develop the potential in a student who was otherwise uninvolved in school and activities.

What made Mr. Chappell successful?

His dedication to students was unmatched by any other teacher on campus. He was able to successfully run a school farm, field many state champion teams, as well as a number of home projects, and sectional, regional and state FFA officers. Mr. Chappell was NEVER unavailable.

Being from a small school, so many students were involved in many different clubs on campus, making it hard for them to juggle time and priorities. He put the kids first, always working the team practices and his schedule to fit the kids. He would go to bat for students and work out prob-

lems with other teachers and coaches, if students were unsuccessful at resolving the issue themselves. He involved the parents and community members resulting in a strong Booster Club to support his program.

What distinguishes Mr. Chappell from other teachers?

Mr. Chappell was a teacher others should aspire to emulate. He was able to take a teachable moment and turn it into a life lesson, something you would always remember and take with you. He led by example. There were no excuses — no one allowed to whine and complain. Just suck it up and go on about your work,
(Continued on page 16)

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News and Views

Meet California FFA Advisor Jack Chappell

(Continued from page 15)
everyone had to help. Students did their own work; none of the parents doing the work while the students reaped the rewards.

Everyone was responsible for themselves and their actions. He depended on students to help run the program. He was a teacher with high expectations for his students and chapter. He set the bar high because he knew we were capable. Great student responsibility developed a great sense of pride and team work in our members.

What do you remember most about Mr. Chappell?

Mr. Chappell developed more than a top-notch program; he helped to develop

many young people into strong, self-assured, proud adults with a great sense of self and community.

What made him an legendary FFA Advisor?

He is a genuine person and really cared about his students both in and out of school. He may have been a gruff old guy, a diamond in the rough, with quite an extensive vocabulary (colorful cuss words!) and a red-headed temper at times; yet, somehow, he was able to accomplish so much and gain the respect of so many. You can look long and hard—but I assure you, there was only one Jack Chappell. If you have the opportunity to meet him yourself, you will be better for it.

☼

Stay Connected with FFA Alumni

(Continued from page 12)
grams will be contacted directly about the opportunity. Collect names and email addresses and you can submit a roster. This can be a great opportunity for you to stay connected with your graduates.

Alumni Judge

Last year during the State FFA Convention, the California FFA Alumni Association was able to get 75 California FFA alumni to travel to Fresno to serve as judges for the State

Proficiency Finals. Many were used to being asked at the last minute to judge and were able to join your students in the opening session.

With more than 70,000 FFA members in California, it is a shame that we are not able to stay connected with them as they move on into college and careers. I hope that you will consider taking advantage of this opportunity to form a local FFA Alumni Chapter.

I will be in touch.

☼

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