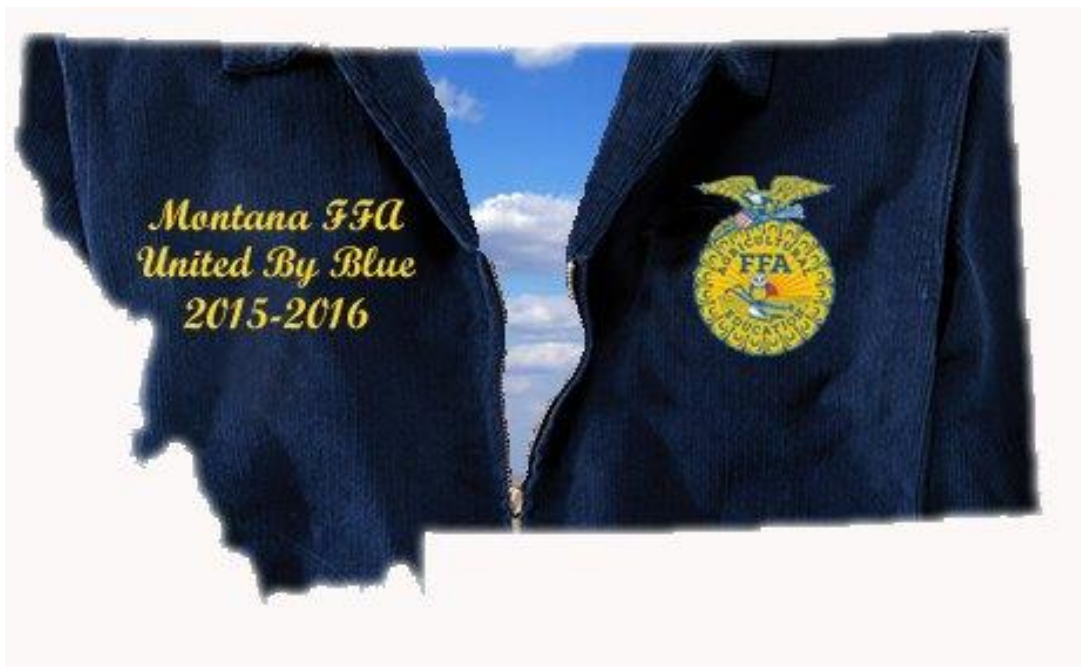


Conference Proceedings

86th Annual State FFA Convention

Montana FFA Association



March 30 – April 2, 2016
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana

Convention Proceedings

State Officers

Lauren Mehlhoff, President
Twin Bridges
Meghan Brence, 1st Vice President
Miles City
Carlie Rembold, 2nd Vice President
Big Timber
Cody Boyce, Secretary
Fergus of Lewistown
Todd Lackman, Forsyth
Treasurer
Sidney Hathaway, Denton
Reporter
Laina Raisler, Miles City
Sentinel
Trevor Motley, Stevensville
Parliamentarian

State Staff

Jim Rose, State Advisor
Bozeman
Dr. Brad King, State Ag Ed Specialist
Helena

Special Guests

Duane Martinz – Keynote speaker
Abby Gretsche – Southern Region V.P.

Convention Facts

1,250 members & advisors from 80 chapters attended plus and estimated 400 parents and other guests for a total attendance of 1,650.

FFA Foundation

Jaime Edmundson, Executive Director
Curt Robbins, President – Columbus
Josh Doely, Vice President – MT
Belinda Darlinton, Secretary – Great Falls
Mark Sinnard, Treasurer – Clyde Park
Jay Meyer – Stevensville
Jack Larson – Miles City
Becky Nelson – Great Falls
Kristen Swenson – Silver Star
Todd Lackman – Forsyth

Alumni Association

Kristen Swenson, President – Silver Star
Brian Engle, Vice President – Big Timber
Bonita Cremer, Secretary/Treasurer –
Melville
Matt McKamey, ALC Director – Cascade
Susan Standley, Director – Missoula
Sandy Evenson, Director – Kalispell
Lane Nordlund, Director – Lewistown
Taylor Brown, Director – Richey
Jay Meyer, Foundation Representative –
Stevensville



Delegate Business Meeting

For Office Use Only # 1	Title: Eliminate State Sweepstakes	<u>11 For</u> <u>45 Against</u>
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Submitted by: Flathead FFA

Motion Fails

Motion:

Move to eliminate state level sweepstakes.

Rationale:

Sweepstakes is an old and outdated award that serves no purpose in today's Agricultural Education. It is difficult to calculate and even more difficult to explain and therefore is difficult to continue its justification.

For Office Use Only # 2	Title: Transparency of Executive Board and Board of Trustees	<u>50 For</u> <u>6 Against</u>
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Submitted by: Flathead FFA

Motion Passes

Motion:

Move that either a video or audio recording as well as written minutes of all meetings of the FFA Executive Board and/or Board of Trustees are made available to all Ag teachers by METNET within 48 hours of adjournment and that a complete record of roll call vote is kept as a part of those minutes.

Rationale:

Have you ever wondered what happens to delegate business after it passes at the state convention? Or how our elected officials voted on whether or not those delegate decisions were ratified into practice for our association? What about the rationale that was used leading up to the final decision? Or how about the discussion and rationale leading up to implementation of new policy?

If you have wondered any or all of those things, then this motion should help.

Amendment
50 For; 9 Against
Amendment Passes

For Office Use Only # 3	Title: Sales CDE	<u>3 For</u> <u>54 Against</u>
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Submitted by: Gardiner FFA

Motion Fails

Motion:

Gardiner FFA moves to amend the current qualification for the Agricultural Sales CDE, which states, "A chapter must place in the top half of chapters in their District to compete in the State Agricultural Sales CDE", by striking the words "place in the top half of chapters in their District" and replacing with "compete in their District Agricultural Sales CDE".

Rationale:

- a. This will allow chapters within a competitive district to be able to compete with teams that could be around their own skill level at the State Agricultural Sales CDE.
- b. Create a more level playing field, by eliminating the skill variance shown at the different district competitions.
- c. It will allow teams to experience the wonderful opportunities that Ag Sales teaches individuals, by not inhibiting the number of members that get to compete at the State Agricultural Sales CDE.

For Office Use Only # 4	Title:	<u>31 For</u> <u>25 Against</u>
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Submitted by: Missoula FFA

Motion Passes

Motion:

Individual sweepstakes will be determined from state contests leading up to and including state convention only. Any state CDE competition that happens after state convention will be calculated into the next year's sweepstakes running.

Rationale:

Sweepstakes is the most comprehensive and prestigious contest of the year. It is unfortunate that the students cannot be recognized for it at state convention.

For Office Use Only # 5	Title: Jr./Novice Parliamentary Procedure	<u>53 For</u> <u>3 Against</u> <u>Motion Passes</u>
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Submitted by: Shepherd FFA

Motion:

I move that we make Jr. /Novice Parliamentary Procedure an official State Contest **and they have to follow the same qualifications as Senior Parliamentary Procedure.**

Rationale:

Currently, this contest is held at JDAE and has a good participation. It is also a great contest for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students to be involved in. In 2017 this will also become an official National Contest. Therefore, we feel that our state and members could greatly benefit from being able to participate in this contest.

Amendment
45 For; 9 Against
Amendment Passes

For Office Use Only # 6	Title: Synchronizing the deadlines for the submission of delegate business	<u>55 For</u> <u>1 Against</u> <u>Motion Passes</u>
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Submitted by: 2015-2016 State Officer Team

Motion:

It is moved that in Section A of Article XI of the Constitution, *60 days* be struck out and *30 days* be inserted, and in Section B of Article XI of the Constitution, *30 days* be struck out and *14 days* be inserted.

Rationale:

This change would be made so the deadlines for delegate business submissions in the Constitution matches the deadlines on the Delegate Business Form.

Currently, the Constitution reads:

Article XI.

Section A. Any proposed amendment to the state constitution must be prepared in writing and submitted to the Executive Committee and the state advisor 60 days before the annual state convention.

Section B. Any proposed amendment to the constitution shall be compiled by the Executive Committee and the state advisor and referred to local chapters for their consideration and review at least 30 days prior to the annual state convention.

The Delegate Business Form calls for chapters to submit delegate business 30 days before State Convention if Constitutional change or 15 days before State Convention for other items of business. The Executive Committee compiles the delegate business and refers it to local chapters for review 14 days prior to the annual state convention.

For Office Use Only # 7	Title: Star Reporter Rubric	<i>57 For</i> <i>0 Against</i> <i>Motion Passes</i>
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Submitted by: 2015-2016 State Officer

Motion:

A grading rubric is provided for the Star Chapter Reporter in the Activities and Awards Guide that reads as follows:

Montana FFA Association

Scorecard for Judging Star Chapter Reporter

Chapter: _____

Score:	Points Allowed	Points
1. Neatness (Grammar, sentence structure...)	50	_____
2. Number of Reports	50	_____
3. Adequate Coverage/Current Activities	50	_____
4. Use of Media & Pictures throughout year	50	_____
5. Organization (easy to follow)	50	_____
6. Creativity	50	_____
TOTAL	300	_____

The reports shall be representative of the complete program of work of the chapter.

The period of time covered should be from March 1 to March 1

It must be documentation of the history of the chapter for the year

Rationale:

Whereas, there is no current rubric for determining the ranking of Chapter Reports sent to the State, and there is no way of officially and fairly recognizing Gold, Silver, and Bronze categories nor a method to identifying the top Chapter Reporter.

For Office Use Only # 8	Title: Nomination Committee Process & Discretion	<i>56 For</i> <i>0 Against</i> <i>Motion Passes</i>
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Submitted by: 2015~2016 State Officer Team

Motion:

We move to add to Article VI Section C after item F of the State Constitution. It shall reflect that the Nominating Committee has the sole discretion to make cuts, determine interview start and end times, determine the amount of interviews given, and to whom interviews are awarded.

Rationale:

Whereas the State Officer selection process is extremely time consuming and whereas the number of State Officer Candidates has grown exponentially in recent years. Therefore, be it resolved that the Nominating Committee has complete discretion and control of the State Officer Candidate interview process.

For Office Use Only # 9	Title: State Officer Team Member Clarification <u>38 For</u> <u>18 Against</u> <u>Motion Passes</u>
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Submitted by: 15/16 State Officer Team

Motion: We move that the Constitution shall reflect that the State Officer team shall have no more than 2 members from the same Chapter on a team.

Rationale: Whereas the State Officer selection process is designed to be as fair as possible, and whereas the State Officer Team should be diverse and more than 2 would limit diversity, and whereas it has been commonly accepted that only 2 candidates from the same Chapter will be placed on the final team. Therefore, be it resolved that only 2 candidates from each chapter shall be allowed to be slated on the State Officer Team.

For Office Use Only # 10	Title: State Officer Selection Process <u>22 For</u> <u>30 Against</u> <u>Motion Fails</u>
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Submitted by: 15/16 State Officer Team

Motion: We move that the Constitution reflect that only 3 4 candidates from each Chapter shall be allowed to run at State Convention for a State Office per year.

Rationale: Whereas the State Officer selection process is extremely time consuming and whereas the number of State Officer Candidates has grown exponentially in recent years. Therefore, be it resolved that only 3 4 candidates from each chapter shall be allowed to run at the State Convention for a State Office.

NOTES: This motions intent is not to discourage individuals for seeking a position as a State Officer however we would give power to the chapters to determine their top individual candidates to move on for the interview process at the State Convention.

Amendment
31 For; 23 Against
Amendment Passes

Career Development Events (CDE) Results

Agriscience Fair Winners:

Animal Systems: Elizabeth Brennan & Zac
Zimmerman, Missoula

Social Systems: Silké Adams, Park City

Power and Technology Systems: Allie Blain
& Morgan Harris, Joliet

Plant Systems: Brandon Berghum, Moore

Food Products & Processing Systems:
Jessie Duffy & Natalie Arnott, Missoula

Environmental/Natural Resource Systems:
Kate Indreland, Big Timber

Agricultural Communications CDE

1. Cascade
2. St. Regis #1
3. Bainville
4. Missoula
5. Electric City
6. Belgrade
7. Winifred
8. Fergus of Lewistown
9. St. Regis #2
10. Roundup

Ag Communications Individuals

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Anna Slivka, Winifred
3. Payton Wilson, Bainville
Madison Hill, St. Regis
5. Saralyn Standley, Missoula
6. Bonny Krogedal, Bainville
7. Becca Bawden, Fergus of Lewistown
8. Anna Sanford, St. Regis
9. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
10. Victoria Brown, Electric City

Agricultural Issues Forum CDE

1. Cascade
2. Corvallis
3. Electric City

4. Conrad

5. Laurel

Agricultural Sales CDE

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Laurel
4. Shepherd
5. Columbus
6. Flathead
7. Corvallis
8. Hobson
9. Joliet
10. Big Timber

Ag Sales Individuals

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Joe Lackman, Forsyth
3. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
4. Brett Robertus, Laurel
5. Walker Heckman, Fairfield
6. Natalie Arnott, Missoula
7. Kyla Andres, Missoula
8. Nathan Wildeboer, Missoula
9. Jessica Horan, Moore
10. Shane Milton, Joliet

Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Big Sandy
4. Choteau
5. Laurel
6. Miles City
7. Denton
8. Joliet
9. Flathead
10. Conrad

ATMS Individuals

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Cotton Myers, Joliet
3. Grant Panion, Missoula
4. Ben Roeder, Choteau
5. Traven Olson, Miles City
6. Ben Hallford, Stevensville
7. Brandon Ross, Bainville
8. Hazen Fink, Lambert
9. Luke Henke, Shelby
10. Tanner Crawford, Fergus of
Lewistown

Agronomy CDE

1. Joliet
2. Stevensville
3. Missoula
4. Clark's Fork
5. Plevna
6. Choteau
7. Belgrade
8. Conrad
9. Flathead
10. Wheatland

Agronomy Individuals

1. Dustin Pape, Stevensville
2. Kacey Bertolino, Joliet
3. Anthony Songstad, Joliet
4. Caroline Roeder, Choteau
5. Caitlyn Corso, Big Timber
6. Russell Zentner, Clark's Fork
7. John Power, Wheatland
8. Noelle Senner, Flathead
9. Cara White, Clark's Fork
10. Dylan Sander, Plevna

Creed Speaking CDE

1. Anna Slivka, Winifred
2. Megan Brewer, Melstone
3. Mattae Tucek, Grass Range
4. Trenton Braaten, Townsend

Jr. Creed Speaking CDE

1. Lexi Dietz, Shepherd
2. Carson Stevenson, Hobson
3. Rachel Stevenson, Hobson
4. Colton Young, Stillwater Valley

Environmental/Natural Resources CDE

1. Missoula #1
2. Joliet
3. Missoula #2
4. Fergus of Lewistown #1
5. Fergus of Lewistown #2
6. Conrad
7. Big Timber
8. Park City
9. Bainville

Extemporaneous Speaking CDE

1. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
2. McKade Mahlen, Culbertson
3. Kala Bertolino, Joliet
4. Jon Andres, Missoula

Farm Business Management CDE

1. Belgrade
2. Missoula
3. Flathead
4. Big Timber
5. Choteau
6. Colstrip
7. Conrad
8. Denton
9. Plentywood
10. Big Sandy

FBM Individuals

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Sam Curry, Big Timber
3. John Tatarka, Belgrade
4. Nathan Wildeboer, Missoula
5. Gray Gordon, Flathead
6. Ben Roeder, Choteau

7. Karly Hanson, Flathead
8. Jon Andres, Missoula
9. Brett McRae, Colstrip
10. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade

Floriculture CDE

1. Belgrade
2. Park City
3. Missoula
4. Hinsdale
5. Joliet
6. Fergus of Lewistown
7. Big Timber
8. Victor
9. Richey
10. Culbertson

Floriculture Individuals

1. Mickayla Johnson, Hinsdale
2. Kacey Bertolino, Joliet
3. Heidi Froelich, Park City
4. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
5. Emma Lawver, Belgrade
6. Sheridan Johnson, Conrad
7. Rhianna Ballanger, Missoula
8. Ethan Banks, Fergus of Lewistown
9. Tehya Ray, Park City
10. Saralyn Standley, Missoula

Food Science CDE

1. Missoula
2. Richey
3. Belgrade
4. Plentywood
5. Melstone
6. Bainville
7. Forsyth
8. Culbertson
9. Fromberg
10. Hinsdale

Food Science Individuals

1. Sheridan Johnson, Conrad
2. Rhianna Ballanger, Missoula
3. Ally Bummer, Plentywood
4. Grant Panion, Missoula
5. Kyla Andres, Missoula
6. Juliet Liedle, Corvallis
7. McKenna Kirschten, Belgrade
- Mariah Millhouse, Missoula
9. Brittany Whiteman, Richey
10. Sydney Brost, Richey

Forestry CDE

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Flathead
4. Stevensville
5. Huntley Project
6. Big Timber
7. Victor
8. Electric City
9. Ruby Valley
10. Chinook

Forestry Individuals

1. Jacob Rasmussen, Missoula
2. Ethan Turner, Missoula
3. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
4. Nathan Wildeboer, Missoula
5. Grant Panion, Missoula
6. Jon Andres, Missoula
7. Maddison Milliman, Victor
8. Matthew Hoskinson, Missoula
9. Casey Cook, Stevensville
10. Ben Hallford, Stevensville

Horse Evaluation CDE

1. Flathead #1
2. Missoula #1
3. Colstrip
4. Forsyth
5. Roundup

6. Missoula #2
7. Electric City
8. Flathead #2
9. Melstone
10. Shepherd

Horse Evaluation Individuals

1. Natalie Arnott, Missoula
2. Aleena McDonald, Colstrip
3. Averie Olson, Flathead
4. Sarah Peterson, Flathead
5. Stephani Rollins, Electric City
6. Cheyenne Napier, Forsyth
7. Kate Indreland, Big Timber
8. Megan Christensen, Missoula
9. Maddie Sutton, Flathead
10. Kyla Andres, Missoula

Job Interview CDE

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Ashley Koenig, Belgrade
3. Mariah Millhouse, Missoula
4. Kodi Myhre, Fergus of Lewistown
5. Shelby Morris, Missoula
6. Danni Nardinger, Joliet
7. Ben Roeder, Choteau
8. Grant Panion, Missoula
9. Sheridan Johnson, Conrad
10. Merle Infanger, Cascade

Livestock Evaluation CDE

1. Laurel
2. Flathead
3. Broadwater
4. Missoula
5. Big Timber
6. Colstrip
7. Lambert
8. Belgrade
9. Shepherd
10. Plentywood

Livestock Evaluation Individuals

1. Jess Moody, Big Timber
2. Hannah Kraft, Laurel
3. Courtnee Clairmont, Mission Valley
4. Jon Andres, Missoula
5. Claire Ruckman, Fairfield
6. Livia Jackola, Flathead
7. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
8. Kelsey Kraft, Laurel
9. Krista Callantine, Belgrade
10. Hazen Fink, Lambert

Market Plan CDE

1. Cascade
2. Victor
3. Electric City
4. Missoula

Meats Evaluation CDE

1. Missoula
2. Flathead
3. Belgrade
4. Shepherd
5. Electric City
6. Stevensville
7. Rosebud
8. Corvallis
9. Fergus of Lewistown
10. Big Timber

Meats Evaluation Individuals

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Krystal Sutton, Flathead
3. Saralyn Standley, Missoula
4. Sandra Ek, Flathead
5. Jon Andres, Missoula
6. Grant Panion, Missoula
7. Ben Roeder, Choteau
8. Dayne Erickson, Flathead
9. John Tatarka, Belgrade
10. Haley Darlinton, Electric City

Parliamentary Procedure CDE

1. Shepherd
2. Flathead
3. Joliet
4. Fergus of Lewistown

Prepared Speaking CDE

1. CJ Stevenson, Moore
2. Tyler Noyse, Broadwater
3. Katie Koterba, Electric City
4. Rachel Prevost, Lambert

Veterinary Science CDE

1. Missoula
2. Fergus of Lewistown
3. Belgrade
4. Flathead
5. Grass Range
6. Bainville
7. Roundup
8. Electric City
9. Park City
10. Rosebud

Veterinary Science Individuals

1. Jon Andres, Missoula
2. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
3. Natalie Arnott, Missoula
4. Cassidy Wiley, Flathead
5. Kayla Morin, Missoula
6. Lauren McCaffree, Missoula
7. Abigail Gatz, Fergus of Lewistown
8. Krystal Sutton, Flathead
9. Grant Panion, Missoula
10. Cassi Bawden, Fergus of Lewistown

Team Sweepstakes Winners

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Flathead
4. Laurel
5. Choteau

6. Big Timber
7. Joliet
8. Denton
9. Big Sandy
10. Colstrip

Individual Sweepstakes Winners

1. Albert Koenig, Belgrade
2. Jon Andres, Missoula
3. Natalie Arnott, Missoula
4. Ben Roeder, Choteau
5. Ashely Koenig, Belgrade
6. John Tatarka, Belgrade
Kyla Andres, Missoula
8. Kacey Bertolino, Joliet
9. Mariah Millhouse, Missoula
10. Nathan Wildeboer, Missoula

State Talent Contest

1. Willie Tsao, Judith Gap
2. Watson Snider, Nelson Ag Academy
Online
3. Member 3

Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS

1. Flathead
2. Missoula
3. Shepherd
4. Park City
5. Beaverhead
6. Electric City
7. Ruby Valley
8. Shields Valley
9. Hinsdale

Star Greenhand

Glacier– Caroline Roeder, Choteau ***STAR***
Western– Kylee Billingslee, Missoula
Southwestern– Trenton Braaten, Broadwater
Southern– Anna Kraft, Laurel
Judith Basin– Anna Slivka, Winifred
Southeastern– Megan Brewer, Melstone
Eastern– MacClain Cathey, Broadus
Big Muddy– Paytyn Wilson, Bainville

Star in Agricultural Placement

Kacie Cummings, Cascade, ***STAR***

Shanna Uskoski, Flathead

Lucas Dekker, Shepherd

Chloe Williams, Electric City

Star in Agriscience

Jake Michels, Shepherd, ***STAR***

Merle Infanger, Cascade

Karle Hanson, Flathead

Star in Agribusiness

Lane Spurzem, Cascade, ***STAR***

Livia Jackola, Flathead

Star Farmer

Kacey Bertolino, Joliet ***STAR***

CJ Stevenson, Moore

FFA/American Indian Program

1. Little Big Horn

2. Simms

Hall of Chapters

1. Cascade

2. Missoula

3. Bainville

Reporter Event

1. Jesse Duffy, Missoula

2. Livia Jackola, Flathead

3. Kohl Michels/Kaleb Flowers,
Shepherd

Secretary's Books

1. Mickayla Johnson, Hinsdale

2. Abby Leachman, Broadwater

3. Addie Donaldson, Denton

Treasurer's Books

1. Lucas Riley, Broadus

2. Katie Koterba, Electric City
Lauryn Pfaffinger, Hysham

Scrapbook

1. Electric City

2. Missoula

3. Bainville

BOMC Awards

1. Shepherd

2. Missoula

3. Beaverhead

Scholarships Awarded

Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:

Sandra Ek - Flathead

Holt Family/John Bliss Memorial

Scholarship: Andee Baker – Park City

Irene Andres Memorial Scholarship:

Megan Flemmer – Park City

Elizabeth Brennan - Missoula

Murdoch's Scholarship:

Kaitlin Angel – Roundup

Brittany Whiteman - Richey

Lars Ronning Memorial Scholarship:

McKade Mahlen – Culbertson,

Brittany Whiteman – Richey

AMTOPP: Brock Reiner - Flathead

FFA Alumni/Foundation WLC

(Washington Leadership Conference) :

Kelsey Kraft – Laurel - \$500

Natalie Arnott – Missoula - \$250

Jenna Barker – Conrad - \$250

Brad King ALC Scholarship:

Matthew Wolsky – Corvallis

Danielle West – Corvallis

Pat Cavey ALC Scholarship:

Hans Lampert – Deer Lodge

Joelle Arthur - Roundup

Blue Shows Through Scholarship:

Xavier Simmons – Melstone

Montana Land Reliance Scholarship:

Ashley Koenig – Belgrade

MABA/MGEA Scholarship:

Ben Roeder - Choteau

Alumni Leadership Camp Scholarships:

Kaleb Starr – Deer Lodge

Megan Flemmer – Park

Cassandra Hull – Roundup

State Officer Nominating Committee

Luke LaLiberty (facilitator). Kaylee Wilson, Victor FFA; Teal Luther, Forsyth FFA; Darian Weaver, Laurel FFA; Myles Watts, Bozeman; Mark Sinnard, Shields Valley; Chase Rose, Bozeman; Leann Koon, Bozeman; Chaley Harney, Billings; Mike Honeycutt, Helena.

Selected: **Albert Koenig**, Belgrade, President; **CJ Stevenson**, Moore, 1st Vice President; **Jon Andres**, Missoula, 2nd Vice President; **Ashley Koenig**, Belgrade, Secretary; **Josh Meyer**, Electric City, Treasurer; **Kacie Cummings**, Cascade, Reporter; **Brock Reiner**, Flathead, Sentinel; and **Jake Michels**, Shepherd, Parliamentarian.

Proficiency Awards

*** = State Winner**

(P) = Placement

(E) = Entrepreneurship

Agricultural Communications

Amber Brown, Electric City, Gold*

Evan Patrick McGonigal, Cascade, Silver

Agricultural Education

Seth Rekdal, Shepherd, Gold*

Agricultural Mechanics Design &**Fabrication**

Jon Andres, Missoula, Gold* (E)

Merle Infanger, Cascade, Gold

JD Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges, Silver (P&E)

Zach Rippenburg, Cascade, Bronze (P)

Agricultural Mechanics Repair &**Maintenance**

Lane Spurzem, Cascade, Gold* (E)

Sandra Ek, Flathead, Gold* (P)

JD Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges, Silver (E)

Agricultural Processing

Kacie Cummings, Cascade, Gold* (P)

Agricultural Sales

Chloe Williams, Electric City, Gold* (P)

Michaela French, Forsyth, Gold (P)

Mikaela Trang, Beaverhead, Gold (P)

Mateo Ferrara, Cascade, Bronze (P)

Agri-science Integrated Systems**Research – Power, Structural &****Technical Systems**

Jake Michels, Shepherd, Gold*

Agricultural Services

Treyton Marquis, Cascade, Silver (P)

Beef Production

CJ Stevenson, Moore, Gold* (E)

Lucas Dekker, Shepherd, Gold* (P)

Kacey Bertolino, Joliet, Gold (E)
John Power, Wheatland, Gold (P)
Brittany Whiteman, Richey, Silver (E)
Hannah Kambich, Beaverhead, Silver (P)
Tyler Ortner, Chinook, Bronze (E)
Garrison Mitchell, Chinook, Bronze (E)

Diversified Agricultural Production

Wade Schneider, Chinook, Gold* (E)

Diversified Crop Production

Tyler Whiteman, Flathead, Gold* (P)

Diversified Livestock Production

Grain Production

Kendall Carpenter, Denton, Gold* (P)

Home and/or Community Development

Tony Mario Rosco Cascade, Gold* (P)

Nursery Operations

Shanna Uskoski, Flathead, Gold* (P)

Outdoor Recreation

Dawson Lee Weickum, Cascade, Gold*

Poultry Production

Shaye Johnston, Richey, Gold* (E)

Sheep Production

Ben Roeder, Choteau, Gold* (E)
Sierra Osborne, Sidney, Silver (E)
Kara Webster, Missoula, Silver (E)
James Kramer, Beaverhead, Silver (P&E)
Kaycie Mikundra, Beaverhead, Bronze(E)

Mekdes Lombardi, Deer Lodge, Gold* (E)
Shelby Morris, Missoula, Gold (E)
Sara Malesich, Beaverhead, Silver (E)

Equine Production

Livia Jackola, Flathead, Gold* (E)
Aimee Parker, Shepherd, Gold* (P)
Natalie Arnott, Missoula, Gold (E)
Jagger Sensibaugh, Cascade, Silver (P)

Forage Production

JD Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges, Gold

Small Animal Production

Katelyn Keplinger, Electric City, Silver (E)

Specialty Crop Production

Todd Lackman, Forsyth, Gold* (E)

Swine Production

Kolby Dietz, Shepherd, Gold* (E)
Bailee Doering, Beaverhead, Gold (E)
Jessica Duffy, Missoula, Silver (E)
Aubri McCann, Chinook, Silver (E)
Kristain Landis, Beaverhead, Bronze (E)

Turf Grass Management

Shiloh Skallen-Robison, Hysham, Gold*
Colton Anderson, Cascade, Silver

Vegetable Production

Victoria Brown, Electric City, Gold (E)

Veterinary Science

Darian Enders, Flathead, Gold* (P)
Lauren McCaffree, Missoula, Silver (E)

State FFA Degrees

Beau Hyatt	Bainville	Tyler Ortner	Chinook
Brandon Ross	Bainville	Wade Schneider	Chinook
Andri Rhodes	Bainville	Ben Roeder	Choteau
Michael Sheehan	Bainville	Colette Zentner	Clark's Fork
Austin Strickland	Bainville	Alexis Dudley	Colstrip
Bailee Doering	Beaverhead	Thayne Hage	Colstrip
Eric James	Beaverhead	Brett McRae	Colstrip
Hanna Kambich	Beaverhead	Gabrielle Bender	Conrad
James Kramer	Beaverhead	Justin Benzing	Conrad
Sara Malesich	Beaverhead	Keely Byrnes	Conrad
Tim Martin	Beaverhead	Maverick Habets	Conrad
Kaycie Mikunda	Beaverhead	Bill Hicks	Conrad
Mikaela Trang	Beaverhead	Kyle Wentworth	Conrad
Jason Burkenpas	Belgrade	Alexi Bidegaray	Culbertson
Naomi Peterson	Belgrade	Adam Buxbaum	Culbertson
Zachary Works	Big Sandy	Renee Granada	Culbertson
Caitlin Corso	Big Timber	Ashton Handy	Culbertson
Holly Emter	Big Timber	McKade Mahlen	Culbertson
Brigit Flanagan	Big Timber	Lindsay Reid	Culbertson
Kelli Mack	Big Timber	Wyatt Shelton	Culbertson
Tucker Stenberg	Big Timber	Anastasia Cybulski	Custer
Houston Brown	Broadus	Jamison Ehlers	Custer
Katie Fortner	Broadus	Bailey Torralba	Custer
Jerrica Gotfredson	Broadus	Jacob Ayers	Denton
Lucas Riley	Broadus	Sam Peck	Denton
Lindsey Riley	Broadus	Cheyenne Phair	Denton
Jordan Meyer	Carter County	Jaeger Schafer	Denton
Jonathon Wolenetz	Carter County	Matt Ammons	Electric City
Kacie Cummings	Cascade	Haley Darlinton	Electric City
Merle Infanger	Cascade	Katelyn Keplinger	Electric City
Jenson Knaub	Cascade	Kaitlyn Koterba	Electric City
Tony Roso	Cascade	Joshua Meyer	Electric City
Jagger Sensibaugh	Cascade	Miranda Shular	Electric City
Brandon Smith	Cascade	Chloe Williams	Electric City
Lane Spurzem	Cascade	Kenzie Anderson	Fergus of Lewistown
Dawson Weickum	Cascade	Hannah Bass	Flathead
Jacob Allen	Chinook	Sandra Ek	Flathead
Aubri McCann	Chinook	Darian Enders	Flathead
Garrison Mitchell	Chinook	Karly Hanson	Flathead

Katherine Hill	Flathead	Derek Peigneux	Malta
SharDay Hilliard	Flathead	Jordan Pierce	Malta
Livia Jackola	Flathead	Nash Pratt	Malta
Sarah Peterson	Flathead	Joleen Waters	Malta
Brock Reiner	Flathead	Kalen Wiebe	Malta
Courtney Rufenach	Flathead	Austin Wiese	Malta
Noelle Senner	Flathead	Kaylee Adams	Melstone
Kaileigh Sidmore	Flathead	Xavier Simmons	Melstone
Shanna Uskoski	Flathead	Rebecca Turley	Melstone
Kaitlin Uskoski	Flathead	Marissa Henning	Miles City
Destiny Wallace	Flathead	Jon Andres	Missoula
Tyler Whiteman	Flathead	Mariah Millhouse	Missoula
Jazmin Mitchell	Fromberg	Shelby Morris	Missoula
Courtney Richardson	Fromberg	Grant Panion	Missoula
Levi Wilm	Fromberg	CJ Stevenson	Moore
Nicole Sperano	Gardiner	Taylor Bohannon	Park
PJ Thomas	Gardiner	Katie McClish	Park
Makae Nack	Geraldine	Ava Nelson	Park
Delany Beil	Hinsdale	Taylor O'Neil	Park
Mariah Estell	Hobson	Aaron Lewis	Park
Elizabeth French	Huntley Project	Silké Adams	Park City
Taylor Larson	Huntley Project	Cara Grewell	Park City
Teishia Gamble	Hysham	Kyle Fawcett	Plentywood
Kacey Bertolino	Joliet	Alyssa Hart	Plentywood
Jess Grewell	Joliet	Taylor Hilyard	Plentywood
Kenyon Hatten	Joliet	Jacob Quigley	Plentywood
Anthony Songstad	Joliet	Jeremy Rice	Plentywood
Karlie Wetstein	Joliet	Jake Edgell	Plevna
Taylor Fink	Lambert	Dylan Sander	Plevna
Hazen Fink	Lambert	Chris Skogas	Plevna
John Helmuth	Lambert	Jessica Stockett	Plevna
Delany Krenning	Lambert	Ian Fatzinger	Richey
Rachel Prevost	Lambert	Shaye Johnston	Richey
Tea Thiessen	Lambert	Brittany Whiteman	Richey
Sean Williams	Lambert	Kaitlin Angel	Roundup
Spencer Drange	Laurel	Kali Flanscha	Roundup
Hannah Kraft	Laurel	Aaron Pelan	Roundup
Victoria North Piegan	Little Big Horn	Makayla Robertson	Roundup
Baily Graves	Malta	Cady Guinnane	Ruby Valley
Leila Mecklenburg	Malta	Cameron Haag	Ruby Valley

Lucas Dekker	Shepherd	Makayla Peterson	Stillwater Valley
Madison Hinkle	Shepherd	Sam Becker	Sweet Grass Hills
Jake Michels	Shepherd	Jackson Nagy	Sweet Grass Hills
Aimee Parker	Shepherd	Ulan Omdahl	Sweet Grass Hills
Seth Rekdal	Shepherd	Quintin Omdahl	Sweet Grass Hills
Phallon Arthun	Shields Valley	Haley Fournier	Twin Bridges
Kayla Gagen	Shields Valley	JD Mehlhoff	Twin Bridges
Teslin Johnson	Shields Valley	Colby Minert	Twin Bridges
Taylor Johnson	Shields Valley	Brooke Smith	Twin Bridges
Kylie Kerkaert	Shields Valley	Eric Swenson	Twin Bridges
Sierra Osborne	Sidney	Wynn Swenson	Twin Bridges
Madison Hill	St. Regis	Jack Pederson	Victor
Shawn Cassidy	Stevensville	Mollie Cameron	Wheatland
Bobby Harrington	Stevensville	Lauren Glennie	Wheatland
Dustin Pape	Stevensville	Kelly Berg	Winifred
Austin Potton	Stevensville	Patrick Carrell	Winifred
Autumn Brimer	Stillwater Valley	Casey Fowler	Winifred
Emma Kelly	Stillwater Valley	Riley Slivka	Winifred

American FFA Degrees - 2015

Randy Layne Taylor	Beaverhead	Rachael Buzanowski	Huntley Project
Cameo Lynn Bruha	Beaverhead	Leisa Leigh Stevenson	Joliet
BreannaMae Thomasson	Big Timber	Katherine Bertolino	Joliet
Carlie A. Brownlee	Big Timber	Tyrel Wayne Hoferer	Joliet
Tanner C. Engle	Big Timber	Neela A. Andres	Missoula
Colton R. Jones	Big Timber	Reagann Dengel	Moore
Alyssa Riley	Broadus	Codi Rogers	Park City
Lane McGill	Broadus	Wyatt Obergfell	Plentywood
Sam Goss	Cascade	Devin Skylar Schwanz	Plentywood
Tavin Marie Schneider	Chinook	Kaylee Taylor Eggen	Plentywood
Meghan L. Bruner	Conrad	Tanner Jorgerson	Plentywood
Natasha Leligdowicz	Custer	Celeste Dominique Hagen	Ruby Valley
Spencer Bud Leligdowicz	Custer	Brant Marsh	Ruby Valley
Annie Lombardi	Deer Lodge	Brady Ostermiller	Shepherd
Brooklyn N. Merja	Electric City	Shane Tyler	Shepherd
Alex I. Nelson	Electric City	Catherine Lee Dekker	Shepherd
Christian Neumann	Electric City	Abbie Lynn Goggins	Shepherd
Amber Roberts	Electric City	Bryce Nicole Street	Shields Valley
Carson Richard Sand	Electric City	Emily Aspen Schaff	Sidney
McKenzie Irene Anderson	Electric City	Dam James Murphy	Wheatland
Marcelle Tikka	Flathead	Nolan J. Holmquist	Wheatland
Kaestra Gorder	Flathead	Kymberly Merle Brown	Winifred
Wayne Ryan Stevenson	Hobson		

Distinguished Service Awards

Jaime Edmundson

Curt Robbins

Belinda Darlinton

Honorary State FFA Degrees

Michael Morgan, MAAE President	Carla Kirchner
Kelly Janitell, Miles City School Personnel	Brenda Baumgardner
Butch Damburger, Montana State University	Terry Baumgardner
Toni Lee, Montana State University	Bill & Kim Boyce
Jaime Rowe	Scott & Audrey Lackman
Lenny Mehlhoff	Kraig & Jody Hathaway
Larry & Shannon Brence	John & Lori Raisler
Randy Rembold	Jeff & Vicki Motley

Friend of the Foundation Award

MSU President Dr. Waded Cruzado

State Convention Sponsors

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Alpha Gamma Rho	Stage Sponsor
Ann Ronning	Creed CDE
Bayer Crop Science	Agronomy CDE
Billings Farmhand	Ag Sales Scholarship
Caroline Davis	Workshop
General Distributing	Mechanics Scholarship Sponsor
Miles Community College	Extemporaneous Speaking
Montana Army National Guard	Thursday General Session Sponsor
Montana Dept of Ag	Advisor Luncheon
Montana Farm Bureau	State Degree Dinner
Montana Grain Growers	Agronomy CDE
Montana Seed Growers	Agronomy CDE
Montana Seed Trade	Agronomy CDE
Montana Silversmiths	Tradeshow/Talent
Murdoch's Ranch & Home Supply	Scholarship Sponsor
Neal Family	Livestock CDE
Northern Broadcasting System	Prepared Speaking
Northwest Farm Credit	Thursday General Session/ Day of Service
Pioneer Meats	Friday General Session/ Meats CDE
Randy Bogden Farm Bureau Financial	Meats CDE
Sheridan College	Scholarships
Stockman Bank	FBM CDE/American Indian/Advisors/Donor Luncheon/A
Torgerson's LLC	Mechanics/ Saturday General Session
Northern Livestock Video	Livestock CDE
WestBred	General Convention Sponsor
Wilbur Ellis	General Convention Sponsor
Kristen Swenson	Stars over Montana
Curt Robbins	Stars over Montana
Montana Agribusiness Association	FFA General Scholarship Sponsor
George and Jan Simmons	Day of Service Sponsor
West Feeds	Livestock CDE Scholarship
Bitterroot Stock Growers	Caroline Davis Workshop
Billion Auto Group	State Convention/State Officers
Ranch House Meats	Parliamentary Procedure
NutriLix	Prepared Speaking
Five Valleys Land Trust	General Convention Sponsor
Animals Blessings	Vet Science CDE

Cottonwood Veterinary Hospital	Vet Science CDE
Montana Equine	Vet Science CDE
Origen	Vet Science Scholarship
Folkvord Family/Wheat Montana	State Officer Fund
Farmers Union Insurance	Job Interview/Ag Issues/American Degree
Central Montana Co-op Big Sky	General Sponsor
Lyle Armstrong	Greenhand Contest
D.A. Davidson	General Convention Sponsor
Montana Farmers Union	Parliamentary Procedure
First Interstate Bank	General Convention Sponsor
Mt Agri-Women	Extemp Public Speaking
Sk Realty	State Convention General Sponsor
Blue Mountain Veterinary	Vet Science CDE
Bay Ltd	Friday General Session Sponsor
Tractor and Equipment Company	Wednesday General Session Sponsor
AMTOPP	Scholarship
Montana Land Reliance	Scholarship
Columbia Grain/Montana Wheat and Barley Committee	Commodity Tour
Tire Rama	Tire Challenge
Montana FFA Foundation's Friend of the Foundation	Dr. Waded Cruzado



Trevor Motley, Stevensville State Parliamentarian

“One Way Ticket”

Fifteen thousand four hundred eight miles, four thousand nine hundred and seventy-five members, three hundred and seventy days, ninety chapters, eight State Officers, and one State Convention. This year has flown by at mach four, and quite honestly I wish it would have slowed up just a little.

I remember back in my Freshman year of High School, I was sitting in wood shop drawing something on Auto-Cad just after the start of the second semester. We had a substitute named Mrs. Hackett that day; she sat down next to me after taking attendance. She asked me a few questions, and we talked about life and what the future might hold. Towards the end of our conversation, she told me that I needed to be in the “building next door.” The “building next door” was the Ag Shop, which happened to be the home of Stevensville FFA. After serious convincing and what I’m sure seemed like pulling teeth, I listened to her and attended an FFA meeting. It only

took that one meeting. I was sold on FFA!

Towards the end of the meeting, Mr. Perkins said that he needed volunteers to go to 4th-grade farm fair which was a few weeks later. I remembered how much fun farm fair was when I was in fourth grade and after discussing with some friends if they’d be going, I signed up. After farm fair, I found myself making a deal with Mr. Perkins and Mrs. Hackett to let me take the Ag 2 class the next semester so I could be involved with FFA and of course stay with all of my friends.

Sophomore year I found myself looking for a contest when the sign up for Ag Issues was put on the board. I wasn’t overly sure about it and didn’t think speaking would be my thing. However, Mrs. Hackett had different thoughts and once again sat me down and began to twist my arm until I finally decided that I’d give it a try. Time started to whiz by, and we were traveling all over giving our presentation.

Pretty soon JAAM arrived, and all of our hard work had paid off, we were headed to National Convention. Over the summer, we lost a member of our team which meant training a new member to be as polished and know all of the little bits of information we had picked up during presentations to the Senator, Governor, and other prestigious organizations. Next thing I knew we were landing at Chicago-Midway on our way to Convention. We gave it our all in the competition and made it to the Semi-Final round. Walking away one of the top 16 teams in the nation was a feeling I will never forget.

The point is this; we have a limited number of opportunities. One thing that I can now look back on is my last four years. What I see is that staying within my comfort zone took me absolutely nowhere. If I hadn’t have had faith in my Advisor that something would work out, I wouldn’t be here today.

Not only that but I wouldn’t have become a part of this FFA family. Now some of us might only think of the FFA family as a cool hashtag to use at the end of our Instagram post, but it truly is more than that. Having the opportunity to talk with members across the State and the Nation this year has made me now more than ever realize the FFA Family is real. We often take for granted our advisors, teammates, and other members who make our experience what it is. But without them, we wouldn’t have near the success or fun that we all have. No matter what member, advisor, or supporter you talk to they somehow weave their way into the stitching of your FFA Family.

The absolutely incredible part of FFA is that anyone can wear this Blue Jacket. I'm sure that many of you are involved in production agriculture or raise livestock. I for one don't fit either of these two categories. I live on a residential street in town, sure I've grown up changing pipe and operating the tractor, but I didn't feel that FFA was going to be my niche. I thought that I had to live out in the country, have stock and drive a truck. I was wrong, and I'm sure glad that I was.

My advisor was always reminding me that I should take every chance I had to put on my blue corduroy jacket and board the bus. And if we were to fast forward from my first trip to Nationals to the beginning of my Senior year. We'd find that I was finally about to learn one of the most impacting phrases Mrs. Hackett ever used. This saying is one that every last one of her students has heard. She reminds you that if you start your freshman year, you only have four opportunities if you're lucky to put on your jacket and attend that activity. I never really understood this until I left John Deere Ag Expo on a bus for home last year. As the country rolled by I thought to myself, well that was the last time I'll ever zip up this jacket to compete here. For the remaining contests and events of my senior year, I set out to make the most of them that I possibly could. As State Convention approached and we were arriving in Billings, I took a moment to reflect on how I had used my shots that started ticking away the day I joined FFA. Each and every one of us have these shots.

If you're a Sophomore sitting in the audience today you only have two more opportunities to be sitting here. If you're a Junior you have one more shot to make it to State. For me those four shots turned into three because of what I assumed FFA and Ag would be and consequently waited to join until I was a Sophomore. Maybe some of you are discovering your Junior year that Mechanics CDE was your fit all along, you have these four days in Bozeman and next year, that's it. Maybe some of you are deciding right now that you're thinking of becoming a State Officer, and guess what guys there's one shot at that.

In life we don't get a lot of second chances. Sometimes if you blow that first job interview, you're done. Sometimes if you blow that first date with the girl of your dreams there isn't a second one. In FFA you do have the opportunity to perfect your story, you do have the opportunity to have four shots at winning a National Contest, you do have the opportunity to run for State Office.

My hope for everybody in this room is that the conversation that my Ag teacher had with me, which inspired me to join FFA is the conversation that inspires you to saying yes to that new opportunity in FFA. That makes you take a shot in running for State Office, about saying yes to Washington Leadership Conference this summer, because guess what guys you have your whole life to work. Montana FFA how will you use your shots? How will you write your story to become "United By Blue"?



Laina Raisler, Miles City State Sentinel

“Plot Twist”

The best stories were the ones that always ended in an unexpected way. You know? The ones full of plot twists? When Nancy Drew cracks the case, Katniss and Petta win the Hunger Games, or the one we all know “Luke, I am your father.” Katniss wouldn't have saved Panam if she had been afraid to take risks, and without good ol' Darth's confession, Luke wouldn't have learned who he was. These stories showed me that when things don't go as you predicted, you can always yell “PLOT TWIST!” and get ready for a new adventure!

Some of the greatest things in life are the things we didn't see coming. The "plot twists" we find ourselves in that intimidate us but make our story better. Abby Gatz from *The Fault in Our Stars* said it best when she told me that she always wants to be making herself uncomfortable so she can grow. Now Abby understands that every opportunity is a risk, and she makes the decision every day to leap outside her comfort zone until she's no longer unnerved by new opportunities.

When have you made yourself uncomfortable? During my junior year of high school, it was simply filling out an application. An application that would lead me to everything from staying with crocodile farmers to eating a tarantula—all the while living in a culture completely different from my own. Looking back at all the crazy stuff I got to do in the tiny country of Cambodia, the scariest thing was deciding to apply. It made me realize that to make the best stories, you have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Finding strength to leave your comfort zone is no easy task. In fact, I can pinpoint a time ten years ago where my fear and courage collided.

I'm known for being cautious. I'm the kind of older sister that used my siblings as test dummies, just to guarantee my own survival. However, it was one time I wasn't manipulating them to comply with my plans that affected me the most. I was eight years old and my family was going swimming. Our friends had a giant pool in their backyard and on the deep end was a diving board that rested just above the water. My two-year-old sister, Jill, literally leaped at the chance to jump off of it. Me? Not so much. I was perfectly content to stay where I could touch. Lower chance of drowning. After watching little Jill effortlessly catapult into the pool upwards of twenty times, I finally concluded that "If she hasn't died yet, I'll probably survive too." Almost impulsively, I found myself at the edge of the board. As I peered into the water, I saw my mom, a former life guard, was waiting within arm's reach of my target zone. My knees started to buckle and my breathing was restricted as I began to regret every single decision that led me to this point. I struggled to take a deep breath I surly thought would be my last, then took one more...for good measure... before finally, flopping into the water. I resurfaced victorious over my fear and most importantly, I was still breathing!

My mom loves telling that story to highlight Jill's fearless determination and my fraidy-cat tendencies—however—Jill influenced me to dive outside my comfort zone, even though she hadn't thought to be scared. That led me to realize that our actions are capable of giving others courage. So be brave, for you and for those around you. Change is the law of life, and plot twists are inevitable. Whether you're still breaking in your jacket or a senior who dreads the constant question of "What are your plans after graduation?" your attitude to a situation will determine how your story will end. You decide. Are you going to dive in or stay where you can touch?

Imagine your first day of school: new building, new teachers, new classmates, whether it was Kindergarten or freshmen year, we all have had to face this terror. For my friend Marissa, her move into high school was no different. In Miles City, my chapter would eat lunch in our farm shop. Marissa would enjoy her meal at a table by herself, resisting our attempts to include her. Now, in Marissa's case, it was easy for her to avoid conversation of any kind, but after she was desperately drafted into a shift for that night's concessions, she found herself forced to talk to people. For quiet Marissa, this was no easy task for her at all. As the shift wore on, she became more comfortable talking with strangers. Gradually, she was influenced to get more involved in the chapter. It was here in FFA, Marissa realized that her plot twist had brought her to a better story, where she was the author.

If you were to look at Marissa's life, you would be amazed at everything she's fit in so far. She spent her childhood in Afghanistan while her family served as missionaries, she's an incredibly talented lyrical dancer and she can make anything out of yarn, but I wouldn't be able to share her story if she hadn't started talking to strangers. I know, I know: stranger danger is drilled into our brains, but on a practical level, the only thing stopping us from learning from others is ourselves. Marissa taught me that we can gain so much from stepping outside our comfort zone and challenging ourselves to talk to others.

So go ahead, ask the girl to dance, discover why your advisor got into teaching, learn who someone from another chapter is outside the jacket. Be like Marissa and learn from strangers, or even like Jill and influence others to dive past their fears.

Traveling the State, I have met so many members who have already taken risks and used their plot twists to have the best stories! I think of Jake Michaels from Shepherd, whose amazement for wind turbines, his plumbing expertise and his dedication to his younger brothers makes him interesting; Hannah King from Choteau, who took gorgeous senior pictures in a grocery store, carries a chicken purse, and spreads self-confidence through her music; or Cara White from Clarks Fork, who has already seen more of this world than most people ever will. Don't stop jumping in feet first and never keep your story a secret. It doesn't matter if you were raised on a ranch 30, 40, 50 miles from your school or you've never lived more than 60 feet from a sidewalk, it doesn't matter if you prefer crops or livestock, how many belt buckles you've won, or if you have trouble spelling 'parliamentarian.' It doesn't matter if you were cut from the team or you've signed to play after high school, whether you dance, plow, weld, sing, paint, yodel, or just nap. You are interesting. Take a risk for crying out loud! Your plot twists have brought you this far, write your next chapter.



Sidney Hathaway, Denton State Reporter

“Spoken Word Poetry”

Time. It's the power that limits and extends, begins, but fears no end. It's the enemy, and somehow a friend. Time, is always changing yet always constant, the clock marking a second, a second, tick tock, tick tock. We wrestle with its consistency, always wanting another minute, in the distance from point A to point B; but it warps the path between the two, taking us somewhere our shoes would not normally tread, Time, is credited with teaching me, that when it's raining, you dance, in order to find joy in every circumstance, because, like time, joy is uncontainable. Time dictates the length, but not the depth; no, it's our choice to settle for mediocrity or to thrive. Friends, don't miss your chance to live while you're alive. Therefore do not hesitate because time does not wait for you to catch up or listen to you complain. It's up to you now, to learn to dance in the rain.

Every day we wake up with a choice. It may seem like our day is planned out, which is probably true. Sometimes it's not so much what we spend our time on, but instead how we spend our time. I remember waking up one morning last May to my mother saying “hey, get up, pack your bags, we're going to the Grand Canyon today!” We are?! Something you should know about my family- we do not take road trips. Have you seen the movie “the Croods”? Well father caveman's philosophy on life is to “stay in the cave”. Sometimes, this is how I felt when it came to my family leaving the ranch.

So imagine my utter bewilderment when my mother barged into my room and announced that we would be departing for the Grand Canyon that morning. The shock had not worn off, when a few hours later, my whole family and a few duffle bags were all crammed into the Yukon. Right from the beginning, the weather, was not on

our side, as it rained the entire way. By the time we got to Arizona, we were in a blizzard.... Ok, stop right here. Do you know how often it snows in Arizona at the end of May? Literally, once a decade!

Anyways, after rain and snow, we had finally made it to the gate of the Grand Canyon. I was on the edge of my seat, this was it. But, it wasn't that easy. Fog was consuming the landscape we were supposed to be looking at, and the line to get into the Grand Canyon was not moving. Finally, over an hour later, we made it through the gate and into the beautiful Grand Canyon. Or at least, I assumed it was beautiful, I don't really know, because, all I could see was fog. We unloaded from the car, just to see if we could catch a glimpse. And that's when it started pouring rain.

I had a choice to make- I could complain about my unfortunate circumstance, or I could try to make the best out of where I was at. So, it was there, standing outside in the rain and fog 1000 miles away from home that I started laughing at the irony of the whole situation. A wise man once said "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." I realized that sometimes the journey we take is more important than the destination we may or may not arrive at. What does the Grand Canyon look like? I may never find out. Time is short and oftentimes pretty cruel. But it's finding joy in the circumstances that makes life worth living- smiling through the fog, and dancing in the rain.

In fact, I remember dancing in the Rain with one of my friends Grace on a Missions trip a few years back. Our group was at San Jose, Costa Rica in a downtown park performing a skit when it started raining. Instead of running for the trees, Grace looked at me with a smirk, and soon the local Costa Ricans were watching and laughing as us goofy Americans jitterbugged in the middle of a rain storm. I will never forget how much fun we had thanks to Grace not running for cover, but instead making the most of a rainy day.

You see, Grace was that person who could walk into any situation with a smile on her face, and manage to put a smile on yours too. Although she wasn't in FFA, her life had "living to serve" written all over it; whether working with Orphans in a Third World Country, volunteering at soup kitchens, or just taking the time out of her day to listen and give a little advice when somebody needed it most. One-day last summer, Grace went on her morning bike ride just like usual- same highway, same routine, just a normal sunny summer day; but her bike ride was cut short. A driver was texting and didn't see Grace until it was too late. In the blink of an eye, an ordinary morning turned into her last morning.

Grace had a very short life, but in the time she was with us, her life made a difference. How many times do we choose to serve ourselves instead of those around us? How often do we stand by and watch opportunities drift away, maybe thinking that another will come along, or perhaps turn up our nose and think we are too good for what just came our way? What would it take for you to look back on your life someday and be satisfied with how you lived? My Grandma told me once "God has given you this day to use as you will. You can waste it or use it for good. What you do today is very important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving something in its place you have traded for it. Do not regret the price you paid for today."

Spoken Word, Part B

Part of what's next is credited to Kurt Schroder.

I'm learning to be grateful for each moment. But I'm well aware that this today will very quickly join the history class full of yesterdays, so friends before it does allow me to share something with you. Time. It Can Fly, And Promises to heal all of our wounds.

We try to make it, save it, kill it, and there's never enough of it, time; is what stops everything from happening all at once, making sense of past, through to the present, into future; it's later and its sooner. Time, is what measures the duration of pain and joy, and of everything in between.

It seems to rule all aspects of our lives and has been the endless Fascination for every creed and Nation throughout all of time. It seems to vary from place to place but personally I have yet to face the space where it does not intermingle and interlace itself into everything, and the mysterious thing is that time is completely personal but then entirely public. Each second ascribed solely to you, but that self-same moment is for the rest of us too, so it doesn't matter who you are or what you pursue, time does not discriminate so do not misconstrue; we all face life at 60 minutes an hour; Live in the present, it's now or never.

So next time your ag teacher asks you to be on a team, you get the chance to see your grandmother, something goes wrong, or maybe like Laina, the chance to go to Cambodia, how will you respond? In any situation, time is limited so find the joy in it. Montana FFA, tomorrow is not promised, but today is here, so live like there is no tomorrow!



Todd Lackman, Forsyth State Treasurer

“Repercussions”

A few years back, I got the opportunity to travel to Australia with a group of Montana high schoolers. And, even though seeing the Sydney Opera House, holding a koala, and eating kangaroo and crocodile were pretty neat, one experience sticks in my mind more than any other. Embarrassing experiences tend to do that. One night during the trip, I was in a hotel room unpacking my stuff when I noticed a few of my fellow travelers were motioning for me to join them outside. For some reason, I had a lot of energy that night, and I started jogging over to meet them. All of sudden, smack, I found myself on the floor, glasses bent, and face stinging. Turns out, my hotel room had a glass door, and it was closed. Or, at least it used to be closed. My impact with it had knocked it off its track, and now it was open just wide enough for me to hear my friends laughing at me. It wasn't too hard to pick up my body and get off the floor. It

was a little harder to pick up my pride.

At the end of the day, running into the glass door really didn't matter, but it made me think about something that really is important—overcoming failure. We all have glass doors in our lives, we all have experiences where one moment we're on top of world and then we run into that glass door we didn't see, and we're knocked down. It hurts. It's embarrassing. And we don't want to do that again. The next time you're faced with a similar situation, a new emotion inhabits our mind. Fear. Fear is the greatest barrier we have to achieving our dreams. As we go through our lives, we accumulate failures, and our fears only grow. Why is fear so hard to overcome? It's only a result of a bad experience. Too often we let it stand in the way of our goals. However, there was a time in our lives when fear didn't exist.

Yeah, when we were young, we could do anything. I remember when I was less than four feet tall, but I thought I was ten feet tall and bulletproof. One sunny summer day when I was five years old, my mom went out to irrigate a field of wheat and brought me along. To get to the field, we took a John Deere Gator, one of those green utility machines with six wheels and two seats. Well, that day, I had a mission: I was going to teach myself how to drive. We arrived at the field, and Mom went off to change the irrigation water. I stayed in the Gator. As soon as her backed was turned to me, I slid into the driver's seat. Hmm, I thought, how do Mom and Dad do it? I reached for the key, turned it, then let off. The Gator juddered to life. I sneaked a glance at Mom. She hadn't noticed. Next, I grasped the orange shifter lever and pushed down, just like I'd seen my parents do so many times. I grinned because I knew there was only one more step. I took my right foot, stomped on the gas, and the Gator ended up almost running into a barbed wire fence. I turned around to see Mom running toward me. You'd think she'd be proud of me, but, she wasn't.

That experience came with repercussions. After that, my mom and dad took me aside and told me I'd have to say, "see you later Gator," for a while. That experience instilled in me some fear. Looking back, though, that fear wasn't a bad thing. I wasn't scared about driving again; that was fun. No, in this situation, fear taught me a lesson: that I should ask/listen to my parents, especially before taking one of their vehicles for a joy ride. You know, that was probably a good lesson.

That's far from the only lesson I have learned from my parents. One day, my dad and I were in our farm shop working on a piece of equipment, and he asked me, "Todd, do you know why I'm so good at fixing things?" I replied, "Because you break things so often?" He nodded his head. It seems counterintuitive at first, but just as my dad's slip-ups have led him to be a better mechanic, failure can teach us how to succeed. It does that by giving us experience.

There's an anonymous quote that says, "Good decisions come from experience, and experience usually come from bad decisions." So, how do we build experience? The path I took to gaining experience was trying to get involved in everything I could. In FFA, that meant trying over a dozen different CDEs. Now, I never qualified for Nationals, and there were times when I didn't even make it out of districts. But, I learned by doing, and some of my early failures motivated me to later successes. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities that come your way. You will gain experience, and you might find what you truly enjoy.

To gain that experience we need to succeed, we must start with one thing: action. Just as the best way to get past writer's block is to write, the best way to practice is to play, the best way to get something done today is to go out and do some work. Yes, I realize that there are obstacles out there. Fear is standing in our path. There is always the possibility of failure.

As Johnny Cash said, "You build on failure. You use it as a stepping stone. Close the door on the past. You don't try to forget the mistakes, but you don't dwell on it. You don't let it have any of your energy, or any of your time, or any of your space." Move on from your failures, take on those challenges, and carry on with your life. Throughout our lives, we will encounter repercussions, those unintended consequences that result from a certain action we take. A repercussion might be failure. But, what really matters is bouncing back, learning from the experience, and going for it again. "Why not?" is a motto for an interesting life. Montana FFA, why not go for it?!



Cody Boyce, Fergus of Lewistown State Secretary

“Roadblocks”

Six days.... before.... my first day... of HIGH SCHOOL. AAAAAAnd I. Was. So. Nervous. How on earth was I going to fit in with all of these older kids that I had never even met? I started thinking, and planning, and I decided... I was going to be on the Fergus High School Volleyball team. Then, I would definitely gain acceptance with the cool upperclassmen. I knew I wasn't the most athletic person out there, but I had spent my whole summer attending camps, practicing in the net I set up in my backyard, and I knew my attitude was better than most. I was on the path to being one of the cool girls at school. But, cut day arrived, and I was one of the four girls who hadn't made the squad. ROADBLOCK. That day my entire 15-year old world came crashing down around me. I mean I had even bought new SHOES. I was left with six days, and no idea how I was going to fit in for the next four years. I spent those days mad. I

was mad at the situation I was left with, I was mad at the coaches, and I was mad at myself. But, should I have been? Of course not. Getting cut from the team was a roadblock for me, but it taught me three very important things about working with what's around you. First of all, being mad at the coaches solved nothing for me. Sometimes our roadblocks are people, and just being angry with them is not going to help us work through anything. Second, I was so worried about fitting in and being cool that I turned the entire situation into a much bigger roadblock than it needed to be. We have to work through the fear of being ourselves. And, finally, that day lead me to many more exciting things including me joining FFA, and if I had let myself get stuck on the roadblock in front of me, I never would have been able to work with everything else that the situation presented to me.

Now getting cut from a team is just one single example in the world of the many, many roadblocks we can be faced with every day. The simple task of working with others can easily turn into a major roadblock for anyone. And, you can each probably think of people that you feel are just impossible to work with. For me, that's my brother Brady. We have spent years having to work together on many things at home and around the ranch. Doing the dishes, feeding our animals, or simply taking out the garbage could easily turn into World War three around the Boyce Residence. The most obvious struggle that we always have is when it comes to moving cows. I've always taken the task very seriously, and felt that it requires a fair bit of planning ahead of time. I would take a second, look at my surroundings, count the cows I could see, look for places they might be hidden from me, and then plan my best route of attack. But, 9 times out of 10, I'd be halfway through my thought process, and there goes Brady. Right through the middle of it all. Being full of sisterly-love and affection, I would of course yell at him and tell him to get out of the way! This went on for so many years, that I started avoiding riding in the same direction that he did at the beginning of the day. But, I would always end up being the last person to show up with the little group that I had gathered. I let Brady be my roadblock. The more I thought about it, Brady and I made a great little team. His impulse to just jump right into things combined with my constant need to analyze the situation made us the most efficient duo out there. My dad would always say that he brought the A-team if he had us along and I finally realized he was right. When it came to working with the kid that once proclaimed that his favorite vegetable was cake, and has impulsively cut off his own eyelashes, it wasn't about trying to make him work, but working with him. We have all encountered people that we just don't understand and we think we will never be able to work with. In our families, on our sports teams, our officer teams, and we all know we've felt that way

when working on a group project for class. What we have to remember is that each person operates much differently than we do ourselves. If you all look at the people sitting to your left and to your right, whether you know them or not, whether you love working with them or struggle to get along with them, you each have something completely different and equally valuable to offer. And, in order to be truly successful, in order to make the most out of our situations, we have to stop letting others become our roadblocks and trying to make them work like we do, and just work with them.

Someone, who always seems to be able to hurdle any roadblock he is faced with is my friend Anders. He's that friend of mine who always inspires me to be better, and never fails to keep things interesting. He loves his minivan and his gorilla suit almost as much as he loves Norway, and he will still send me texts that say "CODY! WAKE UP YOU NEED TO BE AT MATH!" Because he has spent two years keeping me awake during class. Anders joined FFA his Senior year when Mr. Long convinced him to try mechanics. We were all extremely surprised, because he was not your typical FFA member. But, he went on to spend the year helping to carry our mechanics team to State and then Nationals. The night of the dance at State Convention last year, I was incredibly surprised to find my little chapter that usually sat around and acted "too cool" to ask anyone else to dance living it up on the dance floor. And, there was Anders, dancing around and sporting his Nike running headband that he had worn all week for good luck. No cowboy boots, no idea how to jitterbug, but having a great time all the same. Without even realizing it, he had encouraged the rest of the chapter to do the same. You see, Anders knows himself so well, that he doesn't care about how he appears to others. He didn't care what people thought of his headband, and he didn't care that he wasn't the best dancer. He didn't let other people's judgement block him from having a good time. If we learn from Anders and give in to just being ourselves, so many roadblocks will disappear from our lives. We have to be brave enough to dance like no one's watching, to stand up for what we believe in, and to truly work with who we are.

If you really think about it, there are quite a few roadblocks that we are faced with every day. Scheduling is one those, and it can be the most annoying of all. Sometimes, we have to give up one thing for another. Personally, I hate that. Even if it means driving extra miles, changing in gas station bathrooms, and squeezing every last second out of my schedule, I do my best to make everything work. The most difficult conflict I've had was with The Montana Fair in Billings and the Commodity Tour to Portland, Oregon last summer. I was determined to make them both work. The issue was the sale at the Fair would be the day after I left for Portland, and the rules said that I had to be present at the sale to sell. The beginning of the week of fair was a blast. I was there with some of my best friends and my 13th, final, and FAVORITE pig I had ever had, OG. But, as the end of the week approached, I was getting more and more nervous about whether or not they would let me sell. I got so stressed out about it that I was no longer having fun at fair. I was so consumed in my roadblock that I forgot I was in the midst of my last days ever showing. My last fair with my last pig. When the board finally called, they informed me that I could not sell OG unless I was there myself. And, my roadblock went from looming in the distance to hitting me right in the face, and after all that I had tried, there was nothing I could do about it. If I had spent less time trying to force the week to work out best for me and more time working with and enjoying what I had, I would have had a totally different experience. I don't get to relive my last week showing my pig. You won't get to relive your last time competing in your favorite CDE, or your senior night basketball game. And, you won't get to relive this week at state convention. That's the thing about life. The exact same moment will never present itself twice. At any given second, we are in a unique situation. And, let me tell ya', there will be roadblocks that throw themselves in your path, but what defines our experiences is how we choose to work with everything else that we are surrounded by in those situations. We can't let roadblocks stop us from working with each second we are given.

Montana FFA, roadblocks are everywhere. Big, small, break ups, death, hot coffee, senior night, annoying siblings, big mistakes, spilt milk, your last state convention, it makes no difference. Life can be tough, but it is always beautiful. So, choose to work with others, choose to work with yourself, and choose to work with all that you are given. Because in the end, how you work with it, is up to you.



Carlie Rembold, Big Timber State 2nd Vice President

“Pursue Your Passion”

When you hear Big John, you might think about a song from the 1950's sang by Jimmy Dean, about a powerful man working in the mines. But, what I picture is a big green tractor, weighing in at 10,000 pounds that's close to my heart. He is my 1953 John Deere Model R. If I had not found and restored this tractor on that fated day, I wouldn't be where I am, and I would not be in MSU-Northern learning the mechanics trade to live out my dream and my passion. Big John is the one thing that tipped the scales to finding a hidden passion that I had yet to grasp.

Restoring Big John required hours of perseverance, but when it comes to working hard, I have some great role models to look to. One such individual is none other than my step-dad Terry. He owns Wheatland Services, a one-man tire shop and bale bed operation in

Harlowton. He is the receptionist, the technician, the parts man, the field guy for the service calls, and the tire guru. Before he owned it, he worked for my grandpa Jim. Terry has put every ounce of his time into the shop, from sun up to past sun down. He has shown me that you have to work hard to achieve your dreams. My father Randy is another great example; both he and Terry have helped raised me and shape me into the person I am today.

Dad has ran his small business, Boulder River Foundry, for 18 years without falter. He has always valued the quality of his workmanship over the quantity and works to maintain that value to this day. My Dad and Terry have shown me through their examples and daily lives that it is better to be humble and kind instead of proud and vain of my work, whether it be a masterpiece or something simple.

Passion can be more than running your own business. Sean Manning from the Flathead FFA chapter, has his own passion that is restoring an Oliver Crawler. When I first met Sean, he was just finishing his first tractor project. He enquired about the tractor competition I had competed in. After explaining the process he was ready for another tractor and the passion that would grow because of it.

We don't all start out with of the knowledge we need for our passion, so we must be willing to learn from those wiser than us. Wisdom is all around us. It's a tool that past generations present to us to make our future the best it can be. Sometimes, in our most difficult moments, if we listen and remember the wisdom that others are willing to offer us, it can turn a problem into a solution, a bad day into a good day, and a failure into a success.

While we may not always look for wisdom, there is an advisor, parent, grandparent or someone we admire that can have an open door of knowledge for us. Wisdom and knowledge are the key to helping us find the passion that we seek.

When it comes to being yourself, a former classmate of mine Bailey Veteto, has shown how to stay true to who you are. I remember competing with her in Horse Judging, how she always had a light in her eyes that showed the spark of passion she held. That spark grew and blossomed during her run at the Miss Teen Rodeo Montana Competition.

From the introduction to the fashion show, the judges saw her passion for horsemanship, hard work, and people. She stood out to the judges because she was herself and had let them see the real her. Her hard work paid off, as she was crowned 2016 Miss Teen Rodeo Montana.

An inspiration, Anita Roddick, a human rights activist, charity donor and British business woman said “To succeed, you have to believe in something with such a passion that it becomes a reality.” She made her passion into a reality by founding The Body Shop to be able to support herself and her two daughters, while providing the world with cosmetics and starting a legacy.

To succeed, you must believe in something. It’s not enough to believe though; you must have the passion behind it to drive that something into a reality.

Think about something that you are interested in. Is it a hobby or do you want to take it further? Your passion may be writing, singing, speaking or even cooking. There are no bounds to what you can do with your passion, no matter what it is.

It will take you places you have never dreamed of, because the passion shows through. Passion is the light in your eyes as you talk about it with other people or connect with someone who shares your passion. It is inside of you, inside of me, and inside of anyone who is willing to follow their dreams.

So, while we may not all be passionate about a CDE, working on tractors, or even running for a rodeo crown, there is still something out there for each of us. We can all find our passion, but not without hard work from ourselves and others; wisdom from our elders and role models...and most of all, we need to be ourselves, and keep true to who we are.

Montana FFA: are you ready to pursue your passion?



Meghan Brence, Miles City State 1st Vice President

“Finish Your Race”

Everyone’s hearts were pounding and everyone had one thought on their mind... the finals. Nerves ablaze as I looked from my lane to my right at my opponents while waiting for the official to give the command. “Okay ladies, pull your sweats!” *Okay this is it, you got this.* “Runners to your mark,” yelled the official. We jumped and did their usual routine as all ten ladies backed into their starting blocks looking down the track through the ten hurdles and at the finish. “Set”, hips in the air, arms burning and finger tips pushing into the sharp asphalt track. BANG! All ten lanes in the 2015 State girls 100 meter hurdles race advance toward the finish line.

Now time out, this wasn’t any normal meet, this was possibly the last time that I would run the 100m high hurdles. Not to mention, I was also graduating that weekend. I think all the girls had the thought of the finals in their mind and form like I usually did, but I knew that my aunt and uncle would soon be

arriving to my house and my sister Lindsay would be there to greet them. I had other things on my mind than the task at hand. I knew I probably wasn't fast enough to make the finals anyhow.

Ok, Time in- all ten competitors are racing toward the finish! The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh! The Eighth hurdle..... My toe had caught. Dreams crushed, my chest dropped, my running form destroyed. I never fell, but I regained my balance and finished the race. Coming off the track in tears I walked up to JP, my favorite coach, and he put the whole situation in perspective. He said with a laugh, "Its ok kid. Sometimes you're the windshield, sometimes you're the bug." And gave me the tightest hug.

It would have been easier for me, being in lane one to trip and walk right off the track. But I somehow finished and I took my slowest time of the season. That was the only race where I was not racing to win or to improve and the only race in my entire career that I tripped from catching a hurdle. I was racing to finish. At the end of the day, you are your own biggest opponent. Your mind can set barriers for you that not a single person or earthly object can. But overcome those hurdles any way that you can. Whether it mean staying after hours in a classroom or after practice,

We all have those times in life when we compare our performance to others.

I hurdled from the time that I was a seventh grader, all the way to the day before I graduated. When I made the transition from middle school to high school, it was terrifying! A little freshman racing against seniors was a bit intimidating, plus my hurdling coach didn't make the transition seem any more "warm and fuzzy." He was over seventy years old, and an inductee into the Montana Coaches hall of fame- so he of course knew what he was talking about, and yelled way more than I thought possible. "Take a 400! AHHHH keep that trail leg tucked! Keep that toe up! You're a sprinter now! You're a sprinter!" came out of JP's mouth on a daily basis.

There were days when I wanted to quit; it was too hot, and too hard. But on the bright side, I had my two friends Faith and Fiona at practice with me for the first three years of high school.

When I was a junior, Faith and Fiona seniors, there is one race that sticks clearly into my mind. Fiona and I were neck in neck in times the entire season. One meet I let my ego get the best of me. We warmed up in our usual pack and followed the official's commands. Runners to your mark, set, bang! And off we went! I could see Faith ahead of me halfway through the race, but I couldn't see Fiona! I thought I had heard her hit a hurdle, but I kept going. But then, at the second to last hurdle, instinctively, just to check and make sure, I looked back. Everything seemed to stand still, then reality came back. I turned back toward the finish line, frantically jumped over my last hurdle, and to my demise, Fiona managed to beat me to the finish line. In that moment, I felt like a dog with my tail between my legs. Who knows what JP was going to say? I walked up to him, he gave both Fiona and Faith high-fives and they walked away. Then slapped me up the back on the head and "What'd you look back for?" and I said "Checking to see where Fiona was" His simple reply was, "If you ever look back like that again, I'll give you a reason to look back!"

JP was right, as always. If you spend too much time comparing yourself to others and dwelling in the past, you'll never be able to be satisfied with your best. As FFA members, we cannot dwell on that last livestock contest when we bombed that set of heifer reasons that one of our teammates scored well on, or compare yourself to your older siblings- even if your teachers are the ones that always compare you, we must move forward and not worry about what everyone else is doing, after all, you do have your own lane for a reason. Run YOUR race, not your siblings, not your best friends or your teammates, run yours.

Track and Field was my favorite sport when I was in high school and FFA was obviously my favorite activity. One of the reasons that I love both track and FFA is the diversity of people and of contests. There is a competition for every likeness and ability. If you are a motorhead and love anything and everything to do with grease and gears,

mechanics could be the CDE for you. If the warm up lap feels like a marathon and you can bench press twice your own body weight, then the throwing events might be more your pace.

But doing contests for the first time is kind of like a distance race. It feels like it'll take forever, and you are using every ounce of your energy to survive the experience, and at the end of the day, you just want to get done as soon as possible. You may not have enjoyed what you did, but you will never forget it.

At John Deere Ag Expo, Dacey Robertson from Fromberg, and Kurtis Slaughtner from Chinook embarked on their first sales contest. These two juniors combined to make a team, which is easier said than done. After having a hard time getting started this dynamic duo got their feet under them and they were off!

Only lasting a morning Dacey and Kurtis persevered and finished their distance race. It would have been easier to quit, after all they didn't have a whole team, let alone from a single chapter. They overcame their hurdle and did what they had to do. I am so proud that Dacey is competing in Sales here at convention.

But on the flip side, there are events like preparing yourself or your team for a big event, whether its here at State Convention, getting ready for state science fair or state music festival, and maybe working toward attending your very first state convention for the very first time that can feel like a sprint. Preparing frantically and as quickly as possible!

Preparing for my first state convention felt like a sprint. I was going to compete in Livestock and Talent. I had spent weeks honing in my reasons, and making sure that I had my piano piece perfectly memorized. I rushed and tried to power through everything as fast as humanly possible. Even to the point where I was studying on the bus from Miles City all the four hours to Bozeman. Everything was going so fast, but when I got to my first session, everything stood still. We were late, as usual and of course there was not a seat left in the house. So I found my seat next to Agriscience display atop a folding table. When I saw Adam Heggelund, Morgan Kuntz and Cali Christensen on that stage, I knew that I wanted to be there someday. I didn't not know, but I knew that I could do it. And now I can proudly say that I did.

Whether what you are doing is a distance that lasts a morning, or a preparation that feels like a sprint. Start what you finish, like Don Eldon said, "The journey is the destination." Take in the journey while you can, because like a wise man once said, you might outgrow the jacket, but you'll never outgrow the memories.

Whether it's your first contest, or your first state convention always remember the memories and that "the journey is the destination." Run your race, in your own lane and never let that finish get out of your sight! You're in your own lane for a reason, it is your race and you can chose to finish how your race. FFA has taught me like many of you not to give up on what we truly believe, if you have a goal, no person, no single event, no bully, your own self, obstacle or literal hurdle can get in the way of reaching your goal.

Zane Tunby from the Baker FFA didn't let a car accident get in his way of playing football his senior year.

Tori North Peigan overcame the norm and is the first member from the Little Big Horn FFA to receive a State Degree in six years.

Colton Hoppe and Tyler Dobkins of the Colstrip FFA didn't let the giant work load deter them from building a community garden.

You may outgrow the jacket, but I guarantee you won't outgrow the memories! Montana FFA, keep in your own lane, and I challenge you to finish YOUR race!



Lauren Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges State President

“Small Moments, Big Impact”

I walked through the doors of Twin Bridges High School ready to graduate. Not because I didn't love my school or my teachers but because what high schooler doesn't look forward to graduation like it was Christmas morning? Eventually, graduation arrived for me and I'd love to tell you about it but I honestly don't remember much. I'd spent a lot of time wishing for graduation but now the moment I remember most was standing in the back of the gym and having my brother come up with a bouquet of alfalfa and dandelions. He knows that alfalfa is my favorite smell, color, taste and sound, okay maybe not all of that but you get the point. Wrapped around this bouquet was some twine and a note that said, "each one of these flowers represents a fun time or a memory that we have had together, so when this gets old and dried up don't throw it away, just hold it close and remember the good times and memories we've

shared.”

Well first I teared up a little bit because I was already struggling with leaving my brother to go to college but then I just had to stop and think about all the adventures we had shared and they weren't necessarily “big” things like family vacations and birthdays, they were afternoons spent fishing and talking, and they were wearing matching deer sweaters because we are cool like that and they were cruising main street in our “gold key” edition Chevy Lumina with no muffler, seats down low and Gangster's Paradise blaring from the speakers. Our lives aren't built around the milestones. It's our daily actions that shape us. Actions like making friends with the new kid, answering the phone when your grandma calls or throwing footballs with your siblings in the backyard. The milestones like graduation are important, but don't get caught up in these big things, instead lose yourself in the little moments

After graduating high school, I started the next chapter of my life right here at Montana State University. The first day I went downstairs for breakfast and was greeted by an incredibly sweet smile and a woman named Marie. She swiped my card, saw my name and said “Hi Lauren, is this your first day here?” I thought, Gee do I really look that much like a scared freshman? I must have because she continued to smile and chat with me each time I ate in the dining hall. Eventually I noticed she did the same for everyone who walked through the door, calling them all by name and greeting them with kindness. She even knew who had been eating their veggies or not and she might have called me out a few times for walking out with just an ice cream bar for breakfast. C'mon it was mint ice cream and if its green it's pretty much salad right?

Did Marie and I ever sit down and have a long conversation just to get to know each other? Nope. I don't know if she has a family or even how long she has worked in the dining hall. It's great when we get the chance to meet someone new and swap stories, but we may not always have that opportunity. We do however have the opportunity to be joyful in the small moments. Whether it's being courteous to your waitress, greeting the Walmart greeter with sincerity, or simply holding the door for people. We see so many people every day and it is so easy to keep our heads down and mind our own business. But are we ever truly too busy with our own agenda that we

can't sprinkle a little bit of love into the lives of strangers around us? We may not say hi to everyone we see on the street but we should put more effort into spreading joy through sharing small moments

We can never know the way a few seconds of kindness can shape someone's day. Ag teachers - you ARE making a difference, even when it doesn't feel like it every day. The small conversations you have with your students every day are slowly shaping their lives, even if they don't realize it until after graduation. Who knows maybe that conversation was that only positive part of their day. You can always be that small joy for them. In the words of the great Kid President- "Sure, there's bad stuff in the world, but there's also you. You can be anything you want today, so be bold, be kind, be awesome, repeat. It's like shampoo, but with your life." How can WE be the next great small moment for someone? Maybe it's smiling at strangers or simply going through the day without complaining, even when life keeps knocking you down.

There once was a man named Paul who was thrown in prison and severely beaten because of what he believed. He didn't deserve to be in prison and we would expect anyone else to have complained and been ungrateful or angry about these circumstances, but through it all Paul maintained an attitude of joy. He had learned to be content in whatever situation he found himself in. Even when he was brought to an extremely low point in his life he still knew the secret to facing plenty and hunger - abundance and need. Paul found his joy, strength, and contentment in his faith. Where do you find yours? Are we looking for joy in the times of trouble?

There once was an FFA member -- he was caught in the middle of a rough divorce. But he didn't let it steal his goodness or make him bitter-he looked for the little moments in each day. There once was an FFA member -- her sports team didn't win state or even make it out of districts but she always cherished those team dinners and crazy bus rides where the best memories were made. Those moments will live on longer than a trophy in a case. There once were FFA members who didn't walk across the stage whether to win an award or to receive a state office. But they didn't let their time in FFA or themselves be defined by it.

You are not defined by your fears or your failures. You are not defined by your big moments, but your small ones. Why the small moments because you get as many as you create We only get so many big ones- you only graduate high school once, you only win so many awards, you only get one year of service, you only have so many kids, you only get hired for your dream job once but the small moments... the stargazing, the swims in the ocean, the long car rides with your best friend... when you meet a total stranger who becomes more than that, when you explore new cities or mountains, or when you realize that you have become a part of something bigger- that is when you discover your life and all of its possibilities.

Montana FFA – From Plentywood to Harlowtown and Missoula to Froid Thank you for sharing you're the kind notes, hilarious snapchats, random conversations and every small moment in between. They have had a tremendous and lasting impact on my life. Learn and grow from all the moments in your life and make the very most of the small ones.