

Golden Slate

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Copy Due in Elk Grove

November 23, 2012.....January 2013

March 22, 2013May 2013

Articles should be e-mailed to cata@calagteachers.org. ⚙

Issue Date



Sacramento Scene

Bills Pending, Budget Negative, Ag Ed Vision Gets Positive Feedback

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

As this edition of the GOLDEN SLATE goes to press, the Governor is sitting on hundreds of bills passed in the waning hours of this legislative session, deciding which to sign and which to veto. Although lots of legislation was introduced that had the potential to change education policy in a positive way, not much of it survived the sausage mill process that exemplifies California state politics.

Test Scores and API

One of the bills we hope gets signed is SB 1458 (Steinberg), which limits the impact that standardized test scores have on a school's Academic Performance Index (API) ranking. Current Education Code language requires that at least 60 percent of the API ranking be based on test scores, but also allows that percentage to be 100 percent, absent specific action by the State Board of Education.

SB 1458 changes the language to state that no more than 60 percent of the API ranking be based on test scores, and requires the State Board of Education to develop and adopt alternative measures to use in this computation. Not a lot of specific language about those alternative measures, but at least it starts the dialogue. We see this as a positive step forward.

Partnership Academies

Steinberg also authored SB1070, which continues some of the positive work for Career Technical Education (CTE) seen in SB 70, which expired this year. SB 1070 allocates additional resources to Partnership Academies and other CTE initiatives, and should be signed by the Governor.

CTE Protections

One of the bills that never made it to the Governor's desk was SB 275 (Hancock), which would have established protections for CTE programs within the state budget. Despite being passed through the Senate unanimously and supported in the Assembly policy committees, the bill was held in Assembly Appropriations — a familiar killing ground for CTE-supported legislation.

(Continued on page 2)

Officers' Corner

Instilling Attitude of Confidence a Key in Preparing Leaders to Influence Others

By Steve DeRose, CATA State President, Arroyo Grande High School

As I write this article, many of us are already back in school and will soon be looking at the end of the first quarter. Wow, it seems like we were just at conference! Well, onward we go, welcoming new greenhands, facing new challenges, and striving forward to continue to improve our programs. As it goes in the agriculture industry, there is never a dull moment and always something to do in agricultural education.

As we move forward and "Refocus the Vision for 2030," it's important we don't lose sight of our role in developing leaders. Last year I was asked how we teach leadership in agriculture education. Below is my response, much of which is nothing new for most of you as it has been part of many of our discussions and philosophy over the years.

Leadership through Agricultural Education

Leadership and the ability to *influence* is not necessarily a single course or lesson taught in a classroom. Leadership is embedded in the environment that we as teachers and coaches create for our students.

The mission of agricultural education is to prepare students

for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resource systems. We accomplish this through the use of a model that encompasses classroom instruction, supervised agriculture experiences and the FFA. Together, they teach students the basics about the agriculture industry from production

to consumption, provide them with hands-on practical experience, and help build teamwork and communication skills giving them the confidence needed by leaders.

Preparing Leaders

With the growth of agriculture, industry changes, and the constant advancement in technology, the demand for leadership preparation in agricultural education is a must. Recognizing this, the California Agricultural Teachers' Association (CATA) works closely with teachers and the FFA to aid in producing a top-grade product.

As teachers, our commodity is our students, and like the farmer with his crop, we nurture and guide students through their high school experience, providing them the opportunity to develop into responsible leaders who will make a difference.

Attitude

The teacher is a constant coach and motivator, passing on to
(Continued on page 3)

Sacramento Scene

Budget Negative, Ag Ed Vision

(Continued from page 1)

We knew this bill faced an uphill battle, but were hopeful it would make it out of the Assembly.

State Budget

The biggest negative in the legislative process for ag education, as well as other CTE programs, was the adoption of the State Budget, which eliminated \$514,000 in funding for Career Technical Student organizations, reducing the state support for these organizations to \$0.

As a result of this action, the Future Farmers of America program faces an immediate reduction of \$230,000 for this year — even if the proposed tax increase on the ballot is approved by voters.

This will certainly impact the ability of agricultural education to provide the scope and kind of leadership development activities that have proven to be so successful in California.

I hope that you take a few moments to make people in your community aware of these cuts, and ask appropriate questions of the legislators who supported this action.

Please call our office if you need additional information!

Ag Ed Vision 2030

On a more upbeat note, we had lots of very positive feedback regarding the Ag Ed Vision 2030 activity conducted at Summer Conference. As we noted in the summary provided to you earlier this summer, we are moving forward to begin the work of implementing change within our profession to meet the many challenges we face over the next several years.

It was tremendously satisfying to see how engaged our organization and members were in this process, and how much interest there is in continuing these discussions regarding the future of agricultural education in California. We face many challenges, but the resolve and determination evident in the session documents was undeniable — I am more certain than ever that we will find a way to grow and prosper in the future.

Professional Opportunities

As noted in several articles in this edition of the *GOLDEN SLATE*, professional contacts and rela-

tionships, mentoring and other mutual support activities are critically important as we move forward over the next few years.

As you think about the challenges facing your local program, please remember that your peers are confronting the same circumstances, and sharing thoughts and ideas with them may offer new and innovative ideas and strategies that will ensure your ultimate success. CATA is committed to providing you with professional opportunities to take advantage of those relationships, but it requires you to make positive choices about how and when to participate.

As we move forward with Ag Ed Vision 2030 activities and discussions, I hope you'll take full advantage of the opportunity to make your voice heard regarding the future direction of your profession.

Thanks to all of you for the positive difference you make in the lives of your students. I hope you have had a smooth, successful start to the school year, and look forward to seeing you down the road. ☺

Building Community of Supporters Helps Agriculture Programs Prosper

By Lilly Pimentel, San Joaquin Region President, Hanford High School

As I start my 15th year teaching agriculture, I ask myself, what are the top priorities in preparing for another school year? Many answers come to mind — enhancing the curriculum for more cooperative learning, getting to know my new students so I can start my home visits again, and making improvements to the career development events I coach. But the biggest priority that I have is to continue to improve the strong ties within the community. Having a strong community of agricultural supporters will help your agriculture program prosper and succeed in these years of financial hardships. You might say all the agriculture companies are getting drained financially, but there are other ways to reach out to your community to continue to support agriculture.

Some teachers frown at having a parent booster club, but if the clubs are managed properly, an agriculture program can benefit from them. Just having the parents aware of the financial needs of the program and how they can assist with extra expenses to enhance the program can be helpful. If anything else, a booster club gets the parent to meet the agriculture staff on a regular basis and have first-hand knowledge of how the program works and how the students benefit from the program. If at

first they have funds available only for scholarships for the FFA members, then that is a start in building a stronger community within your school.

Advisory Committee

Yes, all agriculture programs are required to have an advisory committee for the AIG and here is another way to get the community involved in enhancing your program. Depending on the current needs of your program, having a minimum of two advisory meetings can provide a

plethora of supporters for your agriculture program. With the financial strains of school districts, these advisory committees are a voice for your program and can meet with the superintendent and principal(s) to continue providing leadership and financing for your program.

The advisory committee members are also great for enhancing curriculum, finding jobs for students for their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects, judging a local, section-

al, regional or state contest, and/or assisting with judging team practices and tools needed to achieve success with your Career Development Events (CDEs). At least meeting with your advisory committee members will enable them to help guide your program to continued success within your community.

Fund Finders

Another option for community involvement is having a group of individuals separate from a parent booster or advisory committee whose sole focus is to find and create funds for your school farm/learning laboratory facility. They can find the funds through endowments, equipment, services, grants, etc. to help your agriculture program continue finding ways for students to grow in their SAE projects and gain knowledge to give back to their community.

Benefits

As you read this, you are saying, "I don't have time for all these added committees with more meetings in the evenings with all the extra activities such as FFA leadership activities and SAE project visits that are on my plate." If the committees are managed properly, you don't have to do all the work by yourself, but receive the great benefits of using your community wisely.

Start small with the one project that you feel is most needed and grow from there.

Getting your FFA chapter and agriculture program out in a positive way will reap benefits for years to come and you will not have to twist arms in getting the

(Continued on page 5)

Teacher Educator News

CSU, Chico Update

(Continued from page 3)

- *Niki Flosi* student taught at Chico High School with *Sheena Sloan, Quinn Mendez* and *Ron Cockrell*. Niki is the new agriculture teacher at Yuba City High School.
- *Brian Kim* completed his Practicum I and II student teaching experience at Orland High School under the mentorship of *Anna Cannon* and *Jerrod Lloyd*. Brian was hired at Westminster High School.
- *Kyle Schaad* completed his Practicum I student teaching at Hamilton High School with *Ryan Bentz* and *Janice Lohse* and moved to beautiful Tulelake to work with *Darryl Hirschler* and *Tim Brown* for Practicum II. Kyle is the new mechanics teacher at Placer High School in Auburn.
- *Stephanie Serna* student taught

both semesters at Gridley High School with *Rod Risso* and *Nick Dreesmann*.

- *Gypsy Stark* student taught at Escalon High School under the mentorship of *Stacy Ingalls, Jennifer Terpstra* and *Bruce Campbell*. Gypsy accepted a position at Central Valley High School in Ceres.
- *Krystal Thomas* student taught at Corning High School under the direction of *Bob Stafford* and *Nolan Kee* for the first semester and with *Alice Munger, Melissa Taylor* and *Jeff Magill* at Wheatland High School for Practicum II.

Thank you to all those who were instrumental in helping these young teachers prepare for a long career in the agricultural education profession. It truly is a team effort!

We look forward to many more

years of collaboration with our high school partners. ☼

Upcoming Events

- October 5-14:* The Chico Experience Week
- October 6:* Hall of Honor Reception
- October 6-7:* Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend
- October 20:* Chico Preview Day
- January 25:* Chico State Ag Alumni Reunion at Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale
- February 2:* Swine Education Day
- February 6:* Colusa Alumni Breakfast
- February 9:* Sheep and Goat Education Day
- February 16:* CSU, Chico Invitational Parliamentary Procedure Contest
- March 9:* CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day
- June 10:* Superior Ag Golf Classic

Assault the World with Laughter

By Dr. Kim Miller, Assistant Professor, Agricultural Science and Education Department, Cal Poly Pomona

When I started my new job as a university faculty member, I knew it would be much different than teaching high school agriculture. Besides the increase in administrative responsibilities and the dramatic differences in classroom settings, it was immediately apparent that my relationships with students would forever change as well. There is still opportunity to get to know students, work with them and travel together, but there is an obvious difference between high school students and college students and how they network with their educators.

High school agriculture teachers have the chance to really interact with their students on a more regular and personal basis. There is more opportunity to experience the world together while making an ever-so-important impact on a student's future. Now, as a member of a university faculty, I do my best to share this concept and inspire my college students to relish in this opportunity when they become high school agriculture teachers. In the process, I end up reflecting on my 14 years of being a high school agriculture teacher and hold to my heart all the wonderful moments that I experienced while working with my high school students.

Charlie Chaplin once said "A day without laughter is a day wasted." In a time when budget cuts, over-stuffed classrooms and additional responsibilities without the perk of additional compensation can take a toll on an individual's enthusiasm and motivation, it is so important to find the humor and laughter in everyday happenings. What follows here are two of many moments that I reflect upon often, not because I don't like my current job, but because they simply make me smile and brighten my day. Can you relate?

GREEN Alfalfa

After excusing my first period senior class one morning, my teaching partner walked into

'A day without laughter is a day wasted.'
— Charlie Chaplin

my classroom and asked me to step outside.

He looked at me, pointing to one of the pastures on our school farm and said, "What's wrong with that picture?"

As I looked out to the school farm, I saw a large group of breeding ewes that should have been enjoying their morning meal of alfalfa and another cool overcast morning in South Orange County. Instead, the group of almost 40 sheep was wandering aimlessly around 32 feet of feed troughs. Overflowing out of the feed troughs were bright yellow flakes of STRAW.

I immediately knew who was responsible for this feeding fiasco and told my teaching partner not to worry, I'd handle the situation.

As my second period class took its place in my classroom, I started with announcing that we would be going outside for the period, and of course, excitement radiated throughout the room. The individual responsible for the straw-filled feeders — let's call her "Beth" — was just as excited as the rest of her classmates. My intent was not to make fun of this student, but to help everyone learn from one small mistake

that was easily fixed simply so it wouldn't happen again.

As always, I started with an anticipatory set of questions to prepare the class for our outside experience. I started with a simple question. "Think back to your first year in agriculture. What do sheep eat?" All hands shot into the air, "Beth's" being one of the highest. I called on another student and the answer was "hay and grain."

"Yes," I said. "And what kind of hay do the sheep on our farm eat?" Again, eager hands reached for the sky, with "Beth," again, anxious to answer. I again called on a different student, with the answer being "alfalfa."

"Excellent," I responded. "And lastly, what color is alfalfa?" This time, "Beth" almost jumped out of her seat as she shot her hand in the air, but as quickly as she raised her hand, her face told the story of what was running through her head.

I called on her, and she said, in a quiet, humble tone, "Mrs. Miller, can I go outside right NOW? I think the sheep might be a little mad and a lot hungry." We all enjoyed the opportunity to go outside and first, find out what had happened and second, help clean up and feed the sheep what they were yearning for ... GREEN alfalfa.

Rooms with Windows

I was traveling with a group of students home for the summer after their first year of college. As we traveled, the topic of paying for college, scholarships and financial aid arose and a deep conversation ensued.

One of the young men in the car, "John," said that he didn't know of any opportunities for financial help at his college. Having known this young man for five years, I knew that he was managing ADHD, and so I said, "There are resources for learning disabilities like what you manage."

Another student in the car agreed, adding that she had a friend who had received financial aid because of a learning disability, and said to the young man, "Didn't they go over that at your orientation?" "John" looked at me, and the others in the car for a moment and said, "DUH, ADHD! If the orientation room had windows, I wasn't paying attention."

We all enjoyed his great sense of humor and hilarious remark, and upon returning home, we looked up financial aid resources for him to investigate.

Mark Twain once said, "Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand." Take a stand, and assault each of your days by appreciating the humorous moments you and your students share. It's great for the heart, mind and soul.

Story to Share?

Do you have a great story to share with our association? Here is your opportunity to share the humor you experience in your daily life as an agricultural educator.

Please send your experiences by typing them in a Word document and emailing to kamiller@csupomona.edu.

Please remember to change the names of students in your stories, to protect the innocent... and the guilty. Contributors' stories will be formatted and submitted for the next two editions of the GOLDEN SLATE. ✨

Building Community of Supporters

(Continued from page 4)

community to help you enhance your program.

If you get stuck, always call a program near you that has a support committee already developed. Don't reinvent the wheel;

it is already started for you. Reap the benefits of being a member of the CATA and start at your sectional meetings. The CATA members are here to help get you and your community involved in your agriculture program. ✨

Old Dogs, New Tricks

By Rob Norwood, Southern Region President, Jurupa Valley High School

When it comes to teaching agriculture, the saying “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” just ain’t true. For an ag teacher it should be more like “You can’t survive to be an old dog if you don’t learn new tricks.” I consider myself an old dog always willing to learn new tricks. Lately, a question on this topic has been bouncing around in my head. What if you are new in the profession and don’t have any tricks? Based on some of the collective results from Vision 2030, our newest and newer teachers could use some help, some old tricks and more.

The beginning of this school year has proven to be nearly the same as any of the last 30 years. No matter how much I try to prep, it seems I can’t help but hit the ground running as I try to get ready for the year. Of course it never helps finding out what classes I am teaching only a couple weeks before school starts, and of course, that letter is mailed out while I’m trying to get away for a few days before the first day back.

This year added a new challenge with four preps. I’ve taught them all before, but not all at the same time, and it’s been at least a handful of years since I have taught two of them. I had to find my old files (the paper kind), literally dust some of them off, review my PowerPoints and e-files, and remind myself of what I used to know. As I struggled with organizing the material and prepping at least a couple of weeks ahead, I was thankful that I had most of the resources I needed at my fingertips. I knew where to look or who to ask for materials that I misplaced or couldn’t find.

What Do New Teachers Do?

As I searched to update what I have, my mind drifted back to the Vision 2030 meeting we had in the gym this past conference, the membership divided into three groups based on experience. I can only guess what lasting impressions others in my 16+ group got from that experience, but I was surprised at the size of the newcomers group.

I began to wonder what all these new teachers would do if they were put in this same situation, with new courses to teach and little to no lead time to prep. They don’t have years of accumulated files, materials, resources and contacts. I wondered: what kind of support do they have?

Do they have a mentor with the needed experience and resources in their department, district or section to call on for help? How much did they take with them from student teaching and how well does that carry over to their new teaching assignment? I know they have some training and experience developing short lessons, but what about a full year’s curriculum, 180 days of lessons?

Common Concern

From the Vision 2030 meeting, one common concern appears to be the SOE/Project Circle. Demands outside our classes developing and aligning classroom curriculum to meet state standards, and now those wonderful Common Core Standards, is making it difficult if almost impossible to find sufficient time for Supervised Occupational Experiences (SOEs) and Career Development Events (CDEs).

Time management is important for all of us and the demand increases dramatically when you have to generate curriculum and daily lessons from scratch. If some or all of this demand could be alleviated, new and experienced teachers alike would be able to devote more time to SOEs and CDEs.

Imagine how much an extra hour a day could help: Time for SOEs, train a team, eat dinner with your spouse and family, maybe even eight hours of sleep! OK, I’ll admit the last one’s probably not happening, but it’s nice to have a dream.

Need for Complete Lessons

As a profession, I believe we can do a better job of providing complete lessons that are easy to access, easy to use, and easy to adapt to meet the needs of new and experienced teachers. There are lots of lessons out there on the

web, but only a few have units or complete semesters. We have done a great job at collecting and publishing labs and activities to use in our lessons, but we need guidance on how and when those activities can best be incorporated into lessons and units.

I believe we need to take the next step and provide complete lessons that lead up to, and follow, those activities. We experienced teachers need to share our complete course lessons, PowerPoints, and materials we have developed, tested and refined over the years.

One of my favorite quotes from my long-time teaching partner/mentor is: “Why reinvent the wheel?” I agree.

Use someone else’s wheel, size it up or down to fit your needs, paint it a different color, trick out the rims, and add some electronics, sound, video, some razzle-dazzle. Make it your own — then share it with others. Why not? We have nothing to lose and so much to gain, both professionally and personally.

How and when would we have time to do this? The winter regional road shows are great for getting new materials and resources, but they are limited. We get fantastic presenters sharing their best practices, best lesson or best lab. After 10 or 20 years, you can amass a pretty good collection to pump up your curriculum. Only problem is, new teachers (and everyone else) need help with lessons from day 1 to day 180. They need bulletproof, foolproof, tried-and-true stuff that works, every time.

One place to start this process is with our section and region meetings and in-services. Sections and regions could make it an informal or formal part of our meetings. Region and section leadership

should help pair new teachers and subject-area mentors (not necessarily just one person). We should develop sectional, regional and statewide subject matter consortiums promoting networking among those of us teaching similar courses.

Wouldn’t it be helpful to have a list of peers teaching the same courses as you, available as a resource only an email or phone call away? At some point, a statewide website to house the various subject matter lessons and materials can be put in place, with access to all.

Vision for Improving Ag Education

I can already see that the Vision 2030 process is going to be a fantastic tool to improve California agricultural education. Some things that come from this shared process will be difficult to bring about and other components will have a simple solution.

The need to support the “SOE circle” I think is one of the easy ones. As a regional president, I plan to put this topic on the fall meeting agenda.

The Riverside Section has already started an informal consortium for floriculture and I’m sure others have too in other areas; we just haven’t publicized it.

Unfortunately, by the time this issue is published, we will already have had our first fall meetings.

You can start the ball rolling in your section and region as we progress toward the December in-services. Make the time to have this conversation at your next meeting. Ask your regional supervisor to add it as a session to the road show. As CATA members we have the ability to quickly and efficiently identify and solve problems in our profession. Let’s start here and now. ⚙

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We encourage your patronage of our Corporate Members, as they have shown a commitment to supporting agricultural education in California.

If you are aware of any others who may be interested in this type of membership, call (916) 714-2970 or e-mail cata@calagteachers.org so we may send pertinent information. ☼



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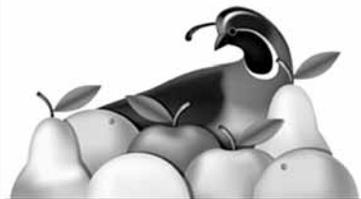
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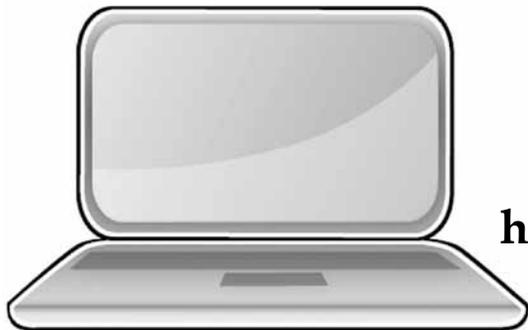
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Time to Develop Vision for Future of Agricultural Education

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

Who among us is a visionary who can lead the agricultural education profession beyond the year 2030? From time to time I reflect on how lucky I have been to work in a profession that 30 years ago had a vision for where agricultural education needed to go and had the fortitude to take it there. This is my 29th year employed in agricultural education. When did I become one of those "old guys"? Where would we be today without the creative thinkers who developed the Agriculture Incentive Grant, the Three Circle Model and agriculture courses integrated with academics to meet graduation and college entrance requirements? To answer that question, just look at the rest of Career Technical Education.

More Opportunities

Those of you who have been in the profession the same number of years as I, have seen agricultural education evolve. Our students today have so many more opportunities to become involved than our students in the 1980s.

The other day, I heard Jim Aschwanden describe what it was like representing his FFA chapter as a delegate at the State FFA Convention held in the Small Theater at Cal Poly. A few years later, I was a delegate at the state convention representing my chapter with the convention held in Chumash at Cal Poly. Many years later the convention was held in the gym at Cal Poly.

I remember the 1994 convention. It was the first held in Fresno using the Saroyan Theater and Valdez Hall. Today we use Selland Arena and every other facility in walking distance. Add to that the Greenhand Conference, MFE, ALA and SLE. Do not forget about COLC, ROLC, SOLS, WLC and National FFA Convention. What more can we add?

Teacher Conferences

When I was a young teacher, CATA had a conference that was called "Lake Sequoia." This was because it was held at a YMCA Camp at Lake Sequoia. Everyone slept in cabins on a cot. There were between eight and 12 per cabin. If you were known to snore, you were assigned to the "Snorer's Cabin" (I made it there year two.) To use the restroom or shower, you would walk either down or up the hill to the shared facilities.

As a young teacher it was a big deal to get selected to attend. Those who attended were the



Hugh Mooney

leaders of the profession. Each year a few young teachers would be selected to attend. The idea was to engage the current leaders with those who may become the leaders in the future.

As time went on, the event was moved to a different facility, Wonder Valley. After some time, they combined the event with the "New Professionals" conference. For a variety of reasons, a decision was made to discontinue the activity.

Many of us have seen the need for creating some type of activity to identify future leaders for the profession for quite some time. One question was always how we pay for it.

Questions

At the CATA Summer Conference this past June, most of you participated in an activity on Monday afternoon that asked each of you to respond to several questions regarding the present and future direction of agricultural education in California.

As a member of state staff, I decided that I would not participate in the activity because I did not want my presence to influence anyone. (I am not certain my presence would have had influence on anyone.) The comments

that were made by teachers were very interesting. I hope that each of you have taken a few minutes to review them.

Developing Answers

What do we do now? That is a question that needs an answer. In the late fall, CATA will host an activity to begin to develop answers to the question: "What do we do now?" This activity is being planned by a committee of teachers. It will not be an activity where the state staff will sit on one side of the table and teachers will be on the other side with

the state staff telling you how it is going to be. Unless for some reason the planning committee believes that state staff would be a benefit to have involved, they will not be there.

Though the profession is faced with many challenges, what an exciting opportunity to create a vision for the future of the profession. If you are asked to participate in this activity, I hope that you make every effort to attend. I wish that I was still teaching so that I could be a part of it. ☺



Pat and Warren Weaver

Hall of Fame Inductee: Warren Weaver

Warren Weaver taught at Elk Grove High School for his entire 37-year career, building a record of student accomplishments that is second to none. During his tenure, 764 students received their State FFA Degrees, 93 went on to earn their American FFA Degrees, 36 students were State Proficiency finalists, and he coached 24 State Champion teams in Farm Records, Farm Business Management, and Best Informed Greenhand.

A highly respected classroom teacher, Warren was recognized as the Sacramento County Teacher of the Year, a CATA Teacher of Excellence, and the California FFA Star State Advisor.

Even after his retirement, Warren continued his involvement in ag education by writing, proctoring and tabulating the State Finals Farm Records contest and writing the State Finals Cooperative Marketing exam. He was also instrumental in creating and organizing the California FFA Alumni Association, serving on its inaugural Board of Directors. ☺

News and Views

2012 Agricultural Education Award Winners



Outstanding Teacher/Don Wilson Memorial Award – Karen Henderson, Nevada Union; Outstanding Young Teacher – Dane White, Galt High School.



Outstanding Large Secondary Program and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner – Tulare High School Farm: Dave Caetano, Marie Pinto (Director of State and Federal Funding), Jennifer Sousa, Frank Marinelli, Chris McKenna, Kevin Koelewyn, Shay Williams-Hopper, Mike Mederos and Sarah Koligian (Superintendent).

Teacher of Excellence Award Winners:

David Gossman, Atwater High School; Ken Moncrief, Central Valley High School - Ceres; Carrie Phillips, Bret Harte High School; Clemente Ayon, Santa Maria High School; Deanna Cargill, Shandon High School; Anthony Catalan, Firebaugh High School; Mike Mederos, Tulare High School; David Valdez, Clovis East High School; Robin Olsen, Littlerock High School; Mike Somerville, Lassen High School



Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program – Orange High School: Patricia Williams



Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program – Nevada Union High School: Jim Drew, Karen Henderson, Katie Alling, and Luke Browning



Outstanding Post-Secondary Agricultural Education Program – Modesto Junior College: Bill Hobby, John Mendes, Steve Amador, Mark Morales, Amanda Schnoor, Marlies Boyd, Gail Brumley, Don Borges, Todd Conrado, Julie Haynes, Dale Pollard, Mark Anglin, and David Baggett

News and Views

Letter to Romney: Time to Educate Skilled Graduates

By Mike Rowe, Owner, mikeroweWORKS

The First Four Years Are The Hardest...

Dear Governor Romney,

My name is Mike Rowe and I own a small company in California called mikeroweWORKS. Currently, mikeroweWORKS is trying to close the country's skills gap by changing the way Americans feel about Work. (I know, right? Ambitious.) Anyway, this Labor Day is our 4th anniversary, and I'm commemorating the occasion with an open letter to you. If you read the whole thing, I'll vote for you in November.

First things first. mikeroweWORKS grew out of a TV show called *Dirty Jobs*. If by some chance you are not glued to The Discovery Channel every Wednesday at 10 p.m., allow me to visually introduce myself. That's me on the right, preparing to do something dirty.

When *Dirty Jobs* premiered back in 2003, critics called the show "a calamity of exploding toilets and misadventures in animal husbandry." They weren't exactly wrong. But mostly, *Dirty Jobs* was an unscripted celebration of hard work and skilled labor. It still is. Every week, we highlight regular people who do the kind of jobs most people go out of their way to avoid. My role on the show is that of a "perpetual apprentice." In that capacity, I have completed over 300 different jobs, visited all 50 states, and worked in every major industry.

Though schizophrenic and void of any actual qualifications, my resume looks pretty impressive, and when our economy officially crapped the bed in 2008, I was perfectly positioned to weigh in on a variety of serious topics. A reporter from *The Wall Street Journal* called to ask what I thought about the "counter-intuitive correlation between rising unemployment and the growing shortage of skilled labor." CNBC wanted my take on outsourcing. Fox News wanted my opinions on manufacturing and infrastructure. And CNN wanted to chat about currency valuations, free trade, and just about every other work-related problem under the sun.

In each case, I shared my theory that most of these "problems" were in fact symptoms of something more fundamental — a change in the way Americans viewed hard work and skilled



labor. That's the essence of what I've heard from the hundreds of men and women I've worked with on *Dirty Jobs*. Pig farmers, electricians, plumbers, bridge painters, jam makers, blacksmiths, brewers, coal miners, carpenters, crab fisherman, oil drillers...they all tell me the same thing over and over, again and again — our country has become emotionally disconnected from an essential part of our workforce. We are no longer impressed with cheap electricity, paved roads, and indoor plumbing. We take our infrastructure for granted, and the people who build it.

Today, we can see the consequences of this disconnect in any number of areas, but none is more obvious than the growing skills gap. Even as unemployment remains sky high, a whole category of vital occupations has fallen out of favor, and companies struggle to find workers with the necessary skills. The causes seem clear. We have embraced an ridiculously narrow view of education. Any kind of training or study that does not come with a four-year degree is now deemed "alternative." Many viable careers once aspired to are now seen as "vocational consolation prizes," and many of the jobs this current

administration has tried to "create" over the last four years are the same jobs that parents and teachers actively discourage kids from pursuing. (I always thought there was something ill-fated about the promise of three million "shovel-ready jobs" made to a society that no longer encourages people to pick up a shovel.)

Which brings me to my purpose in writing: On Labor Day of 2008, the fans of *Dirty Jobs* helped me launch this website. *mikeroweWORKS.com* began as a Trade Resource Center designed to connect kids with careers in the skilled trades. It has since evolved into a non-profit foundation — a kind of PR campaign for hard work and skilled labor. Thanks to a number of strategic partnerships, I have been able to promote a dialogue around these issues with a bit more credibility than my previous resume allowed. I've spoken to Congress (twice) about the need to confront the underlying stigmas and stereotypes that surround these kinds of jobs. Alabama and Georgia have both used mikeroweWORKS to launch their own statewide technical recruitment campaigns, and I'm proud to be the spokesman for both initiatives. I also work closely with Caterpillar, Ford,

Kimberly-Clark, and Master Lock, as well as The Boy Scouts of America and The Future Farmers of America. To date, the mikeroweWORKS Foundation has raised over a million dollars for trade scholarships. It's modest by many standards, but I think we're making a difference.

Certainly, we need more jobs, and you were clear about that in Tampa. But the Skills Gap proves that we need something else too. We need people who see opportunity where opportunity exists. We need enthusiasm for careers that have been overlooked and underappreciated by society at large. We need to have a really big national conversation about what we value in the workforce, and if I can be of help to you in that regard, I am at your service — assuming of course, you find yourself in a new address early next year.

To be clear, mikeroweWORKS has no political agenda. I am not an apologist for Organized Labor or for Management. mikeroweWORKS is concerned only with encouraging a larger appreciation for skilled labor, and supporting those kids who are willing to learn a skill.

Good luck in November. And thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Mike Rowe

P.S. In the interest of full disclosure I should mention that I wrote a similar letter to President Obama. Of course, that was four years ago, and since I never heard back, I believe proper etiquette allows me to extend the same offer to you now. I figure if I post it here, the odds are better that someone you know might send it along to your attention. ⚙

(Downloaded from www.mikeroweworks.com.)

News and Views

Funding Games

By John Avila

I finally watched the movie "The Hunger Games," and if you haven't — please do so. For those who have watched or read "The Hunger Games," I hope to get your feedback on my digest of this movie, as well as my critique of the ongoing saga we now know as the "Funding Games." There are a lot of similarities between the two!

My Review

"Hunger Games" deals with the struggle for self-preservation that the people face in their "districts." The need for resources that the citizens encounter both inside and outside the arena creates an atmosphere of helplessness that the main characters try to overcome in their fight for survival. Not surprisingly, this desperation has been spawned by the actions of elitists within the power structure who are far removed from the grim reality of the "district."

Citizens of the "Capitol" are far removed from the deprivation and open oppression of everyone else, and are generally preoccupied with fashion, parties and mass entertainment. Most Capitol citizens are either ignorant of, or totally unconcerned with, the poverty and desperation that prevails elsewhere in the movie. Compared with the Districts, the Capitol is extremely wealthy, with citizens enjoying a very high standard of living.

Tributes, lowly citizens who have grown up with the constant threat of starvation, are shocked by what they consider wasteful decadence in the Capitol. For example, the selection of dishes served at parties is commonly far greater than one person could eat. Not surprisingly, this awareness eventually leads to a meltdown of epic proportions, with heroes arising from the oppressed class to "even the score" a bit. Needless to say, the basic premise of this movie provides substantial opportunity for action by the common citizens!

In "Hunger Games," there are 12 districts, each representing the commodities they produce for Capitol city. Each district is pinned against each other. As long as the elite continue to eat well and enjoy a high standard of living, they couldn't care less

about how their sustenance is produced, or how cutthroat the conditions are in the "district." By now, you're probably getting a sense that this all seems just a little bit too familiar....

'Funding Games'

Welcome to the State of California's "Funding Games"! In this poorly acted movie, the Elite Ruling Class presides over a world

that pits average citizens against each other for scarce resources, all the while enjoying the freshest fruits, most succulent meats, richest desserts and finest wines the "districts" can produce.

Oblivious of the conditions created by them that have resulted in scarce water, exorbitant energy costs, and oppressive regulations that pit Dairy Farmer vs. Hay Farmer, Rice Farmer vs. Cotton Farmer, etc., they dawdle about their business, unconcerned that any of this will ever impact their privileged existence.

If this weren't bad enough, they extend their aristocratic philosophies to the education and schooling of the "districts" as well. Convinced that their vision of the world need not take into

account the lowly concepts of "work" and "production," they decree that all students be educated in a way that mirrors their own glorified image — complete with tailored business attire, suave and sophisticated manners, and a keen appreciation of politically correct vague-speak.

While programs that complement their view of "worth" are

ers have we lost in the name of politics (Funding Games)? Is it time we demand more from our leaders and more from ourselves to get back our Golden State? Which program will be cut this year? How many more casualties can we endure? How will this movie end?

To effectively deal with these challenges, we in Ag Education must be committed to working together in a way that ensures Agriculture's survival, both as an industry and a program within our schools. Despite the delusions of the Elite, time and reality remain constants, and we will need a vibrant, healthy Agricultural industry and economy for California to prosper. We need to "stand solid" for our part "in that inspiring task."

Vision 2030

Vision 2030 is our time to really examine what it is going to take to thrive as the "Funding Game" movie plays itself out. For now, we know that we must:

- #1 Get many Mentors;
- #2 Get many Sponsors; and
- #3 Get many Allies.

CATA involvement gives us a chance to band together, to learn from the best and most innovative among us, and to learn how to reach out to others for support and assistance. Standing still gets you nowhere and that is why I fight the "Funding Games" in my local district, and why I believe so strongly in our profession.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Ag Ed Vision 2030 process at Summer Conference, and look forward to working together with all of my peers in developing a plan to meet these challenges. How will the "Funding Games" movie end? I'm not sure, but I am committed to doing my part to see that we survive. After all, it's more than just a game.... ✨

THE FUNDING GAMES



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October 24–27	National FFA Convention	Indianapolis
November 3	Cotton State Finals	CSU - Fresno
November 15–16	New Professionals Conference	Fresno
November 17	Central Region Meeting	South Lake Tahoe
November 17	San Joaquin Region Meeting	Lemoore
November 27–December 1	NAAE Conference	Atlanta, Georgia
December 6-8	Community College Midwinter Institute	Monterey
December 7	Superior Region Meeting	Santa Rosa
January 17–18	Winter Governing Board	Galt
January 17–18	Student Teacher Conclave	Modesto
January 26	Natural Resources State Finals	Reedley College
February 2	Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree and Vine Pruning	CSU - Fresno
February 23	Central Region Meeting	Modesto
February 23	San Joaquin Region Meeting	Reedley
February 25	South Coast Region Meeting	San Luis Obispo
March 9	Superior Region Meeting	Chico
March 23	North Coast Region Meeting	Eureka
April 6	Southern Region Meeting	Pomona
April 17–20	NAAE Region I Conference	Pendleton, Oregon
April 20	CSU - Fresno Field Day	CSU - Fresno
April 20-23	State FFA Leadership Conference	Fresno
May 4	State FFA Judging Finals	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23	Executive Committee Meeting	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23	Pre-Conference Governing Board	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23–27	CATA Summer Conference	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 27	Governing Board Summer Retreat	San Luis Obispo