

# The Michigan FFA Creed

Nov/Dec 2006



**Kelly Rosebrugh of the Ogemaw Heights FFA practices her aim for Opening Day with their annual Fall Skeet Shoot. The Opening Day of Rifle Season is November 15th.**

# The Michigan FFA Creed



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**D** **Wildlife and the Farmer**  
Alyn Kiel discusses the struggle between farmers and wildlife.

**F** **A History of Us**  
Learn more about the new history of our association, *Michigan FFA: A Legacy of Great Lakes Leadership*

**H** **In Memoriam**  
Remembering Jim Potier, longtime Perry FFA Advisor

**J** **Farm Safety + Just Kids**  
One parent turns their grief into a movement to protect children on American farms

**K** **The Rest of the Story...**  
Learn more about those who are serving as your state officers.

**L** **Out of Africa**  
The second installment of Past State Officer Caitlin Lorenc's African journal.

**N** **Alumni in Action**  
Meet more members of your State Alumni Council

**Q** **The Cornerstone**  
Learn more about the recent move of the Michigan FFA Foundation

*The Michigan FFA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, weight, sexual orientation or disability. Any student requiring an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact the chapter advisor to arrange such accommodation.*

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# I believe in...

As a state officer team, we believe in living each day to its fullest. There are 86,400 seconds in each day. Instead of sleeping in until noon, or laying on the couch watching T.V. all day, get up and get going! Instead of saying, "Oh, that can wait until tomorrow," get it done today! Instead of not looking at the person passing you on the sidewalk, give them a smile! It is this slight change in your mindset that can make all the difference.

The state officer team would like to challenge you to "Break the Mold" and live life to its fullest. Break through those barriers of sleeping in late, putting things off until tomorrow or ignoring the person on the sidewalk. Put your life into motion the second you wake-up and keep it in motion until the second your head hits the pillow. Don't be caught on the sidelines of life, watching from the bench, get out there and play!

In Tim McGraw's hit song, *Live Like You Were Dyin'*, a picture is painted of a man who learns that his days on Earth may be numbered. He spends his days living life to its fullest, filling his time with sky diving, bull riding, reading the good book and loving his family and friends.

But why should we wait until we think our days are over to live our lives? The answer is, we get busy and priorities are rearranged.

There is no worse feeling than wishing you could turn back time and do something over. Take care of each of the 86,400 seconds of the day. Enjoy life and all that it has to offer.

So now we ask you, how will you spend your day?

## Dates to Remember...

### November

- 6 Broiler/Cornish Hen Weigh Day
- 8-10 Contest Date for Broilers/ Cornish Hens
- 15 Rosters and POAs Due

### December

- 1 Star Candidate Applications, Regional Grant Applications and State FFA Band Applications due to the State Office
- 13-14 Michigan Farm Bureau Leadership Conference - Mt. Pleasant

# Wildlife and the Farmer

**By: Alyn Kiel**  
**MSU ANR Communications Major**

*Five-hundred acres, all to yourself—it is your responsibility to till and plant and harvest and care for this land. Passed down from your father, who received it from his father so long ago that the farm is a family heirloom. In a time when the threat of “factory farms” and urban sprawl constantly encroach on this rural dreamland, it is all that you can do to hang on and make a living in the tradition of your forefathers.*

*As you gaze outward from your porch-railing perch, your eyes pass over the barn, and due to a weekend’s worth of rain, the subsequently muddy barnyard and equally muddy trucks parked in front (hmm, that could use a wash). You scan further outward, to the newly-planted soybean fields, where the recent rain has given the shoots the jump-start they need to start growth. Except, something is wrong. You squint in the light shining from the early morning sun, hoping that what you see is simply a trick of the light. But no, this is no mirage—there, chomping away in the middle of the field, are ...you quickly count...fourteen, no fifteen deer!*

Michigan producers often go head to head with wildlife neighbors living in their own “backyard,” but the proximity of these animals is no joking matter. According to a 2001 report by the General Accounting Office at the United States Department of Agriculture, wildlife damage to U.S. agriculture is estimated at about \$944 million annually. Livestock losses to wildlife predators, such as coyotes, exceeds \$71 million annually, while wildlife damage to blueberries, corn and sunflowers alone cost producers more than \$50 million each year.

Deer are a common problem to both Michigan farmers and the public. Crop damage, animal health issues and car/deer crashes represent a significant issue; large-scale efforts are needed to reduce deer populations in much of Michigan. Michigan car-deer crashes numbered around 59,000 in 2005, causing at least \$130 million in damage, at an average of \$2,000 per vehicle. A national survey conducted by the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service in 1992 identified deer damage as the greatest cause of wildlife damage to cropland, with forty percent of farmers reporting deer damage. Deer can damage a

variety of row and forage crops, vegetables, fruit trees, stacked hay, nursery stock and ornamentals. Residual damage, such as future yield reduction in fruit trees or forage crops, and permanent disfigurement of ornamental trees, can also result from deer damage. Deer are also carriers of bovine tuberculosis (TB) and can transmit it to domestic livestock; TB can be spread nose-to-nose or through saliva contact at bait piles.

Biologists estimate that the Michigan deer population is stable at about 1.8 million head. Deer herd-size estimates are based upon deer check station data, dead deer searches and car-deer crash data. Michigan’s deer herd is not evenly distributed across the state, with the southern half of Michigan containing a large portion of the statewide deer population. In fact, for the last four years, the deer harvest

in southern Michigan was greater than 50 percent of the statewide harvest. However, most deer are found on private land, such as the land used for crop and livestock production.

Turkeys and sandhill cranes are becoming an increasing problem in certain agricultural areas. These species are destructive to corn and wheat seedlings, which often require expensive replanting. Other wildlife could become destructive or may be carriers of disease; the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for the management and control of these species. If a species become destructive to private property or moves beyond its habitat range, the Farm Bureau encourages the immediate enactment of population control tools to avoid agricultural losses.

Despite negative impacts of the deer population, deer also have a large positive effect on the economy. Expenditures, including licensing fees and equipment, food and transportation costs for hunters, have made the estimated value of each deer harvested in the United States to be about \$1,250. Wildlife also have an additional aesthetic value to visitors and landowners, which can help to increase property values, encourage tourism and boost the local economy by increasing sales at local businesses.

***“Livestock losses to wildlife predators... exceeds \$71 million annually, while wildlife damage to blueberries, corn and sunflowers alone cost producers more than \$50 million each year.”***

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) manage the Wildlife Services (WS). Wildlife Services is a world leader in nonlethal research to reduce wildlife damage on agriculture and the public. They combine several management methods, which includes the use of both lethal and nonlethal; often, the combination of nonlethal measures is enough to resolve wildlife damage. If nonlethal methods are ineffective, WS directs lethal measures only at wildlife populations causing the problem. Wildlife Services provides help to individuals who are experiencing wildlife damage, and also work with federal, state, and local governments that request assistance in managing damage and reducing risk to public health and safety.

Solutions available at the local farm level include prevention methods, such as exclusion, which includes fences or individual enclosures for trees, small plots and haystacks; cultural methods and habitat modification, such as planting trees resistant to deer damage and harvesting crops as early as possible; frightening and repellents, such as tethered dogs, gas exploders and chemical formulations such as Deer-Away, and shooting.

Solutions are also being considered at the state level, where the opinions of producers, residents, consumers, special interest groups, and the wildlife themselves are taken into account. The Michigan State Grange organization has created a resolution calling for the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create a program akin to crop insurance that covers profit losses as a result of wildlife destruction.

Government committees can also consider cost-share programs that assist farmers in constructing deer fencing and dog zones or using chemical repellants; there are similar programs available in other states, which allow farmers to pick and choose between various programs to find a system that works for their farm.

Specific solutions to the deer damage problem have been presented by several different organizations, including the State Grange and Michigan Farm Bureau. The section of the Michigan Farm Bureau 2006 Policy Book that deals with wildlife management states that “we

encourage farmers to allow responsible hunters to hunt on their farms in reasonable, safe numbers,” and lists a portion of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act which “provides landowners with liability protection whether people entering the property have permission or not and whether the landowner charges a fee or not.” Another related resolution by the State Grange calls for free deer permits to farmers who can prove significant wildlife crop damage and the resulting income loss. Similar ideas call for considering deer kill laws that allow farmers to kill deer on farmland without a permit, as long as the farmer has a history of severe wildlife damage and has previously tried other methods to control the problem.

Damage solutions for other wildlife species are also being considered. The Michigan Farm Bureau 2006 Policy Book suggests that turkeys be included under the small game license program and that landowner and out-of-season shooting permits be granted to control overpopulation in agricultural areas. It also suggests that the DNR research the sandhill crane problem, with a hunting season as a possible means of control.

Working together with local officials, such as your local DNR officer; staying informed about government policies and the actions of various government organizations, such as the USDA and WS; and using simple prevention methods, including fencing, dogs, or other scare tactics, can help to prevent wildlife damage before it becomes a problem on the farm. Taking advantage of these opportunities can help to manage agricultural damage and public health risk, and allow producers and wildlife to live harmoniously.



Nov/Dec 2006

# A History of Us

For more than a year now, the state staff of the Michigan FFA Association has been working on a special project that would tell a story. It's a story that many people hold small parts of but hasn't been told collectively – until now.

Hundreds of past state officers, degree winners and state staff have been questioned. Old pictures and newspapers have been uncovered. And the best part – our story, the story of the Michigan FFA – has been told.

The interest in presenting our history began late in the spring of 2005 when a stack of American Farmer Degree applications from the 1930s and 40s were discovered in the basement of the FFA office. These old, faded blue pages were accompanied by senior pictures of the applicants – not the dramatic, staged ones of today but the ones of yesteryear – when young farm men sat in front of a camera, dressed in their Sunday best. These historical documents sparked an interest and the question – what else is out there that can tell us about our state association?

Fast forward more than a year and the history has been written, pages have been designed and a publisher has been found. We will have our own book entitled *Michigan FFA: A Legacy of Great Lakes Leadership*. This 120-page testimonial will reveal things about our association that could have been lost. For example, it was discovered that there was a high school organization (the Agricolae Club) for students of agriculture in Michigan (Ypsilanti to be specific) in 1915 – eleven years before the Future Farmers of Virginia was formed by Henry Groseclose. The man who advised this group, B.A. Walpole, helped establish precedents that would become the foundation of the Michigan and National Future Farmer groups. An excerpt from the book, telling of the founding of the Agricolae Club:

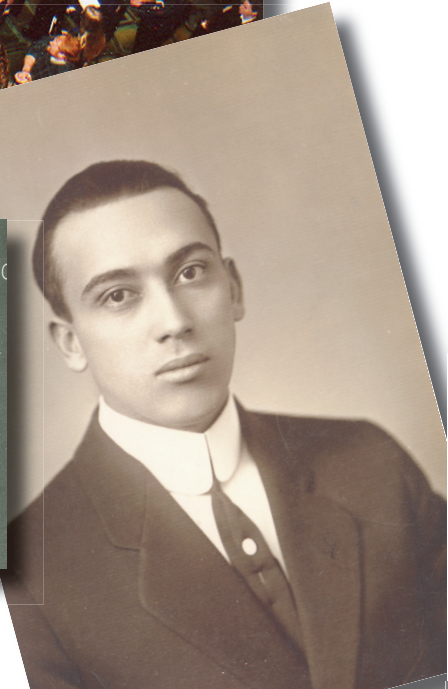
*The group set out to find an identity, a name being the first order of business. Walpole wrote many years later of the process: "Every member put a name on a slip of paper...I put all the names on the blackboard and then the members voted on the one they desired. Among the names we had: Young Farmers, Future Farmers, Agricolae Club...and to my surprise, all the votes*

THU, MAY 4, 1929

## Youths Attending Junior Farmers Week Form State Chapter of Future Farmers of America



When more than 2,000 students in Smith-Hughes agricultural high schools of the state gathered at Michigan State college Thursday and Friday during Junior Farmer's Week, they voted to join the Future Farmers of America and organize the Michigan chapter. Officers were elected and are pictured above. Heading from left to right, they are: Front row—Charles Gill, Ypsilanti, executive committee; Lewis Caro, secretary; Keith Tanner, Chautauque, president; Frank Swagart, St. Johns, vice president; Harry Gibson, Fowlerville, treasurer; Berwyn Pemberton, Imlay City, executive committee; Edward Strenzel, representative; B. J. Up, state superintendent of agricultural education.



*were for Agricolae.” The new name meant “farmer” in Latin and was a direct slam at the fraternities that had tried so hard to keep them down. The Agricolae Club chose for their motto, “Learn to Do by Doing” and purple and gold as their colors. They adopted a constitution and an emblem – with a cross section of corn. B.A. Walpole, the man from Morgan County, Ohio, is indeed the Father of the Michigan FFA.*

And this is one of countless stories included in this volume of history. The book, published by the same firm that put out the National FFA’s Blue Jackets, Gold Standards and the history of the Indiana FFA, operates in a way that allows the association to

pay nothing for the publication of the book. Instead, profits are split between the firm and the association. Someone who buys this volume not only gets an awesome read but also helps support the operations of the Michigan FFA.

Michigan FFA: A Legacy of Great Lakes Leadership is now available for pre-sale for a reduced price of \$37.50 (this price will jump \$5 after pre-sales. For more information on how you can purchase this book, please email [association@michiganffa.com](mailto:association@michiganffa.com).

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## *A Keeper of the History*

**By: Henry Reinart**  
**MSU Animal Science Major**

As you turn into a driveway off a dusty country road you can see a sign overlooking a barn. The sign reads, “Stony Brook Farm, Located in the Sand Hills of Monterey.” When you walk through the door you see a multitude of objects. There are chapter awards dating back from the early 1960s lining the wall. Antique farm equipment hangs from the ceiling. Ceramic farm animals, harvest time decorations and FFA paraphernalia, including a hat signed by the 2005-2006 National FFA Officer team, are placed around the room. Along the east wall sits the table that everybody loves: the food table. In the center of the east wall overlooking the entire room, hangs an FFA jacket from Comer’s days in the organization. If you walk through a white door by the food table you will be taken aback, your journey is far from over. In the basement of this barn lies even more FFA history. The Hopkins FFA Chapter scrapbooks, dating from 1967 lie on a table in the back. An Alumni Blue Blazer symbolizing a significant increase in alumni membership hangs by a picture of Comer along with the other State Alumni Presidents who won this laurel. A display case holding FFA pins, Allegan County Fair Ribbons, pictures and memories lie along the length of a wooden fence splitting the basement. In the other half of the basement Comer has a stage set up. A wooden platform which is raised a couple feet in the air provides a place for musical entertainment. Behind the stage lies a little dressing room for any costumed skits or weddings that will take place on that stage. Set up in front of the stage for the audience to sit is a sea of church pews salvaged from a church renovation. As you exit the barn to the north you will pass a mannequin dressed in Official Dress standing by a giant emblem like they use in the Stars over Michigan portion of State Convention. To the north of the barn a basketball hoop towers over a cement pad and a creek winds around. This is Comer’s Barn.

Comer Skinner, an active FFA alumni member and past State FFA Alumni President, started to convert his barn into an FFA museum five years ago in the fall of 2001. However, his intention was not always to turn the retired barn into a FFA museum.

Comer’s original plan was to provide the local Hopkins chapter with a place to meet in the summer. Before tables and chairs were placed in the barn Comer and the Hopkins advisor had to scramble in order to pull out enough tables and chairs for the FFA functions.

The plaques, trophies, and other mementos of Hopkins FFA’s past successes over the years that now adorn the walls of Comer’s barn did not always hang where they could be seen. These awards were once placed in storage closets of the old Hopkins High School, and were in danger of being thrown away. Comer salvaged the boxes of awards with the hope of displaying them later. Now Comer’s goal was to provide his local chapter with an official place to meet.

Ever since the barn was renovated it has hosted many activities, both FFA-related and not. The Hopkins FFA meets in the barn routinely, for summer meetings, winter recreation, and an annual fall hayride. The Michigan Association of Agriscience Educators (MAAE) had their summer PDI dinner at Comer’s Barn this year, where they had the opportunity to see the relics of the past. Comer has even hosted a wedding reception in the barn. A couple summers ago the Hopkins Alumni program that Comer helped found celebrated their twentieth birthday in the barn.

Although the barn has changed a lot since it was retired from active farming duty in the late 1980s it is still changing. As a supplement to several students’ SAEs the creek behind the barn is getting a makeover. The creek is being deepened and several flowering plants are being planted. A recreational room is being installed overlooking the creek which will one day house a foosball table, dart boards, and other games. When asked about Comer’s barn Hopkins FFA member and neighbor, Basil Stein said, “It’s a top notch barn with lots of memories.”

If anybody would like to visit Comer’s barn and everything that it has to offer please contact the Hopkins FFA chapter.

Nov/Dec 2006

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# In Memoriam

*James D. Potier*  
*1924-2006*



**By: Kirk Yackle**  
**MSU English Major**

Jim Potier always told his students, and moreover anyone he ever came in contact with, that the day he stopped teasing them was the day he stopped loving them. Thankfully, such a day never shone, and now even in the wake of his recent death, that uninhibited love he spent his entire life sharing, will never end as long as there is an FFA and reason to live a life like his.

Jim was born on December 16, 1924, in Eldorado, Illinois, son of Nestor and Fern Potier. His early life followed a trend of the time as his family moved to Okemos, Michigan. His family stayed in the town and Jim graduated from Okemos High School. Shortly after graduation, he had to make a critical decision in his life. At a time when most bright eyed eighteen-year olds are struggling with their school and major choices, he had to do the same with love in mind. Shortly before graduating, Jim started dating a young lady by the name of Alice Marie Weber. Entering college at a time without email or cell phones to help connect with loved ones, entering college might spell the end of a promising relationship. However, Jim would do what he thought was most important. He stayed home and found work so he could be with the woman he loved.

Jim was never a man afraid to chase his dreams and proved this when he entered college at the age of 30. By this time, he had achieved what was truly important, and married Alice. At Michigan State University, he studied with students ten years younger and received a B.S. and Masters degree in Vocational Agriculture.

Soon after college, Jim was hired as the Vo-Ag teacher and FFA advisor at Perry High School. During his tenure, thousands of students passed through his door and learned from the master. Yet, the number of students influenced rises dramatically when you consider that he worked with twenty-six student teachers, many of those went on to

become ag teachers themselves. With the labor of teaching both students and aids, making over twenty trips to national convention, and doing everything that is required not only to maintain an FFA chapter but have a successful one, no one could blame Jim if he became a little worn out. However, he proved this line of thinking wrong when he decided to help the entire high school instead of just the ag students by becoming high school principal.

If his FFA legacy wasn't steady enough, Jim, after his teaching career had ended, decided to create something that would touch all the FFA students that would come after. Along with Norm Braun, the former Chesaning FFA Advisor, the two were able to establish the first Michigan FFA Foundation. This dream certainly has come true and now the FFA Foundation has grown to become the third component, along with association and alumni.

And now we are left with the knowledge that, while he was with us, Jim might not have known how important he was and how much we truly owed him. For over forty years he made leaders of young men and women. We need more men like Jim Potier. Men like Jim who put their futures on hold because they're more concerned with love than their future earnings. Men like Jim who are so dedicated to their noble professions that they work well past the expected retirement age and then only retire because they wish to be with their families more often. Perhaps you know someone like this. Many of us may never have gotten the opportunity to personally meet Jim, I believe the best way to meet him is to look for him in your life. He shouldn't be that hard to find. Look for the teacher whose light is still on long after all the students, athletes, and administrators go home. Look for the parent who juggles a career, a spouse and kids not because they have to but because they want to and love to. Look for anyone who never stops teasing and loving you, because Jim Potier will be there.



# Farm Safety 4 Just Kids



**By: Nicole Schaendorf**  
**MSU ANR Communications Major**

A book, a reminder, and a plan; my journey with Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, FFA, and the many opportunities that I have gained all started five years ago. A chance of a lifetime experience all started with a little book.

*Rhythm of the Seasons* describes how Marilyn Adams lost her eleven year old son Keith in a gravity flow wagon in 1986. It is the story of the beginning. She needed a way to channel her grief and started to help other mothers that had lost children in farm related incidents. This was the beginning of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids.

Many people make decisions that easily could cost lives. Twenty million youths are potentially exposed to farm hazards every year. One hundred and four children die every year on average. Boys are almost eighty-five percent more likely to be injured than girls. Tractors are involved in one in five injuries. Farm machinery is responsible for a third of all farm related deaths.

There is only one seat on a tractor, **DO NOT RIDE ON THE FENDER!** Many parents and grandparents have accidentally killed their own children and grandchildren because of this. The bucket is for commodities and moving objects, not people. This is how people crush bones and lives. Four wheelers require helmets. The list goes on. The simple changes that can be made only take a second. But that one mistake can take a precious life.



*Schaendorf (second from left) at Farm Safety 4 Just Kids Rally*

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK) is a nonprofit organization based in Iowa, which serves the United States and Canada. Farm Safety 4 Just Kids provides resources and training to individuals and communities to conduct farm safety awareness and education programs. The mission of FS4JK is to promote a safe farm environment to prevent health hazards, injuries, and fatalities to children and youth. Simply put, the purpose of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids is to keep rural kids safe and healthy. They have chapters all over the United States and Canada with close to 3,000 members.

By exploring the website, [www.fs4jk.com](http://www.fs4jk.com), one can see that thousands of possibilities. You can find information on accident prevention, learn what action is being taken and how to start a chapter. Chapters expand all over the United States and Canada, many of which are combined with FFA and 4-H.

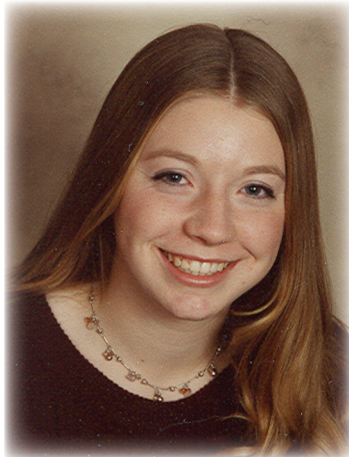
All it takes is one person with a passion to help others. I was that person. Through FFA contests, I was able to look further into this wonderful organization and get up and do something. There was a lot of hesitation, but then I jumped in. After two years of involvement, I currently serve on the National Farm Safety 4 Just Kids Youth Network with five other students from across the nation, I established the first Farm Safety 4 Just Kids chapter in Michigan, and have traveled to many different locations to promote farm safety.

There are a lot of possibilities within this organization. You don't have to start a movement in your community. A simple way to help educate others learn about dangers on the farm and in rural communities would be to become a chapter and do perhaps three service projects for your community. This could very easily be incorporated into your FFA chapter's POA.

By simply paying dues, a chapter will become established and have access to thousands of dollars worth of materials, presentations, and ready to use educational information. This is a great asset to any community. Every person can think of a story they have heard of someone who was injured or lost to a farming incident. By education the public, more people will become aware of the dangers and knowledgeable of hazards facing Rural America.

The ultimate goal of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids is to have zero fatalities and injuries. Join the fight to keep rural children safe and healthy. Log onto [www.fs4jk.org](http://www.fs4jk.org) or call 1-800-423-KIDS today.

# The Rest of the Story...



## **Katie Eldred** **State Vice President**

She says that she enjoys anything that allows her to use glitter...and Katie Eldred shines just like the glitter she uses. Whether it's the smile on her face or her accomplishments in life, she has made an impact on those around her.

Serving the Michigan FFA as State Vice President, Katie has an amazing timeline of FFA and agricultural events. Just to name a few, she was a very successful competitor in the Ag Skills contest representing her home chapter of Maple Valley, a state finalist in extemporaneous public speaking, and currently serves as the advisor of the Eaton County Seatbelt Safety Team.

Katie's positive outlook on life has been the stepping stone to her success. In her spare time, Katie enjoys camping with her family, listening to music and singing along!

## **Henry Reinart** **State Sentinel**

If only we had the ability to fast forward in time, we would be able to see Henry Reinart as a very successful veterinarian back in his home town of Monterey Township. Until then however, meet this cool dude, your State Sentinel.

Henry has quite a history - FFA might as well be his middle name. He has swept the board in many different FFA award areas, including Diversified Livestock Production proficiency awards, extemporaneous public speaking honors and Star Chapter Farmer.

When Henry's not working on the farm or hanging out with the state officer team, he enjoys watching *Babe*, *Pig in the City* and eating his favorite candy, Crunch Bars.



## **Ashley Orlowski** **Region V State Vice President**

The term "Farm Girl" describes Ashley Orlowski to a "T" as she describes her two favorite hobbies as shopping and working on the dairy farm. She has become a master at milking and caring for dairy cows. However, she has become a master over more than just the dairy cow.

This year's Region V State Vice President has risen to the top. She has earned many awards from Ag Issues, Ag Sales, and Livestock Judging competitions. Her motto, "Go into this with an open mind and just do the best you can," has been proven through her success."

Ashley has served on the Ionia Free Fair Queen's Court. As a true farm girl should, she enjoys music by Carrie Underwood and George Strait.



# OUT OF AFRICA

Part II

*With her days as a state officer coming to an end, Caitlin Lorenc traveled to Ghana to learn about that nation's culture and agriculture. At the request of the Creed, she kept a journal. This is the last installment.*

*July 2nd*

Today we headed back towards Accra. We stopped at the Wili waterfall first which was simply breathtaking! We had to walk through dense almost rainforest-like vegetation. It felt so good to be next to water again!! I climbed as close to the waterfall as I could and was subsequently soaked for my efforts. God even blessed us for our troubles with an awe-inspiring rainbow. The Wili waterfall was one of the best parts of the trip. We got back to Accra around 11:30 p.m.

We also visited a 400 year old mosque. Where again, we were mobbed by little kids. Because of our car troubles we were unable to see the crocodile ponds.

Life is so fulfilling here. When in the car, we would wave to people in the villages and they absolutely loved it! It's the little things in life that are so refreshing. Ghana has showed me so much in what life needs to be happy. The people here are proof that we don't need luxuries to be happy, so why do we?

*July 5th*

Went to Adah-foah with Kasa today where we used a paddle boat to ride along the estuary, where both Volta rivers, Black and White, merge before hitting the ocean. When looking back onto the beach we departed from, it was astounding to see the economic difference: one side was where the hotel that we had just come from and it had the more expensive houses, yachts in the water and docks, and then the other side, right next to the hotel on the other side of the fence, was the village, with run down housing, shacks, well used fishing boats and the poorer living conditions.

Earlier Osei took us to the cultural center where we purchased our gifts. It's funny, because people follow you around, calling you, "Madam" or "Sister" claiming they have the best prices for everything, all trying to get you to look in their shop. And you don't want to be rude and say "NO!" so you either fake interest or tell them you need more time to think about the items. And in Ghana, they don't call people, Ms., Mrs., or Mr. If you're older than them, then you are "mom" or "auntie" or "dad", but if you are younger or the same age then it's "sister" or "brother."

Yesterday I gave my presentation to the agriculture students and it was a hit! There were so many questions asked about FFA and several about MSU. There was such a tremendous enthusiasm expressed about the FFA! The students wanted to know what my exact duties were as a state officer, when I had time to study,



FFA NEW HORIZONS

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what our official dress was, and activities I was involved with in the National FFA Organization. I had to explain to them what exactly FFA was and who could take part in it. I had to explain the breakdown of chapters, districts, regions and states, and exactly what positions I held and my duties there. I also told of how FFA was chartered and established, and the fact that 'FFA' doesn't stand for anything anymore.

There were a few other teachers who sat in on my presentation and were just as enthralled as the students. I was questioned as to how FFA can change lives, and how it benefits the students as well as the school and what kind of public exposure it incorporates. I never realized how much there actually is to explain about FFA until I had to clarify everything to students who had never heard of it.

We leave on Monday and I'm already regretting it.

#### *July 6th*

Today we traveled to Esi-Sonkwaa. This is a village which has nothing. There is no electricity except for one room in the school. The village has a population of about 3,000. There is no clean running water, major stable supply of food, electricity, educated medical care, nothing. Kasa stopped earlier and bought 10 loaves of bread, which were handed out after we left. Nicole and I were surrounded by children and I swear we shook more than 100 hands. The kids were shy at first and then quickly warmed up to us. We took several pictures of them and they were fanatic about seeing themselves (they have seen cameras before). Everyone wanted their pictures taken.

The houses are made of nothing more than mud and clay. My first thought or feeling was pity, but that's the worst thing you can do. They know nothing else. Some small kids' stomachs protruded not because they were full but because they were hungry. Something so simple as shaking their hands and teaching them high fives was the highlight of their day. It frustrates me so much that people think they have it bad when they lose their jobs and they have no idea what it's really like. But who am I to lecture? I have clean fresh water, a house, my own car, good clothes, a bed, everything. The money I spend alone on college could feed the village several times over, plus provide more funds. We left with the promise of returning tomorrow.

#### *July 7th*

Left to go to Cape Coast Castle, which was a holding place for slaves. We got a guided tour as well. We toured the male slave quarters, which was larger than the females but the same nonetheless. Both were very dark with only a few tiny windows for light. Inside each, there were small sewers for urine and feces which weren't positioned correctly because they didn't run unless it rained. The slaves were trapped in their own fecal matter. Food was limited and scarce. Most were beaten and raped. There was an Anglican church, located atop the male slave chambers. Across the courtyard from the church was a condemned cell for those who needed to die because they revolted too much. The cell had no light, and prisoners were

given no food, or water and when the door was shut, no air could get through. What a horrible way to die. We went through every step the slaves took before being deported to Brazil, the Caribbean, U.S., or England.

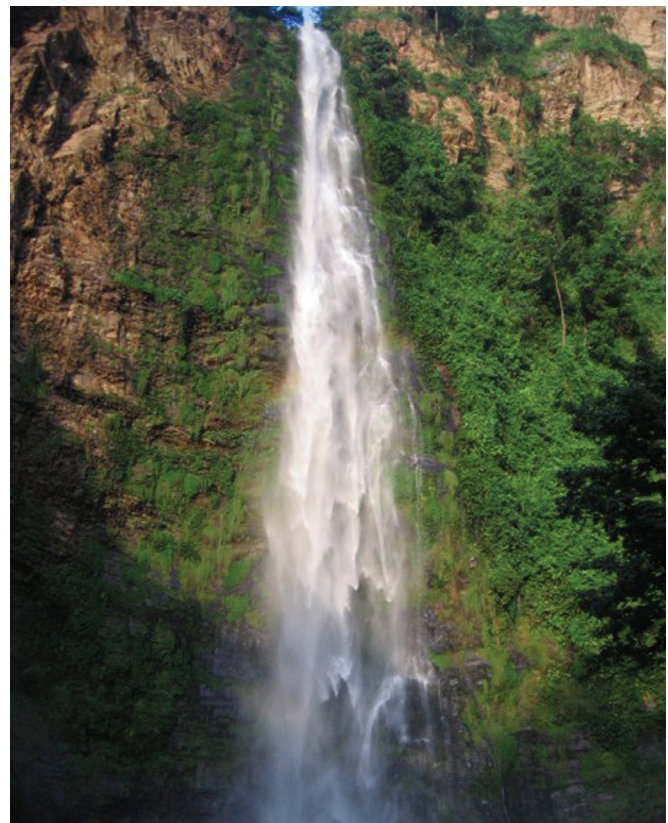
Again we returned to the Esi-Sonkwaa village, this time with candy (Tom Toms-cough drop like candy) in tow and with the idea of teaching them the "Itsy Bitsy Spider." The kids were delighted again to see us. Teaching the song was great! The kids absolutely loved it and some of them even knew it! I sang it three times for them. We also took a walk to see the Methodist church that was being built. There are two churches in the village: Catholic and Methodist. We also handed out two books to two girls who were very bright, brave, outspoken, and polite: one 5th grader and one 4th grader. Their reaction was enough to last me for the rest of my life. A book, bringing so much joy into their life: amazing! How is it that as Americans we can be so greedy for things that aren't a necessity?

#### *July 9th*

Today, we visited the gardens. It was very cool and interesting. The things they consider weeds are the same ones we consider house plants and ornamentals. Neato! We also stopped at the woodcarvers, which is just a section of the road lined with wood carving "shops." They find it insulting if you don't barter with them, which is always a good time.

Tomorrow we will go to the market to buy more material and then off we go back home.

Not looking forward to the plane ride back!!!!



Nov/Dec 2006



# Alumni in Action

## Meet Members of the 2006-2007 Michigan FFA Alumni Council



**Name**  
*Dave Armbruster*

**Office**  
*State Vice President*

**Home Chapter**  
*Laker*

**Career**  
*ATM Technician/  
Farmer*

**Activities**  
*Treasurer of Laker  
FFA Alumni; State  
Alumni Awards  
Chairperson*



**Name**  
*Nikki Dotson*

**Office**  
*State Secretary*

**Home Chapter**  
*St. Louis*

**Career**  
*Office Manager of the  
Ingham County Civil  
Division*

**Activities**  
*Assisting local FFA  
members*



**Name**  
*Randy Butters*

**Office**  
*Region I State VP*

**Home Chapter**  
*Homer*

**Career**  
*Silversmith and  
Farmer*

**Activities**  
*National Ranch  
Heritage Association  
& National Bit, Spur  
& Saddle Collectors  
Association*



**Name**  
*Becky Roosa*

**Office**  
*Region III State VP*

**Home Chapter**  
*Breckenridge*

**Career**  
*Agriscience  
Paraprofessional*

**Activities**  
*Current Secretary and  
Past President of the  
Breckenridge FFA  
Alumni; works with  
FFA programs and  
contest teams*



**Name**  
*Wauneta Ritter*

**Office**  
*Region IV State VP*

**Home Chapter**  
*Byron*

**Career**  
*Retired from the  
Insurance Industry*

**Activities**  
*Treasurer of the Byron  
FFA Alumni; Chair  
of Plant Sale and  
Chapter BBQ*



Charles Arensmeier was selected to receive the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Michigan FFA Alumni this year. Floyd Beneker, State Alumni President is shown making the presentation to Arensmeier. Charles has been a supporter of the alumni since the 1970s. His hard work on the 75th Past State Officer's Reunion is just one example of the effort he puts forth to support Agriscience and the FFA in Michigan.



# The Cornerstone

Michigan FFA Foundation

As of September 1, 2006, the Michigan FFA Foundation has been settling into a new home. The Foundation, housed since 1995 in Lansing at the Michigan Farm Bureau, will move back to Agriculture Hall at MSU.

“Moving back to MSU will concentrate all facets of the Michigan FFA in one location. As Foundation Director, I am looking forward to the resources and opportunities that will become available to the Foundation because of closer ties with the University; especially the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,” said Megan Hirschman, annual fund director of the Michigan FFA Foundation.

The move to MSU brings the Foundation full circle, as it was created at MSU in 1981. Even though the Foundation has been at the Farm Bureau Center for the last 11 years, the ties to MSU were always strong. Members of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development team have always been part of Foundation board meetings, and all funds donated to the FFA Foundation are funneled through to MSU. This unique relationship has allowed the Foundation to operate with the independence of a private foundation, but with the institutional

support of the University. Often, FFA Foundation supporters are attracted to the opportunity to couple their FFA contribution with a gift to a Big Ten University.

The Michigan Farm Bureau Center has been a wonderful place for the foundation to grow. Without their support, many of the FFA Foundation’s recent accomplishments would not have been possible. Hirschman also noted, “The Foundation has always had, and always will have a great relationship with the Michigan Farm Bureau, they are one of our primary supporters, and we are grateful for their contributions both monetarily, and in the hundreds of volunteer hours FB employees have dedicated to the FFA.”

All inquiries, visits or mail for the Michigan FFA Foundation should now be directed to:

**Michigan FFA Foundation**  
**College of Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
**408 Agriculture Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824**  
**(517) 432-2482**

*The Homer FFA Alumni held its annual Memorial Day Pancake Brunch earlier this year. Over 850 people were served 350 pounds of sausage, 200 dozen eggs, countless pancakes and gallons of juice and coffee.*



Nov/Dec 2006

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