The Michigan FFA Creed

Issue 1 Volume 6

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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.
I believe in...

Passion. I believe in the type of passion that takes hold of a person so strongly that nothing and no one can break its grasp. It’s a passion so powerful that mountains can be moved and lives can be changed by its force alone.

Few people today ever find a passion like that in their lives and take hold of it. How many adults have you seen that live their lives without passion? They can’t stand their job, yet they stick with it day after day, week after week, and, eventually, year after year. We all know someone like that. You, Michigan FFA, can avoid and overcome a passionless life.

Many of you already know what your passion is. For some, it’s the FFA or some sector of agriculture. For others, your passion may be a sport, writing or working on cars. Whatever it may be, harness it, fine-tune it, and build a future upon it. We want you to have a future where you love getting up in the morning just to go to work and do that one thing that you’re passionate about.

The 2007-2008 Michigan FFA State Officers challenge you to unleash your passion onto the world! Take your passion and dare to live - mountains can be moved and lives can be changed...try it and see for yourself!

**Dates to Remember...**

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<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
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<tr>
<td>18 MFE/Fall PDI registrations due</td>
<td>3-4 Fall Leadership Conferences/PDI</td>
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<td>25 Start date for Broilers</td>
<td>9 Start date for Cornish Hens</td>
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<td>19 Broiler and Cornish Hen Entries Due</td>
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<td>24-27 National FFA Convention</td>
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A Hometown Soldier
A warm spring day found boys and girls, old and young alike, waving flags on the main street of Standish. There was no cheering. No marching band, boy scouts or floats could be found on this particular Memorial Day.

Instead a lone hearse found its way down the street, carrying a hometown hero and American soldier to his rest.

Sgt. Justin Wisniewski, a 2003 graduate of Standish-Sterling Central High School and a former member of that FFA chapter, died May 19 while serving in active duty in Iraq. At the time of his death, he was part of the 10th Mountain Division and was searching for three of his comrades that had been kidnapped and taken hostage by the Iraqi insurgency.

Sgt. Wisniewski is reported to be the first casualty of the war on terror that was once found in the blue corduroy of the Michigan FFA.

Jessica Wisniewski, 24, remembers her little brother as an always joking entity that had a larger-than-life personality. Jessica and Justin, along with older brother Jason and younger sister Jodi, were raised on the family’s dairy farm operation.

“As early as five or six-years-old, Justin was out helping to milk the cows or feeding calves,” Jessica said.

In high school, Wisniewski was a devoted FFA member and an important part of the varsity football team.

“Justin never searched out the limelight, but his classmates definitely saw him as a leader,” said advisor Ryan Stokoszynski. “He could make even the most serious person double over in laughter and he just drew everyone to him.”

Once Wisniewski graduated, he and four other members of the Standish-Sterling FFA – Michael Stawowy, Matthew Bonnau, Jacob Blehm and Andrew Dunn – enlisted into the military. The five friends each answered a higher call of duty when their country called.

Those same friends would serve as honorary pallbearers at Wisniewski’s Memorial Day funeral.

When word of Wisniewski’s death spread around Standish to those who had known and loved him, extreme grief and some anger was the first emotion felt in the loss of this young life. Slowly, that anguish turned over to appreciation. Wisniewski gave his life trying to rescue his fellow soldiers. He died fighting a war that has caused great debate throughout the world but which also resulted in immense support for the troops placed in the war torn Middle East.

Wisniewski’s obituary read more than just a list of dates and survivors. Even if you never met this young man, it was clear that he had been something special:

“Justin never wanted much, just to raise his family in a log house on the east side of Standish,” the obituary read. “He did not like anyone to make a big deal over him or to fuss, but he is just going to have to deal with it this time. If he did not want anyone to grieve for him, then he should not have been such a great son,
brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, boyfriend or friend. But the truth is, he was the best and he was our hero in more ways than one.”

From Corduroy to Fatigues

When the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked in 2001, many young people felt the same call to service that their grandfathers felt sixty years earlier.

Many of those who were beckoned to serve had been members of the Michigan FFA. To see how a membership in the latter might inspire one to serve as an American soldier, one needn't look any further than the FFA official manual which lays out just what FFA aims to do: promotes the intelligent choice; develops interpersonal skills in teamwork; builds character and promotes citizenship, volunteerism and patriotism.

In May, the advisors of the Michigan FFA were asked to report what alumnus had gone on to fight in the war on terror. 29 names came in, each with their own story, experience and reason for engaging in freedom's struggle.

Specialist Derek Quick (formerly of the Alcona FFA Chapter) jokes that he joined the army because his dad said it would make a man out of him. Joining in June 2005, Quick received Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to work on Blackhawk helicopters before attending airborne school.

Today, Quick works on airplane maintenance and flies missions in Afghanistan.

“Morale for us changes all the time,” he says. “Days when you have to go to a memorial service for a fallen comrade aren’t going to be good. Days where everything goes well and everybody gets back safe from their flights is quite a boost.”

Those in the military service also have the opportunity to learn new skills that otherwise may not have been available.

Lance Cpl. Randy Graftema (from the Coopersville FFA Chapter) was shown as an example by the Marine Corps as how valuable skills can be obtained by soldiers.

Since joining up, Graftema has received on-the-job training as an electrician, a generator mechanic and in the realm of air conditioning.

In the article showcasing, Graftema, he gave some credit to his mechanical skills to his early farm life.

“I worked on a lot of farms and got into heavy equipment and diesel mechanics that way,” he said. “I was working with my uncle when I was younger and we would always work on tractors. I always had fun getting greasy and dirty. It was something that I did when I was real young and kept going.”

Graftema gets the ultimate praise from his staff sergeant: “When you want something done and you want it done right the first time, you call Graftema.”
**Freedom Isn't Free**

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have drawn great debates on their necessity. With that being said, the young men and women fighting those battles of liberty are doing so under dreary conditions and in a land that many would not want to step foot in.

As of July 20, 3,630 Americans have perished in the Iraq War (113 from Michigan) and 408 in Afghanistan (six from Michigan).

While these numbers are often too high to bear, something more can be done for those that continue to fight.

Jill Holdwick-Minnifield (originally from the Harbor Beach FFA Chapter) has been in the U.S. Army since 2004, served in Iraq in 2005 and has recently seen her husband deploy. When asked what could be done to show the appreciation that is felt towards the American soldier, her response is heartfelt and real.

“Hang flags up and just support them,” she said. “Send packages…write the duty stations to get addresses of the soldiers and send them care packages. When they visit, throw a celebration for them. The troops need that support to get through the tough times over there.”

How can the average FFA member show they care?

One method is visiting www.AnySoldier.com. There, you’ll read about Sgt. Brian Horn, who, with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, parachuted into northern Iraq during the summer of 2003. Horne received numerous care packages from his family back in the states, but saw that not everyone was so lucky. When he relayed this information back to his family, they quickly spread the word and Horne started getting numerous care packages, this time with ATTN: Any Soldier included in the address label. These boxes were to be passed out to Horne’s comrades so they could feel the love and appreciation of civilians stateside.

This operation has grown over the past four years to include each branch of the military and now reaches nearly 4,000 soldiers.

To take part, one must just visit the website and choose a soldier to send a care package to. There are helpful hints on what should and should not be sent as well as tips on how larger organizations can help.

“There are so many good soldiers fighting for our freedom,” said Jessica Wisniewski. “We shouldn’t have to wait until one of them dies to thank them for what they are doing.”

Michigan FFA, you have been given challenges and been informed of ways to help your schools and communities before. But, arguably, there has never been a more noble cause than to offer support and appreciation to the fighting men and women who are all much too far from the ones they love.

Please visit www.AnySoldier.com and help anyway you can. If you have additional resources or ideas on helping American soldiers, please contact ffacreed@anr.msu.edu.
The Peace Corps is an independent United States government agency that sends qualified men and women abroad to help provide a service that is needed. Peace Corps volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds that represent the diversity of America.

The Peace Corps has a long standing reputation, having sent more than 187,000 volunteers to serve in more than 138 countries since the program was founded in 1961 under an executive order of President John F. Kennedy.

At the time of its establishment, Kennedy said, “Life in the Peace Corps will not be easy. There will be no salary and allowances will be at a level sufficient only to maintain health and meet basic needs. Men and women will be expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed -- doing the same work, eating the same food, talking the same language. But if the life will not be easy, it will be rich and satisfying. For every young American who participates in the Peace Corps -- who works in a foreign land -- will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace.”

Once being described by people who served in the Peace Corps as being, “the hardest job you’ll ever love” the experience comes with benefits. The international experience and becoming bilingual are qualities that employers seek. For a year after completing two years in the Peace Corps, volunteers are eligible for noncompetitive employment in the United States government.

While abroad, Peace Corps Volunteers are provided with a living allowance that is comparable to the locals around them. Volunteers also receive full medical and dental coverage. The Peace Corps even covers all vaccinations before departure.

The Peace Corps is not all work. Volunteers receive two days off per month over two years. Some save their vacation time and travel to nearby places while in the Peace Corps.

For those worried about paying back student loans while in the Peace Corps, don’t worry so much. While serving, volunteers can defer certain federal student loans and even some private loans but this gets to be complicated and ever changing so it’s best to talk to a Peace Corps recruiter for exact deferment options. After two years in the Peace Corps 15 percent of volunteers Perkins loans may be deducted. After the third year another 20 percent is deducted and after the fourth year an additional 20 percent of the loan is deducted. So if volunteering for four years, 70 percent of Perkins loans are deducted.

The Peace Corps mission consist of three goals: helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women, helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served and helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

If being abroad for at least two years, living in a foreign country, using a skill that can help people, or helping people better understand being American, then maybe the Peace Corps is something you could want to look into further.

As of September 2006, Michigan had sent nearly 6,000 volunteers to the Peace Corps since its creation in 1961.

Michigan FFA, life is calling. How far will you go?

Visit www.peacecorps.gov to learn more.
Region I
Marshall FFA - Chris Christensen, advisor

“Marshall FFA capped a successful school year with its annual point system trip to Grayling for fishing, tubing, canoeing and just hanging out. The trip is one way the chapter thanks members who have significantly contributed to chapter success by their participation, dedication and hard work throughout the school year. Members attending were Ethan Bosserd, Brad Morgan, Jon Croy, Elizabeth Boughton, Kaylee Parker, Zack Taylor and Zach Woods.”

Region II
Lenawee Vo Tech - Ken Bollinger, advisor

“The members of the Lenawee FFA chapter have been busy preparing for this year’s dairy judging contest. This contest is important to the members of the chapter because it teaches them how to be objective and observant in addition to honing their decision making skills. The oral reasons part of the contest is beneficial as it teaches participants how to use logistics and their knowledge to justify their decisions. All of the skills obtained from the dairy judging contest can be applied to any job or career whether it be ag-related or not.”

Region III
Ubly - Melissa Cantrell, advisor

“The members of the Ubly FFA Chapter are extremely busy throughout the entire summer. Some of the activities that the chapter members participate in include the Huron County Fair, the Lionesses dinner, Farm Bureau Dinner, chicken barbeque and cleaning up the their school’s courtyard. All of these activities are beneficial to the members and the chapter because they help to build community awareness and can serve as recruitment tools.”
Region IV  
OSTC-NW - Linda Torony and Nancy White, advisors

“The OSTC-NW chapter is very active in the summer through their involvement in a local organic farm. During the late school year, the members begin growing vegetable plants that are later planted in fields. Throughout the summer, FFA members go to the organic farm and help to irrigate the fields and pull weeds. In the fall, the vegetables are harvested and given to local soup kitchens.”

Region V  
Belding FFA - Kate Feuerstein, advisor

“The Belding FFA Chapter has been busy, whether it be tractor driving day, stealing Montague’s bird Juan or dissecting pigs in zoology. The Belding chapter has also been busy celebrating the election of their first state officer in twenty-three years, Demitria Gavit who is serving as the 2007-2008 Region V State Vice President. Now that it is summertime members have been getting ready for the fair, where they will show and market their project animals.”

Region VI  
Wexford-Missaukee FFA - Heather Dexter, advisor

“Earlier this spring the Wexford-Missaukee FFA Chapter worked with pre-school students for a day. FFA members worked with the children to create flower arrangements for Mother’s Day. Members really enjoyed the experience and are looking forward to further developing this relationship and others in the community.”

Advisors and students: do you want to see YOUR chapter highlighted here? It’s easy! Email State Reporter Dustin Grezeszak at grezesz1@carrs.msu.edu for more information.
The tractor of your dreams at a price you never imagined.

The 2006 FFA Tractors are now on sale.

This year’s FFA tractor is a 1/16 scale John Deere model 7420. The last John Deere in the series! It is available at Tractor Supply Company (TSC) stores statewide. All proceeds benefit the Michigan FFA Foundation.

Now only $58.98!

For more information about how you can support the FFA, contact the Michigan FFA Foundation at (517) 432-2482 or online at www.michiganffa.com
The Rest of the Story...

Joseph Ankley
State Sentinel

Michigan FFA members, meet your 2007-2008 State Sentinel Joe Ankley. Originally from the Lapeer FFA Chapter, Ankley has a long list of accomplishments ranging from the Poultry Contest to a State Runner-Up Demonstration team at the 2006 State FFA Convention. He is a sophomore in college and will be transferring to Michigan State University this fall to study Agriscience.

Coming from a family of eight children, Ankley holds family values close to his heart and looks to his parents during times of need.

During his high school career, Ankley was also involved in many activities outside of the FFA. He was a member of several 4-H clubs, National Honor Society and Farm Bureau and even served as the Lapeer County 4-H King.

For his term as a state officer, Ankley hopes to be a positive role model for the members of the Michigan FFA and would like all FFA members to know that “they should never give up on their dreams, because someday when they are least expecting it, they will indeed come true.”

During his free time, Ankley enjoys watching Extreme Makeover: Home Edition and MSU football. Along with that he likes going to the drive-in and listening to Rascal Flatts.

Andrew Walker
Region VI State Vice President

Introducing your 2007-2008 Region VI State Vice President, Andrew Walker!

Walker is originally from the Ogemaw Heights FFA chapter which he joined as freshman when he was encouraged by a friend. He has a knack for raising animals as his SAE is Diversified Livestock Production shows it. He raises and shows beef cattle, swine and dairy heifers. He also has an SAE in specialty animal production, where he raises goats.

In June, Walker recently graduated as the Valedictorian of Ogemaw Heights High School. There, he was a member of the National Honor Society and the varsity soccer and bowling teams. He was also involved in the Youth Advisory Council and the student council. This fall, Walker is enrolling in the James Madison College at Michigan State University to study political science.

In the upcoming year, Walker plans to help FFA members succeed in reaching their goals. He would like to tell all members that “they are all talented and can achieve anything if they set their minds to it.” He would also like to remind them that “leaders are made not born. If they are determined and set their mind to it great leaders can accomplish amazing things.”

When not serving the state’s members, Walker can be found eating Twix bars and watching the Star Wars movies or eating his mom’s homemade spaghetti.
Ten thousand years ago, the agricultural revolution saw the rise of the tools and cultivars that set the framework for today’s food and fiber industry. The Industrial Revolution occurred during several different time periods and across different world regions, generating many important mechanical and technological innovations. Change today, however, occurs quickly and globally. People have little time to react and adapt to political, societal and environmental changes.

Today’s weakening environmental systems, as a result of deforestation, urban sprawl and global climate change, are taking their toll on people around the world. As these problems move to the forefront of our concerns, people and governments are looking for ways to lessen the negative environmental impact of their actions—to reduce their “ecological footprints.”

An ecological footprint is determined by two factors: population and consumption. A specific country’s ecological footprint can be determined by multiplying the population by the per capita consumption. It is important to note that both the number of people and the amount and way they consume determine a country’s ecological footprint. Developed countries have higher standards of living than less developed countries, and therefore consume more resources.

The United States, for example, contains only five percent of the world’s population, but produces 33 percent of greenhouse gases—the world’s number one producer. If each of the 6.5 billion people living on Earth maintained Canada’s standard of living, we would need two more planet Earth’s to sustain life!

While these numbers are startling, it is sometimes difficult to see how they relate to the everyday lives of teenaged high school students.

So what makes this so important?

Many of the resources we use to produce our food, clothes, cars and houses are finite, meaning that there is only a limited supply of these resources. Furthermore, the American “consume and throw away” attitude cannot be sustained indefinitely. The ecological footprint created by using a product does not merely consist of what ingredients are used to create the product. You must also consider where it was made, what resources were used, and how many people worked on the product before you used it.

The fate of our planet and future generations depends upon the careful consideration of the impacts of our actions—starting by reducing the impact of the ecological footprints we leave.

Change begins on a personal level. First, consider the things that you buy and ask yourself: do I really need this item? Can I get a used version so that more resources don’t have to be consumed to make a new one? Is it energy efficient? What sort of packaging does it have? Can it be reused or recycled?

When making your purchases, consider buying locally-made goods. This not only boosts your local economy and encourages business growth, but also reduces the environmental impact of the additional workmanship and travel that an item from elsewhere would require.

A second extremely simple and economical solution: reduce carbon emissions in your home. This can be done simply, by keeping your car tuned (and gaining extra gas mileage!), planting a tree (and making your yard look better!) or by turning off unused lights and appliances (and reducing your electric bill!). To determine your ecological footprint and for more information about reducing consumption, check out http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp.

Special thanks to Dr. Dennis Propst, Professor, Forest Recreation and Forest Psychology at Michigan State University, for his assistance and guidance with this article.
YOUR JOURNEY STARTS AT

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY!

Get where you’re going with one of the two new majors from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources CARRS (Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies) Department!

In the Fall of 2008, two new majors will be revealed within the CARRS Department: Environmental Studies and Agriscience & Park Recreation and Tourism Resources.

In the Environmental Studies and Agriscience major, options will include: Communication, Community Engagement and Education, Science and Policy, as well as Agriscience and Natural Resources Teacher Education.

In the Park Recreation and Tourism Resources major, options will include: Community Engagement and Education, Commercial Recreation and Tourism, Community Recreation and Zoo and Aquarium Sciences.

For more information please contact: Dr. Randy Showerman (showerma@msu.edu), Dr. David Krueger (kruege20@msu.edu) or Dr. Jeno Rivera (jeno@msu.edu).
New State Alumni Council Officers

Michelle Stealy was elected to serve as the Region I Vice President. She is a design engineer with the Eaton Corporation at Galesburg. She has two sons in the Marshall FFA and farms 1100 acres with her husband, Jr. Michelle is a licensed medical first responder.

Royce Humm will be serving as the Region III Vice President. He is the network services manager for Gratiot/Isabella Regional Education Service District. He is the president of the Breckenridge FFA Alumni and served as the 2002-2003 State FFA President.

Sherry Kiel is the new Region V Vice President. She is a Registered Nurse in surgery and recovery while her husband, Ron, works as a computer analyst. Her daughter Alyn served as the 2006-2007 State FFA President. Sherry is the secretary/treasurer of the Montague FFA Alumni.

Bob Zapolnik will be the new Delegate-at-Large. He is currently the president of the Hopkins FFA Alumni. He works at Borgess-Pipp Hospital in Plainwell as a cat scan technologist. His three children and wife have all been involved in the FFA and alumni at Hopkins.

These new members join the following re-elected members of the alumni council: President Floyd Beneker, Vice President Dave Armbruster, Secretary Nikki Dotson, Region II Vice President Helen Gill, Region IV Vice President Wauneta Ritter, Region VI Vice President Charles Snyder, PSO Representative Brian Martindale and Administrative Director Lori Chamberlain.

2007 School Official’s National FFA Experience

The annual School Official’s National FFA Experience trip will take place on October 25-26, in Indianapolis. This event allows high school administrators, school board members and guidance counselors the chance to experience the National FFA Convention with other colleagues from across Michigan as well as network with administrators from other states. This trip includes the convention registration fee, lodging, transportation to Indianapolis.

Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan FFA Alumni Association, Michigan FFA Association, and Michigan State University sponsor the trip. Space is available to the first 20 applicants and the cost to attend is $400. Registration information will be mailed to FFA/Agriscience Instructors and county Farm Bureau Presidents. The registration deadline is October 1. For more information, contact Lori Chamberlain at 517-323-7000 ext. 3234.
Blue Corduroy
Ambitions

By: Dustin Petty
MSU ANR Communications Major

From a pool of numerous qualified and worthwhile candidates, a nominating committee chose one leader to represent Michigan at the 2007 National FFA Convention as its national officer candidate.

That leader is Gabe Holdwick. Holdwick, who this summer wrapped up his term as the State FFA Secretary, is a native of Harbor Beach and a sophomore at Adrian College.

Holdwick got his chance to serve early in his home chapter.

“During my time at Harbor Beach, I had four Agriscience teachers and six FFA advisors,” he said. “I experienced many transitions and changes, some of which were really difficult to deal with at the time. We almost lost our entire program twice, faced merging with another chapter and so much more.”

Helping Holdwick through these hard times and all difficulties is his faith in God and the never-ending love he receives from his parents, Gene and Mary.

“They have been there for me my entire life,” he said. “I can always talk to them when something is not going well in my life and they offer the support and kind words I need. I know they pray for me everyday and that they will support me in what I chose to do with my life.”

What the red-haired leader chooses to do is, upon finishing college (and a term as a national officer), return home after obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in biology (while minoring in chemistry) and going to dental school. There, in the Harbor Beach area, he hopes to begin a dental practice and eventually raise a family.

But first, Holdwick will work towards becoming a National FFA Officer this November. This process is like something Holdwick has never encountered before. Each state association is allowed to send one candidate. All of these candidates will arrive in Indianapolis the Sunday before convention begins to take part in a knowledge exam, public speaking demonstrations, teamwork exercises and countless other activities that the nominating committee decide upon. And when the process is complete and the National FFA has new officers, Holdwick will know what the next year of his life holds.

Whatever happens for Holdwick at the national convention, he can be sure that he’ll have the support and appreciation of the Michigan FFA wherever he goes.

2007 FFA Alumni Scholarship Winners

The members named here are recipients of the 2007 MSU/FFA Alumni Scholarship. Scholarship winners were selected based on their involvement in FFA, academic achievements and agricultural experiences. The Michigan FFA Alumni, in partnership with the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University, developed this matching scholarship program to help FFA members achieve their career goals. For scholarship information and an application, go to the Michigan FFA Alumni website at www.michiganffa.com/alumni.
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The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University offers Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degrees, certificate programs, and graduate programs leading to the master’s degree and Ph.D.

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