

Corduroy Connections

Minnesota FFA Alumni Association Newsletter

April 2012

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Greetings from President Judy Barka

I'm Not Blue

As a High School student, I never took the opportunity to become involved in FFA and wear the Blue Jacket. I made the choice to become involved in other youth activities including 4-H. Did I miss out on some things – sure - but it is only as I look back that I realize it. I'm not blue that I didn't wear the jacket. Having my children become involved in the Litchfield FFA has shown me FFA at its finest. I understand now that *“FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success!”*



I am looking forward to serving as the MN FFA Alumni President for the next two years. I little background about me. My family has a diversified farming operation including crops, livestock- beef, dairy and horses. We also have a bulk milk truck transport business. I work part time at Meeker Memorial Hospital as volunteer coordinator and also part time as an assessor.

My husband Randy and I have four children. Jon and his wife Jen are the wonderful parents of the most amazing, talented, gifted grandchild, James. David is a junior at South Dakota State University major in Animal Science. Alan is finishing up at Ridgewater College in the Farm Operations and Management, with a dairy emphasis. Torus is a junior at Litchfield High School and is currently serving as the Litchfield FFA Vice President. Did I mention I have an extremely gifted and talented grandson who will soon be two?

In the next two years I hope to develop a closer working relationship with FFA Alumni Affiliates across the state through more effective use of our regional directors. I hope to increase again, the numbers of affiliates in the state and I hope to improve communications between all FFA Alumni members and the State Officer Team.

You will find contact information for our state officer team in this newsletter. Don't hesitate to contact any one of us if you have any questions.

I am looking forward to the State Convention! Be sure to come in to the Stop and Shop and say hello!!

Sincerely,
Judy Barka
MN FFA Alumni Council President

MN FFA Alumni Council News

Membership Renewals Are Now Available!

By now, your Alumni Affiliate should have received information for membership renewal for 2012-2013. These forms must be sent back to the alumni association by **April 20** along with membership dues. If you still need membership renewal information or have any questions, please email: mnffaalumni@gmail.com

Past State Officer Reception



Do you remember the last time zipped up your blue corduroy jacket? When we think of the FFA blue and gold it is easy to think back to the amazing experiences we had, the life-long skills we gained, and the people we met.

Reconnect with those people and those experiences by joining us for the Annual Past State Officer Reception during the 83rd Minnesota FFA State Convention.

Plan to attend this event on **Sunday, April 22 at 4:30pm**. The reception will be held in the Mariucci Arena Club Room on the University of Minnesota campus. Fellow past state officer and renowned rural artist Bonnie Mohr will attend the Past State Officer reunion and will be available to sign the recently release print "We Live to Share".

We look forward to you and your officer team's presence at this event and the opportunity to reconnect.

RSVP at: <https://cfans.wufoo.com/forms/past-state-officer-reunion-rsvp/>

FFA Alumni Stop and Shop 2012

If you are coming to the state convention consider spending some time volunteering in the MN FFA Alumni Stop N Shop. We would really appreciate your help even if it is not for a full shift. The Stop N Shop is located in Room 116 in the CECC. If nothing else, stop in, look around, and say hi to your fellow FFA supporters.

To volunteer, email us at: dahlman@xtratyme.com

Congrats to Region 2 Representative, Aimee Brichacek



Congrats to Aimee and Tom Brichacek on the birth of their beautiful baby girl! Lily Alice was born March 9th at 10:41am. She was 9lbs 5oz and 20 1/2 inches. Four year old Abby has been a super big sister and loves having a baby in the house even though Lily has her days and nights backwards!

Alumni Affiliate News



Minnesota Ag Teacher Wins National Ag Literacy Teaching Award

Morris teacher is one of five in the nation awarded for excellence

ST. PAUL, Minn. – A Morris, Minnesota teacher has been named one of the nation’s exceptional teachers by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization. Natasha Mortenson, an agricultural educator and FFA adviser at Morris Area High School, is one of five teachers nationwide to be chosen for this competitive award.

Natasha Mortenson

Mortenson developed a mentoring program between her high school FFA students and the Morris Elementary School. The program grew into an “Agriculture in the City” project in which her FFA student mentors visit Minneapolis schools to teach students about agriculture and food production. Mortenson’s efforts and recognition demonstrate the growing interest among educators to expand their teaching impact beyond their core curriculum and initiate K-12 agricultural literacy programs.

Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson has had the opportunity to see Mortenson in action and says she is more than deserving of the award.

“I had the privilege of seeing Ms. Mortenson and her high school students during their visit to Lucy Laney Elementary in north Minneapolis. Many of these children had never been outside the city, much less taken a trip to a farm. With her leadership, her high school group really shined and made a lasting impression on hundreds of young students,” said Frederickson.

Mortenson, along with winners from Florida, Maine, New Mexico and Wyoming, will be recognized with an Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award at the 2012 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Colorado.

For more information about Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom visit www.mda.state.mn.us/maitc.

Fairmont Area Schools Approve Ag Program



FAIRMONT - Fairmont Area Schools is set to begin taking students into Ag Academy and FFA. The school board approved the new programs Tuesday night.

The agriculture classes will be offered to students for high school credit, while FFA is an extracurricular leadership program only offered to students who have taken an ag class.

The programs are funded by a committee of community members who agreed to pay \$100,000 per year for three years to start the program. They began fund-raising in the last week of December, and have raised all of the first year funds and most of the funding needed for the second and third years.

Principal Dave Paschke said students will be given the opportunity to register for seven agriculture classes. Courses actually offered will be those in which enough students register. At a minimum, the district will offer exploring agriculture and agriculture leadership. Other possible courses include agriculture business and economics; principles of animal science; principles of plant science; wildlife management; and landscaping.

The district will begin searching for an ag teacher and FFA leader, and the person ultimately hired may have some say in final course decisions.

"We may do some tweaking once we have a teacher," said Paschke, adding that some of the ag courses could be taught by current teachers.

Both administration and the community committee supporting the program have expressed surprise and pleasure at how quickly funds were raised to implement the agriculture classes.

"It is a perfect example of how much can be accomplished when we work together," said school board member Sandy Beckendorf.

Randolph High School: 10th Annual FFA Tractor Parade



What started as a casual conversation between a group of students and their ag instructor has blossomed into a community tradition. Randolph FFA advisor Ed Terry encouraged the group of students to take their idea to the superintendent to request permission. The plan was to kick off spring field work and honor all of the area farmers with a parade that could be enjoyed by the students of Randolph schools.

Now 10 years later the parade is stronger than ever and grows each year. More than one hundred tractors participated in this year's parade. There are tractors ranging from 15 horsepower to 450 horsepower, with makes and models from 1935 to brand new. The parade includes tractors that are fully restored and some that come right from work. The chapter reporters do a great job of public relations. The parade has been covered in the local paper, the St. Paul Pioneer Press, the Land, the Agri-News, local radio stations and Channel 9 Morning news. This year "Machinery Pete" was present and did a great job covering the parade on his website. Check out Machinery Pete's video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHdD12rKmHc>

The morning starts with the tractors making their way to the school parking lot. Some are trailered but most are driven. The drivers are treated to coffee and donuts, while registering their tractors. The parade leaves the school parking lot and circles through the town. Residents and visitors line the streets with their lawn chairs, blankets and coffee cups while enjoying the company of their neighbors. The parade completes its route by passing by the school where the lawn is filled with every student and employee of the district. The local auctioneer brings in his speaker truck and announces each tractor and its owner as it passes.





The alumni have become an important part of the parade as it has grown. The alumni provide volunteers for helping to park tractors, register participants and answer questions. There are usually more volunteers than jobs due to the fact that everyone wants to be there to see the tractors and do some visiting.

Minnesota FFA Association News

Minnesota FFA State Convention – April 22-24, 2012

Join Minnesota FFA in celebrating the accomplishments of FFA members, alumni, and partners over the past year. The state convention will be held April 22-24, 2012 on the University of Minnesota campus. For a complete list of events and more details visit:

<http://www.mnffa.org/Conventions/MinnesotaFFAConvention2012.aspx>

Minnesota FFA Foundation News

Thank you to the MN FFA Foundation's current Star Partners:

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Minnesota FFA Alumni Association
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Calendar of Events

Alumni Membership Dues State Deadline: April 20, 2012

Past State Officer Reunion: April 22, 2012

State FFA Convention: April 22-24, 2012

National FFA Alumni Development Conference (Bozeman, Montana): July 11-15, 2012

