



# VATAT

## News

A publication of the Texas Agricultural Education Family ☆ 2011 Volume II, Issue X

## "Words with Friends"

By: David Reiley, Seguin

Process - a series of actions or operations conducting to an end.

Looking back this should have been the May article, but I still have not figured out the process of me writing the article now and you reading it almost a month later. No wait, you are reading this, so it is like I just wrote it. I am so confused. Sorry, I am a slow learner.

Anyway, by the time you read this we will have a new executive director onboard at the VATAT, a person selected by the entire Board of Directors at the spring board meeting. If my memory serves me correctly, I started my tenure as a board member the year Gerald was hired as the executive director. I had been teaching about seventeen years at that point and decided to run for a position on the board, not really knowing what the process involved. I knew I had to get my district's support, and I would have to win an election on the area level, but that was about it. So, I gave it a try.

Looking back, I am glad I took the chance and ran for the position. My only regret is I wish I would have done it ten years sooner. It has been a great experience that has allowed me to grow as a teacher, meet new people from all across the United States and help me understand the whole process of how the VATAT, Texas FFA

and the Texas FFA Foundation operate as Texas AG ED. It has shown me how fortunate we are in Texas to have such an awesome group of people leading our organizations. If I would have started this adventure sooner, I think I could have had the chance to give back more to the profession. I would encourage anyone who is interested in seeking a position to take the chance and run for a seat on the board. It does not matter if you are young, experienced, gray-haired, blue-eyed, male or female; just do it.

Since we are talking about the process, let me try to outline how this all works. It is kind of like our chapter, district, area and state officers. We have to start out on the local level and work our way up. Each area gets a certain number of board members, and that number is based on the total number of paid VATAT members in that area. If you look at the board, you will see each area has a different number of board members because the number is based on one board member for every twenty-eight paid VATAT members in that area. If more than one person from your district is interested in running, then you will have to have an election to determine who will advance to area.

During the Professional Development Conference, each area



will nominate and elect their board members, who will serve a three-year term. Each area has staggered terms, so all of the board members are not replaced in any given year. After election to the board, you attend the remaining meeting at the conference and then the spring meeting in May. Currently, there are sixty-five members on the board including the officers, past presidents, retired ag teachers

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## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY UPDATES

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# Outstanding Agriculture Science Students Recognized at Best of Texas Awards

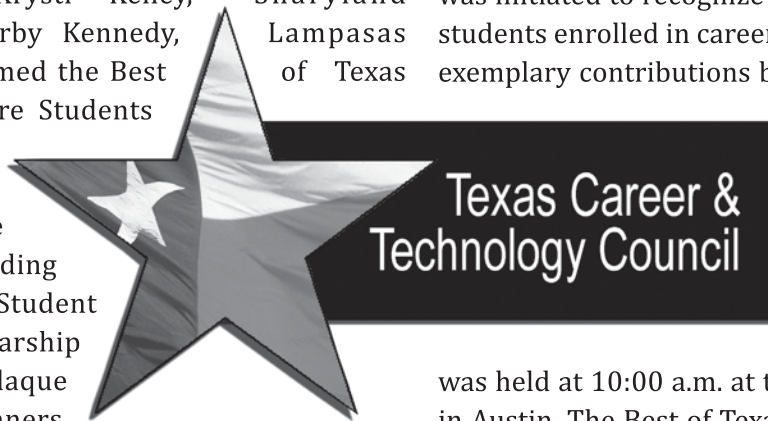
Texas Career and Technical Education students and community leaders were recognized Monday, April 18, 2011, at the annual Best of Texas Awards Ceremony. The Sharyland, Lampasas and Rusk FFA Chapters had members recognized as Outstanding Agriculture Science Students. Krysti Kelley, Sharyland FFA member, and Kirby Kennedy, Lampasas FFA member, were named the Best Outstanding Agriculture Students runners-up. Thomas Marchetti, Rusk FFA member, was named the Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Student winner. A cash scholarship and commemorative plaque was presented to winners and runners-up in each division.

Texas Career and Technology Council Chairperson and Association of Texas Technology Education Executive Secretary Chris Riola was proud to be a part of this year's Best of Texas Ceremony. "On behalf of the TCTC, I would like to congratulate all of the Best of Texas Award winners and runners-up. This group of students and professionals who were recognized

is the reason why the Best of Texas Awards program was started. Best wishes in your future endeavors and, once again congratulations; you are the Best of Texas," Riola said. The Best of Texas Awards are sponsored by the Texas Career and Technology Council (TCTC) and was initiated to recognize outstanding achievements by students enrolled in career and technical education, and exemplary contributions by businesses and community leaders who have dedicated their support to career and technical programs. School districts throughout Texas submitted nominations in 11 awards categories.

The awards ceremony was held at 10:00 a.m. at the William B. Travis Building in Austin. The Best of Texas festivities kicked-off with a breakfast reception and award recipients were treated to lunch at the Capitol Grill following the ceremony.

The TCTC is an organization representing seven professional organizations of career and technical education. TCTC strives to maintain one unified voice, speaking for and supporting career and technical programs. Please visit [www.texascareerandtechnology.org](http://www.texascareerandtechnology.org) for more information.



**Photo Caption:** Best of Texas Outstanding Agriculture Science Students, (from left to right) Kirby Kennedy, Krysti Kelley and Thomas Marchetti, proudly display their awards with Chris Riola, Texas Career and Technology Council chairperson and Association of Texas Technology Education executive secretary and David Reiley, VATAT President.

**TCTC Affiliations:** Association of Texas Technology Education, Family & Consumer Sciences Teachers Association of Texas, Marketing Educators of Texas, Texas Business Technology Educators Association, Texas Health Occupations Association, Texas Industrial Vocational Association and Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas

## “Words with Friends”

*Continued from page 1*

and university staff representatives.

As a board member, you are assigned to one of the ten committees of the VATAT and attend meetings as needed. This year, the board had a special task. The task was to select a new executive director who will lead our organization for the coming years. This process started when Gerald decided he would retire. Once that was done, the wheels were set into motion to find a replacement. The Duties of the Executive Director’s Committee set the schedule and guidelines for the application process. When the deadline arrived in January, there were four candidates who put their names in the hat.

During the May board meeting, the entire board took part in the process with all four candidates sitting down for interviews with all sixty-five members. Questions were asked and notes taken as each candidate had a chance to highlight their careers and strengths as the next executive director. Once the interviews were over, the board voted on the candidate of their choice to select the seventh executive director of the VATAT in its seventy-one-year history.

Just like the hiring of a new executive director, the board acts on various items brought forward from the members of their area. These items are discussed and voted on by the board with a majority vote needed to pass. Some other duties of the board members are to recruit and retain members in our association, meet with committees to review policies and make recommendations, work registration at the conference, review the finances and set the budget, hear reports from the other Texas AG ED organizations and select the future sites for the summer conference.

When the board meets at the teachers’ conference, they also elect new officers for the coming year. Any board member wishing to run for an office must have a Memo of Understanding signed by their principal, superintendent, and school board president to ensure they have the support of their administrators. Serving as an officer is a five-year commitment, three years as a VATAT officer, one year as Animal Industry chair and then one year as the chairperson of the Texas FFA Board. Each year, a new secretary is elected from the current board and will serve a one-year term, the following year that person will move up to vice president and then the third year he or she will serve as president. During this time, you are also involved with the Texas FFA Foundation Board and serve on the Texas Career and Technology Council.

One last thing about the process I have not mentioned is how smooth the board meetings run, and this is due to a well-organized staff. Gerald has always been prepared and has his staff ready for the meetings and it shows. It is awesome when a great plan comes together, and the process works to everyone’s benefit.

## Why Conference?

*Gerald Young, VATAT Executive Director*

Prior to 1983, CTE (*Vocational Education at that time*) programs were considered bonus programs. They were funded by the Federal Government. One of the requirements was every program had to have an active youth organization (*CTSO today*). In 1984, states began to fund CTE, as weighted funding, with some supplemental funding from the Federal Government also known as Perkins Funding. Each CTE organization came up with a way to justify the new funding. The leaders in Agriculture Education chose the record book and SAEP’s for that. Unlike most of the other CTSOs, FFA continued to strengthen and grow. This is a testament of the dedication of our leadership and the teachers to promote the FFA.

As a result, the FFA and its activities have been a very important part of our teachers’ conference. This process begins at conference with the state calendar and concludes with finalizing the district and area calendars during the area meetings held at conference. Teachers’ committees that work with different areas affecting FFA activities are elected and meet during conference (*CDE, LDE, Scholarship, Conference Planning, Degree Check, A I, and Rodeo*). This, along with the educational workshops, CEU credits teachers receive and the teacher interaction with exhibitors makes conference very important. For as long as I can remember, committees of teachers and agriculture education leaders have met to plan conference.

I have gotten word from officers and board members that teachers at area and state CDE’s have asked if we could shorten conference. For this year, the answer is no. The Association signs a contract with the convention center and hotels for conference, the fall before conference. If we made any changes to these contracts, it would be very costly, and it would make it impossible to do. It would be like having all of the county fair animals on feed and the show date being changed by a month or more. The Association can look at shortening conference next year, but it would be difficult to do all we do in fewer days and still give teachers 30 CEU hours. Some have asked if the conference registration fee could be less. If you will remember, the conference fee was put into place for those who come to conference and do not join the Association or to help teachers get some assistance from their schools. Remember, dues are always less than the registration fee and Association members do not have to pay a registration fee. Conference has been and always will be for teachers, so we will do what the teachers need.

*Continued on page 4...*

# Why Conference?

*Continued from page 3*

On a personal note, it bothers me when teachers say their schools will not pay their travel, so they will not attend conference. Go back to the first two paragraphs; I think conference is too important to miss. There is too much information and too many decisions to not be there to have input and be better prepared for the year to come. Five out of the last seven years I taught, I paid my own way to conference and never considered not going or leaving early. I also paid my own dues all 30 years I taught ag. I never once thought about not paying my dues. You could always travel with another teacher, share fuel and room expenses. Once you are at conference, the only meals you cannot get free are Tuesday night and Wednesday through Friday breakfasts, if you do not stay at a hotel that provides those items. I am sure many of you are saying he is only worried about paying for conference, but thanks to our supporters and sponsors conference is already paid for. I hope to see you in Arlington.

# VATAT CAREERS PAGE

The VATAT's Careers page gives you the most recent list of job opportunities available. On the page you can search for the entire list of job openings, or you can narrow your search by looking for job opportunities in your area. If you know of a job opening that needs to be posted online, please email it in a Word document format to either karen@vatat.org or allison@vatat.org.

Have you seen the latest VATAT news on our website's home page?

We continue to update the site with beneficial information, so check it out:

**[www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org)**

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# VATAT Activities



## *Prize Package Drawing*

***Benefiting the VATAT Scholarship Fund  
\$5/ticket or 5 for \$20***

This year, RiverStar Farms and the VATAT offer you more chances to win one of four exceptional prize packages along with several other prizes including the second place prize of a small animal scale from WW-Paul Scales, and \$50.00 cash or gift card! The ten winning tickets will be drawn, as before, and each winning ticket holder will select a filled balloon. Once each ticket holder has his or her balloon, each person will pop the balloon to reveal the prize inside. One winner will get to choose from the following packages...

***South Texas Deer Hunt for Two  
Livestock Equipment Package  
Custom Livestock Trailer  
Las Vegas Trip for Two***

Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Tickets can be purchased during FFA Convention and VATAT Conference at the RiverStar Farms booth. Tickets cost \$5 each or \$20 for five tickets. All funds collected will be donated by RiverStar Farms to benefit the VATAT Scholarship Fund. The winner will be drawn at the VATAT Conference during Family Night. Anyone is eligible, need not be present to win. View descriptions of each package at [www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org) under Conference>VATAT Activities.

### ***Ag Teacher Open- 23rd Annual VATAT Golf Tournament***

Come join VATAT members at the Grand Oaks Country Club in Grand Prairie, Texas. Check-in will be from 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. on Monday, July 25. The tee off time is 8:00 a.m. The all-inclusive entry fee is \$80.00 per player, which includes lunch. The proceeds benefit the VATAT scholarship fund. All players must be current VATAT members and first year teachers are not eligible. In order to participate, please complete the entry form found at [www.vatat.org](http://www.vatat.org) under Conference>VATAT Activities. You must register and send payment by July 19. For more information contact Fud Robertson at 806-543-8298 or email [frobertson@ldalouisd.net](mailto:frobertson@ldalouisd.net).

### ***2011 Fourth Annual VATAT 3D Archery Tournament Scholarship Fundraiser***

Ag teachers and family members attending the 2011 VATAT Conference are invited to participate in the Fourth Annual Archery Tournament. Proceeds will benefit the VATAT Scholarship Fund. All VATAT members, spouses and children are welcome to attend the tournament. More information regarding the tournament's details will be posted online as it becomes available.

### ***VATAT Conference Annual Family Night***

Join us for food and fun at the annual VATAT Family Night at the Arlington Convention Center on Thursday evening, July 28, 2011, starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending at 9:30 p.m. Come enjoy music from the Ag Teacher's Band and participate in the raffle! We look forward to seeing you and your families there!

### ***VATAT Awards Ceremony***

Come show your support and help recognize outstanding VATAT members and agriculture science supporters at the VATAT Awards Ceremony sponsored by Superior Trophies. The ceremony will be held on Wednesday, July 27th from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the Champions Ballroom at the Sheraton Hotel.

### ***Family Activities***

Six Flags over Texas and Hurricane Harbor have a special offer, and tickets are good for the entire 2011 season! Tickets will be available for purchase Monday through Thursday of the conference at the Information Desk. Discount tickets are only available to VATAT conference attendees and their guests. See the VATAT Activities page online for details.

### ***VATAT Conference Nights at Rangers Ballpark***

Visit the VATAT Activities page online for more information about this exciting opportunity!

### ***Spouses' Luncheon***

On Tuesday, July 26 there will be a lunch for the spouses at the Sheraton Hotel sponsored by CEV Multimedia. More information regarding the luncheon will be available soon.

## ***Tours & Workshops...***

Pre-conference workshops can be registered through the VATAT Online system and credit card payments will be accepted. If you choose to mail in a check, please select the "Bill Me" option. You must select "Submit Order" to finalize the registration process. Pre - Conference Workshop registration will close **July 14**, unless otherwise noted. Onsite registration will be available for remaining spots.

## ***If You Are Retiring This Year...***

Please contact the VATAT office if you are retiring or if you know of someone who is retiring after this year. We strive to keep our records accurate and would also like to honor members who are retiring from teaching agriculture science. Thank you for your help with this matter.



# 2011 VATAT Conference Nights

at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington

**JULY 25-28, 2011**

**TWINS vs. RANGERS**  
 First Pitch for all games  
 is 7:05 p.m.

The 2011 VATAT Conference will be held at the Arlington Convention Center, next door to Rangers Ballpark. Take advantage of savings off gate prices for all VATAT Conference attendees by pre-ordering your tickets through this exclusive offer. VATAT discounts will not be available at the box office windows. Deadline to order tickets is Monday, July 25 at 12:00 p.m.



## VATAT CONFERENCE NIGHTS JULY 25-28, 2011

Please indicate the quantity you would like to purchase.

To view seating diagrams, visit [texasrangers.com](http://texasrangers.com)

Seat Locations	Special Price: July 25-26	Special Price: July 27-28
# of Lower Box (Reg. \$62)	_____ x \$36 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$39 = Total \$ _____
# of All You Can Eat (Reg. \$39)	_____ x \$30 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$35 = Total \$ _____
# of Corner Box (Reg. \$43)	_____ x \$25 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$27 = Total \$ _____
# of Lower Reserved (Reg. \$32)	_____ x \$18 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$20 = Total \$ _____
# of Lexus Club Terrace (Reg. \$26)	_____ x \$15 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$16 = Total \$ _____
# of Upper Reserved (Reg. \$15)	_____ x \$10 = Total \$ _____	_____ x \$11 = Total \$ _____
	GRAND TOTAL \$ _____	\$ _____
Select Game Date(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> July 25 <input type="checkbox"/> July 26 <input type="checkbox"/> July 27 <input type="checkbox"/> July 28	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (D) \_\_\_\_\_ (E) \_\_\_\_\_

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Payment Method: (Checks payable to Texas Rangers)

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_  Visa  MC  Amex  Disc  Diners

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Mail completed order form and payment to: Texas Rangers, Attn: Jamie Roberts, 1000 Ballpark Way, Ste. 400, Arlington, TX 76011, fax 817-273-5180, call 817-436-5979, or email [jroberts@texasrangers.com](mailto:jroberts@texasrangers.com).



# Texas FFA

# Update

## 2011 State Convention Schedule

Want to know what schedule changes we have made for the 83rd Annual Texas FFA Convention in Lubbock? To see the 2011 Convention Tentative Schedule, visit <http://www.texasffa.org/StateConvention/ConventionSchedule.aspx>.

### **Here are the major changes. Please read carefully:**

- National Officer Candidate Nominating Committee to report at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, July 8th. *(Previously Saturday)*
- National Officer Candidates to Report at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 9th. *(Previously Sunday)*
- Courtesy Corps Meeting moved to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 11th. *(Previously 5:00 p.m.)*
- Official Ribbon Cutting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 12th **(New Event)**
- Lone Star Degree Recipients Report to Area Sections at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday. *(Previously 1:30 p.m.)*
- Lone Star Degree Ceremony begins at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday *(Previously 2:00 p.m.)*
- HLSR Scholarship Luncheon will be 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 13th. *(Previously noon on Thursday. Recipients will report to directly luncheon)*
- The HLSR Scholarship presentation will be during the 2nd General Session on Wednesday afternoon. *(Previously at end of Thursday a.m. session)*
- The Championship Review *(CDE / LDE Winners)* will be recognized during the 2nd General Session on Wednesday afternoon. *(Previously in Thursday a.m. session)*
- The Agriscience Fair Stage recognition will be during the 4th General Session on Thursday morning, July 14th. *(Previously in Wednesday night session)*
- The Foundation Scholarship Luncheon has been moved to 11:30 a.m. on Thursday. *(Previously on Wednesday)*
- An Honorary Lone Star Degree Recipients Breakfast will be held at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, July 15th. **(New Event)**
- The Honorary Lone Star Degree Ceremony will be held during the 7th General Session on Friday morning. **(New Event)**

## Convention Registration

### **Students/Advisors registered through the Roster Management System:**

- Registration for Advisors is free of charge.
- Registration fee for Students is \$35. This includes admission into the rodeo, concert, dance and hypnotist performance.
- Registration fee for Jr. Members is \$35. *(Junior members must not be registered as voting delegates)*
- Please note - the hypnotist performances are for the advisors and students only and will be held in conjunction with the dance to reduce overcrowding on the dance floor. *(Because seating is limited for the hypnotist, this is a ticketed event. You must pre-register for these tickets through the Roster Management System.)*

### **Chapter Guests:**

- The advisor of the chapter needs to register chapter guests through his/her Roster system.
- The registration fee for guests is free of charge, but this does not include admission to the rodeo, dance or concert.

### **Meal Tickets:**

- Daily meal tickets can be pre-purchased through the Roster system for \$8 or onsite for \$10. Meals will be provided Tuesday – Thursday by Fuddruckers *(burgers)*, River Smiths *(chicken)* and the Texas Tech Meat Science program *(fajitas)*.

### **Parking:**

- Parking passes will be available for purchase on the Roster system for \$7.

### **Registration Payment:**

- Advisors may pay their convention registration before, during or after convention. Please note – all payments generated during the 2010-2011 fiscal year are due no later than August 1, 2011. Please keep this deadline in mind since most school district business offices are closed during the summer. If you will be paying for your registration at convention, you will need to go to the 'Cashier Booth' to pay. You will not be able to make a payment at the area registration table. We will only accept check or money order for registration payment. Sorry, no cash or credit card accepted for registration. You do need to bring extra cash or credit cards for vendor booths, pictures, souvenirs, etc.



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SAE Marketplace is an online resource designed specifically for agricultural science teachers and FFA members to locate livestock sales and breeders, purchase equipment and supplies and find the perfect Supervised Agricultural Experience project.

The SAE Marketplace is a venture of the VATAT and is simple and easy to use. It is divided into three categories which contain agricultural products and services including: The Show Source, Ag Service and Supply Shop and the Greenhouse.

Advertising on SAE Marketplace is a great way to target Ag Ed Family members! Advertisements run for 12 months and include up to 50 word of text, company logo, website and email links--all for only \$100 per year!

Visit SAE Marketplace at [www.saemarketplace.com](http://www.saemarketplace.com) to find your next SAE project or to advertise one!

[www.saemarketplace.com](http://www.saemarketplace.com)

# VATAT News

## *and the benefits of advertising*

Do you know of a company interested in advertising in the *VATAT News*? It is the perfect opportunity to promote a product or service to more than 4,000 VATAT members, Young Farmers, FFA Alumni, FFA Foundation partners and other agricultural and FFA supporters in Texas. Members use the *VATAT News* to receive important information about agricultural education, ag teachers conference, legislation and much more. Advertising prices are reasonable and it is the only way reach Texas agriculture science teachers in their homes.

Advertisers will save money on labor, postage and the announcement will not get lost in the school mail! We welcome advertising and hope to foster a lasting relationship with every company who advertises in the *VATAT News*. Please share this information with a company you think would be interested in advertising with us. For information regarding advertising formats, size requirements and deadlines please email Allison Bequette at [allison@vatat.org](mailto:allison@vatat.org).



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## A Vision that Supports Agricultural Science Education

### *Mission Statement*

The Texas FFA Foundation seeks to strengthen agricultural education and the Texas FFA program, so each student can develop their potential for personal growth, career success and leadership in a global marketplace.

### *Vision Statement*

Through a coordinated effort by the Texas FFA Foundation to engage the Texas FFA Association, Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas (VATAT), Texas FFA Alumni Association, Collegiate FFA Association of Texas, and Texas Young Farmers Association in cooperation with business, industry, agricultural colleges/universities, and governmental leadership over the next five years, the Texas FFA Foundation will work to advance agricultural education and the Texas FFA Program.

Building on the proven success of Texas agricultural education and the Texas FFA Program, our mission will be distinguished by the continued development, funding and implementation, of cutting edge learning opportunities focusing on: academic achievement, critical thinking, leadership and communication skills, technical and practical skills, teamwork, and a strong work ethic.

Progressively, the Texas FFA Foundation will work with affiliate organizations to more clearly define the public's understanding of the personal and economic value of agricultural education and the Texas FFA Program.

The Texas FFA Foundation understands the vital role of agricultural science teachers. We will promote our teachers as a valuable resource, dedicated to teaching, and service to the profession and their communities. As a necessary step in enhancing the range and depth of our teacher's capabilities, the Texas FFA Foundation will work to develop effective programs and alliances with corporate sponsors, private foundations, community, education professionals and governmental leaders to maximize learning opportunities for Texas teachers, students and communities.

To ensure a dynamic future for Texas agricultural education and the Texas FFA Program, the Texas FFA Foundation will seek financial resources sufficient to sustain these programs in perpetuity.

[www.texasffaoundation.org](http://www.texasffaoundation.org)



# Texas Young Farmers Update

## From the President's Pen

*Janet Bulger, Texas Young Farmers President*

We had a great board meeting on the 16th of April in Mexia. We are so thankful to Don and Sharon Beene for offering their home for a meeting place.

A lot was accomplished at the meeting. We elected a treasurer, Joyce Kirby, and a secretary, Trina Holloway. We also adopted a Sponsorship Level Pyramid, worked on modernizing some of the awards and kicked around some ideas for fundraising. We adopted a budget and discussed the Young Farmer Convention scheduled for January, 2012 in Austin.

Kenny Bulger and Ed Kirby cooked a delicious fish lunch for us with all the trimmings, and Sharon Beene provided some great desserts. Thank you to these three.

We are continually updating our website. Please send us articles and pictures of happenings in your chapters, so we can get it online.

## TXYF Awards

I would like to encourage you to be working on your awards applications. These applications are due November 1, 2011, and that day is approaching quickly.

**Outstanding Public Relations Award:** There were some changes made to the Print Media portion of the Outstanding Public Relations Award.

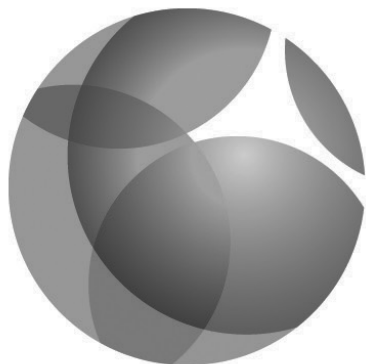
The current format will change into a regular scrapbook format. This is a 12 x 12 sheet. The scrapbook must contain chapter activity and media (*URL with the date & website on the printed sheet as well as from newspapers*). It will need to be formatted in a monthly basis. The score will be broken down with more points going to the media than the photography. The media points will stay the same. Points will be distributed at 10 points per photo with a total of 50 points per activity. The award application must be submitted to the state office by November 1, but the scrapbooks will be judged at the convention. For complete rules for this award and all other awards, please go to the website.

## Come Say Hello!

Be sure to stop by the Texas Young Farmers' booth at both the Texas FFA Convention as well as at the VATAT Conference this summer to see what's new with our organization and how you can get involved. So, come say hello; we would love to see you!

## DATES TO REMEMBER...

- **July 11-15, 2011** – State FFA Convention – Lubbock, TX
- **July 25-29, 2011** – VATAT Conference – Arlington, TX
- **August 6, 2011** – YF 1st Annual Family and Friends Reunion - Confederate Reunion Grounds, Mexia, TX
- **August 20, 2011** – YF Summer Board Meeting – Austin, TX
- **October 29, 2011** – YF Fall Board Meeting – TBA
- **November 1, 2011** – Awards Applications Due
- **December 7-10, 2011** – National YF Institute - Kansas City, MO
- **January 13-14, 2012** – YF State Convention - Austin, TX



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# How Important Are Earthworms?

Most people probably think the earthworm is only good for fishbait. Well, that is wrong. The earthworm is one of nature's top "soil scientists." The earthworm plays a big role in helping make our soil good enough to grow healthy plants and provide us food.

Earthworms are like free farm help. They help to "turn" the soil. This brings down organic matter from the top and mixes it with the soil below. Earthworms help to increase the amount of air and water that gets into the soil. They break down organic matter, like leaves and grass into things that plants can use.

Worms make fertilizer. When they eat, they leave behind castings that are a very valuable type of fertilizer. If there are 500,000 worms living in an acres of soil, they could make 50 tons of castings. That is like lining up 100,000 one pound coffee cans filled with castings. These same 500,000 worms burrowing into an acres of soil can create a drainage system equal to 2,000 feet of 6-inch pipe. Having earthworms around in your garden is a real good sign that you have healthy soil.

## 2011 YF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

**Amber Nicole Matula** the daughter of Stephen and Lisa Matula of Schulenburg and a member of the Schulenburg FFA. Her SAE program includes dairy cattle, beef cattle, commercial steers and swine. She has served as president of her local FFA chapter, participated in the FFA Quiz, Job Interview, Dairy Judging, and state livestock judging. She has been involved in the local Young Farmer chapter by assisting with their hay show, helping with the turkey shoot and she has helped out with the egg toss and cow chip contest. Last year, she was the speaker at the local Young Farmer banquet. Amber plans on attending Texas A & M University to get a degree in Veterinary Medicine.

**Victoria Leigh Pilger** is the daughter of Adren & Susan Pilger and attends A & M Consolidated High School. Victoria plans on attending Texas A & M University and majoring in International Agri-marketing. She has assisted the A & M Consolidated Young Farmer Chapter with their fundraising activities of which they assisted the FFA members with their programs. Victoria has served as chapter president and Area III reporter. She has participated in Chapter Conducting, Creed Speaking, Job Interview, Meat Evaluation, and Prepared Public Speaking. Her SAE Program consisted of commercial steers, market steers, market swine and commercial heifers.

**Catherine Leigh Till** is the daughter of Richard and Becky Till and a member of the Dayton FFA Chapter. Catherine plans on attending Sam Houston State University

and plans to major in Agricultural Education and teach agricultural science. She has been active in the Dayton Young Farmers by assisting with the chapter livestock show and the Dayton Young Farmer Rodeo. She has served as chapter president, Area IX secretary. Her SAE consisted of exhibiting the Grand Champion Market Rabbits at the South Texas State Fair. Plus, she also has shown rabbits at many other livestock shows and she has raised commercial heifers. Catherine has participated in FFA Creed Speaking, Public Relations, Dairy Foods.

**Corey Gene Black** is the son of Steve and Melinda Black and plans on attending Rice University and major in Mechanical Engineering. Cory has assisted the Fairfield Young Farmers at various fundraising activities which included cooking hamburgers at football games, selling and distributing poinsettias and the birddog trials. His SAE included exhibiting market swine at the local level and all major livestock shows. He also raised and exhibited market goats and steers. He served as chapter president, Sandyland District president and Area VIII vice president. He participated in Quiz, Senior Chapter Conducting and Livestock Judging on the state level. He was also Area VIII high individual.

**Hunter Choate** is the son of Barry and Sandra Choate of Athens FFA and plans on attending Angelo State University to major in Agricultural Education. Hunter has assisted the Athens Young Farmers with their Christmas needy-family campaign which included wrapping presents and preparing the food. He also assisted with their fundraising activities. He served as president and sentinel of the Athens FFA Chapter, and participated in Junior Chapter Conducting, Livestock Judging, FFA Radio and Senior Chapter Conducting at the area level. His SAE included exhibiting registered Braford cattle at major livestock shows, and he has commercial heifers. His senior year he built a 20-foot low boy trailer that he exhibited at the Houston Livestock Show Ag Mechanic Show. He won a blue ribbon and the trailer was the Reserve Champion project at the Henderson County Show.

## AG TRIVIA

1. How many tea plantations are there in the United States?
2. Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain which vitamin?

Answers from last month's trivia: 1. Tea; 2. Lettuce; 3. Blueberries; 4. Washington; 5. Peaches

# VATAT BRICK CAMPAIGN ORDER FORM

*Please Print*

Donor's Name:

Donor's Email:

Address:

City/State/Zip:




Cost is \$100. Make tax deductible checks payable to: Texas FFA Foundation.

Please write what you would like your brick engraving to say above. A sample brick is pictured for reference. Limit 3 lines, 14 characters

per line (including spaces).

You may also purchase your brick with a credit card through VATAT Online. For more information about the brick campaign please contact Gerald Young at 512.472.3128 or [gerald@vatat.org](mailto:gerald@vatat.org). Don't miss out on this great opportunity!

Mail completed form to:

**Texas FFA Foundation  
Brick Campaign  
614 East 12th Street  
Austin, TX 78701**



# Texas FFA Alumni

# Update

## Going...Going...Gone!

*Kelly White, Texas FFA Alumni President*

I hope this article will be short and to the point. If you haven't heard yet, the Texas FFA Alumni holds its annual meeting and auction every year during the State FFA Convention. The auction is the Alumni's primary source of funding for the awards, grants and scholarships we bestow to worthy candidates.

The auction traditionally has several items that are useful to our industry. Thanks to McCoy's we have had a squeeze chute, panels, t-post and other miscellaneous items. Rusty Morgan has been graciously donating a scale for several years now. LaQuinta has donated night stays nationwide. Several of our fundraising vendors graciously donate items such as boots, camping equipment and other things. We have had items you can purchase for your spouse to show her or him you missed them the week of convention (*these can also be purchased to give at a later date to get out of the doghouse*). We have also had airline tickets on Southwest Airlines given to us for the auction. Cabala's has also been a good sponsor. The Alumni Auction is for you, just ask the ag teachers who were persuaded (*drug in*) by Liz Treptow last year. Several attendees had not planned to buy anything, yet walked out with a winner.

We are always looking for auction items. So, if you would like to contribute to the auction or know of someone who would like to contribute, please feel free to contact me in order to secure it in the auction line-up.

## DEADLINE...

The deadline for the \$500.00 Grants and Scholarships was June 1st. I hope you did not let this chance pass you by...Going...Going...Gone... For more information on the Texas FFA Alumni, go to <http://texasffaalumni.ffa.org>. National FFA Alumni has a great deal to offer as well. Go to [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) and look for the Alumni page.

## Alumni Chapter Basket Contest



You are asked to enter your FFA alumni chapter in the Texas FFA Alumni Chapter Basket Contest. Each Alumni chapter may enter one basket representative of their locality. It may have homemade goodies, jellies, items made by local companies, home made items, items from the local ag department, caps, etc.

Baskets should be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 12th. The baskets will be judged on a penny (\$.01) per voted. The basket with the most votes will receive the rotating "Basket Winner" plaque. The baskets become the property of the Texas FFA Alumni Association and will be sold in the auction on Thursday evening.

### Contest Rules:

1. Baskets need to be delivered to the FFA Alumni booth by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday.
2. A list of the items included in the basket should be clearly labeled on the basket.
3. The basket can be of any creation.



Vocational Agriculture  
 Teachers Association of Texas  
 614 East 12th Street  
 Austin, Texas 78701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 AUSTIN, TX  
 PERMIT NO. 1

## TEXAS AG ED FAMILY EVENTS

### JUNE 2011

**1st** - State Speaking Events  
 Online Entry Deadline

**4th - 7th** - State Leadership  
 Conference

**8th** - State Officer Selection  
 Interviews & Testing

**9th** - State Scholarship Selection

**9th** - Texas FFA Board of  
 Directors Meeting - Location TBD

**9th - 10th** - State Degree Check  
 - Location TBD

**11th - 17th** - State Fair Priority  
 Tags, Fax Only - Austin

**21st** - Agriscience Fair Online  
 Entry Deadline

**30th** - Last Day to Validate Swine

### JULY 2011

**7th** - Deadline for all Swine  
 Validation Materials - Austin

**11th - 15th** - 83rd State FFA  
 Convention - Lubbock

**25th - 29th** - VATAT  
 Professional Development  
 Conference - Arlington

## 2011 State Fair Swine Validation

The late tag orders are \$10.00 from May 7 - June 10, 2011. The priority tag orders must be faxed to 512-476-2894, and the tags are \$10.00 per tag plus \$20.00 priority postage and handling fee from June 11 - June 16, 2011. All swine must be validated on or before June 30, 2011. The Validation Chairperson must be present when the animals are validated. The change of ownership is due in the FFA office on or before June 30, 2011.

All manila forms, hair envelopes, ethics policies, committee forms and Excel spreadsheets are due in the FFA office on or before July 8, 2011 (Manilas, hair envelopes and ethic policies must be in Alpha order and banded or clipped by classification. Do not staple.) Do not alter tags. Ear notch correction and ear tag replacement forms must be faxed (512-476-2894) to the FFA office on or before July 22, 2011. Any required validation information not in the FFA office by July 22, 2011 will not be validated. **Information is due July 8th**; we do not have personnel in the office to process or call for missing validation items after this date.

Vocational Agriculture  
 Teachers Association  
 of Texas

#### OFFICERS

David Reiley  
*President*

Russell Thomas  
*Vice President*

Kevin Swor  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

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