



# West Virginia AGED NEWS and VIEWS

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## *James Beatty -- Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award Recipient*

CHARLESTON, W.VA. (March 1, 2006) – James C. Beatty believes all students have a hidden desire to learn. “Our job, as teachers, is to extract that desire and empower students to realize their individual educational potential,” he says.

“Every day, every class, every student is a different, yet potentially rewarding struggle in the great educational realm. Teachers have to enter the classroom with a positive outlook and believe that they will reach every student, no matter how difficult the circumstance. A person has to be extremely dedicated to the profession of teaching in order to be successful,” Beatty says.

Beatty’s teaching philosophy – and dedication – are right on target. Today he was among only 12 teachers statewide to receive a 2006 Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Award. Robert W. Shanks, president of Arch Coal’s eastern operations, representing Steven F. Leer, Arch Coal president and chief executive officer, made the announcement during a presentation ceremony at the state capitol. He was accompanied by West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin; First Lady Gayle Manchin; Secretary of Education and Arts Kay Goodwin; Deputy State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack McClanahan; and West Virginia Education Association President Charles Delauder.

“James Beatty doesn’t limit his classroom learning to strictly agricultural learning,” Leer says. “He knows that his students must also have other skills to be successful. For example, he incorporates leadership skills and public speaking into his curriculum.”

Beatty teaches agriculture, forestry and animal science courses at Elkins High School. “Mr. Beatty makes his classes fun and entertaining, yet remains serious so that students can learn within the agriculture program properly,” notes agricultural student

Tyler Spencer. “As an advisor, he will always help when help is needed. He takes time out of his life to train Future Farmers of America teams to compete at the state level to the best of their ability. There have been times we have been at the school until 8 p.m. in order to increase our knowledge about the contests in which we are competing. As students, we choose to stay to learn because of Mr. Beatty’s passion for teaching.”

“He will even help students in their other classes (that he doesn’t even teach) to help them succeed in all their classes,” Spencer adds. He loves his students and should be honored for this. If there is anyone who should receive this award, it is Mr. Beatty.”

Beatty earned an associate degree at Potomac State College and bachelor’s and master’s degrees at West Virginia University. He has trained at the state and national levels on development and integration of various curriculums. Beatty attended the FFA’s National Delta Conference, which is limited to 50 educators nationwide. He also attended a National Agricultural Education in-service that was limited to two teachers per state.

He has served on committees that affect curriculum/career development at the state level and was one of only 25 WV educators selected to formulate questions for Agricultural and Natural Resources exams. Beatty is the Outstanding Young Agricultural Teacher for West Virginia award recipient, and he was one of six honorees chosen by the National Association of Agricultural Educators as an Outstanding Young Teacher for 2004-2005. He also received national recognition as a Teachers Turn the Key recipient, a professional development seminar limited to one teacher per state each year. Beatty was inducted into the Gamma Sigma Delta National Honor Society of Agriculture in April 2005. He further supports his commu-

nity through involvement in a number of agricultural organizations and school-related activities.



In addition to recognition, award recipients receive a \$2,500 unrestricted cash prize, a distinctive trophy and a classroom plaque. The West Virginia Foundation for the Improvement of Education makes a \$1,000 award to each recipient’s school, for use with at-risk students.

Arch Coal is supported by the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia Library Commission in program promotion. Arch Coal’s Teacher Achievement Awards is the longest running, privately sponsored teacher recognition program in the state. Nominations of the teachers are made by the public and selection is made by a blue-ribbon panel of the teachers’ peers – previous recipients of the award.

Arch Coal is the nation’s second largest coal producer and mines clean-burning, low-sulfur coal exclusively. The company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: ACI) and maintains its corporate headquarters in St. Louis, Mo.

Information about each of the 12 recipients is posted on the Arch Coal Web site: [www.archteacherawards.com](http://www.archteacherawards.com).

*James completed B.S (2001) and M.S. (2004) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University and is currently teaching agricultural education at Elkins High School.*

# *The Best Experience of My Life: Student Teaching*

by Charles Bennett

Wow!!! I can not believe my twelve week student teaching experience is almost over. I am just amazed by how much fun I had. I have experienced a lot of fun things through agriculture education such as competing in a national contest, being a state officer, going to regional conferences and recruiting for the Davis College. Without a doubt student teaching was at least 10 times more fun than all of those activities combined. Getting to complete a split student teaching placement looked very bleak at first but without a doubt will prove to be a major asset when I am teaching in the future. By doing a split placement I was able to experience regular and block scheduling and high school and vocational center settings. I also experienced nearly every type of subject matter offered in West Virginia.

I completed my first six weeks of student teaching at St. Marys High School with Mr. Jason Hughes. While at St. Marys I taught biotechnology, forestry science and ecology, Agricultural and Natural Resources I and II. Without a doubt the most challenging, but also the most exciting class was the biotechnology class. It was really neat to learn this subject and apply it to what was currently going on in agriculture. The students in both the biotechnology and forestry class were well behaved and seemed interested in what I had to teach them. Agricultural and Natural Resources I and II was more of a challenge. While the subject matter was not new, such as biotechnology, it seemed to be more of a challenge to get students interested in the subject matter itself. I quickly found Agricultural and Natural Resources II students seemed to enjoy working with their hands in the greenhouse. They enjoyed it so much they would often request to stay after class to make sure the job was finished properly. Agricultural and Natural Resources I seemed to be more of

a challenge for a variety of reasons. I think one big reason was that several students were quickly turned off by the idea of having an SAE. In my conversations with Mr. Hughes most of the students that were not interested in SAEs had already decided that they would not enter the program the next year. In evaluations that I requested the students complete, around 65% of the students wrote down that they enjoyed the variety of SAEs that were covered in the unit. I also discovered that home visits should be a MUST to make sure that students are meeting their full potential with their SAE. One example was a young lady who had a pair of beef cattle already in production that she originally was not going to include in her record book. On another SAE visit one parent, who had never heard of the local ham and bacon show, told the student to add market hogs to their SAE in addition to what had already planned. While at St. Marys my favorite part was the SAE visits. It allowed me to actually see what the student was doing rather than just reading about it in a record book.

From the FFA side I helped set up the annual chapter banquet, prepared for a visit from a National FFA officer, assisted with National FFA Week, helped train teams and a speaker for the scholastic contests, and assisted a member with their State FFA degree application. It was really neat to plan these activities with students that wanted to learn more about what was going on and who wanted to have a part in the FFA chapter.

After six weeks I moved to Mineral County Vocational Center in Keyser, WV. At Mineral County I worked under the direction of Mr. Dana Young. I taught oxy-acetylene/arc welding, small engines/power tools and greenhouse technology. I was taken back by the ma-

ior differences between a high school and vo-tech center. The vo-tech has a more laid back atmosphere. You never know when students would or would not be in class based on the high school schedule. Being on a block schedule did not allow me to interact with all of the students who only completed classes during the fall. The student audience was also completely different. While both groups of students were the same age I think being primarily in an agricultural mechanics situation completely changed the way I taught the group. Most of the students were eager to get into the shop and go to work and did not want to listen to a 15-20 minute classroom presentation. I quickly found out that by tying in something that was taking place in the shop, I could easily grab and hold their attention to make my point.

I also completed SAE visits while I was in Mineral County. Once again it was one of my favorite parts of student teaching. I also assisted four people with their applications for their State FFA Degree. The chapter gave me the privilege of helping with the beef expo team, assisting with planning the chapter banquet and going to Kentucky as a chaperone on a horse trip.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hughes, Mr. Young and the students of St. Marys and Mineral County for allowing me to come into their programs. Without a doubt doing a split placement was the best situation for me. What one school did not have, the other school easily provided. I truly feel that I have received a complete experience. Without a doubt the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of spending time in two different programs.

## *An Extension Field Experience*

by Matthew Dean

Being born and raised on a farm, I've known for some time that I wanted to be involved with agriculture for the rest of my life. After searching for some time, I decided that Extension would be the best career choice to meet my goals. That is why I searched for an internship with the West Virginia University Extension Service for the summer of 2005.

I received an internship and was placed in the Randolph County Office. My immediate supervisor was Mr. Ronnie Helmondollar. When I wasn't busy with agriculture and natural resources activities, I also helped with 4-H and youth development. Over the summer I worked on a wide variety of things such as: helped WVU carry out research projects, performed my own project with hay bale weights,

counseled two weeks of 4-H camp, taught black-powder rifles to 4-H campers, helped with adult education classes, collected soil samples for Huttonsville State Prison Farm, helped with livestock shows at the West Virginia State Fair, and assisted with numerous 4-H activities, meetings and projects within Randolph County. These were all valuable experiences and I learned a lot from each.

My favorite aspect of the internship was having a job which allowed me to work with agriculture and youth development. I now have a deeper appreciation for what goes on behind the scenes at activities such as 4-H camp and livestock shows. Being a camp counselor was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

I also enjoyed the agriculture aspects of my internship. Working with agriculturalists to solve problems and help them become better was very rewarding. Helping someone with decades of experience in their area of production to become more efficient or learn something new was remarkable.

Of these activities my favorite was working with WVU on research projects. All of the projects I helped with dealt with reproduction. As we worked, the professors and graduate students would explain what we were doing and what was being tested. I found the science behind these experiments fascinating, however, I was still unable to completely understand the complexity of the experiments with my limited scientific knowledge. This inspired to me

## *An Extension Field Experience (continued)*

to take a reproductive physiology class this spring and apply to graduate school in reproductive physiology.

I enjoyed working with producers during these projects. While I found the professors to have a vast scientific knowledge, the practical real world experience of producers was also fascinating. The science professional understands why a certain practice works, but it is the producers who best understand if the practice is beneficial. This is where I believe Extension comes into play, to act as a bridge between science and real world applications. I believe Extension is the hardest job in agriculture. They have to be as scientifically minded as any professor, yet be able to run an efficient

and profitable farm or ranch if the need arises. This is what I found the most disturbing about my internship.

Here I was a college senior, ready to graduate, wanting to go into Extension, yet I couldn't understand a reproductive physiology experiment. How am I supposed to help producers apply newly discovered concepts when I can't understand the experiments that discovered them? This is why I have decided to go into a scientific field for graduate school. Since I find reproductive physiology the most interesting area of animal science, I will use it to guide my education. Unfortunately I came to this realization late in the game and now I have to rush myself to learn the science I need. I wish I had

taken more science classes earlier in my college career, so I could spread them out and get the most from them. If I had this planned better I could have made more efficient use of my college credit hours. I believe all Agricultural Education majors should lean more heavily toward science. Whether you want to go into Extension or teach at the high school level it is always better to have too much scientific background as opposed to too little. Even if the scope of your knowledge goes beyond what you plan to teach, it will allow you a better grasp of what you are teaching and have more confidence in your answers, because you not only know what the answer to a question is, but why that is the answer.

### *Student Teaching*

by Annie Hall

As a student at WVU in agricultural and environmental education, I awaited the semester that I would complete my student teaching experience. Now that the semester is nearing an end, I can say that teaching at the Taylor County Technical Center has been a positive experience. I believe I can attribute that to a number of reasons.

First, I was fortunate to work with a co-operating teacher who treated me with respect and did not take advantage of the fact I was "free labor." Instead of leaving me behind at school while he traveled to judge scholastics contests or attend meetings, Mr. Tennant allowed me to travel with him to gain experience.

Second, I was able to gain experience working with students not only in the classroom, but also during after school practices for scholastic contests and other FFA activities. Teaching at a school with an active FFA chapter allowed me to get back into the swing of training teams, advising students, and organizing activities such as a Ham and Bacon sale.

Also, teaching in Taylor County allowed me to gain knowledge in an area that I had no experience; operating a greenhouse. If I have any advice to offer future student teachers, I would strongly suggest teaching at a school that has facilities different from your home high school agricultural program. When I was in

high school, I did not take classes associated with the greenhouse. I knew that when I made my student teaching site selection, I needed to go to a program where I could learn how to manage a greenhouse.

Finally, the main thing that has made my student teaching experience worthwhile has been the students I have encountered. It has been a pleasure working with talented students, watching them succeed and advising them during frustrating times. Teaching has definitely been everything I expected it to be and I am sure that there is more in store as I continue my career in agricultural education.

### *Reflections on Student Teaching*

by Burke Holvey

My name is Burke Holvey and as I sit to write about my experience at Elkins High School a million thoughts run through my mind. I can say that this was a once in a lifetime experience.

First I would like to thank and recognize my wonderful and unselfish supervising teacher, Mr. James Beatty. He knew exactly what I was going through and knew what would help. Mr. Gartin knew exactly what he was doing placing me with Mr. Beatty. We got along great and his thoughts and experiences will help guide me for the rest of my life. The weirdest thing is that I believe even though we got along so well, this was an extremely trying semester for both of us.

I started the semester with Agriculture and Natural Resources II because my past large animal experiences would make this a smooth transition. It would have been smooth except this class involved an extreme amount of

immaturity. No matter what I tried or how I taught it, I just couldn't get across the importance of the material. I made games out of the material, had them complete the work by themselves, and paired them in groups. They just didn't care. Mr. Beatty finally convinced me that I was doing all I could but they just didn't want to put forth the effort.

The class I picked up next was Forestry II. This was a bit of a challenge for me as I had no prior forestry background. It was a learning experience but the great thing about this class is that I had the most wonderful group of students. They behaved and listened and never complained about what they were doing. I thought I was dreaming because of what I had to deal with in my Agriculture and Natural Resources II class. The two classes were as different as night and day. We've already worked through the whole syllabus! I've really enjoyed this class.

The last class I worked with was Forestry I. This was a very lively bunch, but luckily when I picked up the class they were starting in the greenhouse and doing cosmetic chores around the high school. They get to use all that energy for good, instead of giving me a headache.

I won't deny that student teaching has been very hard for me, I'm extremely glad I did it or else I would have wondered my whole life if I should have been a teacher. Because of my experience I now know what my true calling in life is and have decided to move in that direction. I don't think I deal well with immaturity along with many other things. I've enjoyed my time here and wouldn't trade it for the world. Student teaching has taught me many things about myself as a person and what I really want in life. If not for student teaching I would still be wondering if I really did the right thing.

## Shop Talk

by Jonathan Hopkins

Few students in the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences get the opportunity to take agricultural mechanics classes instructed by Daniel Shockey. Mr. Shockey, who graduated from WVU several years ago, recently started teaching various agricultural mechanics classes for the college. Students who excel in the classes and have an interest in teaching can get the opportunity to be a teaching assistant. I was one of those students who was able to help teach the agricultural mechanics classes. I would like to share my story with you.

First, I would like to tell you how I became one of the students who excelled in the agricultural mechanics classes. It all began when I was young. As I grew up, I taught myself a great deal about fixing things. I grew up on a farm and had a mechanical background. I taught myself to weld when I was fifteen years old. I later taught myself how to use a torch. While in high school I was taught to repair Graveleys by a master mechanic, Jacky Drake. When I was eighteen, I got my CDL's and learned a great deal from another master mechanic and truck driver, Bob Killingsworth. When I came to college I decided to continue learning about fixing things so I took various agricultural mechanics classes.

Basic agricultural mechanics classes were taught by Dr. Lawrence. He helped me refine the basic knowledge I had acquired. During one summer while in Dr. Lawrence's classes, I had the opportunity to work for Dr. Sanjay Shah on a research project about a more environmentally friendly way to dispense poultry litter as a fertilizer. This gave me the opportunity to apply the knowledge I had acquired. Unfortunately, Dr. Lawrence retired before I graduated, Dr. Shah was offered a job in North Carolina, and the entire agriculture education program changed. Fortunately we now have Mr. Shockey who is in the process of upgrading

the shop and rebuilding the basic principles that were once valued so highly.

I have had the opportunity to serve as a teaching assistant for Mr. Shockey in several classes. I have helped him upgrade the shop and spent many hours fixing and reorganizing things. I have shared my knowledge of agricultural mechanics practices with many of my fellow students. I feel happy when students seem genuinely interested in what I'm showing them. I have worked hard to ensure the students follow safety procedures and I try to make sure they are learning something in the class. The greatest feeling is when I'm working with a student who is really having a hard time grasping a concept and is on the verge of giving up. Then after several tries they finally get it. Occasionally students give up. When this happens, it upsets me that they don't care as much about the concept as I do.

I use my agricultural mechanics knowledge a great deal. Agricultural mechanics knowledge has helped me choose a career path and find employment to help finance my college experience. This leads me to where I am now. I am one credit away from graduating, so I have taken a job with a company called C.W. Wright Construction Company. I began working for this company in January and have been able to put my agricultural mechanics knowledge to use. Working with other people is kind of like working with others in the shop. It's hard, but most of the people you can get along with. That is a basic skill that I think everyone should develop. You won't always like who you work with, but to be a successful member of society you just have to work hard.

C.W. Wright subcontracts with several electrical power providers. My crew is currently working for Allegheny Power. We are helping power up several developments installing transformers, underground cables, and services to

## Agricultural and Ext Reflective Seminar Stu



**Front Row:** Charles Bennett, Annie Hall, Brooke Zyg  
**Back Row:** Matthew Dean, Burke Holvey, John Warren

the houses. I help pull cable, hook up power, and since I have my CDL, I also operate a boom truck. The job has its pros and its cons, but overall it is a rewarding job. I don't have to be stuck behind a desk. I enjoy the outdoors, so this job is pretty nice. To this point, I feel as though I am advancing quickly through training, and I feel that I will have a promising future.

Overall, I feel that I have learned a great deal and will be able to put this knowledge to use in my future endeavors. My advice to future students is to find something you're interested in and work hard to obtain your goals and dreams. School is hard work, but in the end it has many rewards. The rewards are different for everyone, but they are worthwhile.

## Student Teaching: A Roller Coaster of Emotions

by Nona Hunt

As I look back on the past three months, a variety of emotions run through me. There have been moments of anxiety, stress, anger and frustration, but also anticipation, joy, pride and thankfulness. I remember the few days before student teaching being filled with anxiety and anticipation. I was terrified and felt totally unprepared. I was so nervous that the students wouldn't like me and I wouldn't enjoy my time at Hundred High School. I was totally **wrong**.

It has been a pleasure working with one of the best agriculture educators in the state and the program at Hundred High School is outstanding. I have learned so much from Mr.

Wilkins. He is so enthusiastic about teaching and the welfare of young people. One of the biggest joys of my experience has been getting to know and learn from Mr. Wilkins. He greets me every day with a smile and ends every evening with a "Thank you for being so awesome today."

One of the things that stand out most about my experience at Hundred High School is seeing the difference between Mr. Wilkins and the agriculture program and the rest of the teachers in the school and their classes. I hear teachers discussing the behavior of students in their

classes and nothing is ever positive. The same students do outstanding work for Mr. Wilkins and me. It is evident that the students, parents, teachers and staff really respect him and the program.

Another exciting part of my student teacher experience has been getting to know the students at Hundred High School. Although some might disagree, I think the students at Hundred High School are some of the most well behaved I have seen. The majority of students are positive, active learners and outstanding achievers. They have been so welcoming with minimal teasing and joking. Another favorite



David, Kristin Lockerman, Nona Hunt, Jamey Murray  
n, John Wetzel, Jonathan Hopkins

## *A Roller Coaster of Emotions (continued)*

is working with students one-on-one and really getting to know them as individuals. It's funny how I missed not seeing them every day over spring break.

It has been great strengthening my greenhouse skills and knowledge and learning how to facilitate efficient student work in the greenhouse. It has also been beneficial to experience new things such as curing hams and bacons, preparing for the ham and bacon show and sale, dissecting fish in aquaculture and tearing down engines in agricultural mechanics. Mr. Wilkins has been an awesome mentor and teacher in all of these areas.

One of my struggles as a student teacher has been making the transition from college student to teacher. It took me a few weeks and an eye opening experience to realize that I had to slow down and be more of a teacher. I have missed parts of college life but at the same time found it rewarding to feel a part of something greater. It was also tough adjusting to a new

schedule after being on a college schedule for four years.

It has been a challenge to prove myself to the other teachers and faculty at Hundred High School. It took a few days for some of them to realize I wasn't a new student. It didn't help me establish authority because I look and talk like a 14 year old. The teachers soon realized (or so I think) that I am a knowledgeable and capable young lady. The students also learned that I meant business.

At times during this experience, I thought I might blow up or have a nervous breakdown. Other times I was so excited and overjoyed. The past three months have surely flown by and I will miss my students and Mr. Wilkins. Although I have put more than 5,000 miles on my truck and missed out on a few family or friend activities, I wouldn't trade a moment of my student teaching experience. No matter where life takes me, I will always value the time I spent at Hundred and the countless things I learned from Mr. Wilkins and my students.

## *"A Summer in the South"*

by Kristin Lockerman

People tend to say that everyone in Georgia possesses "southern hospitality," but I never thought that was true until I moved there and experienced it for myself. During my summer internship in Thomson, Georgia I learned a lot, not only from my work at the Watson-Brown Foundation but from my interaction with the community. I was hired as the landscape manager's intern. My internship taught me many things including; communication skills, manners and customs, patience, how to deal with diversity, management, and landscaping.

Through my internship I worked under the guidance of landscape manager Dexter Rhodes. Dexter had owned his own landscaping company, managed a cotton mill, and recently been hired at Watson-Brown. When he was hired, the Watson-Brown estate (former estate of the first governor of Georgia, Mr. Thomas Watson) was being converted from a beef farm to a historical museum and learning center. Dexter had many expectations for my internship, including utilizing my GPS skills to map the entire property (over 300 acres), completing a timber inventory of a loblolly pine plantation on the property, propagating plants and trees for the estate's growing nursery, helping with the watermelon festival, and many more activities.

Many of Dexter's expectations were met. Within the first two weeks he bought a GPS unit and I had installed arc view software that would enable us to take the data from the unit

and transform it into maps. With the help of the NRCS, I was able to make topographic and aerial maps for the entire property. They were used by Dexter to manage his watermelon fields and plan for crop rotations the following summer. Maps were also made for the Watermelon Festival to ensure there was enough room for all of the vendors, exhibitors, games, band, and visitors. I also used the unit to record archaeological findings that the estate archaeologist found, usually in the watermelon fields after the tractor had been through them and loosened the soil. For three weeks throughout the summer there was an archeology camp where campers would learn about collecting historical pieces, dating them, digging them up, and recording where they found them with GPS. I had the opportunity to develop a lesson for the campers to get hands on experience using GPS. They loved it!

The estate itself consists of many buildings, once used as servant quarters, fields, and woods. One piece of the property was a loblolly pine plantation that was thought to have been planted by the late Mr. Thomas Watson before his death in 1909. I inventoried this pine plantation by 100% tally. Once the data were collected, I entered it into Excel and used various volume calculations to calculate board foot volume. The volumes were translated into potential profit estimates. The director was very impressed but kept to his guns about not cutting the trees.

Propagation of many plants and trees was also a part of my duties. In the beginning of my internship I collected various cuttings from plants around the estate with the hope that they would grow. For some plants, like the hydrangeas, we were successful and for others, like the banana shrub, success was limited. By constructing a propagation bench complete with misters and shade, Dexter was pushed to clear land for his tree nursery he had been planning.

Earlier I stated that there were many things I learned not only from my internship but from the community. The first one was communication. There were three men that worked in the landscape department; Robert, José, and Willy. Robert was African-American, born and raised on the estate, and his whole family had worked for the Brown Family (the owners). One of the biggest hurdles I had to overcome with Robert was that he could not read. This made some things difficult, such as telling him to go to the hardware and pick up certain items because you could not just write them down on a piece of paper. When we would go to a restaurant he could not order off the menu. Despite his inability to read I learned very quickly that he had a very sharp mind and memory. This showed me that when a person lacks in one area it can easily be compensated for in another way. José and Willy were Hispanic-Americans who did not speak English well and could only read in Spanish. Dexter and I communicated with them through hand signals and motions and also used a Spanish-English

## *“A Summer in the South” (Continued)*

computer translator where they could read directions or tasks. Working with Robert, José, and Willy taught me various ways to communicate and provided opportunities to improve these skills.

Overall I loved working at the Watson-Brown Foundation not only because I liked the work but I liked the people. While living in Thomson, I met many special people. The first was Miss Tonya (every woman is a “Miss” in the south even if she is 90 years old) who I met at church and within five minutes of conversation was telling me she would have me married by the end of the summer to a nice south-

ern gentleman. At church, which I attended every Sunday (because that is what you do on Sundays in the south) I met Miss Vicki Howard who had native butterfly weed in her garden. She later invited us over to collect and propagate it. She invited me to her annual family reunion. There was also Miss Mary Anne who worked in the office and let me stay at her lake house over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend when my vacation plans did not work out. And there was Miss Judy, who also worked in the office, who desperately tried to marry off her son by setting up a blind date for us. The whole dating thing did not work out but Daniel and I became good friends. At the gym where I

worked out there was Miss Lynn. She invited me to go camping with her family on the lake and go out to dinner with her often. To understand her you have to know that Miss Lynn’s husband had passed away. She was still young and in Thomson, as she stated often “good single men are hard to come by.” There were many other people that made my experience really enjoyable, but those were the few that touched me the most. Leaving them was hard to do. Miss Mary Anne cried her eyes out and told me how “her baby” (I) was leaving and it upset her so. I left Georgia with a tan, very blonde hair, a southern twang, and knowing that “southern hospitality” was still intact in Georgia (well at least in Thomson).

## *Reflections of a Student Teacher*

by Jamey Murray

It all began 5 years ago while I was sitting in the Cisco networking class at Preston High School (PHS). Bob Rhidenour was the instructor, and I was a second semester student. He was talking about how he enjoyed teaching the evening classes and how things were different when you were teaching adults instead of adolescents. It was at that moment when the thought of teaching started dancing around in my head.

After attending West Virginia University and seeing the comradery between the students and the faculty I became even more interested in becoming a teacher. I began to feel like I could help change the attitudes of students by becoming an effective teacher. I began investigating the opportunities that earning a teaching certificate would open for me. The possibilities seemed endless and it appeared to be a better choice than the field of study that I had originally planned.

The first step I took to become a teacher was changing my field of study to agricultural and environmental education. After I completed the required courses and the electives of my choice, I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Now, I was ready to begin my student teaching experience at PHS under Mr. Wilson. Then the light at the end of the tunnel became dim when the reality of student teaching actually hit me. I began to doubt myself and think that this wasn’t the best or smartest thing that I had ever done. Many times I felt like changing my major and running for my

life. Fortunately, I had people around me that were able to help calm my nerves and reassure me that this was the right choice. For the first time I actually doubted my ability to do something.

On January 30<sup>th</sup> I began my first day of student teaching. The first week was simple and I began to feel more at ease. By the second week it almost felt natural to be there in the capacity of ateacher’s helper. I was beginning to learn the student’s names, and they were beginning to open up. I could laugh and joke but still was able to become a professional when it was time.

I began my first day of actual teaching with a lesson on arc welding and soon found out what it was actually like to be a teacher responsible for the education and development of young minds. The students were very receptive to me and it made my first few days a breeze. My first visit from Dr. Gartin was one that I had worried about and wasn’t sure I was ready. Soon the time was upon me and Dr. Gartin arrived at PHS for my first supervisory visit. I can’t say I wasn’t nervous, because I was sweating cantaloupe size sweat droplets. Luckily, I had the wherewithal to prepare my students and ask them for their assistance in making this first experience a pleasant one. Thankfully for me they met my every expectation and made me feel and look like a million bucks in front of Dr. Gartin.

The classes went on and I felt like it was taking a long time for the students to grasp the material I was covering, but after speaking with Mr. Wilson I found out that they were doing just fine. My first evaluation from Mr. Wilson was a good one and this added to my confidence level.

The following weeks were filled with more and more first time experiences. I chaperoned my first school trip to Louisville, Kentucky and helped with the Ham, Bacon, and Egg Show. I also received another visit from Dr. Gartin, which went well. I also picked up my second class which turned out to be more nerve rattling than the first. I began teaching a forestry unit which is a strong subject for me. That helped boost my confidence level.

Looking back I see all of the laughs and the moments when I wanted to just sit down and shake my head. The students can make or break a student teaching experience, and for the most part, the students made mine enjoyable.

Overall, I would have to say that my experience student teaching has been a good one and has made me a better person. It turned out to be a true test for myself. I was able to take this new situation and find the confidence from outside sources to make me a better teacher. I now have a new found respect for teachers and realize that the torment I put teachers and substitutes through has finally come back to nip me in the butt.

## *Student Teaching Experience*

by John Warren

One thing I can say about my student teaching experience at Clay Battelle High School is I definitely received my money’s worth. As most of you know, my supervising teacher, Mr. Saul and his family went

through a very difficult time when their home burned in February. I was happy to fill in for all of Mr. Saul’s classes while he was picking up the pieces of his loss. This was a responsibility I was not expecting all at once,

but it proved to be a test of my abilities as an educator. In Mr. Saul’s absence, I dealt with the arrival of thousands of plugs to be transplanted for the greenhouse, hams and bacons to be cured, preparing students for

## *Student Teaching Experience (Continued)*

competitions, and learning in the classroom. I must say there were many times I was ready to pull my hair out, but I will admit that I had a wonderful support system to help me through it all. The principals, faculty and staff, community members, and parents were there to assist any way they could. For that, I

am very appreciative. There were many calls to Mr. Saul and my university advisors, Dr. Boone and Dr. Gartin, to help me through the situations. I can honestly say I had a great time getting to know the students and teaching them in the area of agriculture. After my student teaching experience, I am looking

forward to finding a program of my own to call home and continue educating the young minds of our future generation of agriculturists.

## *Specific Problems in Landscaping*

by John Wetzel

Landscaping has a host of benefits but at the same time there are some basic problems that every landscaper has to address. Some of these problems are discussed in this article along with potential solutions on how to deal with them.

**Dealing with Pests:** Pests are unwanted animals and insects that invade our landscapes and have the potential to cause major damage if not controlled properly. In addition pests can also cause damage to humans in terms of spreading infections. The solution comes down to traps, repellents and pest proof products. These products, if not used properly, can harm your landscape and the people who use it. Consult with other landscape owners in your area and try to analyze the pests they encounter and the methods they use to control/eliminate them. In addition, consult pest control offices in your area to get information on the type of chemicals that can be used safely.

**Dealing with Irrigation:** Irrigation, if not installed properly, can be a major problem for any landscape. Improper irrigation (too much or too little water) can cause plants to die prematurely or inhibit their growth. In addition improper irrigation systems can lead to the growth of pathogens. For the do-it-yourself landscapers, the solution would be to go for a drip based irrigation system. The system should

be checked regularly to find extra leakages and irregular water flow.

**Dealing with Maintenance:** Regular maintenance is required for any landscape to look fresh and colorful. Maintenance, however, can be a daunting task when the landscape is big and plants are highly segregated. The solution is to go for native plants that require less maintenance. Smaller and simpler landscapes look good and require less upkeep. In addition, landscapers reduce maintenance by selecting larger quantities of a similar plant.

**Dealing with Plant Diseases:** Dealing with plant diseases is a common problem faced by landscapers. On the average landscape plants can get infected by a host of pests ranging from rose-slugs to lygus bugs. The solution is to purchase plants that look healthy from all sides. The plants need to be watched closely to find any parts that look diseased. Any diseased part should be removed immediately. In addition organic pesticides can be used to ensure protection against pests.

**Dealing with Drainage:** Most amateur landscapers fail to give landscape drainage serious consideration. The aftermath can create a horde of landscape problems like erosion, leakage and puddle formation giving rise to algae, fungi, mosquitoes and a bad odor. This

spoils the overall look and feel of the landscape. The solution is to include drainage as a part of the landscape design. If you do not have the knowledge to deal with the drainage issues, you should consult a professional.

**Dealing with Weeds:** Weeds are a nuisance that every landscaper has to deal with at some time or another. Improper control can turn your landscape into a complete mess with unwanted plants taking over landscape plants as time progresses. The solution is to make use of herbicides, mulch, and solarization etc., to control the growth of weeds.

**Dealing with Hazardous Chemicals:** Landscapers need to make use of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals to ensure proper plant protection. These chemicals if not used properly can lead to serious health hazards. The solution is to treat harmful chemicals with utmost care when it comes to using and storing them. If possible, landscapers should move towards organic chemicals altogether and reduce/eliminate their synthetic counterparts.

In conclusion, these are some of the problems that landscapers commonly face. Finding good reliable labor has also proven to be a problem in many highly populated affluent areas. Through careful planning and education these problems can be resolved.

## *Problems Facing Youth Today*

by Brooke Zygmund

The greatest challenge in this generation is the ability to stand out and stand up for what you believe in. In general, educational philosophies across all genres are derived from basic principles and rarely allow for creative outlets, constructive opposition, or individualized development. We must take a look at those children that have the intelligence and plans for progressive change but never get the opportunity to share those ideas. A goal of mine is to inspire one, twenty, hundreds. It doesn't matter how many, but I want to inspire those children to be proud of who they are, where they came from, and what they believe. They have the ability to be or make something great.

Just as the sun rises each morning and sets every night, the development of education and leadership will also continue. For those years that have passed and for the days still to come, leadership skills and educational values will remain the leading factor that shall inspire future legislation. Education in areas of leadership development and personal development advances the establishment and/or amendment of public policy. A problem with traditional schooling is the lack of emphasis in leadership development. I genuinely believe that providing leadership opportunities for our youth will not only improve the growth and integrity of these students, but also help them to lead in improving the integrity and growth of our na-

tion and even the world. I was fortunate to attend a program outside of our public schooling district that helped me discover my creative potential and a personal outlet. I cannot even begin to explain the life altering experiences and lessons from that program that I still use to this day. My main purpose in life is to promote and preserve the intelligence, self-confidence, determination, veracity, and sociability of leaders to come, today's youth. I can't do it alone. We must join together with our fellow teachers and administrators in attempting to create new lessons that incorporate civic duty, confidence, and self exploration. Teaching is only the beginning...

**Important Dates**

May 6	State Equine CDE	Meredith Manor Equestrian Centre
May 14	WVU Graduation	Morgantown
Jun 13-15	State Teacher's Conference	Hampshire High School, Romney
Jul 12-15	78th State FFA Convention	Cedar Lakes
Aug 13	State Dairy Cattle CDE	Jackson's Mill
Sep 27-29	WV Career Development Events	Morgantown

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