



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

One Emblem, Endless Opportunities

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A.C.E.S. Conference Puts "FFA Under Construction"

SUZANNAH J. MELLINGER
State FFA Reporter

HARRISBURG, Pa. — For a lot of people, it's that time of the winter where cabin fever starts to set in. Luckily for the members of the Pennsylvania FFA, the Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success (A.C.E.S.) leadership conference offered them a change of scenery and much more. Held on two separate weekends (Feb. 9th and 10th and Feb. 16 and 17), A.C.E.S. drew more than 1,000 FFA members and advisors to the Harrisburg-Hershey Sheraton hotel for two action-packed days of

leadership workshops, presentations, and chances to meet other members from across the state.

This year, the theme for A.C.E.S. was "FFA Under Construction." After the State Officers conducted opening ceremonies on Saturday, the members attended workshops to learn about "Subcontracting Your Future" (the FFA Foundation and FFA Alumni), got "A Fresh Coat of Paint" while they worked on a community service project, figured out "What's in Your Toolbox" as they explored ways to increase chapter involvement and take advantage of opportunities within the FFA, visited the "Renovation Station" to work on goal setting and

continuous improvement, and took care to make their efforts "Constructive Construction" by improving problem solving and communication skills. After a delicious supper (a great A.C.E.S. tradition), members met up at the "Construction Crew Gathering" where they could dance to the latest hits and the classics, play games, or view a slide show of pictures from various FFA events through out the past year.

Before the evening drew to a close, the State Officers presented reflections on the parts of the FFA emblem and constructed the emblem while they spoke to the group. "...every piece of the emblem could stand on its own, each representing something unique and different, but it is when we put them together that they form something bigger, better, and stronger. ..." said Kristie Folk, state vice president of the northern region during her part of reflections. Cale Grimes, state treasurer, reminded the members that they are each an essential part of the FFA.

The members turned in for a short night of sleep before reassembling for a time of inspiration before breakfast on Sunday morning. Gary Swann from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau joined the members for breakfast and shared some of his thoughts and experiences from his time in the FFA and as the 39th National FFA President. Swann reminded the FFA members that leadership is not just about congratulating the winners — leadership is just as much about talking to those who did not finish in first, commending them on their efforts, and encouraging them to keep trying. By the end of the A.C.E.S. conference, Pennsylvania FFA members may have been exhausted, but they headed for home with new tools, information, and possibly even some renovation plans to take back to their home chapters.



The State FFA officers present a skit on the "do's and don'ts for the weekend."



FROM THE OFFICER'S STATION

KAMI FORGIE

South Central Vice President

When most people hear that the month February is here, they mainly think of cupid and Valentines Day; but when I think February, I think of fun and FFA. Not only is February the home month to National FFA Week, but it is also home to the Agricultural Cooperation's Establish Success (ACES) Conference. ACES is a time for the State Officers to have some fun and let loose. It is usually the first time we get to see all the friends we made during chapter visits. It was quite the year for this particular conference, we hit an all time high with more than 1,000 members, guests and advisors registered! That is amazing seeing as ACES started out with roughly only 300 members 7 years ago.

There is one time a year where the whole nation can celebrate how great this organization is, and February is home to that week. The nation celebrates National FFA Week, Feb. 17-24. Tuesday, you can even celebrate with a State Officer at "meet your state officer at Hoss's night". I hope to see all of you there! We have 10 different locations around the state, so hopefully you can find one near you.

After February is over, the fun does not stop. March is home to our State Legislative Leadership Conference (SLLC). Have you ever wondered how something becomes a law? Or why you can't drive until your 16? Well, this leadership conference is based on just that. Students will come together to simulate the legislative process. We split members up into two groups: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The State Officers get to pick six different bills that are actually in con-

gress right now for the members to discuss. In their groups, members will learn the proper ways to change the bills and actually change them the ways they want. After all the voting and debate, our members get to meet our State Legislators and discuss the changes they made to the bills and possibly change the outcome of a law!! But this conference is not just about law making, it is also about fun! SLLC is home to a graffiti dance and costume dinner. At the Graffiti dance, everyone is asked to where a white t-shirt and everyone will go around the dance floor signing each others' shirt. By the end of the night, each shirt will be a memoir of a great conference. Our theme dinner has to be one of the most entertaining nights. Every chapter is asked to dress up as any theme they would like. In previous years, chapters have dressed up as the Wizard of Oz, Ninja Turtles, Penn State Football Players, and the President's Secret Service. Its our members' turn to get creative and have some fun. At the end of the night, the State Officers will pick a couple special groups to receive an award.

With all the fun events for February and March, I hope I can see some of you shortly! It has been a great year so far and I cannot wait to see what the next couple of months have to offer. If you are interested in having a State Officer come to your banquet, have your advisors fill out a form on the state Website! And to hear more about what we do as state officers, do not forget to check out the state website and read our journals (www.paffa.state.pa.us). Have a great month, hope to see you soon.



FFA members work on suncatchers as part of the "A Fresh Coat of Paint" workshop.

Northern Lebanon Starts New Year With a Full Schedule

FREDRICKSBURG, Pa. — With the beginning of the New Year, the Northern Lebanon FFA Chapter is ready as every for many exciting opportunities. The agricultural classes had a great time while visiting the Farm Show and three members received their Keystone degrees at the Mid-Winter Convention, they were Lauren Williams, Kaleb Gassert and Ryan Davies. Several members also showcased their talents by entering designs in the floriculture contests. Members also showed pigs, cows, rabbits, and poultry.

The state FFA Association will host the A.C.E.S. Conference, which will kick off National FFA Week. Twenty members will be participating at the conference and can't wait to learn many things. During the National FFA Week, students will have the opportunity to learn more about agriculture and FFA. Both high school and middle school students will be able to pet animals and participate in fun activities. From March, 9 through the 11 students will also have the chance to participate in the S.L.L.C. Conference (State Leg-

islative Leadership Conference), where they will learn about the workings of the government and parliamentary procedure. The conference is always fun and a great learning experience.

The chapter will be kept busy this spring planning for the annual banquet to take place on April 10 at 7 p.m. in the Northern Lebanon High School cafeteria. Anyone interested in attending, contact the Northern Lebanon High School Agriculture Department at (717) 865-2117 before April 1.



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