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2004-2005  
“Helping Shape America’s Future”  
Illinois FFA Alumni Association

Volume 6 Issue 4

# PRESIDENT'S CALL TO CONVENTION

Greetings from Ron Byers, Illinois FFA Alumni President,

Once again we are about to complete a very successful year in the Illinois FFA Alumni.

At our last annual meeting and scholarship auction we matched our previous record of \$14,000 and were able to help a total of 60 FFA members attend the various leadership conferences including EDGE, Made for Excellence, FFA Leadership Camp, Washington Leadership Conference, and Work Experience Abroad.

Again, we have contributed towards Capital Campaign for the FFA Center, served on the FFA Administrative Council governing body representing the alumni, represented Illinois at the National FFA Alumni State Leaders' Conference in Nebraska, and cooked pork chops for the campers at FFA Leadership Camp in July.

In October I gave a presentation at the beginning Teacher's workshop. It is very important to extend a helping hand to all of the FFA advisors throughout the state, but especially the beginning teachers, to help prevent becoming too overwhelmed as they begin their career. Our message is to let them know we are here to lend them support in many ways, and if their chapter does not have an alumni affiliate, our goal is to help them get chartered. In these tough economic times for school systems, and the continued threats to make budget cuts, our message becomes even more crucial and our voice for ag education needs to be more loud and clear.

We are proud to announce that our membership continues to grow, as we have not only encouraged existing affiliate growth, but have helped several new affiliates become chartered this past year. Recently, we were recognized at the National Convention for increased membership, second in the nation for total membership at 4080, and second for percent alumni members per FFA member.

I encourage your attendance and participation at your annual meeting at the Springfield Hilton on January 28th and 29th, 2005. We are planning awards presentation and entertainment in the form of a social and game time on Friday night in conjunction with the silent auction. Saturday morning will be the business meeting and an informative presentation by Jay Runner and his F.C.A.E. staff, followed by the popular live auction. Our auction committee, chaired by Dean Olson and Jason Webster, are working hard to secure items, large and small for everyone, and ask for your help and participation to make this the best auction ever. We are working with some popular companies for large items, so please watch the Illinois Agri-News and Farm Bureau's Farm Week paper in December and January for a list of items.

Again this year, F.C.A.E. will be awarding a \$100.00 grant per affiliate with at least one registered member for the complete annual meeting, so please spread the word and take advantage of this offer. Come share and exchange ideas with fellow alumni members throughout the state.

We are excited about what is happening in the FFA and the path that your Alumni is headed and look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting in January.

Ron Byers, President  
Illinois FFA Alumni

2004  
Illinois FFA Alumni  
Executive Council  
Cont.

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# MEET THE CANDIDATES

The Illinois FFA Alumni Annual Meeting will be held January 30-31, 2004 at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield, IL. The following individuals submitted an Intent to run for Illinois FFA Alumni Council and will comprise the ballot at this year's annual meeting. The biography portion of the Intent form is the only portion reprinted in this newsletter. In the interest of space, I have eliminated paragraph breaks for each candidate. The FFA Alumni activities, reason for wanting to be on the Illinois FFA Alumni Council, and the additional information portions will be available for review at the annual meeting.

Ron Byers – Ron is from the Roseville FFA Alumni affiliate and is running for President. “I own and operate in partnership with our son a beef cow, grain operation, and custom silage harvesting business in central Illinois near Roseville. I’ve been very active with FFA and FFA Alumni since 1993, helped restore a discontinued ag education and FFA program in our local community, and have worked on an ag curriculum committee for a proposed consolidated district in our community. I have also been involved with chartering several new alumni affiliates. My wife and I own and she manages Western Illinois Home Care, Inc. serving ten counties in western Illinois. Our oldest daughter helps manage the home care business. Our youngest daughter recently graduated from the University of Notre Dame and will be employed by Illinois Casualty in Rock Island.”

Dean Olson – Dean is from the Geneseo AG Alumni affiliate and is running for Vice President. “Agriculture has always been part of my life. I now own and operate the farm near Geneseo where I was raised. I graduated from Geneseo High School where FFA was my major activity. I graduated from Western Illinois University with a B.S. in Animal Science and Ag Management. Along with my sons I farm 1700 acres of corn, soybeans, rye and hay. Feeding cattle is the basis of our operation, but we also feed hogs and do custom work. My family includes my wife, Diane (a middle school English teacher), our daughter Dee Ann Kuster (a veterinarian), sons Deric and Dustin who both operate farms of their own, and son Devin, a sophomore in high school. All four of our children have been very active in FFA. I have served on the Henry County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, as president of the Henry County Beef Association, Illinois Beef Association Board, as 4-H County Fair Superintendent, and am currently president of the Geneseo FFA Alumni and vice president of the Illinois FFA Alumni. We are members of First Lutheran Church in Geneseo.”

Sally Kittinger – Sally is from the Eldorado FFA Alumni affiliate and is running for Vice President. “I grew up in Bloomington, Illinois and attended University High School in Normal. My high school did not offer agriculture or the FFA. I had heard of the organization but did not really know what the FFA was until I began working for the Illinois FFA Center in 1995. In 1995, I was hired on as a secretary. I finished earning my associates degree during the time I worked in the FFA Center. I continued to work there until August of 2000 when the FFA Center moved to Springfield. Instead of following the FFA Center’s move, I chose to move to Eldorado, Illinois. In November of 2000, I married Bill Kittinger, the FFA Advisor here in Eldorado. I worked as a part-time secretary for Shults Septic Service and did substitute work at the Child Study Center and Eldorado Unit 4 School District. I am currently a “stay-at-home” mom. The most recent addition to our family, Chase Austin, was born in August 2003. In addition to Chase, I have a 7-year-old daughter, Riley, a 17-year-old stepson, Alex, and 22-year-old stepson, Logan. Riley is in the second grade and involved in Brownies and Basketball. Alex is a senior in high school and serves as the FFA Chapter President. Logan is a junior at the University of Evansville in Indiana studying computer engineering. I volunteer as my daughter’s Brownie troop leader, am a member of the PTO, serve on the community Town and Country Days committee, and I am an active member of our local FFA Alumni affiliate.”

# MEET THE CANDIDATES cont.

Bill Brown – Bill is from the Eldorado FFA Alumni affiliate and is running for Treasurer. “I was raised in Saline County where my father owned and operated a small cattle operation and a game bird farm and my mother owned a Bible Book Store. I graduated from Eldorado High School in 1981 and was active in all FFA and vocational programs. After graduation I went into law enforcement security and then into sales. I was Vice President of Sales for a communications company in Tampa Florida until a change in Board of Directors. I am currently working for Hostess & Dolly Madison Cakes as Area Manager. I am married to a wonderful wife Valerie and have 2 children. Our oldest, Adam 16 years of age, is currently JR President of the Eldorado FFA and is very active within the FFA Chapter and after graduating from high school he wants to major in Constructional Engineering. Our youngest, Audrey 13 years of age, is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and a cheerleader in the Eldorado Middle School. She loves all kinds of animals and wants to become a Marine Biologist. I am very active volunteering for the State of Illinois Special Olympics serving on the State Committee Board for the winter and summer Olympics as well as serving on the Special Olympics area 14-committee board. I am a key volunteer for Coleman Tri County (adult disabilities). My wife and I are members of the Eldorado FFA Alumni and I am currently serving as the Illinois State Alumni Treasurer and Alumni Section 25 Chairman.”

Rich Sanders – Rich is from the Prairie Central FFA Alumni affiliate and is running for Secretary. “I was born and raised in the Forrest area. I was the state electrification award winner in 1968. I received my associates degree from Joliet Jr. College in 1970. I was in the army for 2 years at Ft. George G. Meade in Maryland between Baltimore and Washington DC. In 1975 I started my own electrical business and by 1988 I had 6 employees, doing mostly agricultural wiring. In 1999 I co-purchased a plumbing and heating business. In 1978 I became interested in the village operations so I decided to run for the board. I was elected village council member for 6 years. I have served as village president from 1984 until the present. I am a volunteer fireman and was fire chief for 18 years. I am vice president of the South East Livingston County Ambulance Board. Wanting some changes in the Livingston County economical development, I was elected to the board and am currently president.”

Jim McCray – Jim is from the Cissna Park FFA Alumni affiliate and is running for Secretary. “I have been the president of the Cissna Park Alumni for over ten years. We started our alumni, like all of you, to help our local ag department exist and hopefully grow. I want to do the same for the state organization. I am a partner in a construction company that builds new homes and sells Wick Buildings. Being involved in the construction industry intensifies my commitment to a strong ag and industrial arts program in the state.”

Karen (Haas) Jones – Karen is from the State-At-Large Alumni membership and is running for Reporter. “I have lived in Roanoke, Illinois area all my life. I graduated from Roanoke-Benson High School in 2000 and in May 2004 I graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in Agricultural Communications. I was in FFA all through high school, serving as chapter reporter & president, as well as Section 5 vice-president and Section 5 president in 2000-01. I received my American Degree in 2001. during college, I was active in several College of ACES clubs and activities, and worked for 3 years in the ACES placement office. 2 days after my graduation I went to work for GROWMARK, Inc. in the Bloomington home officer, where I am an assistant in the agronomy customer service division. I am getting married Nov. 20, 2004 to Christopher Jones.”

## Top 10 Reasons to Attend the Annual Mtg.

10. Enjoy a social hour / game night with other alumni members from across the state.
9. Hear talented FFA members perform.
8. Show your support of the FFA and the FFA Alumni.
7. Recognize top alumni affiliates across the state as they are presented with awards.
6. Receive \$100.00 grant for having a representative attend both days of the annual meeting.
5. Vote for the officers representing you on the Illinois FFA Alumni Council.
4. Attend the community action workshop to learn more about supporting the FFA and agriculture education.
3. Participate in the business session to help determine the future direction of the Illinois FFA Alumni.
2. Support the Scholarship Auction.
1. Exchange ideas with other alumni affiliates to bring back to your local alumni.

# **TENTATIVE ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**

## **Friday, January 28, 2005**

- 4:00 p.m. Registration & Auction Item Check-In  
6:30 p.m. Evening Banquet  
Introduction of Officers  
Presentation of Colors  
National Anthem  
Welcome:  
Introduction of Guests  
Invocation  
Greetings from National FFA Alumni  
Affiliate Awards:  
Candidate Recognition  
Recess  
Game Night:  
Silent Auction  
Collect Silent Auction Bids

## **Saturday, January 29, 2005**

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast  
National Anthem  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Invocation  
Late Registration  
Check in Auction Items  
Silent Auction Begins  
Community Action Workshop  
8:45 a.m. District Caucuses  
District I, III, IV, V (Elect 1 Director – 2 year term)  
District II (Elect 1 Director – 2 year term, and 1 Director – 1 year term)  
9:30 a.m. Business Meeting: Call to Order  
Old Business  
New Business  
- Election of New Officers  
Exchange of Ideas Panel  
11:30 a.m. Call to Order  
President's Remarks  
2004 Council Recognition  
Invocation  
Luncheon Meal  
Cornerstone Award Presentation  
2005 Officer Introductions  
Adjourn  
Collect Silent Auction Bids  
1:00 p.m. Live Auction

**(Times on events are subject to change.)**

# LOCAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS AVAILABLE

Grants will once again be available to Illinois FFA Alumni Affiliates who send at least one delegate to the annual meeting of the Illinois FFA Alumni, January 28 & 29, 2005. A grant in the amount of \$100 (maximum) is available for alumni affiliates that have a representative in attendance who participates at both days of the meeting. Grants are limited to one per affiliate with funding available for 100 affiliates. Should more than 100 affiliates apply for the grant by the pre-registration deadline, the grant amount will be pro-rated among the eligible affiliates. (Eg. If 110 affiliates request the grant by the deadline, all will be funded, but the grant per affiliate will be reduced to \$90.90)

How your affiliate can qualify:

- 1) Complete the advance registration form.
- 2) Have the affiliate president sign the advance registration form and mail it with the registration fee before the deadline.
- 3) The affiliate representative must sign in at each session of the annual meeting.
- 4) Grant checks will be mailed to the local affiliate following the annual meeting.

Partnering in the local community is a powerful force. The grants have been made available to compensate individuals and affiliates for the costs to attend the annual meeting. The meeting will provide some valuable information and tools that can be implemented in your local community to increase and improve the opportunities for local Agriculture Education students and will also focus on how the local community can have a positive impact on the future of Agriculture Education in their schools.

# NATIONAL ALUMNI CONVENTION

Once again, Illinois was well represented at the National FFA Alumni Convention. The Hamilton County FFA, Kewanee FFA, North Clay FFA and Valmeyer FFA chapters each received a \$1,000.00 Local Program Support Grant from the National FFA Alumni at this year's National Alumni Meeting. The grants were received for the following projects: Hamilton County FFA Alumni Methamphetamine Educational Workshops, Kewanee Historical Tourism Brochure, North Clay Greenhouse Benches and Valmeyer "Making a Splash". Bushnell-Prairie City FFA Alumni and Waterloo FFA Alumni received a Silver ranking in the Outstanding Affiliate Award while Jefferson County FFA Alumni (Mt. Vernon) received a Bronze ranking. Bill Forest and Mike Miller each received a Legion of Merit award. Illinois also had a state basket put together by Sarah Myer. Congratulations to all!

# E.D.G.E. CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

The following individuals were selected to receive a scholarship for them to attend the E.D.G.E. Conference in Springfield, IL on November 13, 2004. Craig Shehorn of the Orion FFA Chapter, Jacob Kabat of the Waltonville FFA Chapter, Audrey Brown of the Eldorado FFA Chapter, Jordan Matthews of the Waterloo FFA Chapter, Nathan Musselman of the Trico FFA Chapter, and Mason Dehlinger of the Olney FFA Chapter. Congratulations to these scholarship recipients!

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS ARE NEEDED

The Illinois FFA Alumni Council would like to be able to contribute more to supporting the Illinois FFA and Illinois Foundation FFA. Presently the Illinois FFA Alumni has three money making activities: the auctions (silent and live) at the annual meeting in which all money is set aside strictly for scholarships, alumni membership dues which are used for operating funds, and the raffles held these past two years in which the money was used as a contribution to the Capital Campaign Fund. The Illinois FFA Alumni contributes a very minimal amount compared to the Illinois FFA and the Illinois Foundation FFA even though we are supposed to be their support group and not the other way around. The Alumni Council has been brainstorming to come up with fundraisers that would be successful and continue to grow each year. If you have any suggestions, please contact a council member or bring ideas with you to the annual meeting.

# IMPORTANT DEADLINES!

**Illinois FFA Center**  
3221 Northfield Dr  
Springfield, IL 62702



**National FFA Alumni**  
6060 FFA Dr  
PO Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN  
46268-0960

**Remember that your membership rosters must have been postmarked and returned with dues to the State FFA Center prior to judging to qualify for alumni scholarships. Rosters must show 10 or more active members and include a list of officers. Dates listed are the postmarked dates due.**

January 1, 2005	Work Experience Abroad Scholarship Application due to State FFA Center
Jan. 28-29, 2005	Illinois FFA Alumni Annual Meeting – Hilton Hotel, Springfield
March 1, 2004	Membership Rosters due to State FFA Center to qualify for scholarships
March 1, 2004	IL Leadership Camp Scholarship Applications due to State FFA Center
March 1, 2004	Washington Leadership Conference Scholarship Applications due to State FFA Center
March 1, 2004	Team Ag Ed – National Distinguished Contributor Award due to State FFA Center

**There will be a sale bill for the annual alumni auction printed in the Illinois Agri-News in early January!**

**Helping Shape America's Future**  
**ILLINOIS FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**  
3221 Northfield Dr  
Springfield, IL 62702

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**WATCH FOR A SALE BILL FOR THE ALUMNI AUCTION IN THE ILLINIOS AGRI-NEWS**