



West Virginia

AGED NEWS and VIEWS

Published by
West Virginia University's Agricultural and Extension Education Department

January - February 2007

Harry N. Boone, Jr., Ph.D., Editor

FFA Legacy

by *Baxter Black, DVM*

They stood before me as I was signing books in my booth at the National FFA Convention this fall in Indianapolis. The man showed his age but was still holding up. "This is gonna be my last," he said.

I looked at him more attentively. "How long have you been teaching vo-ag?" I asked.

"Thirty-eight years," he said. There was a touch of weariness in his voice. We looked out over the sea of blue coats that surged through the huge convention hall. His wife took our picture. "That's a long time to be married to an ag teacher." I told her, knowing the commitment a spouse must make to accommodate the late suppers, kid's projects, county fairs, field trips, night calls, weekend practices, long hours and exhaustion that are an accepted requisite of the job description.

She smiled and touched his elbow. "It was worth it," she said and they walked away.

The very next person extended her hand. She had a broad smile. If I had not seen her advisor button it would have been easy to mistake her for one of the older students.

"Hi," she said. She was excited, "Would you sign my book?"

"How long have you been teaching vo-ag?" I asked.

"This is my first year, my first time as an advisor to come to the convention. I've been here three years before as a student. We've brought 23 kids, two in public speaking, a judging team..." she rattled on as I signed her book.

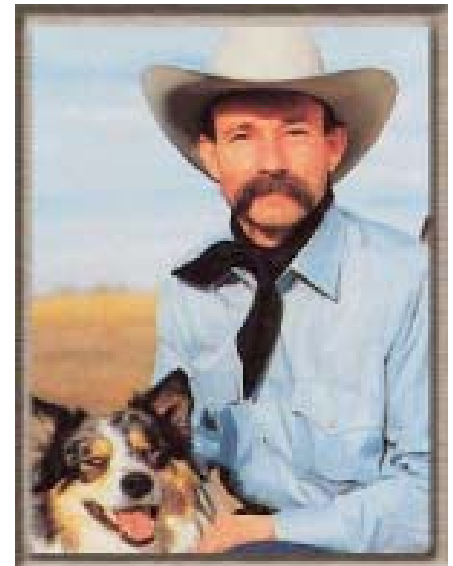
"Thanks," she said, shook my hand firmly and disappeared into the crowd.

A warm feeling slid down my back, I actually chuckled out loud.

I often have occasion in my travels to remind vo ag teachers of the responsibility they bear. Maybe they know it already but I think their job is so hectic trying to balance teenage insecurities, practical real-life educational subjects, and personal obligations, that they don't have time to mull over the profound effect they have on their students.

I believe teaching school is a noble calling. And ag teachers take it a step beyond because they are in the position to shape the professional life choices as well as the character of pliable minds.

They say there were 50,000 attendees to the FFA Convention. 50,000 kids dressed nice, behaving responsibly, treating adults politely, not trashing hotels, yelling profanity or abusing the hospitality of our Indianapolis hosts. The locals noticed and commented over and over about what a great group the FFA was.



To you folks in Indianapolis, Thank you, but you can thank that advisor who has given 38 years of his life to that end. And you can expect that new first year advisor to follow in his footsteps.

That sea of blue coats is their legacy. They leave the world a better place. And they have a right to be proud.

Used with author permission.

*Coyote Cowboy Company
P.O. Box 2190
Benson, AZ 85602
(800) 654-2550
www.baxterblack.com*

Mr. Black is a cowboy poet, syndicated columnist and radio commentator. He was a quest speaker at the 2006 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN.

Editorial : The FFA Code of Ethics -- Are We Living Up to the Challenge?

by Harry N. Boone, Jr.

What is this world coming to? I am sure that everyone has heard this statement at some time in their life. Recently a star athlete was given two technical fouls and ejected from the game. On the way off the court he bumped the referee. He was suspended for two games however, the adults decided to get involved in the process. A state court imposed an injunction and the athlete was allowed to play the next game. We have seen too many incidents of overpaid pro athletes getting into skirmishes with fans. Baseball has a dark cloud over it with recent allegations of steroid use. It is tough finding good wholesome role models today.

The FFA has enjoyed a reputation as an organization of individuals who are patriotic, honest, respectful, courteous, fair, good sports, etc. In fact the organization has a "code of ethics" to remind its members of their obligations to the "blue and gold." Over the past few days I have heard a number of stories that make me wonder if the organization's members are changing and becoming more like society as a whole. Let me provide you with a few examples. There were reports of students using reference materials and cell phone text messages during a recent Career Development Event. In another Career Development Event students were rude to the Contest Coordinator. A

chapter secretary was criticized by a member from another chapter because they had prepared and distributed a newsletter highlighting their activities. The newsletter was "making other chapters look bad." A member from another chapter was accused of cheating when their team placed first in a Career Development Event. The reason, "you cannot win your first time in the contest."

I am sure these are isolated incidents in an otherwise outstanding organization, however, we as adult leaders must take steps to insure that our members maintain the image of courteous respectful youth and conduct themselves at all times in a manner to be a credit to their organization, chapter, school, community and family (*Official FFA Manual 2006-2007*, 2006). We used to assume that youth would learn these characteristics at home. Today that is not true and character education has become a part of the high school agricultural education curriculum.

Before we get on the "bandwagon" and start legislating change, I think we need to stop and conduct an internal search for the source of the problem. A popular country song tells the story of a young son saying a "four-letter" word. The father asked the son where he learned to talk like that and the son

responded, "from you Dad." Are our words and actions sending the wrong signals to our students? Start the evaluation process by asking yourself:

1. Have I ever "bent" the rules to create an advantage for my students?
2. Have I talked negatively about another teacher, chapter, state department personnel, or university faculty in front of my students?
3. Have I been dishonest (stretched the truth) on an application (student, chapter, or personal)?
4. Have I taught students ways to "get around" crucial elements of contests, applications, etc.?
5. Have I criticized judges in front of my students?

The list goes on. If you answered "yes" to any one of these questions, you are a part of the problem. Nobody is perfect, however, we as the leaders in the organization must do our best to be positive role models for our students. Keep in mind that you will be a role model to your students. The question is: Are you a positive role model? You become a role model through your examples and actions. If your students see your actions as courteous, respectful, honest, fair, etc., it is more likely that they will attempt

(Continued on page 6)

Questioning Promotes Learning and Helping Students to Understand the FFA Creed

by Stacy A. Gartin

Educators continue to support the concept that active directed learning produces more effective results as opposed to passive non-directed learning. Teachers of agriculture have long been noted for not only teaching the "how", but the "why" of their disciplines.

Agriculture teachers continue to utilize questioning as both a teaching technique and an instructional method. Agriculture teachers believe that questioning is as natural a part of teaching as it is of learning. Teachers realize that students have come to understand their environment by asking "Why?", "When?", "Where?", "How", "Who?", and "What?" Students want answers to their questions so they can gain an initial understanding or further clarification. The agriculture teacher questions to develop and direct the learning process.

Questions serve many functions:

- To arouse interest.
- To promote understanding.
- To develop new insights.
- To develop ideals, attitudes, and appreciations.
- To strengthen learning.
- To stimulate logical or critical thinking.
- To test a pupil's preparation for the lesson.
- To test for the achievement of objectives¹(Groisser, 1964, p.6.)

Which of these functions could be reinforced if teachers of agriculture utilized some of the following questions to direct student understanding of the FFA Creed?

I believe in the future of agriculture, a faith born not of words but of deeds—achievements won by the present and past

generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

- Describe what you see as the future of agriculture in West Virginia and the United States.
- How has agriculture assisted people in developing their faith?
- What have been some of the major accomplishments of past generations of agriculturists?
- What are some of the more recent achievements of present day agriculturists?
- Referring to "in the promise of better days through better ways," in what ways do you see agriculture improving in the next twenty years?

I believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agri-

(Continued on page 4)

Student Teaching: An Eye Opening Experience

John Smith, Student Teacher, Tyler Consolidated High School, Fall 2006

As my student teaching draws to an end, I look back and realize I could not have picked a better setting than the one at Tyler Consolidated High School. I was blessed with being a part of one of the best chapters in the state, as well as being mentored by the highly respected, Mr. Leon Ammons. Mr. Ammons and I both benefited from the experience as I was the first student teacher he has had during his career.

Being from a program that was not very active in FFA activities, I was able to witness and take part in an extremely active program at Tyler Consolidated. Before my student teaching experience, my views of SAEs were to what I had been told. That all changed the day I arrived at Tyler Consolidated. Nearly every student is engaged in an elaborate SAE. I was able to encounter this aspect for the first time and now hold a completely new and rejuvenated view of what the experience should be like for the students.

My most rewarding and memorable moments also came from a first time experience, the Career Development Events. At first, Mr. Ammons did not plan to have an Agricultural Mechanics team participating in the events. With a little bit of persuasion, he granted me the opportunity to put a team together and give it a shot. With only two weeks to prepare the team, and assist the other teams, the after school hours began to add up. All of the hard work paid off as the Ag. Mechanics team placed third in the state and contributed to the school's third straight sweepstakes title.

Teaching at Tyler Consolidated allowed me to gain knowledge in an area that I had no experience; operating a meats lab. I knew when I selected my student teaching site that this would be ex-

tremely beneficial to my success as an agriculture educator. My background consisted of an agricultural mechanics shop and operating a greenhouse, so witnessing the operation of a meats lab was a much needed experience. For future student teachers, I strongly suggest teaching at a school that has facilities different from what your high school program offered.

Teaching at Tyler Consolidated also provided me the opportunity to see what an advisory committee is all about. The support which is gained from the group is overwhelming. The advisory committee is a great ally to have when the times get tough. When I begin my teaching career, an advisory committee will be one of the first things I implement in my program.

My biggest fear prior to starting my student teaching was how the students would react to a student teacher. Being the first student teacher under Mr. Ammons, I

felt it could be a challenging task to keep the students under control and on task.

My fears were soon relieved as the students exceeded my expectations of discipline. I never had to send a student to the principal. I did not have to issue detention or reprimands a single student for any reason. I was blessed to be placed in a situation where the discipline was not a factor, but I also understand that where my career takes me from here could be a different story.

Student teaching has been an awesome experience. I would not change one thing about it if I had to do it over again. As for now, my time is up to move on to bigger and better opportunities. I find myself asking where the time has gone. In the same thought, I'm thrilled to be finished and eager to find my start, wherever that may be.

Fall 2006 Student Teachers



Front Row: Ashley Watts, John Smith

Back Row: Matthew Thornton, Chris Puccio, Ashby Ruddle

2007 Career Development Events

4-H and FFA Equine Judging Contest (Meredith Manor, Waverly, WV) Saturday, April 28, 2007

4-H and FFA Dairy Cattle Contest (Jackson' Mill) Sunday, August 12, 2007

WV FFA Career Development Events (Morgantown, WV) September 19-21, 2007

Reflections of my Student Teaching Experience

Matthew Thornton, Student Teacher, Hundred High School, Fall 2006

The transformation from being a student to a teacher was one that was both scary and invigorating at the same time. The thought of being responsible for the information being learned and grades of another student is one that is odd to say the least. For the past sixteen years I was the one who sat at the desk and was responsible for paying attention to the teacher and passing the tests. Now the roles have been reversed.

At first I was extremely nervous, as were most student teachers I imagine, but the assistance I received from Mr. Wilkins made the transition rather easy. On the very first day of class a warm welcome was extended by the entire school on the morning announcements. It was then that I began to realize the type of setting I had entered. Before actually starting my formal teaching I had some time to get to know the students and faculty. This made things a whole lot easier. When I started teaching I was able to call on students by name which really helped to make everything a little more personal. It was the formal teaching which proved to be the most challenging and rewarding.

Assuming responsibility of more than one class was pretty difficult. I was used to having to prepare one lesson a week for methods class, and even that was hard sometimes. That is nothing compared to really teaching high school. It is difficult, especially with agriculture, because there are so

many completely different subjects being taught on a daily basis. One period I was talking about plant nutrition and the following period I was teaching about preparing livestock carcasses for evaluation. Within a few minutes I had to completely change my train of thought and teach with enough enthusiasm that the students wanted to pay attention. I never seemed that I was prepared enough for each class a lesson plan base to work from, unlike a teacher like Mr. Wilkins who has done this for so long that he can teach any subject on a minutes notice. I had to teach all day, help out with activities after school such as preparation for Career Development Events, processing hogs and deer, and SAE visits, and then do work for the next day's classes until I went to bed. Honestly, my time student teaching could have been the least amount of sleep I have ever gotten. Waking up in the morning was difficult as well; especially when the previous day did not go as well as I had hoped it would.

Some discipline problems got me down a few times throughout the semester, but I learned that they are a part of teaching. I had overheard a conversation where some girls were talking about dropping out of the class because they disliked my personality. This makes it really difficult to get up in front of the class everyday knowing you are speaking to people who may not like you. Another time I had

a student swear at me because he did not feel I was acting fairly and then refused to do what I had asked him. I thought that once the class saw one student begin to act out, they all would try to take advantage of the situation. The student and I worked everything out and the class moved along without further conflict the remainder of the semester. Mr. Wilkins was a huge help at this point. I get down on myself once in a while when things don't go as well as I would like. We sat down and had lengthy conversations about some problems that were occurring and he assured me that things would work out for the best. Having a cooperating teacher that is so kind and insightful is probably the best thing that could have happened to me while student teaching. No matter what problems I faced or troubles I encountered throughout this twelve week journey, he was there to offer as much assistance and guidance as I could have asked.

In just twelve short weeks I transformed from a student studying agriculture and the environment, to the teacher responsible for facilitating the learning activities of students who hopefully have at least some of the desire I have to learn more about the world around us. These past twelve weeks began in a very uncertain way, but ended up being an experience that I will never forget. What made everything special was the students at Hundred High School, and a teacher that is truly one of a kind, Mr. Virgil Wilkins.

Understand the FFA Creed (continued)

cultural pursuits is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny.

- What are some of the challenges you have faced thus far in your agricultural career? How have they helped you?
- We see American farmers who have spent their entire lives on the farm losing everything they own. Do you honestly believe there is a future in farming?
- What makes a good farm? Describe the development of your interest in agriculture.
- We are experiencing an image problem. What are some of the careers in agriculture that have been overlooked by the public?

I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.

- How does agriculture assist in developing one's leadership skills?
- Explain how secondary agriculture, the FFA, and a supervised agriculture experience program enhance one another. Why are all three vital if we are to continue being progressive agriculturists?
- Considering some of your interests in agriculture, describe a few production and/

or marketing techniques that could benefit you and your associates.

- Are secondary agriculture, the FFA, and SAE Programs preparing young people for agricultural careers? Explain.
- What skills can you gain from secondary agriculture and the FFA that will make you a better person?
- What is the public interest as far as agriculture is concerned?
- What are some of the products of your toil?

I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in the life abundant and enough honest wealth to help

(Continued on page 5)

Student Teaching at Elkins High School

Ashby Ruddle, Student Teacher, Elkins High School, Fall 2006

I decided to major in Agricultural and Extension Education for two reasons. First, my sister majored in it and seemed to enjoy it. Secondly, my high school agriculture teacher, Mr. Hudson, made an impact in my life by getting me involved in the FFA and in agriculture. I thought when I first went to West Virginia University that I wanted to be a teacher. Later on, I realized maybe I want to do something else. My student teaching experience has helped me change my mind again.

My student teaching experience at Elkins High School was an interesting one. During the first week, I lost all of my lesson plans that I had prepared because of a faulty hard drive in my computer. From that point I adopted the attitude that things could only get better. The first few weeks were hard. I felt like I was not connecting with the students and that I was teaching material that had been covered. After about two weeks, I got a better understanding of what to teach. I noticed that the students started to realize that I was going to be there for a while and I was not a substitute.

During my first few weeks, Mr. Beatty let me help train the poultry team. I was happy that I could experience what it was like to train a team. It was a big difference going from a contestant in a poultry contest to a coach of a team. I felt this experience lead to the students listening to me more in the classroom because I was willing to help them and their chapter.

After the Career Development Events, I had a great time teaching. I noticed students seemed to be adjusting to a different style of teaching. They were a lot more cooperative and more outspoken in discussion. I was able to find out more about what they wanted to learn and go into more detail. I could tell they were gaining interest and this led me to change some of my teaching techniques. I would spice up my interest approaches. During class, I would try to change techniques to keep their attention. Mr. Beatty did a great job in helping me. He would give me ideas to work with. I was glad that he did not sit me down and say this is how you have to teach. He would suggest ideas and I would use the ones I felt more comfortable using.

My student teaching experience showed me the three components of the total program; FFA, SAE, and classroom/laboratory need to be taught in the classroom. If I could do it all over again I would stress the SAE portion more. I covered in great detail the FFA and classroom/laboratory, because I felt more comfortable with them. The FFA part was easy because I was active in the FFA. I feel strongly that FFA does promote premier leadership, personal growth and career success. I covered the classroom/laboratory portion because I enjoy working in the laboratory setting whether it is a greenhouse or an agricultural mechanics shop.

While student teaching at Elkins High School, I was able to see what it was like

being a chaperone by transporting students to the state Career Development Events and National FFA Convention. I actually enjoyed the situation. It made me realize the liabilities and responsibilities that a teacher has.

Student teaching has helped me realize that I enjoy teaching and working with high school students. I think that I want to become a teacher. My experience at Elkins High School was very interesting but I feel that I have matured more. At the end of my experience, I need to become more organized and work on varying my teaching techniques.

I would like to take a moment to thank a few people. Dr. Gartin, I appreciate your help and advice on teaching. Drs. Boone, both of you have been helpful working on my schedule and making sure I can graduate. Mr. Hudson, I am glad that you have been there for me. You have helped me when I needed it. You are not just a teacher to me, but you are a good friend. Thanks for everything. Mr. Beatty, you proved to me that you are a great teacher. I noticed your students enjoy your classes not because of what you teach, but mainly because of who you are. You have helped me become more interested in teaching and I would like to thank you and your family for giving me a place to stay. Last but not least, Mom, Dad and Carrie, you three have helped me the most. You were always there for me and inspired me to be my best. Thanks for everything.

Understand the FFA Creed (continued)

make it so—for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and more of it when needed; in being happy myself and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me

As a future agriculturist, do you believe that those individuals currently working to make a living from farming are receiving a fair return for their efforts? Explain.

- Explain ways in which you believe today's problems in agriculture can be improved.
- How can you, a greenhand in FFA, help the less fortunate?

- What is meant by "less need for charity and more of it when needed"?
- How does the happiness of others depend on your involvement in agriculture?
- What is honest wealth?
- How do you play square with your family, peers, and teachers?

I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.

- Describe some of the ways that you can improve and maintain agriculture as a strong foundation for America.
- What are some of the lost traditions of our national life?
- What are some of our traditions in America that are different from other nations?

*What is the importance of the FFA creed?

(This article was originally published in the February 1999 issue of *News and Views*)

Field Experience Summary

Ashley Watts, Student Teacher, Mineral County Technical Center, Fall 2006

Student teaching has been quite an experience. I have learned so much. I did not think that going back to a high school environment would be as different as it has been after five years of college. I knew it would be different just because I was switching positions. I was becoming the teacher. That part was different, but I hadn't realized how much I had matured since high school. When you are in high school, you feel so old and grown up. Being back in that atmosphere, I realized just how young a high school student is. They all need guidance right up to the day they graduate, and through this experience I have realized that most juniors and seniors think that they do not.

Student teaching has made me realize what I am comfortable teaching and what I need to work on. I am so glad I was placed at Mineral County Vocational Technical Center. All three teachers have very different teaching methods and ways of disciplining their students. Mr. Young is by far the best high school agricultural mechanics teacher I have ever observed. The students respect him and want to please him with their class work, fruit orders, and SAEs. The agriculture teachers have class competitions and Mr. Young always wins because the students take all of their orders to him. He is the kind of teacher that makes you want to do better than you think you can. He is always pushing his students to the next level. Mrs. Webb is very kind hearted and patient. She is always willing to help others. Mrs. Chambers is very organized and does not put up with any outbursts. She tells the students like it is and all the students get along with her because

she gains their respect and can relate things to real life experiences. All of these qualities that all three teachers possess have made a very strong and productive agriculture department. They have impacted me because I can imitate their strengths.

I have also realized from my experiences just how important it is to work well with all of the agriculture teachers, the principal, and all other staff and teachers. It makes things run more smoothly. Having a principal that supports your program and its students gets you ahead of the game. The principal at MCTC, Mr. Whetzel, was very supportive of all teachers and their classes. He was very open to do everything he could to help pour money into the technology classes at the middle school and the agriculture program.

One thing that was different from the agriculture program that I was a part of is that they do all of their activities after school. Instead of working on record books during class, the agriculture department at MCTC has a record book clinic after school. They count it as a chapter activity. They do this because they can get more one on one time with each student.

I also learned that it really does take a special kind of person to be a teacher. You have to have patience, knowledge, understanding, will to learn, stamina, time, a good heart, and be able to control a room. I have learned and realized that my problem area is that I am not domineering enough. My cooperating teachers said their biggest worry is that I will not be able to handle students that have a moderate/se-

vere discipline problem. That is probably the one thing that is unrealistic about teaching at MCTC; the students are very well behaved. I had no serious discipline problems at all. I felt like MCTC was an oasis. I wanted to see the difference between working at a high school and working at a technical center. Besides the well behaved students and not having lunch duty, the schools are maintained the same way.

I felt like I could easily connect with most of the students. I noticed a difference between underclassmen and upperclassman. I liked teaching the underclassman a lot better because there was an arrogance with the upperclassman. They did not want to be helped. They thought they knew everything.

I have learned so much about my personality and how I handle and work with people. I think that I would make a good, effective teacher. I discovered I like working with the younger kids, which confirmed suspicions I had prior to student teaching. I also learned that you do not have to know everything, it is important to make sure you do your homework before entering the classroom to deliver a lesson, do not act like you know what you are talking about when you do not, and never assume anything. After enduring this experience and constantly being evaluated by others, I evaluated myself and came to the conclusion that I think I would make a very good teacher. I believe I have what it takes. My personality is calming, kind, and I can easily deal with others. My student teaching experience was an eye opening experience and assured me that this is my calling.

Editorial : Are We Living Up to the Challenge? (Continued)

to emulate the actions of their role model. I'm reminded of an incident in another discipline. The guest instructor started off the instructional activities with a forty-five minute lecture on why the students should respect her. Instead of getting the respect she desired, she earned the disdain of the youth. The bottom line is you must lead by example. If your actions are viewed as appropriate, you will earn the respect of your students. Once you earn their respect, they will be more likely to emulate your actions.

There are too many outside influences and everyone will not fall into line and be-

come perfect citizens. When we observe one of our students "stepping outside the line," it is our role to correct the situation. Our reaction should depend on the nature of the incident. If it is a minor incident, a simple reminder may be sufficient. If the incident is a major one, more severe measures will be required. If at all possible the measures should include the student taking responsibility for his/her actions and attempting to correct the situation.

We teach the FFA Creed to each of our students. Students are taught to analyze the

meaning of each sentence and determine what each segment of the Creed means to them. Are we at the stage where similar actions should be taken with the FFA Code of Ethics? Should we help our students analyze each item, decide the meaning of each line, and develop a plan to implement the Code into their daily life? It's an idea worth considering.

The opinions expressed are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent official positions and/or opinions of the Agricultural and Extension Education program, the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences, or West Virginia University.

An Evaluation of My Student Teaching Experience

Chris Puccio, Student Teacher, University High School, Fall 2006

I cannot believe that after all of the fuss and the commotion I caused throughout my college career that I am almost finished. From the day I started to the final day it has been fun. Yet even though I have been worried and scared, I will miss this lifestyle. It is finally time to change from child and student to adult and professional.

Teaching is a profession and all throughout my academic career at West Virginia University I have been taught to accept this. I now fully understand what it means to be a professional. Every morning during my student teaching experience I would wake up, get ready for school and then walk through those doors and be amazed at the fact that 25 students, children, were looking at me, waiting for me to teach them and mold their minds. I still stand firm on the principle that there should be a separation between the teacher as a professional and his or her students, the amateurs. I learned early that what I was taught actually works. For instance the seating charts; now when I first started I let the students sit where they wanted. It was fine for a day or two but then things got out of hand and needed to be dealt with quickly. Assigning seats is a wonderful idea and should be practiced so students will respect their limits and their place in the academic society. However there are limitations to what we perceive as a just action against discipline. Learning not to use certain words that may sound too offensive or too demeaning toward a student; this is a key. Take for example one day a student just abruptly called me out and called me a name. Without hesitation I yelled right back him and sent him to the office. This may not have been the best use of my position. Maybe I should have taken him outside after class and gave him a firm talking and came to an understanding.

Now that time is running down and I feel I have at least cracked open the surface of my full potential, I love every minute of this situation. It is wonderful, and yes there are bad days, but the good far outweigh the bad. Not knowing what the future holds is also a unique feeling, scary but unique. I know I am not the best teacher, nor will I ever be, but at least I can admit that and always strive for the highest amount of excellence I can achieve.

Learning occurs everyday, and it never stops unless you allow it to happen. However being a teacher, especially in an ever-changing field such as agriculture, one never stops learning. I plan to do so until my last minute standing. Student teaching has also helped me gain a better understanding of the many different ways students learn and comprehend information. I never really understood nor appreciated this. Being prepared to implement at least one auditory, kinetic, and visual activity into every lesson is a challenge.

Thus far I have had few extreme discipline problems. Learning to deal with the immaturity of high school students I guess has been the second toughest part of my experience. The worst and hardest portion of this final chapter in my undergraduate career has been learning to be more prepared and ready. To put in just one word, flexible. Flexibility is the key factor in anyone's student teaching experience. The more flexible with time, patience, and ability to be able to get off the subject matter at hand and then get back on it is astounding. If a student asks a question of how this will relate to their life, you stop and explain it, and then you get back onto the original lesson is a true sign of flexibility. Also learning to

be flexible with your time is a factor. There is always something you would like to do, but you must be aware that teaching is first and foremost. Student teachers must realize that this is a lifestyle. This is actually two different lifestyles; one being a student teacher, and the other switching from the student to the professional. I would hate to see teachers try and go into the field without having this experience. I would wager that the majority would quit within a year or two.

I would not exchange this experience for anything. It has been absolutely wonderful and yet at the same time it has been rewarding and fulfilling. I would not mind student teaching for a little while longer. Maybe getting paid would be an added bonus, but as I said to one of my students recently, I am getting paid in experience instead of money. This semester has been bittersweet especially in the past few days knowing it is coming to an end. On one hand I want to get on with my life and have a family and become a professional while on the other I want to go back and student teach with that safety net of my advisors and cooperating teacher. Yet it is good to spread your wings and fly on your own. I am going to really miss this. I can still remember how scared and nervous I was during the summer and the beginning of the semester watching and observing before taking over classes I worried that I would mess up and never be able to accomplish what I set out to do so long ago. Who would have thought that I would have had the guidance and the support structure I have encountered, not to mention the fun and excitement of having a classroom to call my "own." It was fun, exciting, scary, weird, and unique here at University High School with Mr. Shriver and his students during the fall semester of 2006.

FFA Code of Ethics

We will conduct ourselves at all times in order to be a credit to our organization, chapter, school and community by:

1. Dressing neatly and appropriately for the occasion.
2. Showing respect for the rights of others and being courteous at all times.
3. Being honest and not taking unfair advantage of others.
4. Respecting the property of others.
5. Refraining from loud, boisterous talk, swearing and other unbecoming conduct.
6. Demonstrating sportsmanship in the show ring, judging contests and meetings.
7. Being modest in winning and generous in defeat.
8. Attending meetings promptly and respecting the opinion of others in discussion.
9. Taking pride in our organization, activities, supervised experience program, exhibits, and the occupation of agriculture.
10. Sharing with others experiences and knowledge gained by attending national and state meetings.
11. Striving to establish and enhance my skills through agricultural education in order to enter a successful career.
12. Appreciating and promoting diversity in our organization.

Important Dates

Mar 11-12	State Ham, Bacon, & Egg Show and Sale	Charleston
Mar 30	State FFA Governing Body	Cedar Lakes
Apr 28	State FFA and 4-H Equine Contest	Meredith Manor, Waverly, WV
Jul 11-14	State FFA Convention	Cedar Lakes
Jul 24-26	Teachers Conference	Charleston
Aug 12	State FFA and 4-H Dairy Contest	Jackson's Mill
Sep 19-21	WV Career Development Events	Morgantown

Email Addresses and Phone Numbers

WVU-AGEE	Office Fax	(304) 293-3752
Dr. Stacy A. Gartin	sgartin@wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4480
Dr. Harry N. Boone, Jr.	hnboone@wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4481
Dr. Deborah A. Boone	debby.boone@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4482
Daniel Shockey	dan.shockey@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-5190
Alice Compton	alice.compton@mail.wvu.edu	(304) 293-4832 ext. 4484
Website	http://www.caf.wvu.edu/resm/aee	
WVDE	Office Fax	(304) 558-1055
Donald L. Michael	dmichael@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Keith Burdette	kburdett@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Kelly Turley	kturley@access.k12.wv.us	(304) 558-2347
Website	http://www.wvffa.org	

Published by:

West Virginia University
Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry,
and Consumer Sciences
Division of Resource Management
Agricultural & Extension Education
Morgantown, WV 26506-6108

in cooperation with

West Virginia Department of Education
Division of Technical & Adult Education
Services

Office of Program Services
Agricultural Education
Charleston, WV 25305

and

West Virginia Association
of Agricultural Educators

Volume LVII No. 1

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Morgantown, WV
Permit No. 34

Agricultural & Extension Education
Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and
Consumer Sciences
P.O. Box 6108, Room 2056 Ag. Sciences Bldg.
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506-6108