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Volume 57
Number 1
Fall 2007

President's Message

Ralph Johnson

We're off and running! Literally, I am sure. You probably have gotten through Homecoming Week, prepared for a substitute teacher at least once, attended your FFA Sectional Leadership Workshop, done hours of grading and posting of grades, spent hours in planning for your classes, and best of all, you have given your students a taste of what Agriculture is in your classes and labs.

I hope that your year is off to a great start and that it will continue to get even better as we go through this 2007-2008 school year. Remember to take some time to spend with family and friends to continually rejuvenate yourselves as you run this marathon of a school year. I can remember some of my earlier years in teaching. Some of our faculty members and I would leave the building at the end of the school day during this time of year and hit the golf course. We found it to be a very relaxing way to get away from the grind of the school day. Focusing on hitting that little white ball around the course allowed us to take our minds off the challenges and struggles and the

deadlines that were in front of us. We sometimes feel guilty when we do these things, but I really believe that they refresh us and help us to be more efficient when we come back to the work setting the next time. There are certainly other ways to unwind or get our minds cleared besides golf. Whatever your passion is outside of Agriculture Education/FFA/WAAE, enjoy the time you spend on those other activities and, when you get back to school, you will be more willing to continue to work on the many things that you do.

There are going to be great things accomplished this year in your Ag. Ed. Program and with TEAM AG ED, and it is going to be fun to see this come to fruition next summer at the Wisconsin FFA Convention, the NAAE Region III Conference in LaCrosse, and at our Professional Development Conference in July. I had the opportunity to serve as a Co-Chair of the Youth Committee with Dan Ziegler for the 2007 Farm Technology Days in Green County. We had been in the planning mode for the past three

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to four years for this event. I can remember the first organization meeting that was held in Green County. A large crowd gathered to offer support to this event without knowing a lot about what our responsibilities would be. Once the committees were formed and we started meeting, we learned what needed to be done and how we were going to get to the point of hosting this show in September of 2007. One of the most fun parts of this whole process was to attend all the committee meetings and listen to the reports that each committee gave. Each committee talked about what they had done and what needed to be accomplished yet. As we got closer to the event, it was fun to see all of the committees coming together, and in August of this year, it appeared that we were going to be able to pull this off—and with much success.

I see the same cooperation, dedication, and passion among our WAAE organization as well as in Team Ag Ed. It takes ALL of us to do our jobs to make Agriculture Education work full strength here in Wisconsin and across this country. I look forward to seeing the many accomplishments that you achieve this year in order to make Wisconsin Agriculture the best that it can be! Please know that the WAAE Board will help in this effort, and if you ever have comments or questions, please know that we are here to serve you.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name: _____

New Address (home):

Street: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: () _____

New Address (school):

School: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: () _____

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BACK TO SCHOOL ALL YOU STARS

Jerry Wendt, Past President

I am 100% convinced we are on track with the work we do in Agriculture Education from Early Childhood-Adult levels. We have the understanding, opportunity, support, history, and plans to make it happen. We work to overcome so many obstacles on a daily basis and students go on to career success due to the work in public education. We celebrate what we do, reward those of accomplishments, help those getting started and strive for better success.

Where is your star from this summer? If you do not know make a STAR- any kind shape, color,... and put it somewhere where you will see it for the next several months. This is because it fits with the message that was given out to over 300 people at the

WAAE Banquet this summer. Read closely what it has to say and **NEVER FORGET YOU ARE A STAR TO MANY PEOPLE AND STUDENTS BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU STAND FOR AND DO.** Have a great year!

Thank you for being a “Star” in all that you do. Your support of your community, family, sharing of your talents, succeeding in an occupation makes you a star!

These stars are in all sizes, shapes, colors, degrees of finish, out of different kinds of wood ...etc. There is no one star the same as the rest, just like each of us here tonight. We have different talents, experience, and degrees of finish. In fact some of these stars are pretty bizarre. This is what makes us great as we blend those talents, work together, progress whether we are young or old, to light up the sky.

The colors might reflect how you feel at times:

- Yellow- bright, happy, new opportunities ahead, sunshine.
- Gold- priceless, Olympics medal, value, investment.
- Blue- water, sky, first place, tired, sad.
- White- clean, third place, pure, healthy.
- Stained- finished, natural, see through, pretty.
- No finish- unfinished work, not polished, lots of opportunity.
- Red – angry, second place, hot, bright.

The star that you have chosen (or ended up with) may not reflect you today or right now but that can be changed. This star can be changed in color, shape, use, location it ends up in, or who it is given to. You might use this as a paper weight, miniature decoration, drill a hole in it and attach it to a key ring, hang it in your room, no matter what- always remember you are a star in my eyes. There are programs that search for the stars, we award stars of fame, stars are read, found, studied, and songs made about them.

Look no farther than the people around your table, this room, our profession and cherish them as stars! The world is a better place because of Agriculture

Education and you are the stars that made it that way.

My sincere thanks goes out to the several students in the Stoughton Tech Ed. Department for cutting these out of wood, which took many hours. Also special thanks to my understanding and supportive family, friends, supporters and colleagues to giving me a chance to be the president of WAAE. I will be eternally grateful!

In the time I took to sand, grind, mold, shape, paint, package, and deliver these stars a little bit of me goes with each one. Much like a little bit of you has gone with me. I have learned so much from so many, that this is my token of appreciation to you.

Take your star with you and never forget your value and impact! Pass it along to someone else if you wish to let them know they are a star in your eyes.

GREAT RESOURCES ONLY A CLICK AWAY

Arlaina Meyer, Section I Vice President

Through the Internet, we are fortunate to have access to some outstanding educational resources. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be a challenge to find the time to locate some of these reputable and helpful sites. To make this task a bit easier, check out this outstanding informational source for you and your students.

Wisconsin Eye

<http://www.wisconsineye.com/index.html>

To access helpful video footage, refer to the following directions. On the left hand side of the screen, click on “Video Archive” located under the “Programming” heading. Once in the “Video Archive” section, select “Other Programs” to view programs produced by “Wisconsin Eye.” Many of the educational videos focus on events and topics associated with Wisconsin Agriculture. For example, consider showing a clip from the 6-13-07 video entitled “78th Annual Wisconsin FFA Convention” to expose students to the excitement of Wisconsin FFA.

View a workshop from the WAAE Professional Development Conference to give you background information on the managing CWD (6-25-07) or provide students with a tour of a Limburger cheese plant (8-12-07). Take a look and chances are that you are only a mouse click away from finding agricultural programs filmed in your local area.

HELPING THE NEW TEACHER SURVIVE TO BECOME AN OLD TEACHER

Marty Nowak, Section X Vice President

This year, in the L-C High School, we experienced the retirement of three lifetime teachers (two within the Vocational Department) at our school. These three teachers were great advisors, mentors and role models. To replace them, the district has hired three new young enthusiastic teachers. To date, the three are doing a wonderful job, although they are barely keeping their head afloat. The question arises— how are we going to make these three teachers as good, if not better than the three that retired? The answer is simple— become their advisors, mentors and role models.

An article that was published on [choiceliteracy.com](http://www.choiceliteracy.com) wrote, “Universities put far more energy into the initial certification of teachers than they do into on-going support for teachers in the crucial first five years. This “sink or swim” mentality has led to 50% of new teachers leaving the profession in these early years” (<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/department16.cfm>). These numbers are astonishing: 50% of new teachers leave the profession in their early years. To better understand why, I started looking into out districts mentoring program. Author Ellen Moir who wrote “Phases of First-Year Teaching” illustrates the different phases that a first-year teacher goes through. She lists the stages as anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection.

The anticipation stage occurs even into the student teaching assignment of the new teacher. They are excited about all of the young minds they are going

to influence and change.

Then, the survival stage starts to take place. “The first month of school is very overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a lot and at a very rapid pace. Beginning teachers are instantly bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated,” says Moir.

After getting stretched to the limit and beyond, the teachers start wondering if this is the occupation for them, and they have entered the disillusionment stage. They are spending countless hours after school correcting assignments, working on lesson plans, and preparing for the next day’s lesson. They realize the life of a teacher is not all it was cracked up to be. To compound the stress, the new teacher also has to deal with parent-teacher conferences and evaluations from the administrator.

Hopefully, the teacher will then move into the rejuvenation stage usually around January (the “relaxing” winter break may help them feel a little refreshed). During the rejuvenation stage, the new teacher understands the school system more, is starting to become more familiar with the capabilities and expectations of students, and is relieved he/she has made it through the first semester.

The last stage is the reflection stage. According to Moir, this stage usually starts in the beginning of May. Many times this can be a revitalizing stage. Young teachers, as well as old teachers, reflect on their past year and their accomplishments. Changes in their lesson plans, curriculum, and instructional methods are being considered. “It is critical that we assist new teachers and ease the transition from student teacher to full-time teacher professional,” says Moir.

After reading this article, it really made me think about my first years of teaching, the countless hours spent on the job, and the feeling that I was (and still am) never going to get ahead. It also made me think that Moir’s article was written about the average teacher and not an Ag teacher whose struggles are multiplied with the stress of having to advise the

FFA. Constantly missing school for FFA Activities and meetings, getting your roster and POA complete, helping students apply for awards and organizing fundraisers elevate the stress of being a first year teacher.

As experienced teachers, please take time to help the new teachers, agriscience and other curricular areas, through these stressful times in their teaching career. The WAAE organization has a wonderful mentoring program that is set up by Bridgett Neu. Please become active in the mentoring program, but also lend a helpful hand and words of encouragement to young teachers even if you are not their mentor. They will truly appreciate this.

As a young teacher, do not be afraid to ask for help. We have been there and dealt with many of the areas in which you struggle. Many older teachers can share great words of advice with you to help you through the stress you will encounter. Make sure you fully benefit from your school mentoring system and the WAAE mentoring program. Schools, the DPI and the WAAE have realized the stress you encounter and the importance of keeping teachers like yourselves in the occupation and have created the program for you.

References:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/department16.cfm>

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