



MONTANA FFA STATE CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS

MARCH 25TH - 29TH, 2015

BILLINGS, MONTANA

Convention Proceedings

State Officers:

Brant Marsh, President
Ruby Valley

Brady Ostermiller, 1st Vice President
Shepherd

Allie Nelson, 2nd Vice President
Electric City

Neela Andres, Secretary
Missoula

Randy Taylor, Treasurer
Braverhead

Bryce Street, Reporter
Shields Valley

Carlie Brownlee, Sentinel
Big Timber

Calli Jo Dixon, Parliamentarian
Fergus of Lewistown

State Staff:

Jim Rose, State Advisor
Bozeman

Special Guests:

Andy Paul, National President
Brain Walsh, Keynote Speaker & Past
National President
Brian Imbus, Hypnotist
North Dakota State Officers

FFA Foundation:

Curt Robbins, President
Columbus
Josh Doley, Vice President
Kalispell

Foundation Continued...

Belinda Darlington, Secretary
Great Falls

Mark Sinnard, Treasurer
Shields Valley

Jaime Edmundson, Executive Director
Bozeman

Carol Perisho, Development Director
Bozeman

Karissa Floerishinger, Development Assistant
Bozeman

Caitlin Creighton, Development Assistant
Bozeman

Jack Larson, Miles City

Jay Meyer, Stevensville

Mike Cavey, Bozeman

Kristen Swenson, Twin Bridges

Dr. Brad King, Helena

Rodney Braaten, Sheridan

Alumni Association:

Kristen Swenson, President
Twin Bridges

Brian Engle, Vice President
Big Timber

Bonita Cremer, Secretary/Treasurer
Big Timber



Convention Delegates:**Bainville**

Andri Rhodes
Gracie Jorgenson

Baker

Tannon Dukart
Taylyn Dukart

Beaverhead

Mikaela Trang
Bryer Anderson

Belgrade

Aspen Eldredge
Emma Lawver

Big Horn

Selina Salazar
Michaela Hafemann

Big Timber

Tucker Stenberg
Kelli Mack

Broadus

Bailey Sparks
Lindsey Riley

Cascade

Elsie Carpenter
Darby Bogden

Chinook

Jaime Lowham

CJI

Peyton Cole
Anna Jamison

Clarks Fork

Colette Zentner
Tristan Brandt

Colstrip

Dennis Derby

Columbus

Chaz Krone
Matt Palmer

Conrad

Bill Hicks
Jenna Rodriguez

Culbertson

Mariah Machart
Lindsay Reid

Custer

Jamison Ehlers
Bailey Torralba

Deere Lodge

Josh Gilky
Ryann Eham

Denton

Alex Schafer
Carlee Marquart

Ekalaka

Tessa Pierson
Kimberlee Elmore
Jordan Meyer

Electric City

Josh Meyer
Chloe Williams

Fairfield

Caleb Jergenson
Griffen Lee
Andrew Hicks

Fergus of Lewistown

Abi Gatz

Flathead

Emily Hilde
Jayme Evenson

Forsyth

Hunter Wester
Logan Harms

Froid

Bailey Christofferson
Michael Eylander

Fromberg

Courtney Richardson
Jazmin Mitchell

Gardiner

Brooke Dreyers
Nicole Sperano

Geraldine

Wendell Stephens
Erik Neilson

Harlem

Erin Lamere
Sami Werk

Hobson

Ember Drivdahl
Kaylee Pospisil
Morgan Wertheimer

Huntley Project

Bailee Stenger
Ashley Carlson

Hysham

Trevor Edwards
Shiloh Skillen-Robison

Joliet

Allie Blain
Morgan Harris

Jordan

Bobbi Sinks
John McRae

Lambert

Delaney Krenning
Quentyn Evenson

Laurel

Spencer Drange
Ellie Pfeifer

Little Big Horn

Gabby Plenty Hawk
Dalton Dosson

Medicine Lake

Jennifer McBride
JD Stratton

Melstone

Will Ecord
Emily Jones

Miles City

Bailey Rodenbaugh
Brittany Merrill

Mission Valley

RJ Clairmont
Scarlet Westbury

Missoula

Jesse Duffy
Lauren McCaffree

**Nelson Agriculture
Academy Online**

Watson Snyder

Park

Aaron Lewis
Kati McClish
Sabrina Durnez

Park City

Cara Grewell
Kate Madsen

Plentywood

Ally Bummer
Aleecia Eggen

Red Lodge

Hayden Rose
John Jacobsen

Richey

Isaac Sponheim
Halle Fatzinger

Roberts

Rylee Perkins
Sydney Miller

Rosebud

Kinsee Crocker

Roundup

Joelle Arthur
Tadan Pierce

Ruby Valley

Cameron Haag
Juan Pablo

Ryegate

Cedar Bruner
Arianna Bennet

Savage

Ashley Green
Emily Reynolds

Shepherd

Seth Rekdal
Aimee Parker

Shields Valley

Caitlin Boyd
Ashley George

Simms

Jamie Hitchcock
Dace Steinke

Stanford

Jordan Vejtasa
Rachel Burns

Stevensville

Morgan Potton
Cheri Jackson

Stillwater Valley

Emma Kelly
Makayla Peterson

Sweetgrass Hills

Jarret Bloch
Haylee Koon
Meagan Hesla

Twin Bridges

Eric Swenson
Haylee Fournier

Victor

Josie Lewis
Dallas Baines

White Sulphur Springs

Royale Tousely

Megan Ogle

Winifred

Kaylie Carlstrom

Samantha DeMars

Career Development Events (CDE) Results:**Agriscience Fair:**

Animal Systems: Kyla Andres, Missoula

Power and Technology Systems: Trent Cox, Cascade

Environmental/Natural Resources: Jean Blackman, Cascade

Plant Systems: Katrina Roberts, Electric City

Social Systems: Samantha Morris, Electric City

Food Science Systems: Saralyn Standley and Wesley Rolle, Missoula

Agricultural Mechanics CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Fergus of Lewistown	1. Jon Andres, Missoula	6. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Laurel	2. Todd Lackman, Forsyth	7. Logan Smith, Columbus
3. Ruby Valley	3. Ben Roeder, Choteau	8. Nick Haag, Ruby Valley
	4. Donald Philippi, Wheatland	9. Brett Robertus, Laurel
	5. Grant Panion, Missoula	10. Anthony Songstad, Joliet

Agronomy CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Stevensville	1. Ben Roeder, Choteau	6. Stormy Hack, Stevensville
2. Clark's Fork	2. Dan Lavy, Clark's Fork	7. Todd Lackman, Forsyth
3. Forsyth	3. Dustin Pape, Stevensville	8. Jake Duty, Dutton
	4. Royce Bonsell, Carter County	9. Cara White, Clark's Fork
	5. Kacey Bertolino, Joliet	10. Kaitlin Uskoski, Flathead

Agricultural Sales CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Missoula	1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade	6. Dalton Lemburg, Shepherd
2. Belgrade	2. Emily Standley, Missoula	7. Ellie Hansen, Melstone
3. Shepherd	3. Ashely Koenig, Belgrade	8. Laina Raisler, Miles City
	4. Merle Infanger, Cascade	9. Seth Rekdal, Shepherd
	5. Caleb Bowey, Ruby Valley	10. Kacey Bertolino, Joliet

Farm Business Management CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Belgrade	1. Todd Lackman, Forsyth	6. Emily Standley, Missoula
2. Missoula	2. John Tatarka, Belgrade	7. Jon Andres, Missoula
3. Flathead	3. Albert Koenig, Belgrade	8. Chris Gartner, Sidney
	4. Ryan Handley, Missoula	9. Jordan Kiger, Flathead
	5. Ben Roeder, Choteau	10. Meagan Larson, Missoula

Agricultural Issues Forum CDE:

1. Electric City
2. Cascade
3. CJI

Floriculture CDE:

Team	Individuals	
1. Big Timber	1. Kacey Bertolino - Joliet	6. Emily Standley - Missoula
2. Joliet	2. Riley Horegon – Big Timber	7. Mariah Ray – Park City
3. Missoula	3. Kelli Mack – Big Timber	8. Makalee Klein – Big Timber
	4. Cody Boyce - Fergus	9. Saralynn Standley - Missoula
	5. Ellie Hansen - Melstone	10. Kyla Andres - Missoula

Livestock Judging CDE:

Team	Individuals	
1. Mission Valley	1. Laurel Rigby, Mission Valley	6. Hannah Kraft, Laurel
2. Missoula	2. Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown	7. Jess Moody, Big Timber
3. Big Timber	3. Destiny Brewer, Flathead	8. Chase Huelle, Baker
	4. Jon Andres, Missoula	9. Ryan Handley, Missoula
	5. Shaylyn Huelle, Baker	10. Kate Indreland, Big Timber

Meats Evaluation CDE Teams:

Team	Individual	
1. Missoula	1. Ryan Handley, Missoula	6. Jon Andres, Missoula
2. Flathead	2. Saralyn Standley, Missoula	7. Sandra Ek, Flathead
3. Fergus of Lewistown	3. Dayne Evenson, Flathead	8. Alexis Johnson, Fergus of Lewistown
	4. Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown	9. Krystal Sutton, Flathead
	5. Albert Koenig, Belgrade	10. Grant Panion, Missoula

Horse Evaluation CDE Teams:

Team	Individual	
1. Hobson	1. Natalie Arnott, Missoula	6. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
2. Belgrade	2. Bailey Wertheimer, Hobson	7. Danni Nardinger, Roberts
3. Missoula	3. Ashley Scullion, Missoula	8. Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown
	4. Faith Stevenson, Hobson	9. Codi Uecker, Fergus of Lewistown
	5. Albert Koenig, Belgrade	10. Abby Stevenson, Hobson

Environmental/Natural Resources CDE Teams:

Team	Individual	
1. Missoula	1.	6.
2. Fergus of Lewistown	2.	7.
3. Joliet	3.	8.
	4.	9.
	5.	10.

Forestry CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Flathead	1. Dayne Erickson - Flathead	6. Wyatt Mchenry - Flathead
2. Stevensville	2. Jakob Thompson - Stevensville	7. Cody Rummel - Stevensville
3. Missoula	3. Brock Reiner - Flathead	8. Kaitlin Uskoski - Flathead
	4. Jon Andres - Missoula	9. Zac Zimmerman - Missoula
	5. Ben Hallford - Stevensville	10. Grant Panion - Missoula

Ag Communications CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Cascade	1. Reanna Shular, Electric City	
2. Missoula	2. Mateo Farrara, Cascade	
3. Electric City	3. Merle Infanger, Cascade	
	4. Travis Jaquez, St. Regis; Emily Standley, Missoula	

Food Science CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Missoula	1. Saralyn Standley, Missoula	6. Gyeen Smith, Missoula
2. St. Regis	2. Isabel Reh, Missoula	7. Jon Andres, Missoula
3. Conrad	3. Kyla Andres, Missoula	8. Dylan Lindsey, Missoula
	4. Cheyenne Lewis, St. Regis	9. Grant Panion, Missoula
	5. Cora Phoenix Price, Missoula	10. Sheridan Johnson, Conrad

Vet Science CDE:

Team	Individual	
1. Missoula	1. Alyssa Taylor, Missoula	6. Mariah Millhouse, Missoula
2. Fergus of Lewistown	2. Cora Phoenix Price, Missoula	7. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
3. Flathead	3. Jon Andres, Missoula	8. Mikayla Comes, Fergus of Lewistown
	4. Codi Uecker, Fergus of Lewistown	9. Destiny Brewer, Flathead
	5. Grant Panion, Missoula	10. Ashley Scullion, Missoula

Marketing Plan CDE:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Missoula | 4. Cascade #1 |
| 2. Cascade #2 | 5. Shepherd |
| 3. Electric City | |

Job Interview CDE:

1. Codi Uecker, Fergus of Lewistown
2. Katarina Goettlich, Winifred
3. Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown
4. Kelsey Kraft, Laurel
5. Kaitlin Angel, Roundup
6. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
7. Dace Steinke, Simms
8. Blake Morgan, Sweet Grass
9. Baylee Green, Roundup
10. Michaela Zimmerman, Missoula

Parliamentary Procedure CDE:

1. Shepherd
2. Flathead
3. Joliet
4. Stevensville

Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE:

1. Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown
2. Todd Lackman, Forsyth
3. Mckade Mahlen, Culbertson
4. Kelsey Kraftm Laurel

Prepared Public Speaking CDE:

1. Destiny Brewer, Flathead
2. Kaitlyn Koterba, Electric City
3. Chase Kilzer, Culbertson
4. Shiloh Skillen-Robison, Hysham

Creed Speaking CDE:

1. Madlyn Empter, Big Timber
2. Hayden Hammontree, Hobson
3. Mikayla Johnson, Hinsdale
4. Courtney Clairmont, Misson Valley

Jr. Creed Speaking CDE:

1. Chase Drange, Plevna
2. Rachel Stevneson, Hobson
3. Grace Smith, Victor
4. Colton Jacks, Laurel

State Talent Contest:

1. The Kraft Sisters – Laurel

2. Faith Stevenson, Hobson

Team Sweepstakes Winners:

1. Missoula
2. Flathead
3. Big Timber
4. Forsyth
5. Laurel
6. Belgrade
7. Ruby Valley
8. Joliet
9. Miles City
10. Beaverhead

Individual Sweepstakes:

1. Albert Koenig – Belgrade
2. Jon Andres – Missoula
3. Cody Boyce – Fergus
4. Ben Roeder – Choteau
5. Todd Lackman - Forsyth

Star Greenhand

Hayden Hammontree, Hobson *STAR*

Star in Ag Placement:

Brandon Schlotter, Cascade *STAR*

Star in Agribusiness:

Quinn Glazier, Flathead *STAR*

Star Farmer:

Todd Lackman, Forsyth *STAR*

FFA/AMERICAN INDIAN PROGRAM:

1. Little Big Horn FFA
2. Simms FFA

Hall of Chapters:

1. Missoula
2. Ruby Valley
3. Electric City

State Degrees:

Patrick Butikofer, Bainville
 Somer Reidle, Bainville
 Bryer Dean Anderson, Beaverhead
 Kelsey Brown, Beaverhead
 Jaydyn Child, Beaverhead
 Weston Helle, Beaverhead
 Desirae Klose, Beaverhead
 Eduardo Matamoros, Beaverhead
 Kenneth Pauley, Beaverhead
 Jade Sprinkle Beaverhead
 Donald Williams, Beaverhead
 Albert Koenig, Belgrade
 Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
 Brent Beley, Big Timber
 Rachel Glavin, Big Timber
 Riley Horigan, Big Timber
 Makalee Klein, Big Timber
 Calvin Kunda, Big Timber
 Destan Miller, Big Timber
 Carlie Rembold, Big Timber
 Jakob Ronneberg, Big Timber
 Amanda Gaskill, Broadus
 Lawson McGill, Broadus
 Darby Bogden, Cascade
 Elsie Carpenter, Cascade
 Joe Clemens, Cascade
 Sawyer Evans, Cascade
 Natalie Gerard, Cascade
 Casey Keen, Cascade
 Roman Lorange, Cascade
 Calise Ludvigson, Cascade
 Brandon Schlotter, Cascade
 Sarah Hodgekiss, Choteau
 Kayla Hutton, Choteau
 Darby Yeager, Choteau
 Dan Lavy, Clark's Fork
 Elizabeth Evans, Columbus
 Tyler Reed, Columbus
 Jenna Rodriguez, Conrad
 Samantha Fellman, Culbertson
 Mariah Machart, Culbertson
 Emily Nielsen, Culbertson
 Garrett Reid, Culbertson
 Matthew Cornell, Custer
 Taylor Haug, Custer
 Kathryn David, Deer Lodge
 Joshua Gilkey, Deer Lodge
 Mekdes Lombardi, Deer Lodge
 Kendall Carpenter, Denton

Tom Grubb, Denton
 Sidney Hathaway, Denton
 Tyler Lee, Denton
 Molly Ward, Denton
 Royce Bonsell, Ekalaka
 Victoria Brown, Electric City
 Amber Brown, Electric City
 Shelby Depping Electric City
 Dallas Dickinson, Electric City
 Loni Grantzich, Electric City
 Austin Hader, Electric City
 Katie Lamping, Electric City
 Samantha Morris, Electric City
 Jayelyn Ruckman, Fairfield
 Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown
 Kaycee Gobble, Fergus of Lewistown
 Todd Lackman, Forsyth
 Mindy Barker, Fromberg
 Shale Krenning, Fromberg
 Emily Berg, Great Falls
 Jordy Hereim, Harlowtown
 Donald Philippi, Harlowtown
 Boyd Pletan, Harlowtown
 Kyle Albus, Hinsdale
 Lukas Johnson, Hinsdale
 Brett Johnson, Hinsdale
 Wyatt Pattison, Hinsdale
 Faith Stevenson, Hobson
 Ashley Carlson, Huntley Project
 Shiloh Skillen-Robison, Hysham
 ShayLe Hildebrand, Joliet
 Levi Mydland, Joliet
 Kaylee Rowlison, Joliet
 Madison Unger, Joliet
 Destiny Brewer, Kalispell
 Brianna Erickson, Kalispell
 Jayme Evenson, Kalispell
 Quinn Glazier, Kalispell
 Emily Hilde, Kalispell
 Raylene Kerney, Kalispell
 McKenzy Lee, Kalispell
 Jacqueline Schauble, Kalispell
 Gabriel Serrano, Kalispell
 Eathan Carda, Lambert
 Shelby Hier, Lambert
 Autumn Rehbein, Lambert
 Jacob Rosaaen, Lambert
 Kyle Watson, Lambert
 Cody Shick, Laurel

Terence Benjamin Snell, Malta
 Austin Witmer, Malta
 Cassidy Christensen, Medicine Lake
 Nicole Kirby, Medicine Lake
 Nolan Nelson, Medicine Lake
 Braydon Rasmussen, Medicine Lake
 Laura Hansen, Melsone
 Ellie Hansen, Melstone
 Kayla Jones, Melstone
 Meghan Brence, Miles City
 Harley Dowse, Miles City
 Laina Raisler, Miles City
 Micah McClure, Mission Valley
 Laurel Rigby, Mission Valley
 Seth Foster, Missoula
 Ryan Handley, Missoula
 Meagan Larson, Missoula
 Gyen Smith, Missoula
 Emily Standley, Missoula
 Mark Deupree, Moore
 Wyatt Hill, Moore
 Sabrina Durnez, Park
 Erica Greenwood, Park
 Baile Anderson, Park City
 Kate Madsen, Park City
 Mariah Ray, Park City
 RJ Becker, Plentywood
 Danette Becker, Plentywood
 Cheyenne Kisler, Plentywood
 Kyle Draper, Red Lodge

Max Erickson, Red Lodge
 Gunnar Nelson, Red Lodge
 Kevin Rose, Red Lodge
 Tommy Baldwin, Richey
 Kimball Brost, Richey
 Ryder Olson, Richey
 Shelby Senner, Richey
 Paige Smith, Richey
 Megan Volbrecht, Richey
 Caleb Bowey, Ruby Valley
 Nicholas Haag, Ruby Valley
 Colter Kenworthy, Ruby Valley
 Charlie Smart, Ruby Valley
 Samuel Wood, Ruby Valley
 Cole Torgerson, Shepherd
 Holden Vandivort, Shepherd
 Caitlin Boyd, Shields Valley
 Thad Ferguson, Shields Valley
 Hannah George, Shields Valley
 Wyatt Niewojna, Shields Valley
 Meaghan Raw, Shields Valley
 Clay Scidmore, Shields Valley
 Benjamin Hallford, Stevensville
 Jakob Thompson, Stevensville
 Ty Pfingsten, Stillwater Valley
 Jarret Bloch, Sweetgrass Hills
 Michael Walsh, Twin Bridges
 Jared Wisler, Twin Bridges
 Katarina Goettlich, Winifred

American FFA Degrees:

Taylor Acheson, Huntley Project
 Darcy Anderson, Broadus
 Karlene Bailey, Shields Valley
 Nathan Baird, Big Timber
 Chase Berry, Ruby Valley
 Taylor Brown, Richey
 Chase Brumfield, Shepherd
 Jynna Christensen, Medicine Lake
 Chad Clark, Plentywood
 Caitlin Creighton, Missoula
 Riley Dalke, Huntley Project
 Brianne Dandrea, Huntley Project
 Markie DeRudder, Fromberg
 Bobby Dorvall, Clark's Fork
 Faith Dyrud, Conrad
 Jarett Eggen, Plentywood

Leela Engle, Big Sandy
 Emily Fochs, Park
 Janice Frank, Park
 Daniel Garza, Miles City
 Kylee Gibson, Flathead
 Colter Guinnane, Ruby Valley
 Allison Hajenga, Judith Gap
 Tanner Haug, Custer
 Whitney Hilliard, Miley City
 Laurie Hogemark, Big Timber
 Brady Johnson, Hinsdale
 Dan Johnson, Beaverhead
 Garrett Jones, Big Timber
 Ashley Kerkaert, Shields Valley
 Warren Krone, Electric City
 Mackenzie Lepley, Shepherd

American FFA Degrees Continued:

Morgan McQuillan, Joliet
Kayla Meine, Beaverhead
Tyler Murry, Plentywood
Brady Oksa, Plentywood
Jaden Paddock, Huntley Project
Canyon Rehbein, Lambert
Lindsay Richardson, Fromberg
Brody Robertson, Big Timber
Jordan Robins, Flathead
Matthew Sarrazin, Shields Valley
Colter Scidmore, Shields Valley
Spencer Siewert, Huntley Project
Austin Standley, Missoula
Cash Stenger, Huntley Project
Alana Townsend, Flathead
Danielle Walker, Electric City
John Walker, Park
Tara Welborn, Shepherd
David Williams, Broadus
Elle Wood, Ruby Valley
Brittany Woodman, Plentywood
Justin Wright, Wheatland

**Calli Jo Dixon, Fergus of Lewistown
State Parliamentarian**

“Give It Your Best Shot”

There was a little blonde girl who had her hair in two messy pig tails that her step dad diligently fixed. They were two peas in a pod, they did everything together, and she always seemed to be in his hind pocket.

She had the nickname that started it all. She acquired it when she was “taking naps”, she would fake sleep, he knew it all along, he called her possum and it stuck with her. He would stack pillows on the seat just so she could see out the windows when they would go hunting coyotes. They would hook up the horse trailer and they would go rope, and the stories don’t end there.

One day she decided to put her favorite little fairy princess stickers all over his thermos for work, after she had done it she thought she was going to be in huge trouble, instead of getting mad and frustrated, he just laughed and carried the thermos every day. From that moment on she knew he was a special man with a big heart, she was so happy he came into her mother’s life, and changed her and brothers lives forever.



This man has been with her as long as she can remember and it wasn’t only him that she grew to love. His family brought her in, as their own. Even though she was not blood, she was a part of them and she did not know any different. All of Kliff’s family are special, with hearts of gold, from her Aunt Kari who would always house kids on FFA events, and share every piece of warm clothing for those frigid livestock contests. His family was there the time the little girl accidentally ate the fortune out of her fortune cookie, the day she graduated high school, and everything in between. She has grown up in this family and they have helped each other through thick and thin, she would not know them if it wasn’t for her stepdad. Blood doesn’t make you family, love does, and this was proven true time and time again in this girl’s life.

There is a small twist in this story, this little girls dad was also a part of her life, on the weekends she would go to the his house and they would have daddy daughter time. Their time spent together was short but it was always memorable, going to the store to get groceries, which consisted of sugar cookies, carrots, and hot dogs. Going to her dad’s bachelor pad was her normal weekend, she liked it that way. Her dad and she always seemed to be doing something fun together, homemade science experiments to baking a cake just so they could decorate it. Until one day it was no longer just she and her dad, he met a new woman, he fell in love with her and they got married. The little girl was in the wedding as the flower girl, she now had to share her daddy. She was so scared that she would lose him and never have that special

time again. It was hard at first but she soon learned to love her because she knew she made her dad happy. Her dad and Sandi have 3 kids now and this girl could not be happier to call them her brother and sisters.

You may be wondering about this girl's mom and the innate role she plays in her life, her mom is a strong independent woman who taught her the true meaning of hard work, she is a nurse and everyone who works with her admires her more than she knows, her mother was always there for her as a child and supported her everything she did as she got older. Even though they had their differences and the typical mother daughter tiffs. She will never forget the time that her and her mother were going visit Kliff at hunting camp, she remembers the story like it was yesterday, she was content watching *Lilo and Stitch* and her mom said they were going to go visit Kliff, so they jumped in there 1983 Pontiac Catalina they called Leepin' Leena, everything was fine until they reached a steep hill that poor Leepin' Leena could not handle, the car quit on them, the little girl was terrified, she was pretty sure this was the end of the road for her. Luckily a family friend came and rescued them. The countless mishaps with her mother made for a very interesting childhood, but she wouldn't have it any other way. She knew that she was one lucky girl growing up with the mother and role model that she did.

As you can tell this little girl had a far from normal childhood, she was used to always bouncing back and forth between her mom and dad's house, with both parents re married, she had quite the list of family. She knew she would have to pick the holidays she would spend with her mom and her dad. As she got older she had to start making her own decisions, it was harder than she was anticipating. The desire to be in both places at one was so strong. Some days she wondered what it would be like to be a "normal kid". We are constantly comparing ourselves to others and not thinking we are good enough. This girl often found herself feeling bad because she did not grow up in a normal home with her mom and dad. As she grew older and thought about her life, she could not imagine it without the four families that she has been a part of. She knew that this is how her life was supposed to be. Her dad always used to tell her that you take the good and bad, mix it all together and make something out of it.

Montana FFA, I tell you this story of this girl because there is a lesson to be learned.

There are so many times in our life when we are so mad at the situation we are in we cannot see what is really good. When we don't receive the office we wanted, when we get a low score on that sales presentation we worked so hard for. We are so worried about how much better it could be, how badly we wish it was different, we always want more, its human nature. No matter your situation you have to make the best of it and give it your best shot, you absolutely cannot be angry or upset when your life isn't perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect life

We all have a story to tell, a story that makes us special, it is all a part of who we are. You don't need to have a tragedy or a single moment that changes your life forever in order to make your story worth sharing. Instead of always wanting something more, and wishing your situation was different, appreciate what you have and what you have been blessed with. Your life, your family, and your story, that is what has made you who you are today, and in my eyes that is the key to life. We are so much stronger because of our hard times, the times that challenge you, and the memories you make along the way will stay with you longer than any "perfect life." I tell you the story of the little girl and her family is far from perfect but full of love.

The life she has lived for the last 18 years has taught her the true meaning of love and living YOUR life, and always giving it your best shot. That has made her the girl who is standing in front of you today. This man was a dad to me when he didn't have to be and this man was my dad even though he knew I had another man raising me. Thank you Dad for always teaching me to make the best of every situation no matter what I will always be your little girl, and thank you Kliffy for being a dad to me and bringing into your family and teaching me more life lessons than you will ever know, I still am your little possum. All I can say is... Thank you. Montana FFA regardless of your circumstances you have to always give it your best shot!

Carlie Brownlee, Big Timber State Sentinel

“Focus on the HEARTware”

It was a hot summer afternoon of my 5th grade year. If you think I am small now, think of me then. I was sitting on the wooden bleachers in the arena at my local county fairgrounds in Sweet Grass County, patiently awaiting the awards ceremony that would conclude our county fair. I was eagerly anticipating the announcement of the award that I had worked so hard for the last three years in an attempt to win... the herdsmanship award. The microphone crackled, and my heart sank as another person's name was called. After trying for the herdsmanship award 3 years in a row I was **hurt** and **mad** that I had not been awarded for my hard work! There were many older kids that I looked up to in 4-H and FFA who were always winning, and I felt



I needed to be just like them and fill their big shoes - no small task for someone who wears a size 4. My hurt and anger turned to disappointment, but I learned one thing: I will **not** give up. As the years went on in my 4-H and FFA career I would win some and lose some, and my thinking began to change; I was not the sum of the awards kept in a shoe box underneath my bed. The experiences gained along my journey were the true awards.

Take a look at some of these pictures, plaques, trophies, and buckles that surround me on stage today. Looking closely we can notice that most of these coveted awards are covered in a thick layer of dust. These mementos are filled with memories and knowledge gained, but I have realized that I don't need a belt buckle, trophy, or plaque in order to show my achievements. Winning is wonderful, but there is so much more to life than carrying home a trophy.

I know I can speak on behalf of our team when I say this: that a State Title will never compare to the friendships and experiences we have created within this last year. And let's not forget those wise ol' owls, we are so fortunate to have within the Montana FFA. Whether we won or lost - FFA members - we owe our achievements to our advisors, and we must not forget to go up to them tonight and thank them. As members, I am sure that each of you can relate when I say, we spend so much time with our Ag teachers that if they aren't already family, they surely seem like it. They see the potential that each of their students have and work diligently with us, investing their time, effort, thought, energy, and sanity...all for our success.

My successes in life go beyond the **hardware** and, rather, focus on the **heartware**: the lasting memories or experiences that will get me through the obstacles that life will inevitably throw my way. I think back to my senior year: I was the state class B/C speech and drama original oratory champion. Standing at the podium and receiving my medal will never mean as much to me as the hug that I received from my speech coach who was waiting for me, tears filling her eyes, after I triumphantly bounded from the stage.

The truth is, few people actually care about the awards you've won. In high school I had the opportunity to spend 50 minutes a day helping a class of first graders with their daily class work, and my speech and drama medal *didn't* matter to the first grader I once told to stop picking his nose. The weight of an award in my hands will never compare to witnessing a student succeed - even if I'm simply helping him blow his nose. I began to realize why my Ag teachers and my speech and drama coach invested so much time in others and myself. Folks, it's the experiences and the service that is the *real* award. We each have experienced the hype of an awards ceremony or winning an award; however, that hype quickly fades away. The excitement I had after helping a little girl named Allee figure out how to sound out a word on her worksheet (and seeing the joy on her face after she figured it out) will last a lifetime.

Sometimes in life we don't have experiences like this until we get older. I didn't begin to have extremely rewarding experiences of serving others until I was a freshman in high school, and by then I still didn't have a complete grasp of how important service could be. As we get older, we truly do begin to realize the greater things in life - the things that truly matter. We should all take a step back, look at the bigger picture, and realize that serving others is the real award. You can make your entire life a triumph, through having rewarding experiences while serving others.

And if I died tomorrow, I would like to be remembered as the feisty girl with red hair who once put a pink bow on my favorite piglet in our barn, the girl who created handmade Valentines for every person in my class, and the girl who - every day - without fail - sings 90s pop music in the shower (also choreographed). But perhaps most importantly, I would like to be remembered for my service to others. Most times at funerals we are presented with a few sentences that talk about an individual's life. What would *you* want the last words that someone says about you to be? About all of the awards you won? Or would you want to be remembered for what you have done for others, your community, and world? I hope each of you will have an enlightening experience of your own and find it in your hearts to realize the importance of service. I know that stocking shelves at a food bank isn't the most glamorous job, but for 1 in 5 families in Montana it can mean the world.

I'd like to tell you a story about a woman who was the epitome of selflessness, a woman who dedicated her life to serving others. My aunt Cathy was woman who, when she woke up in the morning, thought of what she was going to do for someone else, and she was always doing things within her church and community to help out others. My aunt Cathy was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2004; she endured surgery, a stroke, and many hospital visits for chemo and radiation, and she passed away 9 years ago on Christmas Day. At nine years old, I was able to grasp the concept of death, but nothing helped me realize the true character of my aunt Cathy until I saw the hundreds of people that showed up for her funeral...inside the church, in the halls, upstairs in the Sunday school classrooms, downstairs in the parish hall, and even a string of people lined up outside the door. The walls of the church were so full they could have burst, a testament to her unselfish service to others. My aunt Cathy never won any awards, and she certainly had faults, like all of us: she had dry, scaly feet that reminded me of a dragon's; she once french-braided my hair so tightly that I felt as though I'd been given a facelift; and she definitely

couldn't make fudgy brownies like my mama does. However, my aunt Cathy was born with a heart that was selfless and giving, and spread humble acts of kindness to all, touching an infinite number of lives.

Remember the story I told you of when I didn't win the herdsmanship award? When I first started 4-H, my little Carlie legs dangled off the bleachers at Big Timber's fairgrounds, and as I watched my competition below, all I could think of was how awesome that glitzy belt buckle was going to look on me after I won.

But I didn't win; I wanted the award for the wrong reasons and missed out on everything good that was happening around me because I was preoccupied with something that ultimately would lose its luster in the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

Fast forward a few years to 2011. My legs hadn't grown much, but my passion sure did. And now, I was no longer hyper-focused on an award, but rather, dedicated myself with a genuine desire to help others around me. I realized that their success would also be mine. For instance, I helped a first year member clip his heifer, and I will never forget all of the fun I had teaching this younger member all of my tips! I also put on a showmanship clinic which helped younger kids understand how to show their animal properly and also how to show in Round Robin. I did all of these things because I wanted to, without even thinking of the herdsmanship award, but then something strange happened...I won it. That buckle is now buried under my bed somewhere, and I can open the box, remember winning it, and feel pride for my achievement. But it was the experiences, not the award, that - today - and all days - will matter the most.

My opening song by Faith Hill sums up my emotion. *A little girl, a little small for her age a little to slow for the field day race, momma's waiting at the finish line and wipes the tear drops from her eyes. She says, you did just fine honey that's okay, sometimes life's just that way, You're gonna lose the race from time to time, but you're always gonna find. You can't lose me.*

Sometimes things in life don't turn out the way that we want them to; we're going to lose the race from time to time, but we're always going to find that we can't lose the relationships we've built, the services we've done, nor the family, friends, and the loved ones we have. Remember, we only have a few sentences that will sum up our lives. Montana FFA members, run your race wisely because when you leave your legacy, people aren't going to remember the trophies or medals you've won. People are going to remember the impact that you made, what you did (and continue to do) to invest in others' success, not your own. Focus on the heartware, and you will achieve greatness far beyond what a dusty trophy will provide.

**Bryce Street, Shields Valley
State Reporter**

“Behind the Eyes of a Dream”

Imagine looking into someone’s eyes, what do you see? Do you see hope, love, determination, happiness, or do you see something that lives within every human on this earth? It is portrayed differently in every person, a four-letter word that is a part of everyday life, and a feeling that can instantly change the most perfect plan. **Fear.** Now, picture someone who is fearless, someone who never shows the slightest hesitation to do what you might think is the scariest thing ever, and someone who believes fear is not an option. We all have those people in our lives that we look up to for these reasons; we think these people are invincible, that nothing can get in their way. They may be your parents, grandparents, siblings, celebrities, your best friends, or maybe it is someone you don’t even know that well. Even though we may think of these people as fearless and invincible, everyone is scared of something; it just depends on how cloudy they are going to let the eyes behind their dream become.



A person that never let the eyes behind her dream become cloudy is one that I look up to everyday of my life. As a 6th grader she was running track for a very small school in the middle of Wyoming. There she fell in love with the sport of track; it became her life, a spark was ignited in her and a passion was developed. Even after two moves and two different schools, her passion was stronger than ever to start high school track, be successful, then go on to fulfill her dream of running in college. Her freshman year of high school, running in the final heat of the 100-meter hurdles at the divisional track meet in Missoula, something happened that would forever change her track career. She was set in the blocks: adrenaline rushing, heart pounding, the gun was fired. The first hurdle she cleared no problem, soaring over the next six hurdles she was leading the heat to win divisionals, on the eighth hurdle she lost her footing, but managed to make it to the ninth hurdle, one hurdle away from accomplishing her goal of making it to state as a freshman, seeing the finish line within reach, she tripped and fell, the result wasn’t to pretty. She had separated her growth plate in her right foot, taking away the chance to run in the rest of her events for the day. Her season was over and her dreams stripped away in a matter of seconds.

This accident changed something inside of her, she became very quiet, seemed sad, and wasn’t the happy go lucky girl I had known all my life. This “slump” of hers was off and on all the way until the next track season. She began to get worse as the first track meet rolled around; finally I asked her what was wrong. She looked at me and said two words. “I’m scared” but more than anything I could see the fear in her eyes. Fear had gotten the best of her and it had seemed to change the person I had looked up to and

believed was fearless and invincible my entire life. She was scared to even step foot back in the blocks, reimagining every detail that happened when she had fell and hurt herself.

Finally, she was able to do it; she stepped into the blocks at the first track meet of her sophomore year and ended up winning the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, as well as winning the 4x100 meter relay with her team. She didn't stop here, the rest of her career was full of many first, second and third place finishes, as well as four state titles. A back-to-back championship in the 100-meter dash, a state title in the 200-meter dash, and a state title in the 4x100 meter relay with her team. She has achieved her dream of running in college and now competes for Montana State University Billings in the sprinting events and I honestly could not be more proud, yes I am talking about my big sister Blair.

Blair did not let fear get in her way of her dreams, she took her situation and thought about it for a long time, but realized that being sad and feeling sorry for herself wasn't going to help her win and achieve her dream. She converted her sadness and fear into ambition and drive to win those four state titles and make her dream of running in college become a reality. Blair did not let fear cloud the eyes behind her dream.

Throughout our lives I am sure that every one of us, at least once, has heard the quote by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, "If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough." Personally, I could not agree more with what this quote is saying. If you are not even the slightest bit scared to go after your dreams, take them step by step, and work hard every day to achieve them, then they may not be big enough and maybe you are letting the eyes behind your dream become cloudy.

Of course, not everyone dreams of becoming a college track and field athlete, maybe you dream of becoming an NBA basketball player, an Ag teacher, a veterinarian, or in John's case he wanted to become an Eagle. John wanted to earn his Eagle Scout merits just like his older brother; but through this journey he never would think he could take the step of out the shadows of self-doubt, and shine in his own light. Ever since I was 8 years old I had watched John Bartlett work towards one of his biggest dreams, and the day before his high school graduation I got to see his dream come true. John became an Eagle Scout in the organization Boy Scouts of America; this is the highest honor you can earn in the organization. Just to give you an idea of how big of deal this is, only 5% of Boy Scout members actually achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. Throughout his seven years of being in Boy Scouts, there were many times while watching John work so hard to achieve his dream that I could see the doubt in his eyes, this bright and bubbly person I called my best friend was caught in the shadows of self-doubt.

Not being able to tie the perfect knot, start a simple campfire, or canoe down the river successfully are a few examples of things that John failed at his first time around in Boy Scouts. He became frustrated, lacked confidence, and always thought, "I will never be as good as my brother." This thought made it feel like his dream was just out of reach and made it feel as if that there was a thin layer of clouds blurring his vision. The day that John realized what project he would be completing to earn his Eagle Scout merits, was the day we had all been waiting for. This was the day he realized that doubting himself and always comparing himself to his brother was doing nothing but holding him back. John took each plan step by step and increased his drive, determination, and work ethic to complete his Eagle Scout project of rebuilding the animal shelter for the Dubois Humane Society, always keeping one thought in mind, "I do not have to be better than anyone, I just have to be satisfied with myself." By overcoming self-doubt, John was able to escape from the shadows and shine, the thin layer of clouds that had once blurred his vision had burnt off by his shining light.

Self-doubt is something that everyone faces at some time in their lives. Being able to overcome the feeling of “never being good enough” is one of the greatest hardships we face in life, but overcoming that feeling is one of the most rewarding feelings. Often we find that we are comparing ourselves to others just so we can find a way to be better than them. I challenge you with a new task, remember John’s one thought, “I do not have to be better than anyone, I just have to be satisfied with myself.” If you can work hard every day to satisfy yourself, you will find you spend less time comparing yourself to others, and more time investing in others and your own success.

Just like my big sister Blair and my best friend John there are FFA members across the Big Sky state that have avoided letting the eyes behind their dreams become cloudy, and that have overcome the feeling self-doubt. Jason Burkenpass from the Belgrade FFA chapter achieved his dream of becoming an Eagle Scout a year earlier than most Boy Scouts. Kaleb Flowers from the Shepherd FFA chapter has achieved his dream of starting his own cattle business. And Maria Murnane from the Choteau FFA chapter has been working towards her dream of becoming an Olympic gymnast since she was 3 years old. All of these members have faced fear and a sense of self-doubt while striving to achieve their dreams; they, like Blair and John, learned that they could not let self-doubt and fear cloud the eyes behind their dreams.

Now it is time to look into our own eyes. What do we see behind the eyes of our own dreams? Do we see fear or self-doubt? Because what I see in each and every one of you is a light, a light that cannot be extinguished by the fear of failure and defeat. Montana FFA it is up to you whether or not you fuel that light that shines bright in each and every one of us. You can choose to stand in the shadows, or you can choose to let your light shine, make the world around you a brighter place, and let your light burn off the cloudiness behind the eyes of your dreams!

**Randy Taylor, Beaverhead
State Treasurer**

“No Pain, No Gain”

The beginning of my 6th grade year, I noticed that everyone seemed to be getting a boyfriend or girlfriend. I soon decided that I wanted to pick up the ladies too. And it soon became obvious in my quest for love that I needed to start working out at the gym, because that’s what all the other guys were doing. So I made my way down to the local YMCA, and walked into the workout area for the first time in my life. My first thought as I walked in was that I had took the wrong turn, and had wound up in the family YMCAs local torture chamber. Lethal looking instruments and moaning bodies covered the room. I quickly turned around to find an escape when the biggest man I’ve ever seen pointed his finger at me and growled “are you here to work out?” I didn’t even have to answer before he grabbed me and started dragging me around the gym. He showed me how to operate the different types of equipment, and then before leaving me to my own devices, he said “Don’t try something that you feel comfortable with, try something that pushes you. That’s the only way you will grow”. I glanced around the room a bit, until I saw a piece of exercise equipment that caught my eye, and began my work out.



Soon I settled into a routine. I would go to the YMCA afterschool, do a quick workout, and then leave. At first I thought “hey, I’m pretty good at this whole working out thing, this is easy! I’m not even breaking a sweat!” It wasn’t long however until the trainer stopped me again. He then asked me question he said “Why do you want to work out?” I grinned as I told him that I wanted to pick up the chicks. As I told him this, he smirked and asked the next question. He said, “Do you remember the advice I gave you on your first day about challenging yourself?” I nodded yes, and he asked, “Do you think you are doing that?” At this point in lost my cocky confidence, and as I fumbled for words, as he pointed to a sign on the wall that said “No Pain, No gain”. The trainer then began explaining how exercising works. He said “When you work out hard, your muscles began to break down and tear. After your muscle fibers rip, when they heal, they build back stronger, making you stronger.” Finally my trainer asked “Do you think that you are pushing yourself hard enough to make a difference? And if you’re not, you are just wasting your time.” As he walked away, I looked back at the sign on the wall I had ignored earlier because I didn’t understand what it meant. No pain no gain? I had a different life motto: no pain? Good! But I quickly learned that if I wanted to become stronger, I had to endure the pain first.

We have all sorts of trials and obstacles placed in our path. These obstacles come in many different weights and take on many different forms. We’ve all heard about those overwhelmingly large weights that people have faced and their stories of perseverance. Not all of us face trials like this but most of us have the medium sized weights that are a little harder to carry. Finally all of us have those small weights that bring us down in our everyday lives. Regardless of the size, these weights can be difficult to handle.

If you should know anything about me, you should know that I have an unhealthy Disney obsession. I thought I had just about mastered every piece of Disney trivia there is, until I stumbled across this fact one day. In order to survive, Walt Disney had to eat dog food. I was intrigued and as I began to dig into Walt Disney's past I found that Walt had a life of full of failure.

His trials began when he dropped out of high school in order to escape his controlling father and join the military. When he tried to enlist however he was rejected. He got a job working for a newspaper until he, Walt Disney, was fired because he lacked "imagination and had no good ideas". Walt went on to form his first animation company in Kansas City. In six months He was forced to dissolve his company and at one point could not pay his rent and was surviving by eating dog food. Later Walt created a mildly successful cartoon character called Oswald the Rabbit. When he tried to negotiate with Universal Studios for better rates for each cartoon, he was informed that Universal had obtained ownership of the Oswald character and they had hired Disney's artists out from under him. When Walt tried to get studios to distribute Mickey Mouse he was told that the idea would never work-- a giant mouse on the screen would terrify women. The Three Little Pigs was rejected by distributors. Pinocchio ended up losing a million dollars in its first release. When attempting to find funding for Disney Land, Walt was rejected by over 302 bankers.

What did Walt himself say of his failures?

"All the adversity I've had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me... You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you."

After facing tremendous amounts of trials in his life, Walt finally achieved his dreams, and established his legacy for us to enjoy. Walt Disney persevered and used the massive weights of his past to build himself for his future.

Next we have the medium weights. Often times our weights not as heavy as Walt Disney's, but still provide us with difficult challenges

Growing up, I had a terrific friend named Brock. To tell you a little about him, he's an Eagle Scout, has a part time job at Murdoch's, likes skiing, old cars and trucks, and he has a deep love for hunting and the outdoors. Brock has graduated now, but when he was in high school he wrestled, was involved in FFA, won grand champion market lamb at our county fair and loved high school football and basketball, even though he was never able to play himself. Brock was born with Spina Bifida and has been in a wheel chair since birth. To give you just a brief snapshot of his life, in the past 3 years Brock has had 18 major surgeries. He spent 10 months in Utah confined to a special bed, and then he was finally able to be moved home, he spent another 2 months in this bed before he was able to return to the freedom of his wheelchair. Brock has every excuse to feel sorry for himself and let his limitations define him. Instead he has pushed himself above and beyond the expectations set on him and has led an extraordinary life, that even someone without his limitations would be hard pressed to copy. Brock has developed an incredible attitude of positivity, and has chosen to be better, not bitter. Brock doesn't let the medium sized weights in his life define him.

Finally, there are the small weights in our lives. It's these little things, the daily grind, and how we choose to react, that will ultimately determine who we are. They may seem like a lot of small things, but remember the pyramids where built one brick at a time.

During my sophomore year of high school it felt like one of these weights was dropped on my head. I remember walking through the door of the Ag shop and learning that I had not received the chapter office of vice president that I had been running for. Instead, I received the office of reporter. Later I found out that my own Dad, who was my Ag teacher at the time, had personally recommended that I not receive the office of vice president and instead suggested reporter to our chapter nominating committee. To make matters worse, 2 weeks later my dad was asked to resign from his job teaching. Soon it became apparent

that the upperclassman who held the higher leadership positions in the chapter quickly lost interest after we lost our advisor, and it felt like the weight of the chapter fell onto my back. I discovered a turning point in my life as I began to re-evaluate the reasons why I was involved in FFA, and what I was going to do with my position as a chapter officer, even if it wasn't the one I wanted. I learned that leadership is all about service, and not about me. I spent a lot of long nights in the Ag shop with our new advisor, Mr. Igo, as he worked through his first year of teaching. I also discovered that a leadership position was not just a flimsy hand-me-down title but something that needs to be earned every day. I learned that I had to grow from my weights and I began to understand that I wouldn't have learned these lessons if I wasn't given this challenge to overcome.

Looking back, I can easily identify that experience as a small weight even if it did seem monumental at the time. Our challenges are often magnified in our own eyes and put out of proportion. When we take a step back we can see the true size of our weights. But we look a little closer we can begin to understand that a weight isn't just a hunk of metal, but a tool used for building strength.

How we view the bad things in life will ultimately determine who we will become. We can view our trials as excuses, or we can view them as opportunities to prove ourselves. We can see our obstacles as barriers, or as tools to use in our lives. We can turn our stumbling blocks into stepping stones. We can see adversity as a burden, or a gift. I came across this saying:

I asked for strength and I was given difficulties to become strong;

I asked for wisdom, and I was given problems to learn to solve;

I asked for prosperity and I was given intellect and muscles to work with;

I asked for courage and I was given danger to conquer;

I asked for love and I was given people to help;

I asked for favors and I was given opportunities;

I got nothing I asked for, but I was given everything I needed.

We must understand that we can use our obstacles to become stronger, and that a weight is a tool, not just a burden. Let's use our weights to build ourselves. Let's use our trials to make us better. Let's learn from adversity, let's learn from life's pain. Because, without pain there is no gain!

**Neela Andres, Missoula
State Secretary**

“Homeruns, Chickens and Church Bells”

I don't know about you- but in high school every single day went pretty much like this...Wake up to my mom tearing the covers off my face. Hop in the red Dodge truck so my dad can drive me to school. I attempt to put make up on in the dark car which results in stabbing myself in the eye with the mascara wand. Go to English, chemistry, history. Then finally it was FFA practice, the part of the day where FBM's math made sense and where the right answer in electrical wiring literally turned on the light bulb. Then I ran to speech and debate practice to blurt out my original oratory - my coach laughs as he realizes my speech conveniently doubles as my FFA prepared public speech. Then I threw my hair into a pony, scrubbed the pig barn off my cheer shoes and stumbled into cheer practice. If you're actually athletic this is where you fit in a real sport. Or if you're in a C school you just do all the sports. Then finally I'm home again eating the pot roast my mom left out for me.



As a student someone - whether parents, teachers, advisors or coaches, someone *invests* in you all day long. One of the best teachers Montana was blessed with (Mr. Bill Jimmerson) ends his emails with the phrase:

The best minute you can spend is investing in someone else.

Parents, teachers, advisors, coaches, we rely on the people that have been around the track a time or two to teach us how to succeed. Each and every day someone puts time, money, energy and expertise towards our goals. They forget about themselves and help us knock our dreams out of the park.

Sarah Tucholsky' had never hit a home run, not playing for Western Oregon, not in high school not ever. Frankly, Being 5'2 doesn't give you a lot of power. It was the second of a double header game against their rivalry team, central Washington. The bases were loaded and she was up to bat. First ball, strike. She gazed across the field, the pitcher came into focus and the second ball came whizzing at her. Sara gave this ball everything she had. It soared across the field and across the fence ensuring her a home run. Sarah began to sprint. Which resulted in running right over first base, she doubled back to tap the marker but her knee didn't come with her. She collapsed on first based. Sarah had torn her ACL, there was no way she was going to cross home plate ever again much less today. Rules state any help from a teammate or coach would result in an out. The only option was for the coach to throw in a pinch runner - someone to run those bases for her. Sarah would never claim her home run. At that moment Mallory Holtman, a spoke

quietly to the umpire. Mallory was a four year starter and holds just about every major offensive record for Central Washington, the opposing team! Mallory whispered to the umpire. She asked if she could help Sarah.

With the help of Washington's short stop they picked up Sarah and carried her around all of the bases. Pressing her uninjured foot to each base.

As a girl with record breaking 33 homeruns the team was counting on Mallory to bring them to victory yet again. No one expected Mallory to sacrifice one of her last games to help a rival. Instead, the girl with everything helped the girl with less. In a later interview Mallory replied, "In the situation you don't really think about the wins or loses you just think this person is in pain and needs help. I didn't mean to be a hero it just seemed like the right thing to do.

This act of kindness ultimately lost the game for Mallory and the central Washington wildcats. Mallory could have used these extra minutes of confusion to strategize with her team to win the game or at the very least she could have sat down and caught her breath. But instead she gave a few minutes to Sarah. The best minute you can spend is investing in someone else.

This blue jacket has shown me just the beginnings of what investment in others really means. In January, this jacket took me on my first 15 hour international flight. I had the amazing opportunity to travel to South Africa with 75 of the nation's state officers. On this trip we met a woman who truly lived to serve.

Sabina Khoza started out with ten chickens and no idea the amount of toil agriculture required. She expected other people to do the work for her, expected the product to ready to harvest overnight, and expected to make some money fast. Now as we know anything involving land and livestock just isn't that simple. Luckily, Sabina began to learn that as well. Fast forward 25 years and she has African farming all under control. Today she runs more than 400,000 chickens and is one of the biggest producers in all of South Africa. Besides feeding her community Sabina calls success investing in others. She starts each day by asking herself, "what is success without service."

So she started a school. She knew she was a successful farmer and wanted to share her knowledge. So in 2003 she started a university level school to teach others how to be as successful. Her classrooms are made up of the physically handicapped, widows and children left orphaned by aides. She predicts she has taught over 6 hundred thousand students throughout the years. She focuses on teaching her students how to farm sustainably with Africa's limited resources. Students learn soil preparation, planting, growing, fertilizing, pest control, irrigation, and marketing.

She could have kept these secrets to herself but instead she chose to help others. When they come back after successfully starting their own farm she knows teaching is time well spent.

Just like our Ag teachers, Sabina feeds the minds of her students so they can feed the world.

Sabina and Mallory are great examples of investing in others. They represent acts of selfless service done right. Acts done to their fullest extent. But what happens when serving others isn't done to its fullest?

As most young Catholics in middle school I was an altar server. I wore the white robe, packed in the cross, and held up the bible when needed. However I had a love hate relationship with the Eucharist bells. The first Sunday on the job the head server was attempting to teach me the most complicated part of altar serving. When father Pascal held up the bread I was supposed to ring the bell after he held up the wine I was supposed to ring the bell. Pretty simple right? Up goes the bread... no ring... I was definitely spacing out. I knew the wine was about to be lifted up this was my chance to redeem myself. I sit on the edge of the pew, listen. If I couldn't hit both then one was just as good right? Up goes the wine and (Rings bell) I

ring that bell for all its worth. Like a good five minutes worth. After church that day I was hoping for some congratulations or at the very least to look over my mistake. But of course everyone in the congregation had a doctorates in alter serving and they definitely noticed only one ring out of two. A 50% effort.

The fact of the matter is, when we don't give our all we are cheating the people that depend on us. When it comes to serving others we have ring that bell just hard both times. Imagine if Mallory didn't help Sarah or Sabina didn't start a school. Imagine if our parents, teachers, advisors, coaches didn't invest in our goals. People in our homes, chapters and communities are depending on us the way we depend on them.

My grandma always said you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Meaning you should talk once and listen twice. But we also have two hands. Two hands that are willing and capable to serve. So for every time we speak, yes we should listen more but more importantly we should do more. We should act more we should serve more, we should invest more. The best minute you can spend is investing in someone else. There are 1,440 minutes in a day. How do we use those minutes? All around Montana FFA Members are already investing in others. In Park City, Silke Adams started a business called Antifreeze, a project where she collects and distributes blankets and coats to the homeless in the billings area In Electric City, Reena Roberston has been learning sign language and teaching it to her friends to better communicate with her mom and others in the deaf community. For Zane Tunby, of the Baker FFA, it's as simple as the joke and the smile that always make you feel welcome.

Sabina Khoza was right what is success without service? No matter how many homeruns we have, or chickens we raise, let's remember that our best investment is investing in others. Let's invest our skills and strengths in the name of service and have our communities hear our bells ring. Let's continue to help others reach their goals.

Montana FFA, Lets invest in others!

**Allie Nelson, Electric City
State 2nd Vice President**

“Beyond Their Job Description”

Gazing across the room, point to my head, she brings me Tylenol. Show up to a meeting in the Helena capitol with a snag in my nylons, she has an extra. He drives 20 miles out of his way to check out a market hog to weigh and adjust feed rations. She sits in the high school on a Saturday afternoon to work on state degree applications. He taught me how to tie a tie, drive a stick shift, and the perfect water to replacement ratio when feeding bottle lambs. Never do they say that’s not in my job description. (Move) No, I’m not talking about a coach, a band director, or a geometry teacher. I’m talking about the advisors who have made us, as FFA members, who we are today.

Thank you- “a polite expression used when acknowledging a gift, service, or compliment”

As I think about the words thank you, my mind automatically tracks to my own FFA advisor and the advisors all around the Big Sky state, and the difference they have made in my life and the lives of all the members – Ruby Valley to red lodge, Miles to Missoula, our agriculture teachers are teaching us valuable lessons. Lessons we can take directly out of the classroom and directly into our daily adult lives. They show us compassion, courage and selflessness.

Our FFA advisors have been our cheerleaders, our coaches, our substitute parents, and our mentors. They are the biggest fan of the shyest students. They have been able to control the welding boys and hold a teenagers attention for more than an hour, and yet still get us to fill in our Ag Experience Tracker, and turn in our proficiency and state degree applications. Our advisors have been able to schedule bus rides, navigate through towns, yet to still make it to a contest or convention on time. They invest in our success through their time, service and talent.

31 years. 11,315 days, 135,780 hours. This is the amount of time that Mr. Bill Jimmerson has given back to the Montana FFA and to Agricultural Education. Although our team had Mr. Jimmerson as our state advisor for a few months, it was enough to see his passion for the organization. Mr. Jimmerson would go out of his way to ensure that his state officer teams were successful. The time I mentioned a few moments ago does not even compare to the amount of time that has given back through volunteering. Today, after he retired, he is a Farm Business Management Coach to the Belgrade FFA, A scantron grader at almost all district contest, but most importantly, he is a mentor to past state officers, members, and advisors. Mr. Jimmerson and his wife, Molly, have invested time into Montana FFA.



Picture this. Brant Marsh, your state president I, were doing a week of chapter visits across the Southwestern district. Mr. Stender, also known as STENNNDDEERR was the first person to volunteer for us to stay at his house to head out the next morning. We pulled up to the school. He asked us to come inside to the shop. Brant and I only expected to stay at the school for a few minutes before we head off to his house. Instead, Mr. Stender decided to stay at the school until 8 o'clock at night, packing fruit boxes, only so it would be easier for the students to deliver the next morning. As we helped place the grapefruits, apples, and pears into the homemade boxes, I couldn't help my mind from drifting off from the mundaneness of packing fruit to thinking about how it takes such a special person to be an ag teacher. From teaching, to woodworking, to welding, then to packing fruit boxes 12 hours later, Mr. Stender, Brant and I made it to his house, only to find his two little boys playing in the living room, and his wife cooking us what looked like to be a Thanksgiving dinner. The Stender family was more than welcoming to Brant and I that night, and I couldn't thank them enough. However, it doesn't stop there, Mr. Stender woke up the next morning, especially early, to get to the school early, only to ensure that Brant and I had all of the necessary resources for a successful chapter visit. Mr. Stender and his family invests service in his students, state officers, but more importantly, Montana FFA.

Just like Mr. Stender of the Harlowtown and, Mr. Jimmerson a recently retired chapter and state advisor, there are FFA advisors all across the state who continue to invest in your success.

Mr. Andres from Missoula, you have inspired Kayti Mahoney to join FFA, try new CDE's, and even run for state office Mr. Matheis of the Big Timber FFA, you have pushed Carlie Rembold to try new things like Farm Business Management. Mr. Gunderson of the Baker FFA, you have encouraged Chase Huelle to compete in the creed at the eastern district contest, not only was I able to hear your positive words, but I couldn't help but notice the sparkle in your eye as you watched Chase. It showed that you were such a proud advisor and that your entire heart was put into making Chase succeed. Mr. Massar of the Joliet FFA chapter, you have taught Katie Bertilino not only how to be a silent leader, but also to inspire and teach her peers using actions more than her words.

Working twelve hours a day when you only get paid for six, writing recommendation letter after recommendation letter on the day it's due. Driving sixty miles to take a car full of students to a jackpot show to only come back that night to present to the school board about a community greenhouse project. Agriculture teachers are constantly going above and beyond, breaking out of the confines of their job description each and every day. Agriculture teachers encourage their students to be above average, to endure difficult times, they teach us responsibility and the power of integrity and humility. They do all this while working overtime, raising a family, and informing the community about the importance of agriculture. The question is, how can we be the ag teachers in our own lives? How can we go above and beyond to help out a classmate, friend, our community, but most importantly, our world? Mr. Andres always says, "The way you know you're doing a good job is when others want to be just like you." Whether you want to pursue a degree in Agriculture Education, or live each day to your fullest potential of service (extend hand up!), it's completely up to you.

Thanking an ag teacher can be as simple as writing a thank you note or physically saying thank you!

Montana FFA, how will YOU thank an Ag Teacher today?

Brady Ostermiller, Shepherd State 1st Vice President

“Earn your 0.5”

In elementary school we are all taught things like how to count to 100, multiply, and round. We all can agree that for a first grader it is challenging yet rewarding to rehearse 100 numbers in sequence. For a 4th grader, memorizing the multiplication table is the holy grail of mathematics. In school growing up, I often asked why we rounded. The answer was always "to make numbers smaller" or "to make math easier" but in my head I thought it was cutting something short of its potential or giving something more than its actual value. Tonight we will focus on exact values.

- 0.1. He settles down into starting blocks and prepares for a race just like any other. The world record for the 100 meter dash is 9.69...but not for long. Usain Bolt fires out and pushes himself to break the record by .11 seconds. At 9.58 seconds, just under 27 miles per hour, he is the fastest man alive. Breaking a world record didn't come easy which means that Usain Bolt earned his .1
- 0.2. We have all heard of a race too close to call, but how close is close. The 1960 presidential election was one of the closest races on record. Richard Nixon was edged out by John F. Kennedy by a margin of just less than .2 percent of the popular votes.
- 0.03. Who here loves FFA? How about a passion for agriculture? Only about 3% of the American population lives and works on a farm. In 1790 over 90% of the American population were considered food and fiber farmers. 3% might seem like a low number of people who get their hands dirty but 100% of all people are effected by agriculture and the FFA. It is the appreciation everyone has for agriculture that makes the 3 percent of Americans special.
- 0.4. We can all agree that Michael Jordan is one of the greatest athletes to ever live. 6 national championships, 32,000 points and nearly 7000 rebounds. Michael was also known for his team having faith in him. Trusting him with the game. With only a few seconds left in a close game the team would give the ball to number 23. 7/15. .47. 47% of the time he was successful. The other 53% he wasn't so fortunate. This may seem like he failed a lot but Michael has the highest percentage of last second shots to this day in the NBA. Michael spent countless hours practicing and countless hours gaining his teammates' trust. He earned his .4.



0.5. Let's take it back to April 14, 2013. This is the day my aunt Nancy was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer. The thing is that wasn't the only bad news she got that day. She was also told that she had 2 weeks to two months to live. My aunt being the fighter she was decided to go through chemo therapy which the doctors thought would never work. During The weeks of treatment aunt Nancy stayed at our house. My favorite part of having her at our house was tucking her in every night, giving her a kiss on the forehead, telling her I loved her and the I would see her in the morning before I went to school. Two weeks passed. Two months passed. My Aunt went from under our watch 24/7 to living on her own at her own place. That in its own sense is amazing, but the story doesn't end there. My aunt fought so hard that she was able to return back to work in full sprits. She was able to go to Maryland with her sons and also on many drives through the mountains that will forever be in their hearts. August 6 2014 my aunt passed away 16 months after her diagnosis. Her obituary read Nancy Ostermiller Taylor, 59.5. She passed away one day after her half birthday. This extra 0.5 represented more than just her age. It signified her fight against one of the most aggressive cancers, the extra time she got to spend spent with friends and family, and the bonus time that she wasn't promised by any doctor. Aunt Nancy was a true fighter and earned her extra 0.5.

These are instances but not exceptions of achievements done by extraordinary people and people just like you and me. Usain Bolt and Michael Jordan are professional athletes but the amount of hard work and dedication they have for the sport is unparalleled by anyone else. Usain Bolt earned his 0.5, well actually .11 by going above and beyond and doing something no man has ever done. My Aunt earned her .5 by fighting 16 months to spend time with her friends and family. Matt from St. Labre FFA earns his 0.5 by encouraging younger members to get involved so the chapter will continue to grow and succeed long after he invested his time into their success. You can earn it too, help a Greenhand, start a community service project, or make someone smile. Montana FFA one small effort can be the difference in earning it or not. How will you earn your 0.5?

Brant Marsh, Ruby Valley State President

“Fear of the Dark”

We would all be lying if we said that we have never been afraid of the dark.

When we were little it was an irrational fear of the boogie man but once we become older it's simply being scared of what the darkness represents...the unknown.

The only thing we know for sure is what we are passionate about. That thing that we can feel in our stomach, that thing that keeps us up at night, the thing we spend every waking minute dreaming about. Passion is the one thing that makes good men great, and great men even better. To quote William Shakespeare “Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them.”

When I think of greatness I think of the smell of burnt hide. Growing up on a ranch, I loved branding season, I love testing my strength against a calf's. When I was ten years I met my match with a calf that went by the name Little Hercules. It was almost the end of the day and this little body fueled on animal crackers and apple juice just couldn't compete. I was pulling Hercules leg back but it just kept slipping. I dug my size 4 cowboy boots into the mud of the Ruby Valley but there was no way I was going to be able to hold him down. Just when my fingers were about to slip a hand grabbed the calf's leg. No it wasn't Superman, but the weathered hands of my dad Jeff Marsh.

My grandpa was taught by his dad, in return grandpa taught my dad, and my dad taught me. Truth be told there have been 5 generations of Marsh boys digging their boots into the mud of the Ruby Valley. My dad makes his passions his own but more importantly he shares his passion with his family.

Even as a kid riding on the back of the four-wheeler with my dad, I could detect the passion that he had for his way of life.

Just like the crops he harvests, my dad is rooted in the land and he continues to grow. Anyone who has worked with the land knows that there is a special connection that is formed with the caretaker and the land. The word “Family Farm” does not just mean that it is a family who makes their living off of the land, it means that the farm is part of the family. Somehow when generations of a family work the land, their passion, sweat, and dedication makes its way into the soil, and then that makes its way into the crop, which in return makes its way back to its laborer, and this is what I believe is life's true cycle.



It's hard to believe there is someone out there who is comparable with my dad. It's hard to believe there is life outside of Sheridan Montana. That's why this next story takes place in the faraway land of Twin Bridges, a whopping 7.1 miles away.

Angela McLean had a humble up bringing growing up in Twin Bridges. But while other teenage girls were chasing boys, Angela was chasing her dream. All off Angela's life she dreamed of being a teacher she had a passion for education. All through high school she worked as a waitress at the Blue Anchor Café to earn money for college. She graduated from University of Montana Western in 1994, this making her the first person in her family to graduate college. From there she attained a Graduate Degree from the University of Montana. We find that Angela's hard work and dedication has paid off, she is living out her passion teaching at Anaconda High School, a job that she has been passionate about from her start in 1997. But on one February day in 2014 the school of Anaconda got a surprise visitor. This visitor was unexpected by many, but welcomed by all. Governor Steve Bullock came from Helena to change the life of one faculty member. This person was none other than Angela McLean. Governor Bullock came to offer her the second highest position in Montana Government, he wanted her to serve as his Lieutenant Governor.

Governor Bullock could see that Lieutenant Governor McLean has achieved greatness. He said "From humble beginnings in Twin Bridges, Angela has proven over and over again that if someone works hard and has the support of their friends and community, the sky is the limit,"

The lesson here is that not everything will be handed to us. Sometimes in life we have to be like Lieutenant Governor McLean and let our passions **lead us** instead of letting our fear of the darkness keep us still.

I believe former president Theodore Roosevelt is the epitome of a passionate leader. Roosevelt was a man who took charge, and shape the position of president of the United States to what it is today. And not to mention he was a "Mans Man!", but this man was not one that was known for not accepting the advice of others. On the other hand, his successor, William Howard Taft sometimes was not assertive enough. As a child Taft was told to go in one direction by his rather successful attorney father. By the time he was ready for college his father had not only picked out his school, but also had decided that young William was going to study law. Taft graduated second in his class from Yale, then went on to law school. Taft discovered a passion for law, and dreamed of becoming a member of the Supreme Court! But his wife Helen had other ideas. She was pushing him in different directions and different jobs, where William just wanted to follow his dream for the Supreme Court.

As his career went on, he found himself as the secretary of war for President Roosevelt. When Roosevelt's term was up he offered Taft one of two position, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or to be the candidate for the presidency. Taft was so excited because he was finally going to get his dream job, to serve on the Supreme Court! But when Helen found out about this she had a private meeting with Roosevelt and they persuaded William to run for president. He ran, was elected on the 'ideas' of Roosevelt, and was arguable one of the most unsuccessful presidents because he was not living his passion. The fact that he let others dictate his passions led to many dark days for our nation.

I am a believer that every person has the ability to be great. My dad has achieved his greatness by living his passion for family and agriculture. Angela McLean has achieved her greatness by living her passion for teaching even as she educates on a state level. But when you are not passionate about the task in hand you will never achieve greatness. Find your passions, own your passions, and do not let anyone sway you

away from your passions. What we fear the most is often what we love the most, whether that is our family, our land, or even the love from each other. When we get past our fear of failing we can do some pretty incredible things.

Montana FFA, I don't think I could say it better than it was said by Timo Cruz "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Thank you for letting me live out my passion and allowing me to liberate my fears.