



West Virginia

AGED NEWS and VIEWS

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

Living Legacies in Agriculture: William C. West

by Connie Scarbrough

William Charles West, son of Patty Tucker West and Harold West of Glen Easter, West Virginia was born in Morgantown on Sunday, February 6, 1949. His father was a Chapter Star Farmer. In 1966 Bill was the President of his high school FFA chapter and was elected State FFA District Vice-President in 1967.

During his tenure as State FFA Vice-President, Uncle Sam needed him in the U.S. Army. In a letter dated May 16, 1968, his supervisor assured him that if he could get leave to attend the state convention, "the delegates would be most happy to have him there." However, his supervisor stated, "your duty to our country comes first." Bill never made it to the 1968 convention. Like many young men at that time in our country's history, he was on his way to Vietnam. Someone else read his retiring address.

Mr. West is a living legacy to all that is brave and true and right about this country. He has dedicated his life to advancing agriculture in West Virginia. One time I asked him to back down from a statement he had made to our students about a contest. I wanted him to reconsider a firm stand he had taken and allow a dedicated group of students to compete. He just smiled, shook his head, and said, "Connie, you know, I am a man of principle." All my well-planned arguments evaporated. How can you argue with a man of principle?

All of us know men and women of principle. Our agriculture educators from high school to the universities and colleges we attended have been instrumental in making us who we are. For the past 18 years I have had the pleasure and honor of watching this man of principle make daily decisions which will have a profound effect

on the young men and women in our state for years to come. Bill West is a very driven person with purpose and determination to achieve lofty goals. He is inspirational, motivational, and completely unable to be repressed. He learned from the teachers and professors of long ago, but he is completely modern in his thinking.

One of the teachers he learned from was a man named Ray Brown. Mr. Brown is 91 years young and lives in Marshall County. He still drives himself and takes care of his wife. Maybe Mr. West got his dedication from Mr. Brown who taught for 38 years and substituted for 22 more years. Sixty years on the payroll as a teacher at Cameron is the ultimate in dedication. I had the privilege of meeting, visiting, and interviewing Mr. Brown in my sabbatical across the state in search of the real Bill West.

I was not surprised in the answers to questions that were posed to this wonderful gentleman. He told a story about Bill's dad, whom he also taught. He said that at the time that Bill's father was a student, many young men were being called into duty to serve their country during World War II. The area around Cameron was no exception and two of the local agriculture educators were sent overseas leaving Mr. Brown as the sole teacher in the county. Mr. Harold West had been a student at Moundsville, but now his teacher was gone. He wanted to finish his senior year, but could not do it at his old school. The solution was to go to Cameron, but the bus route was five miles away from his home. In that day, students did not just hop in their cars and zoom off to school. So Harold walked 10 miles each day to be a

part of FFA and agriculture education. Mr. Brown said, "I always figured that Harold had a lot of ambition, and I thought that Bill must have inherited that ambition from his dad." I would say that Mr. Brown is right.

Mr. West has used that ambition in many ways. From his tireless work for the State FFA Foundation, to his promotion of the Jackson County Junior Fair, to his great love of his Ripley FFA chapter, he has always wanted one thing: student success. I have watched Bill come up with some crazy ways of motivating students and adults to accomplish the goals he helped them establish. Most of the time Bill's goals have been for other people. Watching others become successful has been his greatest reward.

Once in awhile, though, that success has rubbed off on him. Bill has been the recipient of many awards for his own accomplishments. In the FFA he was the winner of numerous awards. Following his graduation from high school, he served in Vietnam where he was awarded commendations for bravery, service above and beyond the call of duty, and a Purple Heart. He was president of the Alpha Tau Alpha chapter during his college days and earned recognition for his agriculture

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Editorial: Reflections

by **Harry N. Boone, Jr.**

This issue of *News and Views* is filled with reflections. Connie Scarbrough prepared an article that reflected on the career of William West, one of the outstanding teachers in our profession. Two first-year teachers reviewed their experiences as a beginning teacher. Three students related their experiences as student teachers as they prepare for a career as a high school agricultural education teacher. I would like to take a few minutes and reflect on the fast-paced happenings of last year. Finally, I challenge you to reflect on the past year and use the results to improve your personal and professional life.

The past school year started and ended at a whirlwind pace. The beginning of the year saw the department scrambling to ease a new faculty member into the routine, replace a thirty-year veteran, and cover the classes of a colleague who was on professional leave. Spring semester ended with eight students completing the requirements for a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Education. Add a couple of medical emergencies and a number of professional service activities and you can understand how hectic this year has been.

Over the next few weeks, we plan to sit down as a faculty and examine our workload, undergraduate curriculum, and many of the

day-to-day operations of the program. I challenge you to do the same thing. Take time out of your busy schedule and examine the many varied aspects of your program. If you work in a multiple teacher department, set a day aside that everyone can meet, preferably without cell phones and other interruptions, and examine your program.

Start the self examination with your course of instruction. Do your classes meet the needs of your students? When was the last time you did a community survey? Do your courses take into consideration the needs of the local community as well as the content standards established by the State Department of Education? Remember, a course of instruction provides rationale for content of the course, is used to communicate the purpose and content of the course with others, is needed to plan day-to-day lessons, provides structure for the course and facilitates student learning, and is an important tool for planning resources.

Do you have an active advisory committee? If not, what obstacles have you encountered in organizing you advisory committee? An advisory committee is an essential element for the effective operation of the agricultural education program. The

advisory committee provides the opportunity for a community voice in your program. It also provides advice and support from the local community.

Did your FFA officers develop a program of activities for 2003-2004? If not, how did they plan the activities for the FFA chapter? The program of activities provides a blueprint or a road map for the local FFA chapter. You will never achieve success without a program of activities. (If you were successful, how would you know it?)

How many of your students are FFA members? If you do not have 100% members, how can you attain this worthy goal? How many of your students have SAEs? If you do not have 100% of your students with SAEs, how can you attain this essential element of the program? If each of your students is not an FFA member and does not have a SAE, you have denied them a part of their education. You did not do your job as an agricultural education teacher. Having every student in the FFA and maintaining a SAE should not be limited to a goal of your program but a mandate that is required for your continued employment.

I challenge you to take a few minutes to reflect on the successes and failures of your program. Use this opportunity to strengthen your program. Enjoy the summer break.

Summer Class

Research Methods, AGEE 692B, will be taught this summer. Care has been taken to avoid any major statewide FFA or agricultural education event.

Meeting 1 (8 hours)	June 5
Meeting 2 (8 hours)	June 18
Meeting 3 (8 hours)	July 9
Meeting 4 (8 hours)	July 23
Meeting 5 (8 hours)	August 6

In addition, the course will include two Internet based assignments that will require

between 4 and 6 hours to complete. The class location has not been determined but will rotate throughout the state based on the students enrolled.

The CRN # is 71451. You must be an active graduate student to enroll. If you have not completed a WVU course during the past two years, you probably will need to reapply for admission to the graduate program. This may be done online at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/applications.html>.

DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE FIRST CLASS TO REGISTER. If we do not have 8 students registered before the first day of class, the course will be canceled.

If you have questions about the class, please contact hnboone@wvu.edu. This will be the only time in the next 4 to 6 years this course will be offered during the summer. If you are interested in completing a Master of Agricultural Education degree, this is your opportunity.

Personals

Clifford I. Dunn, 85, of Henderson died April 23, 2004. Burial was in the Mount Union Cemetery. Mr. Dunn taught agricultural education at Pt. Pleasant High School from 1942 to 1972 and the Mason County Technical Center from 1972 to 1975.

Kerlin O. Judy, 90, of Harrisonburg, VA died July 3, 2003. Mr. Judy taught agricultural education at Hurricane (Putnam County) from 1939-1946 and Martinsburg High School from 1946-1955.

Reflections of a First Year Teacher

by Robert Herrod

I remember sitting at my desk on the first day of school, looking at stacks of papers and a key ring that probably weighed 200 pounds (which I now guard with my life), thinking only of how happy I was to be there. After all, I had finally made it! After a few minutes of daydreaming, I looked over my shoulder to see Mr. Michael standing in the doorway. I was so nervous that I forgot his name for a few seconds. He said "Mr. Herrod, glad to have you on board." I am not sure how the rest of the conversation actually went, but it made for a very interesting beginning to an interesting first day.

That first day didn't begin to offer a glimpse of what the first year would be like. College simply doesn't entirely prepare one for all of this. As I take a look back at my first year of teaching, I think of how I can and will improve things for next year. I made a decision at the beginning of the year to try to write down each mistake I made during the year, to analyze them, and make corrections to better my program for future students. I think I may have written a novel,

so what follows will include only a small fraction of my findings.

The two most difficult tasks to overcome during this first year were paperwork and change. The amount of paperwork involved with being an Ag teacher, first and foremost, is ridiculous. Maybe there should be a class at WVU to teach how to do paperwork. As for the change, I found it very difficult to keep things the same for my older students (who are already set in their ways) while incorporating my own ideas and techniques for younger students. It takes time to get students to realize we are going to do things a new way - my way. How things were in the past is not how they are going to be now. As time passes, I am slowly getting students to buy my philosophy of teaching. Time and patience are needed to get things where one wants them to be.

The first year would not be complete without some funny memories and I will include a few. I am the second youngest teacher at Wirt High School. One day a

substitute teacher asked me to please take my seat when class began. Even though I had a dress shirt and tie, I guess she just didn't catch on. Winter leadership

conference was a time to realize that you can stay awake for two nights in a row due to the fear of pranks six FFA boys might try to perpetrate against their new advisor. During the state CDE's, I took my students to the steak house for a nice dinner. I thought it would be funny to tell the waitress it was one of the student's birthdays, but before I knew it, I saw the waitresses coming toward our tables. Oddly, the intended

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Being a First Year Teacher

by Willis Freeman

Being a first year teacher brings many difficult, yet exciting times in our profession. I, for one, could not wait for the first day of classes to start when I accepted the job at Buckhannon Upshur High School. I guess I just did not know what to expect. The responsibility of an Agriculture teacher is beyond comparison to other professions.

I stepped into this position only two days before classes started. I scrambled these two days just to find where everything was at the school. What about lesson planning? Well, I just have to say it was shaky at first, but it has come a long way since. Most of my earlier lesson plans came straight from the folder that I had created during my student teaching. I say most and not all for one reason. I did not teach all the same classes during my student teaching so there were a lot of sleepless nights at the beginning of the year.

My first period class was a combination of Agriculture II, Agriculture 11, and Agriculture 12 students. Second period was

Agriculture 1, by far the hardest class to get under control. Third period consisted of forestry for half of the year, and then switched to wildlife management. Fourth period was my favorite class, agriculture mechanics. I had a group of horticulture students fifth period. Sixth period was aquaculture for half of the year, and wildlife management for the remainder of the year. I know I said fourth period was my favorite, but I need to take that back and pick seventh period as my favorite. Seventh period is my planning period.

I guess I should talk about all the good things that have happened this year. First, I would like to start with the many contests that we participated in this year. I had an excellent group of students who were very interested in every contest that we enrolled. Their record shows their enthusiasm as contestants. The livestock judging team and the entomology team placed 12th in the State Career Development Events (CDE's) with one student on the livestock judging team placing 9th high individual. Our

Envirothon team placed 12th in the state competition.

The parliamentary procedure team placed third in the region. One of the three Beef Expo teams that I trained came in fourth place over all and had 10th

and 12th place individuals. It was very enjoyable yet time consuming to train students for the events.

The facilities at my school are spectacular. They are actually quite a bit for one teacher to manage, but give the students an excellent place to learn. I have a nice agriculture mechanics shop that is

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Student Teaching Experience at Clay-Battelle High School

by Erin Hersman

I had many positive experiences during my student teaching at Clay-Battelle High School. The students in the agricultural education program are primarily farm kids and have a great deal of knowledge and enthusiasm about the agriculture in the area. The students possess varying levels of agricultural knowledge in the production, marketing, business planning, and mechanical aspects of the industry. This varying knowledge base leads to increased creativity and group participation among the students in everyday classroom and laboratory operations. The mutual respect that Mr. Saul and his students have for each other is evident in the way the program is managed.

During my student teaching experience, I was exposed to the operation and management of a greenhouse, an aquaculture facility, a hydroponics unit, and an agricultural mechanics lab that included a sawmill. I also participated in my very first Ham, Bacon, and Egg show. The students wasted little time involving me in this activity. After school on my very first day of student teaching, the students made me follow them several miles back numerous unpaved, winding roads in order to “assist” them in cleaning their hams and bacons. Before I was allowed to leave, they made sure that I was fully capable of completing the entire cleansing process. Just a small piece of advice for future student teachers: always keep a change of clothes in your vehicle, and if your

students look too excited to show you how to do something – be cautious!

As far as the greenhouse portion of the program, this spring the students worked diligently to plant over 500 flower plugs, more than 350 hanging baskets, and a variety of vegetable plants. Several student managers took their jobs very seriously when it came to making sure the greenhouse was properly organized, watered, and fertilized. Since the students put so much effort into the greenhouse, it was decided that taking two days to paint and organize the classroom would provide a learning environment that the students would both feel a part and appreciate. Another piece of advice: just because planting and painting both start with a “P” they are very different processes. Perhaps planting is slightly less challenging. Challenged or not, the students “stepped up to the plate” and worked extra hours to ensure that the classroom was repainted to the best of their ability. I must admit, even though a lot of us wore paint for several days, the classroom looks very professional.

An unwritten rule at Clay-Battelle is that every student teacher kills a large quantities of something during their tenure at the school. My area of expertise: fish! The fish had a rough time surviving during my three months of teaching. Apparently

catfish and bluegill were the most susceptible to my aquaculture management skills, but do not worry, I left before the aquaculture facility was entirely depleted of fish.



The agricultural mechanics lab and sawmill were quite an adventure for me. Everyday new and inventive ideas were demonstrated in the shop. The students worked industriously on trailers, tables, benches, and many other projects. Initially, I found the sawmill to be quite interesting; however, after several communal forest donations, the sawmill experience became overly tiring.

Overall, my student teaching experience at Clay-Battelle was invaluable. Everyday I learned something that will be beneficial to my future educational pursuits.

(Erin Hersman earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from The Pennsylvania State University in 2001. She completed her Master of Science degree and teaching certification requirements in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University in May 2004.)

Student Teacher Experiences at University High School

by Lisa Montgomery

There comes a time in our lives when one road must end and another must begin. For me that new road started in February 2004. That was the day that I embarked on a new adventure in my life.

February 2, 2004 was a very cold, snowy morning, I woke up early and my stomach was in knots. I was both excited and scared all at the same time and, of course, hoping for a snow day, because that was the first day of my student teaching adventure. Yes, I use the word adventure, because that is what student teaching was for me. Everyday was a new adventure; I never knew what the day would hold when I got

up that morning. Everyday something new would happen. Students are amazing creatures and some of the things they come up with are things I would never even dream of.

I was asked to write a brief article about my student teaching experience and share with you my experience over the past 3 months. Let me start with telling you that having a supportive cooperating teacher is a key to succeeding. I student taught at University High School, in Morgantown, WV. My cooperating teacher was Mr. Richard Shriver. Mr. Shriver was always there for me and helped me when ever I

needed. When it came to criticism, he was the first to dish it out to me. If I can offer just a few words of advice to future student teachers:

T a k e criticism in a p o s i t i v e manner, use it to improve yourself, and your teaching abilities. You are going to get a lot



of it, so you just need to learn to deal with it, and don't let it get you down. As I have always said, "just smile and remember that today is almost over and tomorrow is a day that you can improve on the faults of today."

I had some very interesting adventures student teaching. Let me share a few of those with you. I think my best happened midway through my student teaching. I was teaching a lesson on mice in my small animal care class. I brought 2 mice in because I love hands on learning. Everything was going great and the students loved the mice until my seventh period class came in. At the end of class I realized one the mice had been mouse-napped. It is kind of funny now that I think about it, but I was very upset at that time. The next day I didn't say anything, but I kept hearing updated reports on the mouse sighting. I think that mouse made its way all

over the main school and by the end of the day, it made its way back home to my room.

The scariest thing happened when one of my students turned around and hit another student in the eye. This was scary for me because I had never dealt with something like this before, nor was I warned. I figured it out with the help of Mr. Shriver. In case you are wondering, the student is ok. I have several more student incidents and if you are curious just let me know. I would be glad to share them with you.

Let me leave you with this, student teaching is what you make of it. Always remember that for every kid that gives you trouble there is one there that you are reaching out to and they are reaching back and learning. So, keep trying because it could be that one student that will keep you going and keep you looking forward to

tomorrow. Good luck and remember that someday soon you will have your own classroom with your own students. On your placements; don't worry about it because we are all placed somewhere for a reason. Make the most of it and have fun! Mr. Shriver once told me something that has helped me so much and maybe it will help someone else. He told me, "There is the way you want it to be, then there is the way it should be, then there is JUST THE WAY IT IS." This got me through a lot and made me realize that what ever happens, happened for a reason because there is nothing that you can do to stop it. That is just the way it is...May God Bless You.

(Lisa Montgomery earned a Bachelor of Science degree and completed her teaching certification requirements in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University in May 2004.)

Student Teaching Experiences at Wood County Technical Center **by Matthew W. Knopp**

My experience. I remember during my middle school training I had a class of seventh graders that really had an affect on me. I know many people like to say that if given the opportunity they would not be willing to teach at the middle school level. I would have to disagree with them. While in this middle school classroom setting I could see in their eyes that they wanted to learn the information that I was offering them. They might not have known the correct answer to every question, but they had their own answer for it. This willingness and drive to learn was why I have decided to take the path of agriculture education. I want to see students like this progress within the agriculture program while I educate them as well as advise them from time to time.

At the Wood County Technical Center I was given the chance to become part of a family that I will hold dear to me for the rest of my life. There I was able to take on the role of teacher for the Agriculture Science 1, animal veterinary science, and horticulture classes. I was also given the chance to assume the position of advisor for many FFA and SAE activities. Each of the classes in which I taught was unique in their own way, but they had one thing in common. They were there to learn about different aspects of agriculture and I believe that I was able to fulfill my duties as their educator. One

thing that I have found that worked really well was introducing each unit with an article that deals with the unit at hand. This article usually dealt with technology within the particular field that the instruction was geared toward. Students were instructed to read the article and then write an essay portraying their opinion of one question. This allowed students the chance to improve in three different areas. They learned about new technological advances, improved their reading skills, and finally gained better writing skills which are very crucial as they reach adulthood. This idea was given to me by Mr. West, my former agriculture teacher and a man that has had a very large impact on my life.

Finally, I would like to leave some tips for the future student teachers of agriculture from West Virginia University. If at all possible pay attention to what the Agriculture and Environmental Education staff is trying to get across to you. You will not realize how many times during your experience that you will think back and say I should have been paying attention during that lesson. Some things that you think are irrelevant could be a god send when you are in the middle of a lesson.

As I finish up with my reflection I encourage all of you to become motivators and role models. These are two things that I be-

lieve make up a successful agriculture classroom as well as a great agriculture program. Motivation is the key that unlocks many doors for an agriculture teacher. This

can be used to create a positive learning experience in the classroom or it can develop a student's ambition to go out and achieve high standards when it comes to SAEs and FFA related activities. As teachers we should be good role models outside of the classroom. This is in regards to how we conduct our own lives outside of the classroom. We must be aware that students are judging us as much as we are judging them. It is our duty as professionals to develop good citizenship behaviors. We have to remember that we are educators within the classroom, as well as outside. Not all students have positive role models in their lives and it is our chance to actually make a difference.

(Matthew Knopp earned a Bachelor of Science degree and completed his teaching certification requirements in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University in May 2004.)



International Experiences of a Graduate Student

by **Cindy Burskey**

As a recent graduate of West Virginia University with a master's degree in agricultural education, I am excited to move into the next chapter of my life. I would have to say that I am sad to be closing this chapter because I have had many wonderful experiences and have met many great people. I have been spending some nostalgic time looking back at all my experiences as a college student. There are many things that stick out but the two that I feel that have been the most enjoyable are my travels to places that I would never dreamed. As an undergraduate at The Ohio State University I traveled to Swaziland and more recently I was given the opportunity through West Virginia University to travel to Trinidad and Tobago.

I decided to go to Swaziland to get a new perspective of another culture. Swaziland is an independent monarchy in southeastern Africa, land locked on the east by Mozambique and on the southeast, south, west, and north by South Africa. The official languages of Swaziland are siSwati, a Bantu language, and English. Chief cash crops are sugarcane, cotton, citrus fruits, and pineapples. Swaziland also has an important forestry industry. I went with eighteen other OSU students in the summer of 2001 for six weeks as the last quarter of my undergraduate degree. We stayed at the University of Swaziland. As students, we attended three classes, and during our free time and on the weekends we were able to travel within Swaziland, South Africa, and Mozambique.

The most interesting trip we took was to Johannesburg, South Africa. This is where apartheid took place in the 40s. I had never read or studied anything about apartheid but to see some of the effects that were still around was saddening. The city was divided up by a Population Registration Act which, stated that all South African's be racially classified into one of three categories: white, black (African), or colored (of mixed decent). The colored category included major subgroups of Indians and Asians. Classification into these categories was based on appearance, social acceptance, and descent. Race laws touched every aspect of social life, including a prohibition of marriage between non-whites and whites, and the sanctioning of 'white-only' jobs. I was able to see first hand the divided races because even though

apartheid was abolished in 1994, the towns are still separated. It was very heartbreaking for many of the group members because there is still a lot of poverty in these areas.

Swaziland is a very rich cultural experience. Not only is there a culture among the younger population that resembles much of our young people, but an older culture too characterizes Swaziland. This older culture believes in polygamy and big families. The King also practices this custom. At the time the country was getting ready for the king to pick another wife by having their annual reed dance. All the young women come and dance (scantily clad) in front of the king and he then picks whom he is interested in. Another custom that also is practiced is paying the brides family for her hand in marriage, usually in cows.

We were able to do many things. We went on a safari in Kruger national park, hung out on the beach in Durbin, South Africa (a huge surfing Mecca), and traveled to Maputo, Mozambique. It was the experience of a lifetime.

Trinidad was altogether another kind of trip. This was part of my thesis work for my master's degree. I received grant money to go from WVU's International Studies department and also the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences. This was the first time I had ever traveled by myself. Needless to say I was very nervous and scared. I arrived at around 11 p.m. and breathed a sigh of relief when I was greeted with over 20 students from the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry. I was very intimidated when I realized they spoke a form of broken English that was very fast and hard to understand for an untrained ear. I must say everyone was very nice and willing to slow down when they were talking to me so that I could understand. I was totally immersed in the culture while I lived in the women's dorms on campus for the week and a half that I was there.

I was surprised with the classes that were taught. It was different from my experiences in school. The classes were more rigid and difficult. A statistics class that I sat in on had the students doing hand calculations. This was some distance from just

plugging numbers into a computer program that I was used to.

The climate was also different. It was very humid and hot. I had never been in this kind of climate and was suffering. By the end of the third day the right side of my face had swelled and was very itchy. There were also many bugs and you had to make sure you turned off your light before they invaded your room in the evening. If you know me you would know that I just don't do bugs and critters. I had been given a mosquito net to use and made sure that this was tucked securely around my bed every night. One night in particular, I had completed my nightly routine when I saw the net move up and down. I found a lizard that had taken refuge in my bed.

Trinidad is the larger island, which is known as a business island. Tobago is the smaller of the two and has a totally different feeling. It is the vacation place. It has beautiful beaches and resorts. I definitely enjoyed my few days there and went to several events. One was "Sunday school." Sunday school is not what you think. It is actually a calypso band concert. People dance, talk, and eat. One of the specialty dishes is called sauce, which consists of different vegetables and chickens feet. I did not try it, but I heard it was very good.

In conclusion, I must say that these trips have changed my outlook on life. If there is one thing that I would like to share is to challenge you to encourage your students to travel to another country. It is a valuable learning experience that will help them learn about themselves and others.

(Cindy Burskey earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Communication from The Ohio State University in 2001. She completed her Master of Science degree in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University in May 2004.)



Living Legacies in Agriculture: William C. West (Continued from page 1)

fraternity during his tenure as president. He was awarded the NVATA Outstanding Young Member from Region VI and the NAAE Outstanding Teacher Award for Region VI in 2001. The Ripley agricultural education program was named the NAAE Outstanding Chapter in 1993. Mr. West is the only teacher in the state to win all three.

When I served as President of the West Virginia Association of Agriculture Educators, I traveled to New Orleans on behalf of the association. My schedule would not permit me to be at the hotel where they recognized the candidates; however, after the presentations, I talked with several who had been there and had met Mr. West. People all over the United States were in as much awe of this man as I am. They were as impressed with his talent as we are in West Virginia. No wonder.

Most of the time, I LOVE FFA. However, from time to time, I have been dissatisfied with the logos the National FFA has sent for us to use. When these logos are

not what I want portrayed to my students, I “lose” them and use one which I feel is more appropriate for the students of Ripley. For the past two years the “tank which thinks” in Indianapolis has done an outstanding job with their “Madison Avenue” campaigns to promote FFA. These slogans have also been appropriate for Mr. West. **One Mission: Student Success** could be a four word wrap up of his life. This truly has been his mission and he has accomplished it time and time again. The other logo was **Living the Legacy**. I can think of no more appropriate time for the leaders of our organization to release this slogan. This slogan reminds me of Mr. West, his teachers, and his professors. It serves as a reminder to all of us that we should be living legacies to what agriculture is in this country and all it could become.

Like other men of principle before him, Bill West has retired. As of February 6, 2004, he, as he liked to remind me, was history. The history of West Virginia

agriculture is full of men and women of principle who gave their entire lives to making life better for young people. We are forever in their debt for paving the way for those of us who are still teaching. They, by their success, have made us more successful. They deserve our thanks and respect for the challenges they overcame.

Bill West has been like a father to me. Although he is only 12 years my senior, he is wise beyond his years. Bill, when you read this, understand that you have deeply touched so many lives. Please know that I hope I can have a fraction of your successes in your One Mission. Please know that we all are living legacies to what you have done in West Virginia. Thank you from all of us who have been the beneficiaries of the investment you have made. You will be greatly missed.

(Connie Scarbrough is an agricultural education teacher and colleague of Mr. West at Ripley High School.)

Reflections of a First Year Teacher - Robert Herrod (Continued from page 3)

“prankee” was two tables back. Needless to say, the advisor ended up riding the little bull and not the student – and they took a great picture to prove it!

Now that my first year is almost complete, I have some changes I want to make. I must take the time to find a way to make my lessons more interesting and complete for *all* of my students. I know now that students react differently to different teaching strategies. Things will only

continue to improve in the future. Because of a very strong group of freshmen, I am already thinking of next year. I also have big plans for the FFA and some ideas for community involvement.

In closing, the first year is a time for learning about how students will react to you in certain situations. The first year is a time for one’s nerves to take over at times to the point of forgetting the advisor’s part in the FFA opening ceremony. That

mistake sure did travel fast! The first year is a time to realize that one does not have every answer to every question, but you had better find that answer before the next class. The first year is when one realizes that students become, in a way, like family: you will do anything to help them better themselves. The first year, in summary, was extraordinary.

(Robert Herrod is an agricultural education teacher at Wirt County High School. He is a 2003 graduate of West Virginia University.)

Being a First Year Teacher - Willis Freeman (Continued from page 3)

loaded with tools and equipment. There is an aquaculture lab with great equipment to study the fish. There are a total of three greenhouses with only two up and running at this time. We recently planted 17,100 flower plugs into flats, which filled one greenhouse. The agriculture program also owns a John Deere tractor that is used to teach tractor safety.

The faculty is very supportive and helps when I get in a bind. The administration also is very supportive of the program along with the community. Having this support has helped me get through this first year. It would have been a lot worse without their support. The best advice I can give to a

beginning teacher is don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it. The community would rather help you through a difficult situation than see their kids suffer the consequences.

My major accomplishment for the year would have to be the start of our hog show. With the assistance of a member of the community, I started a new program for our area. I have 22 students raising hogs for our swine show to be held August 28th in Buckhannon. Many members of the community are very supportive of this program and I am looking forward to great results. The students will show their hogs in the morning and sell them in the

afternoon. This will give the students excellent Supervised Agricultural Experience projects (SAE) and help them raise money to further their education.

I must say that over all, this year was a success. At first it seemed to be moving slow. Now that I look back on it I don’t know where the year has gone. I have truly enjoyed myself this year, even with all of the sleepless nights. I am sure that it will only get better next year.

(Willis Freeman is an agricultural education teacher at Buckhannon-Upshur High School. He is a 2003 graduate of West Virginia University.)

Important Dates

June 17	Ag Ed Teacher's In-Service	Morgantown
July 14-17	State FFA Convention	Cedar lakes
July 28-30	Technical/Adult Education Conference	Charleston
Aug 8	State Dairy Cattle CDE	Jackson's Mill
Aug 13-22	WV State Fair	Lewisburg
Aug 23	WVU - First Day of Classes	Morgantown
Sep 4	WVU vs East Carolina	Morgantown
Sep 18	WVU vs Maryland	Morgantown
Sep 22-24	State CDE Events	Morgantown
Sep 25	WVU vs James Madison	Morgantown
Oct 20/21	WVU vs Syracuse	Morgantown

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