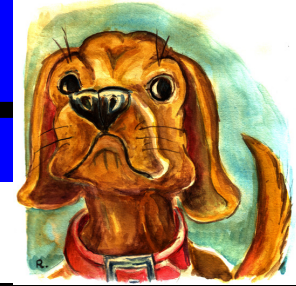




Fall 2009

Professional Development



Old Yeller

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Curtis North wins Outstanding Teacher

IMBLER—Curtis North of Eagle Point High School is a true believer in agricultural education. His passion for students, agriculture, and the profession combined to secure him the title of Oregon Ag Teacher of the Year in the Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association.

North, who has taught agriscience and technology for 15 years was humbled by the award. "Personally, this a great honor and a real surprise because there are so many really great ag teachers in Oregon," North said. "It is a particular honor because I was picked by some of those great teachers. It's not just a reflection on me, it is a reflection on the Eagle Point ag program as well as the ag community," North added.

The relationships and connections North has built with the Eagle Point community were instrumental in securing the award. Those connec-

tions range from community service projects performed by the FFA chapter to guest speakers and coaches for CDE teams.

probably has the best network group in the state," said North.

North will compete at the Region I conference of the National Association



Curtis North accepts his award from former winner Kathy Mayfield at the OVATA Summer Conference in Imbler.

Advisors from each of the OVATA's 12 districts pick the winner, and that added to the prestige for North, who served as the organization's treasurer a couple of years ago. "This group

for Agricultural Educators in May.

Applications for next year's outstanding teacher awards will be accepted and judged at next year's OVATA summer conference.

Coming Up

- OVATA Fall Conference, Lebanon—October 9
- State Soil, Corvallis Area—October 13
- National FFA Convention, Indianapolis—October 21-24
- Membership Rosters Due November 4
- State Ag Sales, Sutherlin—November 14

Kate Crawford—Outstanding Young Teacher

IMBLER—Kate Crawford teaches in the same school from which she graduated. And she does it well.

Crawford, who teaches Agriscience and Technology at Oakland High School was selected as the Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association's Outstanding Young Member. That distinction comes a year after

she was selected as the OVATA's Teachers Turn the Key Award winner, which carried with it an opportunity to attend the NAAE National Conference to attend Professional Development workshops that helped her build a strong program.

When she took the program over, Crawford said it was a system of

basic shop classes and non-progressive agriculture classes. She changed that to a thorough program of study that includes introduction to agriculture, agricultural plant and animal biology, two advanced agriculture classes, and a horticulture class. Her program has grown through relationships with the (continued on page 4)

“Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”—Les Brown

President’s Message by Tim Ray, OVATA President

Now is the Time

As we head back to our classrooms and reenergize our programs, now is the time to reconnect with those who were so instrumental in our efforts last spring to restore funding to the Student Leadership Development Center. Throughout this coming school year, engage your students and community in the advocacy process by laying the groundwork for communication with local elected officials. We can all start by letting our legislators that listened to our concerns and found ways to help keep the Student Leadership Development Center viable for all students know how much we appreciate them. Now is the time to keep Agricultural Education and the FFA on their minds.

At a time when we are not asking for any special consideration and the legislature is not in session, we need to grasp the opportunity to promote our programs and the benefits that Agricultural Education and the FFA have on student success. Open your doors and allow elected officials in to see students engaged in learning and help them understand the value of our programs in this perilous time

of budget balancing. Remember to invite people of influence to your banquets and ask them to participate as honorary judges for leadership events. Do your part to keep up the communication in our local communities with those who have done so much to help us in our time of need.

With the job markets in America changing, Career and Technical Education is gaining a lot of attention across the



country. Now is the time to be talking about the benefits of Career and Technical Education, especially Agricultural Education, and informing our elected officials on why

Agricultural Education and the FFA are so vital in our school, communities, and nation. Now is the time to be reinforcing the positive perception of our programs with advisory committees, alumni, parents, and administrators. Now is the time to tackle change in our programs in an effort improve our own teaching practice and be recognized as forward thinking and creative leaders in our schools. Now is the time to spread the word about the unique three-dimensional model we use in Agricultural Education to engage and motivate students to become well-educated and highly skilled graduates.

As we work towards a unified Team Ag Ed approach in Oregon, it is time for OVATA to step up our efforts in advocacy and continue to move forward toward stable funding for the future. The next few years will be challenging for Agriculture Education, but like all great organizations facing distress, we will weather the storm if we work together for a common purpose. Now is the time to rise to the occasion and say as one voice that we will do whatever it takes to provide what is best for our students, programs, communities, and Agricultural Education.

Preventing the Baptismal Under Fire by Marty Campbell

Teaching high school agriculture has been for me a baptismal under fire. I changed my major so many times, trying to dodge a math class, that I’m not even sure what my degree is in. What I do know, however, is that learning how to teach ag by trial and error is like learning to fly an F-16 by reading about it on the back of a cereal box.

The good news is that ag teachers are by and large the salt of the earth. Aaron Duff is my mentor, and I’m sure he gets sick of my questions and complaints, but he’s always there with an answer. I still owe Nick Nelson a couple of reproductive tracts to replace the ones of his that I wore out, and Bill Peal has been a wealth of enthusiasm in addition to his good advice.

Perhaps the best part of teaching agriculture, however, is the fact that there are many opportuni-

ties for us to become better teachers through attending professional development conferences, workshops, or events. In my first year teaching ag, I hauled a couple of kids back to Indianapolis, and I hid out in workshops the whole time I was there. I didn’t know teaching could be so much fun.

Professional development is readily available to us as ag teachers. We have publications that offer us advice and wisdom. We have associations that are made up of people just like us, who long to better the world by building a future for our industry. Believe me, I’ve taught other subjects, and there are very few opportunities like the ones we as ag teachers have. So I encourage each of you to take advantage of at least one opportunity, this year to develop yourself professionally. It will make your life easier, and you’ll probably get one step closer to being that teacher that you strive to become.

“Now is the time to tackle change in our programs in an effort improve our own teaching practice and be recognized as forward thinking and creative leaders in our schools.”—Tim Ray



“Better to have that and not need it than to need it and not have it.”—Woodrow F. Call

Are We a Profession That Eats Its Young? Challenges of Beginning Teachers

by Greg Thompson and Brian Warnick

The first years of teaching are often problematic for beginning teachers. The isolation of beginning teachers with little to no support has been the norm for years. In 2005, Warnick and Thompson set out to investigate into the trials and tribulations of first year agriculture teachers. This exploratory study attempted to obtain information regarding the successes, challenges, needs, and problem solving strategies of first year teachers and their mentors.

First year teachers identified areas of concern in: classroom management, parent involvement, time commitment, and misinformation provided to students about the agriculture program (dumping grounds). Other challenges included: comparison to the previous

teacher, curriculum development, and dealing with student differences. At the same time, beginning teachers indicated that working with students, helping students succeed, and developing partnerships were all successful experiences of beginning teachers. Teachers also agreed that the good outweighed the bad, but support in the challenging areas of teaching would help them become more effective and increase job satisfaction.

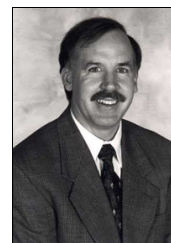
Interviews with teachers and their mentors helped to identify factors that have promoted successful experiences during the first years of teaching. Teachers and mentors agreed that developing relationships with other professionals, communicating with key people, support and mentoring, and a background in FFA and agriculture were factors that

promoted successful experiences.

Our profession is making efforts to help beginning teachers in their first years of teaching. Mentoring beginning teachers is critical to their success. They are great teachers and need our help. Let's work together to help our beginning teachers not only survive, but also thrive.



Dr. Brian Warnick



Dr. Greg Thompson

A Cornucopia of Professional Development by Marty Campbell

Do you ever have one of those days? You're out of ideas. You're about two weeks behind. You're tired of kids, CDE practices, land labs and parents. You walk into the room and simply dig through the old video cabinet and veg out the rest of the period. Burnout has officially settled in, and you think about how much easier it would be on you and your family to just go be a feed salesman.

It's days like that that make it even more critical to take part in the many and diverse professional development opportunities available to agriscience and technology instructors nationwide. The question may be, "Where do I start?" Well, hopefully, this article will give you a few ideas to plan out your next year and begin the process of becoming a fresher, more vibrant teacher whose burnout changes to catching fire.

OVATA Conferences

The Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association offers two great conferences for its members. Those conferences are filled with opportunities for teachers to become more proficient in the classroom. Offering sessions on everything from technical skills assessments, to hands-on learning opportunities, to introductions to new curriculum models and programs, to just being re-ignited by good speakers and fellowship with other awesome teachers; the OVATA can prime the pump for any teacher.

NAAE National and Regional Conferences

Along the same lines as the OVATA conferences, only with a bigger budget and a bigger pool of ideas, the National Association for Agricultural Educators offers both national and regional conferences that allow teachers to take part in a multitude of professional development workshops. This year's NAAE national conference takes place in Nashville, and the speakers and workshops on board are set to be truly amazing.

National FFA Convention

What a deal! Haul twenty crazy kids more than half way across the country and get in on some free workshops while having a perfectly legitimate reason to hide in a glass room. Wow! From Lab-Aids workshops that revolve around Inquiry-Based Learning to Ag Business workshops from DTN, there are truly some great workshops available to teachers during the National FFA Convention. So, while in Indy, jump in on a few. They're definitely worthwhile—you may even end up with free concert tickets for attending.

Delta Conference

Dr. Kyle McGregor and his crew from Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas will take you where you are, break you down, and build you into the greatest teacher of which you are capa-

Yes, it's tough to fit all of it in, but the rewards are great. You could come out of your professional development avenue with new ways to stay organized and geared up for another great batch of students!

ble of being. Incorporating high learning standards, effective instructions, E-moments, Life Knowledge, and a philosophy of teaching that truly raises the bar for educators, the Delta Conference is touted by alumni as a turning point in their careers.

Although these are only a few of the many options available for AST instructors, the point is simply this: be the best you can be as a teacher. Yes, it's tough to fit all of it in, but the rewards are great. You could come out of your professional development avenue with new ways to stay organized and geared up for another great batch of students!

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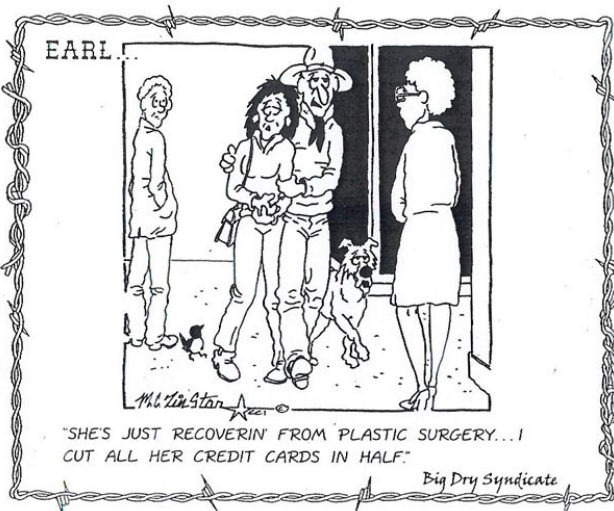
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We're on the web!

www.ovata.org



Kate Crawford, Continued

community, and has grown to include an FFA chapter that placed in the top four in the state forestry contest.



Her schedule keeps her very busy, but she is able to cooperate with the neighboring Sutherlin Chapter, a chapter advised by her husband, Wes.

Kate Crawford, Oakland's winning teacher

Buckskin Mice and Illiterate Cows by Marty Campbell

The Martynus Touch

Sometimes, I get pleasure out of hearing tales of tragedy. It's not that I want others to suffer; it's just that—I'm an idiot. And it gives me hope to hear of instances when my friends and neighbors do stupid things, too. A guy just hates to be alone in this world.

There are a number of positive thinking gurus that would tell me I might oughta change my thinking, but facts are facts. There are times when I truly feel that everything I touch turns into that puss you squeeze out when you lance a cow's jaw. Not a glowing self-evaluation, but at least I've grown a definite policy of being honest with myself. I'll pat myself on the back when deserved, but stupid is as stupid does, no matter *who* does.

A couple of winters ago, I had a most heinous weekend. If it could go wrong, it went twice as wrong on my place. I'd gotten a flatbed trailer stuck on my driveway, took out my guardrail trying to undo the mess, and barely survived the plague of frogs falling from the sky and pelting me in the head. That weekend did to me what seeing your grandmother in law naked does to most people. I needed a rest.

Fortunately, the snow melted. Flipside—MUD! I hate mud. I would rather beat myself in the back of the head with a stick than deal with mud. That's why I like cold weather. I'm warmer at 25 than I am at 45, because mud makes me cold and grumpy. Fast forward to feeding Monday night.

I jumped in the rig to haul some hay out to the heifers. Usually, I use the tractor, but I was feeling lucky (why, I have no idea—like I said, I'm an idiot). I threw her in four low and gassed her through the gate and up the hill. A little sliding, but no major problems. I got done feeding and headed her back through the gate only to find that pickups going slowly through a mudslick tend to slide downhill. This one slid downhill right into the gate post. I stopped. Not cool. Not cool at all. I climbed out, and it didn't appear any damage had been done other than a scratch and maybe a little dent.

As I scratched my head, I had a brilliant idea (a paradox, I know). To execute the plan, I fired up the tractor. There's a deer bumper on my pickup—one that can take a pretty good beating and still look like reasonably well-adjusted prom date. Anyhow, I took the tractor bucket and pushed on that deer bumper, shoving the front end of the pickup uphill and away from the gate post. I drove around through another gate and shoved the flatbed uphill as well. I jumped off the tractor, climbed in the rig and gassed her. Slip—thud. I had wound up where I started.

Assessing the damages, I noted I was still in the clear. I was really trying to accomplish all of this before my wife got home, so maybe I'd never have to tell her. Anyway, I re-shoved both ends of the pickup uphill with the tractor again. Then, a light bulb popped on in my head with a shot. I got right behind the flatbed, bailed off the tractor, and threw the pickup out of gear. I climbed back on the old John Deere and gently pushed the Dodge right through the gate.

It moved like a hot knife through butter. I smiled, and I stopped the tractor. The pickup—kept on going. I shook my head, held it in my hands, and I laughed uncontrollably, as I watched my pickup roll away. This, as they say, was icing on the cake. How was I to explain this one? The pickup rolled until it ran over a 250 gallon water tote, ending the tote's useful life, but saving the pickup.

I parked the tractor, got into the high centered pickup, backed it off the tote and parked for the night. Of course, my darling bride came through the door wondering what had happened to the tote. I told her the truth. I calmly said, "Your husband's an idiot." She didn't argue.

Ideas Unlimited—A Handbook to Assist Ag Teachers

Natasha Mortenson and Ellen Thompson joined together to collaborate a handbook of classroom learning strategies to share with fellow Ag teachers. The handbook is designed to assist Ag Teachers with delivering lessons that take minimal teacher preparation while maximizing effectiveness. Natasha and Ellen first thought of the idea of a handbook during a workshop presentation at the Minnesota Association of Agriculture Educators Conference in July of 2008. They wanted to compile all the fun, interactive, and effective strategies they had success with so that others could be successful too. "The handbook contains over 40 activities that any teacher could use in almost any discipline to engage students in the learning process. The ideas in the handbook have been used and tested in our classrooms with specific detail and examples for others to use as a guide," explained Mortenson and Thompson. "Ag teachers are very busy people. They need to use, minds-on techniques to implement into their lessons. That is exactly what this handbook is," said Mortenson. To view the handbook go to:

http://naae.ca.uky.edu:8080/clearspace_community/docs/DOC-1048 or
<http://www.isd743.k12.mn.us/AgTableofContents.htm>