

Network KNOW-HOW



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This Issue...

ABOUT THE COVER:

Find out how the world wide web is changing the face of chapter communication.—*Photos from iStockPhoto.*

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Samantha says...

BY SAMANTHA WARNER STATE FFA PRESIDENT

I had just gotten back to Springfield from visiting an FFA chapter. I needed to grab a couple of things at Wal-Mart, but I was still in official dress. We have all felt a little weird wearing official dress in public at some point, right? However, I decided that I would risk a few weird glances, rather than give up my afternoon nap to change clothes.

I had not been in the store 5 minutes when a gentleman asked me, “Are you a flight attendant?” Trying not to laugh, I said, “No, I’m an FFA member.” His response was, “That’s cool.” As I pushed my cart away from this gentleman, a woman said, “Are you a Future Farmer of America?” With a smile I said, “I’m in the FFA, formerly the Future



Farmers of America.” I had barely moved, when another gentleman said that he had taken an agriculture class in high school. It was nice to know that some people knew what my official dress was.

I was the person that was excited to wear my FFA jacket for the first time. I have always stood a little taller after I zipped

my jacket. Yet, I was always a little uncomfortable wearing it somewhere other than an FFA function. That day in Wal-Mart made me realize something—I should not be embarrassed to wear my official dress in public. In fact, I should be more excited to wear it in public than to an FFA event, because in public I can truly show my pride in the organization that I love.

FFA pride is amazing and will lead you to believe in yourself. You will uncover your hidden talents and be less scared to step out of your comfort zone. That confidence will push you to set goals for yourself and drive you to follow through with them, even when the going gets tough.

If you are saying to yourself, “I have FFA pride.” Then I ask you a question. Would you walk around Wal-Mart in official dress, knowing that people are going to look at you a little weird? If the answer is no, then I venture to guess that means you do not have the real FFA pride yet. If the answer is yes, then I thank you. I myself did not have the real FFA pride until this year. Between my experience at Wal-Mart and interacting with FFA members across the state I have truly found my FFA Pride!

It has been an honor to serve as your State FFA President this year. I want to thank you for everything you have taught me, from FFA pride to putting others first. I wish you all the best of luck, and do not forget to show that FFA PRIDE!

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NETWORK KNOW-HOW

BY BEVERLEY KREUL

High school students today spend upwards of 31 hours per week online, according to an article in the New York Times. This includes research for school, checking email, or spending time on social networking sites. Some FFA chapters across Missouri are capitalizing on this convenient and easily accessible media to change the way they are communicating with members.

"Members love that they can easily check dates and times

with just the click of a mouse," said Abby Elson, president of the Marshall FFA Chapter. "We often have comments on our posts expressing thanks or concerns, making it very easy

to address any questions that members have."

The Marshall FFA Chapter has had its own Facebook page for about two years and many of its FFA members subscribe to it. Members are able to check out upcoming dates, words of encouragement, and messages from advisors and officers.

"This greatly affects our chapter communication," said Elson. "By having a Facebook page, members can easily see all the information they need. This is extremely convenient

since a majority of our members use this site on a daily basis."

It is not only FFA chapters that use social networking sites these days. Jordan Branstetter, a Missouri State FFA officer, created a group so members could connect with the state officers effortlessly.

"It has affected communication with the members because we can go on and post pictures, videos, blogs etc.," said Branstetter. "I think it helped members realize as a state officer we're just people that live normal lives and that makes it easy to relate to whoever we encounter."

On the statewide page, members from every corner of Missouri are able to find ways to meet people that have similar stories and experiences. There is discussion about everything from "what you keep in your

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jacket pockets” to “creating a Missouri state band.” Pictures, ideas and discussions can be shared on a much larger basis than the chapter level.

“The members have reacted well to it. We have just over 1,000 members and I think that’s excellent,” said Branstetter. “I would’ve never imagined that many members joining the group. However, as the membership of Missouri FFA grows, I would love to see the page grow to bigger numbers.”

While many students have joined their chapter facebook groups and connected to state officers in a different way, some advisors feel as if social networking sites are not the ideal method of reaching members.

“Not every student has access to social networking sites,” said Michael Shumaker,



advisor of the Republic FFA Chapter. “I would be apprehensive about depending on one to send information to members and it not reaching them.”

However, the Internet can still be a useful tool for reaching students. Social networking sites may be a handy way of reaching many people, but

some chapters have created their own webpage as a way of communicating.

“I am really looking forward to starting up a website for the Republic FFA Chapter,” said Wesley Davis, advisor. “I feel like it will be a way for us to be creative with our announcements and an easy way for students to access the information. “

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You Can Make a DIFFERENCE

The summer after my freshman year of high school I was lucky enough to travel to Daytona Beach, Fla., with my church youth group. We spent a week working on hurricane victim's homes, but still had time for a little fun. The whole week was full of memorable moments, such as my leg going clear through a floor to some seeing the ocean for the first time.

Perhaps the most memorable aspects of our trip was one of the women whose house we worked on. She was a peculiar woman who told us she had been a model back in the day. We easily believed her as she wore fancy clothes each and every day, very bold

make-up, and loved to give us lessons on posing. Throughout the week we installed new windows, sanded drywall, painted, and fixed and cleaned up odds and ends.

The woman had no children, siblings, or family left and as the week went on she told us continuously how much we were starting to mean to her. She seemed especially quiet on our last day, and as we left that day we all signed our names on the freshly painted wall behind her new front door. We left our names so she could remember each individual who had made a difference in her life.

As FFA members you can make a difference any time, any place. Although your name may



BY MEGAN THACKER
STATE V.P., AREA 1

not physically be left on a painted wall, people will remember the good deeds you do and even the simple smile you put on their face.



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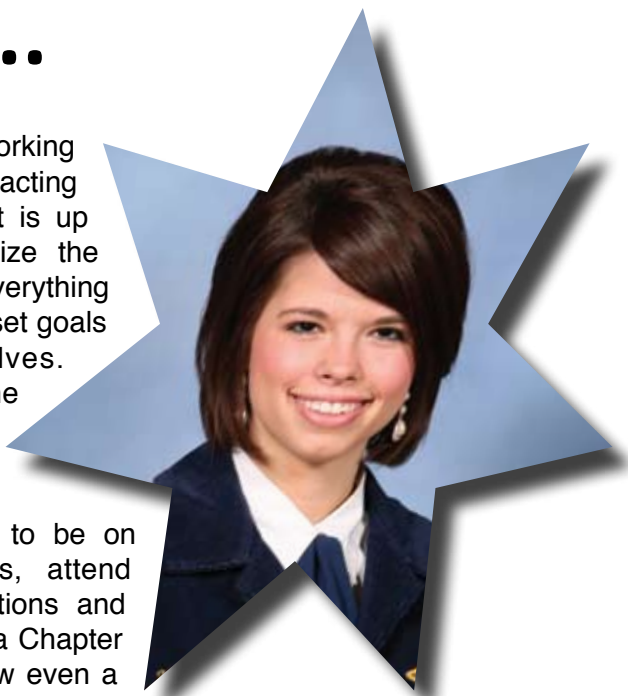
BY KELSIE YOUNG
STATE V.P., AREA 11

I am a first generation FFA member and I knew nothing of the FFA organization and the meaning it would later have on me. In October 2005, I was a freshman sitting in Mr. Spencer's Agriculture Science I class. We had a routine in my Ag class, but that particular day in October was different. He moved around the room and passed out envelopes.

I noticed not everyone received an envelope. Mr. Spencer quietly placed one on my desk and returned to his desk at the front of the room. I tore open my envelope and learned that I was asked to attend the 2005 National Convention in Louisville, Ky.

I did not even know there was a National Convention and I was being asked to go! For as long as I can remember, I have strived to be a part of a

group. I love working with and interacting with people. It is up to us to realize the potential in everything we do and to set goals for ourselves. Going to the National FFA Convention opened the doors for me to be on contest teams, attend State Conventions and later become a Chapter officer and now even a state officer. What you need to realize is to some that note about attending National FFA Convention was just a piece of paper from an Ag teacher, but to me, it was a chance —a chance to learn something new, a chance to be a part of a new group or a chance for me to stand out all on my own. Opportunities just like this one can be found



everywhere in the FFA. It's up to us, FFA members, to unlock that potential.

FFA CALENDAR

June

1.....National Agriscience Apps. DUE
 1-4.....LEAD Conference for Chapter Officers
 7-July 16.....State FFA Camp - Camp Rising Sun, Kaiser, Mo.
 8-10.....Public Speaking Academy - UCM, Warrensburg
 18-19.....Area Officer Institute - FFA Camp Rising Sun, Kaiser, Mo.

July

26-29.....MO ACTE Conference - Springfield, Mo.
 30-Aug. 8.....Ozark Empire Fair - Springfield, Mo.

August

12-22.....Missouri State Fair - Sedalia, Mo.

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