



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

INITIATE, CREATE, ILLUMINATE

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Pennsylvania Shines at National Convention

PHILIP WINKLOSKY

Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

FFA events, such as the National FFA Convention & Expo and National FFA Week, celebrate the amazing accomplishments of members, teachers and the industry of agriculture.

In October, more than 67,000 FFA members and guests participated in general sessions, competitive events, educational tours, leadership workshops, an expo and shopping mall, and volunteer activities. There was a wide range of activities for members and advisers to participate in such as band, chorus, the National Days of Service, workshops and contests.

Pennsylvania's agriscience finalist Joseph Gresoi of Conrad Weiser FFA won Animal Systems Division 5. Andrew Miles of Wilmington Area FFA won En-



A record-breaking 81 members received their American Degrees at the national convention in October.

vironmental Services/Natural Resource Systems Division 5. Sarah Kern and Jillian Rathman of Conrad Weiser got third in Foods Products and Processing Systems Division 6.

Pennsylvania's teams that competed in Career Development Events or Leadership Development Events included Northern Bedford, Conrad Weiser, Central PA Institute, Newport, Manor, Southern Huntingdon, TCHS Pennock's Bridge, Big Spring, Manheim, Huntingdon Area, Standing Stone, Littlestown, Wellsboro, Cloister, Little Dutchmen, Berlin Brothersvalley, West Perry, Southern Huntingdon, East Juniata, Danville, Monroe CTI, Oley Valley, Troy, Big Spring and Midd-West.

A record-breaking 81 members earned their American Degree this year.

Pennsylvania was well represented at the 2017 National FFA Convention.

Chapter Visits Connect State Team With FFA Members

KELSEY STEWART

Pennsylvania FFA State Chaplain

For many Pennsylvania FFA members, a chapter visit is the first time seeing the blue corduroy in action. For some, it means a day of workshops and activities. For others, it is a day of leadership, team growth and development.

State officer chapter visits are a great day for everybody. This is a day when state officers facilitate workshops with the members. Students focus on leadership, team development, and communication skills, while doing hands-on activities to show the value of those life skills. It is most common for two officers to visit a chapter, unless there are multiple

teachers. Then more may come to a visit. It is the time where our state officer team is able to interact and get to know the members on a personal level.

The state officers are also able to see what members and chapters are doing all across the state. Petunia the pig at Big Valley is oinking awesome and the chicks at Cumberland Valley

are pecking-ly perfect. The garden at Conrad Weiser is impressive. The Central Columbia woodworking and metal fabrication shops are remarkable as well. Chapter visits are without a doubt the best season of the year. Whether a member, officer or adviser, FFA members are bound to have a great time and have some valuable takeaways.

Greetings From the Treasurer

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

Hey there Pennsylvania FFA. My name is Brody Coolidge, and I am proudly serving you as the 2017-18 state FFA treasurer. The last five months have gone by very fast, but time flies when you are having fun.



BRODY COOLIDGE

This year, I have gotten to travel all across the state, and have even travelled outside of Pennsylvania. Even though the place may change, there is one thing that never seems to change, and that is the enthusiasm for FFA that I find everywhere I go.

Before my first chapter visit, I didn't know what to expect. I was wondering to myself, "What if none of the students here even care about FFA? What if they think I am some lame high school graduate who is still trying to hang onto the past?" But after an amazing week of chapter visits in Perry County, I saw just how wrong I was. Every single chapter that I have visited so far has been full of energy, passion, and desire to grow as young leaders in this amazing organization.

As I continue to meet FFA members from around the state throughout my year of service, I hope that I continue to see this incredible enthusiasm wherever I may travel. The future of our organization lies in the hands of the current members. If our organization is full of encouraging young leaders, then the future of The National FFA Organization is bright.

I plan on attending Penn State majoring in agricultural Extension

and education, with the hopes of one day becoming an agricultural educator and FFA adviser myself after completing my year as a state officer.

I have been influenced by many people throughout my life. Some of those people include friends, coaches, and of course, family. However, there is one person who definitely had a greater impact on my life than most. That person would be my ag teacher and FFA adviser Mrs. Melanie Berndtson. She has been the greatest influence on me in deciding to become an ag teacher. She is always looking for the best experiences for her students and somehow also seems to know what her students are good at before they do. But the most important thing about Mrs. Berndtson is that she cares about her students.

To be a teacher, and an FFA adviser, you have to be selfless. You have to know that you have the ability to change a person's life just by spending a little time with them in a classroom every day. You have to be committed to the future of FFA and education as a whole.

I know that the future is bright because everywhere I go I see teachers with a passion to teach agriculture and students with a passion to learn about agriculture. I see teachers growing young leaders every day, and I see students transforming into young leaders every day.

Editor's note: Brody Coolidge is the Pennsylvania state FFA treasurer.

SAE Spotlight: Ella Heckman



Member
Spotlight

Four years ago, Ella Heckman of the Conococheague FFA got a horse. It was a dream come true for her. "I couldn't wait to see what a window of opportunity owning my very own horse would open," she said. However, she was a green rider when her horse arrived on the family farm.

Countless hours were logged as horse and rider became a team. As high school approached, Ella joined FFA and made her horse Sprinkles a part of her supervised agricultural experience project. "Owning a horse has taught me a lot of things including patience, endurance, courage and responsibility," she said. "When my family purchased Sprinkles, I immediately knew that I wanted to dive into the crazy world of competing. With that being said, I knew there was a long road ahead of the two of us by trying to prepare ourselves as a team."

Owning a horse is a lot of work between feeding hay, carrying buckets of water, grooming, mucking out the stalls and barn maintenance.

"Riding and training Sprinkles these past four years has been one of my life's greatest blessings," she said. "We started getting serious about competing in the spring of 2016."

Sprinkles was already trained to compete in barrel racing and pole bending, which made things easier for Heckman. However,

the horse had gone several years without competing. "So in a sense, we were both new to the sport. I mostly show with my 4-H club, a few local saddle clubs. I am extremely thankful for the opportunity to make it all the way



Ella Heckman enjoys riding her horse Sprinkles as part of her FFA supervised agriculture experience.

to the state level with 4-H for the past two years and each year has gotten better and better," she said.

It's been an uphill climb the past two years, and she believes they still have a long way to go. She quotes Winston Churchill: "No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle." Heckman looks forward to spending more time developing her SAE and horsemanship skills.