

# **Convention Proceedings**

## **88<sup>th</sup> Annual State FFA Convention**

### **Montana FFA Association**



**April 4 - 7, 2018  
Montana Convention Center  
Billings, Montana**

## **State Officers**

Sheridan Johnson, President  
Conrad  
Seth Rekdal, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Shepherd  
Abbey Dunn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Corvallis  
Mikayla Comes, Secretary  
Fergus of Lewistown  
John Power, Treasurer  
Wheatland FFA / Harlowton  
Kelsey Kraft, Reporter  
Laurel  
Shelby Morris, Sentinel  
Missoula  
Jessica Horan, Parliamentarian  
Moore

## **State Staff**

Jim Rose, State Advisor  
Bozeman  
Cathy Rose, Convention Assistant

## **Special Guests**

Dave Roever – Keynote speaker  
  
Breanna Holbert – National FFA President  
  
Dr. Steve Brown – National FFA Advisor

## **FFA Foundation**

Jaime Edmundson, Executive Director  
Gwynn Simeniuk, Program and Events Manager  
Trevor Motley, Marketing Coordinator  
Cody Boyce, Donor Relations Coordinator  
Meghan Brence, Office Coordinator  
Curt Robbins, President  
Columbus  
Bill Jimmerson, Vice President  
Bozeman  
Belinda Darlinton, Secretary  
Great Falls  
Mark Sinnard, Treasurer  
Wilsall  
Jay Meyer, Director  
Stevensville  
Jack Larson, Director  
Miles City  
Becky Nelson, Director  
Great Falls  
Scott Aspenlieder, Director  
Billings  
Rik Miller, Director  
Bozeman  
Kristen Swenson, Alumni President  
Manhattan  
John Power, State Officer Rep.  
Wheatland FFA / Harlowton



## **Alumni Association**

Kristen Swenson, President

Manhattan

Brian Engle, Vice President

Big Timber

Sandy Evenson, Secretary

Kalispell

Todd Lackman, Treasure

Bozeman

Ken Johnson, Glacier District Rep.

Conrad

Emily Standley, Judith Basin District Rep.

Lewistown

Trevor Motley, Western District Rep.

Bozeman

Lisa Rekdal, Southeastern District Rep.

Shepherd

Scott Lackman, Eastern District Rep.

Hysham

Brent Beley, Southwestern District Rep.

Big Timber

Matt McKamey, Alumni Leadership Camp Director

Cascade

Jim Rose, State Advisor

Bozeman

Seth Rekdal, State Officer Rep.

Shepherd



## **Convention Facts**

1,365 members & advisors from 94 chapters attended plus and estimated 450 parents and other guests for a total attendance of 1,775.

## **Delegate Business Meeting**

For Office Use Only #1	Title: Chartered Collegiate and Postsecondary Chapters

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution in Article II, Section A, to strike the words "collegiate and postsecondary" so it reads as follows:

Section A.

It shall consist of chartered local chapters.

Motion **PASSES**

40 for

0 against

**Rationale:**

Whereas, National FFA has determined collegiate and postsecondary chapters are to be considered Alumni chapters, not chartered chapters of the state associations. Therefore, be it resolved, collegiate and postsecondary guidelines shall not be included in the Montana FFA Constitution to align with national standards.

For Office Use Only  
#2

**Title: Collegiate and Postsecondary Chapter Establishment**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
38 for  
0 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution by striking Section D which reads:

**Section D.**

Collegiate and postsecondary chapters may be established in two or four-year institutions where agriculture courses are taught. Each collegiate or postsecondary chapter shall be chartered by and maintained under the authority of the Montana FFA Association. All activities of these chapters of FFA shall be in harmony with the purposes, principles and ideals of the FFA organization. Activities for FFA collegiate and postsecondary chapter members shall be based upon the needs and interests of its members.

**Rationale:**

Whereas, National FFA has determined collegiate and postsecondary chapters are to be considered Alumni chapters, not chartered chapters of the state associations. Therefore, be it resolved, collegiate and postsecondary guidelines shall not be included in the Montana FFA Constitution to align with national standards.

For Office Use Only  
#3

**Title: Owl Pin Guidelines**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
37 for  
1 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article III, Section B, by striking out "Collegiate members and advisors may wear an owl pin of official design" so that it reads:

**Section B.**

Emblems shall be uniform in all chapters. All Active, Alumni and Honorary members shall be entitled to display the emblem.

**Rationale:**

Whereas, the proposed sentence to be struck is a repetition of the guidelines laid out in Article III, Section E for the wearing of the official gold owl pin by collegiate FFA chapter members and FFA advisors, it is not necessary to include in Section B as well.



For Office Use Only  
#4

**Title: Collegiate Members and the Owl Pin**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
38 for  
0 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article III, Section E by striking out "Collegiate FFA chapter members and" so it reads as follows:

Section E.

FFA advisors shall be entitled to wear the official gold owl pin.

**Rationale:**

Whereas, National FFA has determined collegiate and postsecondary chapters are to be considered Alumni chapters, not chartered chapters of the state associations. Therefore, be it resolved, collegiate and postsecondary guidelines shall not be included in the Montana FFA Constitution to align with national standards.

For Office Use Only  
#5

**Title: Membership of the FFA Organization - Collegiate**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
39 for  
0 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article V, Section A by striking out "four" and inserting "three" and striking out "Collegiate" so it reads as follows:

Section A.

Membership in the FFA organization shall be of three kinds: Active, Alumni, and Honorary.

**Rationale:**

Whereas, National FFA has determined collegiate and postsecondary chapters are to be considered Alumni chapters, not chartered chapters of the state associations. Therefore, be it resolved, collegiate and postsecondary guidelines shall not be included in the Montana FFA Constitution to align with national standards.

For Office Use Only  
#6

**Title: Collegiate Membership Guidelines**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
38 for  
0 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article V by striking out Section D which reads:

**Section D.**

Collegiate Membership - Collegiate membership shall be open to students who are enrolled in agricultural courses or who are pursuing career objectives in the industry of agriculture at a two- or four-year postsecondary institution having an FFA chapter. Collegiate and postsecondary members shall pay State and National dues.

**Rationale:**

Whereas, National FFA has determined collegiate and postsecondary chapters are to be considered Alumni chapters, not chartered chapters of the state associations. Therefore, be it resolved, collegiate and postsecondary guidelines shall not be included in the Montana FFA Constitution to align with national standards.

For Office Use Only  
#7

**Title: The State Officer Advisor Position**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

Motion **PASSES**  
39 for  
0 against

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article VI by substituting all of Section B with the following:

The state advisor shall oversee the duties and responsibilities of state officers.

**Rationale:**

Whereas the Specialist of Ag Ed and the state advisor positions were split into two separate positions about 15 years ago. Therefore, be it resolved, the Montana FFA Constitution reflects this change, and instead states what the role of the state advisor is.

For Office Use Only  
#8

**Title: Eligibility for State Officer Candidacy**

Submitted by: 2017-2018 State Officer Team

**Amendment** **PASSES**  
**62 for**  
**4 against**

**Motion** **PASSES**  
**37 for**  
**3 against**

**Motion:**

It is moved to amend the Montana FFA Constitution Article VI, Section C, by inserting “during the second semester of their senior year of high school” so it reads, as amended:

Members are only allowed to run for a state office during the second semester of their senior year of high school or equivalent until their first convention following graduation from high school.

**Rationale:**

Whereas the Montana FFA Constitution does not currently provide a specific time period which a student may run for State Office. Therefore, be it resolved, that the proposed amendment provides this specific time period which has been previously upheld by tradition.



# **Career Development Events (CDE) Results**

## **Agriscience Fair Winners:**

Animal Systems: Claire Stevenson - Hobson

Social Systems: Morgan Zuidema, Megan Toplovich - Electric City

Power and Technology Systems: Hayley Nelson, Chris Ammes - Electric City

Plant Systems: Emma Clark - Conrad

Food Products & Processing Systems: Ben Kaul, Stephanie Rollins – Electric City

Environmental/Natural Resource Systems: Dustin Steele - Stevensville

## **Agriculture Communications**

1. Electric City
2. Cascade
3. Corvallis
4. St. Regis
5. Forsyth
6. Richey
7. Fairfield
8. Roundup
9. Wheatland

## **Agriculture Issues**

1. Electric City
2. Cascade
3. Corvallis

## **Agricultural Sales CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Park City
3. Cascade
4. Shepherd
5. Beaverhead
6. Big Timber
7. Stevensville
8. Huntley Project
9. Choteau
10. Belgrade

## **Ag Sales Individuals**

1. Joe Lackman - Forsyth
2. Dalton Lemburg – Shepherd
3. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
4. Devon Solberg – Baker
5. Ethan Turner – Missoula
6. Lucas Oelkers – Culbertson
7. Jacob Rasmussen – Missoula
8. Mamie Hertel – Moore
9. Abbie Motley – Stevensville
10. Zac Zimmerman – Missoula

## **Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE**

1. Ruby Valley
2. Missoula
3. Miles City
4. Joliet
5. Laurel
6. Park
7. Deer Lodge
8. Broadwater
9. Broadus
10. Clark's Fork

## **ATMS Individuals**

1. Tyler Haag – Ruby Valley
2. Zac Zimmerman – Missoula
3. Ethan Turner – Missoula
4. Stephen Hamilton – Ruby Valley
5. Noah Salo – Joliet
6. Cordell Ellis – Miles City
7. Max Andres – Missoula
8. Cade McParland – Ruby Valley
9. Joel Raisler – Miles City
10. Kalten Hendrickson – Miles City

**Agronomy CDE**

1. Choteau
2. Missoula
3. Kalispell
4. Clark's Fork
5. Belgrade
6. Baker
7. Deer Lodge
8. Joliet
9. Miles City
10. Stevensville

**Agronomy Individuals**

1. Caroline Roeder - Choteau
2. Amber Johnson - Choteau
3. Kala Bertolino- Joliet
4. Serenity Enders – Choteau
5. Jacob Rasmussen – Missoula
6. Maria Bay – Kalispell
7. Russell Zentner – Clark's Fork
8. Kayla Hagan – Plentywood
9. Katie Aisenbrey – Clark's Fork
10. Hunter Hastig – Baker

**Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Danika Soper - Hinsdale
2. Miles Gravelley – Deer Lodge
3. Colton Young – Stillwater Valley
4. Jenna Paul – Plevna

**Jr. Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Miya Ross – Gardiner
2. Brighton Lane – Huntley Project
3. Leah Veress – Gardiner
4. Claire Stanley – Missoula

**Conduct of Meetings CDE**

1. Shepherd
2. Missoula
3. Plevna
4. Roundup

**ENR**

1. Missoula #1
2. Missoula #2
3. Conrad

**Employment Skills**

1. Michael McKay – Corvallis
2. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
3. Kyla Andres – Missoula
4. Isabell Gillard – Stevensville
5. Margaret Thompson – Deer Lodge
6. Anna Kraft – Laurel
7. McKenna Quirk – Missoula
8. Emily Evans – Fairfield
9. Abigail Austin – Stevensville
10. Mickayla Johnson – Hinsdale

**Extemporaneous Speaking CDE**

1. Mary Brown – Electric City
2. Michael McKay – Corvallis
3. Kala Bertolino – Joliet
4. Tyler Noyes – Broadwater

**Farm Business Management CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Ruby Valley
4. Joliet
5. Big Sandy
6. Electric City
7. Deer Lodge
8. Kalispell
9. Clark's Fork
10. Miles City

**FBM Individuals**

1. Anthony Tatarka – Belgrade
2. Joe Tatarka – Belgrade
3. Reann Shular – Electric City
4. Dakota Terry – Big Sandy
5. Zac Zimmerman - Missoula
6. Jacob Rasmussen - Missoula
7. Caroline Roeder - Choteau
8. Max Andres – Missoula
9. Mamie Hertel – Moore
10. Reilly Allik – Judith Gap

**Farm Bureau Speaking Contest**

1. Gus Turner - Missoula
2. Claire Standley - Missoula
3. Aidan Graham – Lodge Graa
4. Jadyen Scheffer – Victor
5. Kyla Tacker - Victor

**Floriculture**

1. Missoula
2. Hinsdale
3. Red Lodge
4. Park City
5. Joliet
6. Bainville
7. Belgrade
8. Plevna
9. Park
10. Conrad

**Floriculture Individuals**

1. Mickayla Johnson – Hinsdale
2. Kyla Andres – Missoula
3. Saralyn Standley – Missoula
4. Jacob Rasmussen – Missoula
5. Justice Betts – Missoula
6. Anna Dye – Red Lodge
7. Jerrica Bursik – Park City
8. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
9. Amy Haughian – Miles City
10. Kerstin Sweet – Joliet

**Food Science CDE**

1. Missoula 4
2. Missoula 1
3. Missoula 2
4. Corvallis
5. Forsyth
6. Colstrip
7. Choteau
8. Electric City
9. Richey
10. Carter County

**Food Science Individuals**

1. Karli Blanchard – Colstrip
2. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
3. Anthony Tatarka – Belgrade
4. Matthew Wolsky – Corvallis
5. Jacob Rasmussen – Missoula
6. Joe Tatarka – Belgrade
7. Michael Clark – Coltrip
8. Seth Rothwell – Forsyth
9. Joe Griswold – Melstone
10. Kyla Andres – Missoula

**Forestry CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Deer Lodge
4. Wheatland
5. Ruby Valley
6. Big Timber
7. Valier
8. Melstone
9. Park
10. Sweet Grass Hill

**Forestry Individuals**

1. Jacob Rasmussen – Missoula
2. Ethan Turner – Missoula
3. Joe Tatarka – Belgrade
4. Jarrett Bowman – Missoula
5. Logan Turner – Missoula
6. Kalten Hendrickson – Missoula
7. Anthony Tatarka – Belgrade
8. Teaghan Guffey – Belgrade
9. Margaret Thompson – Deer Lodge
10. Saralyn Standley – Missoula

**Horse Evaluation CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Belgrade
3. Roundup
4. Missoula
5. Red Lodge
6. Melstone
7. Grass Range
8. Big Timber
9. Shields Valley
10. Wheatland

**Horse Evaluation Individuals**

1. Matt Glimm – Kalispell
2. Maddie Sutton – Kalispell
3. Kaydee Teselle – Belgrade
4. Katie Jacobsen – Red Lodge
5. Emma Clark – Conrad
6. Mariah Simmons – Big Horn
7. Reann Shular – Electric City
8. Mackenzi Serrano – Roundup
9. McKenna Quirk – Missoula
10. Tess Shaw – Roundup

**Livestock Evaluation CDE**

1. Broadwater
2. Kalispell
3. Miles City
4. Hobson
5. Missoula
6. Joliet
7. Big Timber
8. Mission Valley
9. Clark's Fork
10. Little Big Horn

**Livestock Evaluation Individuals**

1. Trenton Braaten - Broadwater
2. McKenna Quirk – Missoula
3. Abby Leachman – Broadwater
4. Abigail Stevenson – Hobson
5. Dylan Laverell – Big Timber
6. Courtnee Clairmont – Mission Valley
7. Walker Anttila – Joliet
8. Maddie Sutton – Kalispell
9. Bailey Lake – Kalispell
10. Lindsey Brence – Miles City

**Marketing Plan**

1. Electric City 1
2. Cascade
3. Electric City 2
4. Little Big Horn
5. Cascade
6. Missoula
7. Choteau

**Meats Evaluation CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Fergus of Lewistown
4. Grass Range
5. Belgrade
6. Mission Valley
7. Deer Lodge
8. Corvallis
9. Electric City
10. Rosebud

**Meats Evaluation Individuals**

1. Kyla Andres - Missoula
2. Zac Zimmerman - Missoula
3. Saralyn Standley - Missoula
4. Max Andres - Missoula
5. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
6. Ethan Turner - Missoula
7. Whitney Levanen - Kalispell
8. Kalten Hendrickson - Missoula
9. Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade
10. Courtnee Clairmont - Mission Valley

**Parliamentary Procedure CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Broadwater
3. Shepherd
4. Missoula

**Prepared Speaking CDE**

1. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
2. Gracie Smith – Victor
3. McKenna Quirk – Missoula
4. Emily Ekhardt – Fergus of Lewistown

**Vet Science CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Grass Range
3. Missoula
4. Fergus of Lewistown
5. Corvallis
6. Big Timber
7. Roundup
8. Choteau
9. Huntley Project
10. Forsyth

**Vet Science Individuals**

1. Sarah Tripp – Kalispell
2. Mattie Tucek – Grass Range
3. Kyla Andres – Missoula
4. Amanda Bicknell – Kalispell
5. Caleb Russell – Fergus of Lewistown
6. Grant Finkbeiner – Grass Range
7. Jordan Horn – Kalispell
8. Caitlin Pelan – Roundup
9. Reata Smith – Grass Range
10. Skyler Farnes – Kalispell

**Team Sweepstakes Winner**

1. Missoula
2. Joliet
3. Miles City
4. Clark's Fork
5. Kalispell

**Individual Sweepstakes Winners**

1. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
2. Jacob Rasmussen - Missoula
3. Zac Zimmerman - Missoula
4. Ethan Turner – Missoula
5. \*TIE\* Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade
6. \*TIE\* Joe Tatarka - Belgrade
7. Max Andres - Missoula
8. Reann Shular – Electric City
9. Saralynn Standley – Missoula
10. Kyla Andres – Missoula



### **State Talent Contest**

1. Megan Brewer, Melstone

### **Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS**

1. Beaverhead - STAR
2. Kalispell
3. Shepherd
4. Missoula
5. Park City
6. Fromberg

### **Star Greenhand**

**\*STAR\*** Eastern: Joe Lackman – Forsyth  
Big Muddy: Walker Ator – Medicine Lake  
Southeastern: Cody Johannes – Huntley Project  
Southwestern: Kaydn Braaten – Broadwater  
Western: Bailey Lake – Kalispell  
Glacier: Taylor Bogden – Electric City  
Southern: Colton Young – Stillwater Valley  
Judith Basin: Carson Stevenson – Hobson

### **Star in Agricultural Placement**

**\*STAR\*** Cayden Rose – Gardiner  
JoDee Fleming, Big Timber  
Kaleb Flowers, Shepherd  
Sean Manning, Kalispell

### **Star in Agriscience**

**\*STAR\*** Elizabeth Brennan, Missoula  
Mary Brown, Electric City

### **Star in Agribusiness**

**\*STAR\*** Kolby Dietz, Shepherd  
Tyler Noise, Broadwater

### **Star Farmer**

**\*STAR\*** Nicole Stevenson, Joliet  
Colton Liddle, Chinook  
Abigail Stevenson, Hobson  
Katelin Aisenbrey, Clark's Fork

### **FFA/American Indian Program**

1. Little Big Horn 2
2. Little Big Horn 1

### **Hall of Chapters**

1. Park
2. Fromberg
3. Belfry

### **Reporter Event**

1. Michael McKay, Corvallis
2. Stephanie Rollins, Electric City
3. Cassy LaFromboise, Cascade

### **Secretary's Book**

1. Bethany Lyford, Kalispell
2. Kyle Glenn, Missoula
3. Halle Fatzinger, Richey

### **Scrapbook**

1. Broadwater
2. Missoula
3. Hinsdale

### **Treasurers Book**

1. Zac Zimmerman, Missoula
2. Kyler Brown, Richey
3. Cole Dykhuizen, Kalispell

### **BOMC Awards**

1. Hysham
2. Columbus
3. Joliet

# **Scholarships Awarded**

## **LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS:**

### **Sam Cornthwaite Memorial ALC**

#### **Scholarship:**

Jean Blackman, Cascade

### **Pat Cavey ALC Scholarships:**

Tallon Hansen, Deere Lodge

Bridger Gouchenour, Conrad

### **Brad King ALC Scholarship:**

Anabelle Tirado, Roundup

### **Montana FFA Alumni ALC Scholarships:**

Miles Graveley, Deer Lodge

Victoria Tirado, Roundup

### **Sam Cornthwaite Memorial WLC**

#### **Scholarship:**

Jerrica Bursik, Park City

### **WLC Scholarships:**

Paytyn Wilson, Bainville

Jean Blackman, Cascade

Victoria Tirado, Roundup

Amber Johnson, Choteau

Kylee Billingsley, Missoula

Claire Stevenson, Hobson

### **Irene Andres Memorial National FFA**

#### **Convention Scholarship:**

Hans Lampert, Deer Lodge

### **Holt Family National FFA Convention**

#### **Scholarship:**

Miles Graveley, Deer Lodge

### **John Bliss National FFA Convention**

#### **Scholarship:**

Tallon Hansen, Deer Lodge

**COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS:**

**AMTOPP (*Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest***

***Professionals*) Scholarship:**

Mickayla Johnson, Hinsdale

**Lars Ronning Memorial Scholarship:**

Kyle Topp, Sidney

**Stockman Bank Next Generation Scholarships:**

Tyler Noyes, Broadwater

Katelin Aisenbrey, Clark's Fork

**Dr. Max L. Amberson Scholarship:**

Kolby Dietz, Shepherd

**Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:**

Abigail Stevenson, Hobson

**Murdoch's Scholarship:**

Kelsey Kraft, Laurel

**Montana Land Reliance Scholarship:** Andrea

Rutledge, Big Sandy

**MABA/MGEA (*Montana Agricultural Business Association/Montana Grain Elevators Association*) Scholarship:**

Mamie Hertel, Moore

**Blue Shows Through Scholarship:**

Zane Bowey, Ruby Valley

**Leave a Legacy Scholarships:**

Kelli Ober, Cascade

Dakota Terry, Big Sandy

Kyla Andres, Missoula

Courtnee Clairmont, Mission Valley

Watson Snyder, Choteau

Heidi Froelich, Park City

Saralyn Standley, Missoula

Logan Donally, Huntley Project

Samantha DeMars, Winifred

Garrett Bromenshenk, Laurel

Jacob Martin, Culbertson

## State Officer Nominating Committee

Luke LaLiberty (Facilitator), Matt McKamey (Facilitator), Leah Graf (Facilitator). Tom Peterson, Wilsall; Katy Sparks, Bozeman; Clark Marten, Billings; Ronna Holman, Malta; Rick Arnold, Park City; Rachel Silve, Bozeman; Alison Young, Fairview FFA; Brooke Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges FFA; and Emily Evans, Fairfield FFA.



Officers Selected: **Morgan Weidow**, Corvallis - President; **Nathan Wildeboer**, Missoula - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; **Andrea Rutledge**, Big Sandy - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; **Mamie Hertel**, Moore - Secretary; **Jacob Martine**, Culbertson - Treasurer; **Courtnee Clairmont**, Mission Valley - Reporter; **Karli Blanchard**, Colstrip - Sentinel; and **Lainee Hill**, Broadwater - Parliamentarian.

## **Proficiency Awards**

Saralyn Standley- Agricultural Education  
Tyler Noyes- Ag Mechanics Design/Fabrication  
Benjamin Kaul-Ag Mechanics Repair/Maintenance  
Kaleb Flowers-Agricultural Processing  
Reanna Shular-Agricultural Sales  
Katherine Achilles-Agricultural Services  
Elizabeth Brennan-Agriscience Research-Animal Systems  
Jean Blackman- Agriscience Research-Envr./Natural Resources  
Colton Liddle- Beef Production Entrepreneurship  
Logen Mydland-Beef Production  
Kyle Deines-Diversified Crop  
Kolby Dietz-Diversified Livestock Production  
Rebecca Nelson-Equine Science Placement  
Stephanie Rollins-Equine Science Entrepreneurship  
Zach Douglas- Forage Production  
Savannah Spurzem-Goat Production Placement  
Julie Grubb- Goat Production Entrepreneurship  
Jacob Rasmussen-Grain Production  
Trent Cox- Home/Community Development  
Watson Snyder-Outdoor Recreation  
Tyson Hatch-Poultry Production  
Dylan Laverell- Sheep Production  
Katrina Roberts-Small Animal Production and Care  
Payten Wilson- Swine Production  
Mary Brown- Vegetable Production  
Kyle Topp- Veterinary Science



## **State FFA Degree**

<i><b>First Name</b></i>	<i><b>Last Name</b></i>	<i><b>Chapter</b></i>
Macala	Adkins	Bainville
Carlee	Azure	Bainville
Joely	Picard	Bainville
Dylan	Johnson	Beaverhead
Reese	Meine	Beaverhead
Alfred	Peterson	Beaverhead
Trent	Wahl	Beaverhead
Andrea	Rutledge	Big Sandy
Carter	Brownlee	Big Timber
Madilyn	Emter	Big Timber
JoDee	Fleming	Big Timber
Clayton	Gano	Big Timber
Dylan	Laverell	Big Timber
Cole	Lunceford	Big Timber
Bailey	Veteto	Big Timber
Troy	Amsden	Broadus
Leighton	Bilbrey	Broadus
Maclain	Cathey	Broadus
Hannah	Johns	Broadus
Lainee	Hill	Broadwater
Abbey	Leachman	Broadwater
Tyler	Noyes	Broadwater
Kyleigh	Bonsell	Carter County
Kennedy	Tooke	Carter County
Cameron	Wolenetz	Carter County
Trent	Cox	Cascade
Zach	Douglas	Cascade
Christina	Eike	Cascade
Becca	Gerard	Cascade
Ryder	Jackson	Cascade

Cassy	Lafromboise	Cascade
Kara	Lorance	Cascade
Calder	Lundvigson	Cascade
Molly	McRorie	Cascade
Kelly	Ober	Cascade
Thad	Phillips	Cascade
Savannah	Spurzem	Cascade
Yoko	Tran	Cascade
Cristen	Friede	Chinook
Colton	Liddle	Chinook
Garrett	Lowham	Chinook
Hailey	McMaster	Chinook
Sierra	Swank	Chinook
Watson	Snyder	Choteau
Katelin	Aisenbrey	Clarksfork
Kaleb	Buessing	Clarksfork
Kaitlyn	Ohmstede	Clarksfork
Russell	Zentner	Clarksfork
Karli	Blanchard	Colstrip
Bailey	Benzing	Conrad
Joseph	DeBoo	Conrad
Kaylie	Wilson	Corvallis
Abigail	Ator	Culbertson
Lance	Bengochea	Culbertson
Cassie	Lucas	Culbertson
Jacob	Martin	Culbertson
Dakota	Shelton	Culbertson
Victoria	Cybulski	Custer
Daniella	Leligdowicz	Custer
Matlock	Morrison	Custer
Emily	Prokop	Custer
Margaret	Thompson	Deer Lodge

Amber	Webb	Deer Lodge
Kyle	Lee	Denton
Louden	Miller	Denton
Layton	Senef	Denton
Jacob	Squires	Denton
Sammie Jo	Anderson	Electric City
Mary	Brown	Electric City
Korena	Frantzich	Electric City
Jacob	Gilman	Electric City
Reagan	Johnson	Electric City
Taylor	Potts	Electric City
Katrina	Roberts	Electric City
Stephanie	Rollins	Electric City
Kennedy	Spencer	Electric City
Megan	Toplovich	Electric City
Avery	Harris	Fairfield
Caleb	Jergensen	Fairfield
Griffin	Lee	Fairfield
Steven	Smith-Darlington	Fairfield
Karrington	Kjos	Froid
Donny	Robertson	Fromberg
Cayden	Rose	Gardiner
Megan	Wickham	Gardiner
Glenna	Finkbeiner	Grass Range
Casity	Boucher	Hinsdale
Mickayla	Johnson	Hinsdale
Abigail	Stevenson	Hobson
Morgan	Wertheimer	Hobson
Logan	Donally	Huntley Project
Emily	Hildebrand	Huntley Project
Chris	Nava	Huntley Project
Karli	Snell	Huntley Project
Teghan	Vermandel	Huntley Project

Shay	Adler	Hysham
Kala	Bertolino	Joliet
Danny	Hildebrand	Joliet
Trey	Oswald	Joliet
Brett	Robinson	Joliet
Nicole	Stevenson	Joliet
Tayler	Wright	Joliet
Reilly	Allik	Judith Gap
Jacklynn	Barber	Judith Gap
Oriana	Barber-Castro	Kalispell
Amanda	Bicknell	Kalispell
Benjamin	Brown	Kalispell
Else	Enders	Kalispell
Danniell	Enger	Kalispell
Skyler	Farnes	Kalispell
Sean	Manning	Kalispell
Dawson	Massey	Kalispell
Averie	Olson	Kalispell
Sarah	Tripp	Kalispell
Tori	Cundiff	Lambert
Molly	Pust	Lambert
Garrett	Bromenshenk	Laurel
Mylon	Blacksmith	Little Big Horn
Lewellyn	Dawes Jr.	Little Big Horn
Dalton	Dosson	Little Big Horn
Beau	Plenty Hawk	Little Big Horn
Tavia	Torralba	Little Big Horn
Tayler	Walter	Little Big Horn
Zachary	Drabbs	Malta
Macy	Knudsen	Malta
Samantha	Mitchell	Malta
Kaden	Moore	Malta
Billie	Orahood	Malta
Gracey	Adams	Melstone

Dwight	DeJaegher	Melstone
Joe	Griswold	Melstone
Shayla	Hough	Melstone
Gillian	Severe	Melstone
Tavin	Tabbert	Melstone
Lindsay	Brence	Miles City
Courtnee	Clairmont	Misson Valley
Kyla	Andres	Missoula
Rhianna	Ballenger	Missoula
Elizabeth	Brennan	Missoula
Kyle	Glenn	Missoula
Jacob	Rasmussen	Missoula
Laurel	Schmidt	Missoula
Saralyn	Standley	Missoula
Ethan	Turner	Missoula
Zachary	Zimmerman	Missoula
Katelyn	Bacon	Moore
Brandon	Bergum	Moore
Austin	Grover	Moore
Mamie	Hertel	Moore
Tim	Horan	Moore
Dalton	Booth	Park
Jaydon	O'Hair	Park
Taylor	Rieger	Plevna
Nate	Harris	Plentywood
Bridger	Wang	Plentywood
Tanner	Weeks	Plentywood
Adrianna	Pellegatto	Red Lodge
Ivan	Buller	Richey
Halle	Fatzinger	Richey
Isaac	Sponheim	Richey
Selina	Angel	Roundup
Caitlin	Pelan	Roundup
Jordan	Grindheim	Roy

Zane	Bowey	Ruby Valley
Destiny	Fabel	Ruby Valley
Jacob	Jasper	Saint Regis
Anna	Sanford	Saint Regis
Jonathan	Henke	Shelby
Ethan	Schwenke	Shelby
Kolby	Dietz	Shepherd
Kaleb	Flowers	Shepherd
Tanner	Harrell	Shepherd
Dalton	Lemburg	Shepherd
Kohltrane	Michels	Shepherd
Gustav	Wenz	Shepherd
Trinity	Boyd	Shields Valley
Lauren	Flatt	Shields Valley
Morgan	Raw	Shields Valley
Randi	Hart	Simms
Zachary	Olson	Simms
Adrianna	Rohrer	Simms
Tori	Thomas	Simms
Madison	Wiegand	Simms
Abigail	Austin	Stevensville
Samantha	Merwin	Stevensville
Abbie	Motley	Stevensville
Mikol	Degele	Stillwater Valley
Hana	Kelly	Stillwater Valley
Rebecka	Lester	Stillwater Valley
Kodi	Martin	Stillwater Valley
Chase	Ostrum	Stillwater Valley
Tyler	Planichek	Stillwater Valley
Jenna Ann	Nelson	Twin Bridges

Brietta	Boyce	Winifred
Samantha	DeMars	Winifred

Jada	Goettlich	Winifred
Kayla	Smith	Winifred

## **American FFA Degrees – 2017**

Matt Ammons - Electric City FFA  
Kenzie M. Andersen - Fergus of Lewistown FFA  
Jon Andres - Missoula FFA  
Darby N. Bogden - Cascade FFA  
Keely Byrnes - Conrad FFA  
Kendall Louis Carpenter - Denton FFA  
Kacie Cummings - Cascade FFA  
Lucas W. Dekker - Shepherd FFA  
Spencer Drange - Laurel FFA  
Holly Emter - Big Timber FFA  
Darian Enders - Kalispell FFA  
Kyle Fawcett - Plentywood FFA  
Jess Daniel Grewell - Joliet FFA  
Tom Grubb - Denton FFA  
Cady Guinnane - Ruby Valley FFA  
Austin M. Hader - Electric City FFA  
Ashton Paige Handy - Culbertson FFA  
Karly Hanson - Kalispell FFA  
Alyssa Hart - Plentywood FFA  
Bill Dwaine Hicks - Conrad FFA  
Madison Lynn Hinkle - Shepherd FFA  
Jennica Hopcroft - Stevensville FFA  
Livia Jackola - Kalispell FFA

Taylor Johnson - Shields Valley FFA  
Albert Koenig - Belgrade FFA  
Ashley Koenig - Belgrade FFA  
Hannah Kraft - Laurel FFA  
Aaron Lewis - Park FFA  
Kelli Mack Big - Timber FFA  
Lawson E. McGill - Broadus FFA  
Samantha Jo Morriss - Electric City FFA  
Shelby Kay Morris - Missoula FFA  
Jackson Nagy - Sweet Grass Hills FFA  
Quintin Omdahl - Sweet Grass Hills FFA  
Ulan Lloyd Omdahl - Sweet Grass Hills FFA  
Taylor O'Neil - Park FFA  
Aimee Catherine Parker - Shepherd FFA  
Somer Reidle - Bainville FFA  
Brock Reiner - Kalispell FFA  
Courtney Rufenach - Kalispell FFA  
Miranda Shular - Electric City FFA  
Tucker Stenberg - Big Timber FFA  
C.J. Stevenson - Moore FFA  
Kaitlin Uskoski - Kalispell FFA  
Shanna Uskoski - Kalispell FFA  
Carol Ann Warburton - Chinook FFA  
Brittany Marie Whiteman - Richey FFA



## **Distinguished Service Awards**

Brian Engle – Big Timber

## **Honorary State FFA Degrees**

Casey Lunceford: MAAE President

Dean and Julie Comes

Garrett Hamm: Shields Valley FFA Alumni  
President

Pete and Jen Dunn

Shane and Lisa Rekdal

Dan and Carla Horan

Ken and Cyndi Johnson

Mandy Morris

Rick and Brenda Kraft

Brian and Julie Power

## **Friend of the Foundation Award**

Caroline Davis

## **State Convention Sponsors**

<b>Sponsor Name</b>	<b>Event Sponsored</b>
<b>Alpha Gamma Rho</b>	Stage Sponsor
<b>Altria</b>	District Leadership Conferences
<b>Animals Blessings</b>	Vet Science CDE
<b>Ann Ronning</b>	Creed CDE
<b>Bayer Crop Science</b>	Agronomy CDE
<b>Billings Farmhand</b>	Ag Marketing Sponsorship
<b>Bitterroot Stock Growers</b>	Caroline Davis Workshop
<b>BNSF</b>	Keynote Speaker
<b>Curt Robbins</b>	Stars over Montana
<b>David &amp; Nancy Hall</b>	General Sponsor
<b>Farmers Union Insurance</b>	Job Interview/Ag Issues
<b>Franz Bakery</b>	Food Science CDE
<b>General Distributing</b>	Mechanics Scholarship Sponsor -changes by location
<b>Hubbard</b>	Livestock CDE Scholarship
<b>Jay Armstrong</b>	Greenhand Contest
<b>Kristen Swenson</b>	Stars over Montana
<b>Lyle Armstrong</b>	Greenhand Contest
<b>Mark &amp; Joan Sinnard</b>	Employment Skills CDE
<b>Miles Community College</b>	Extemporaneous Speaking
<b>Montana Agribusiness Association</b>	FFA General Scholarship Sponsor
<b>Montana Army National Guard</b>	Thursday General Session Sponsor
<b>Montana Dept of Ag</b>	Ag Teacher Luncheon
<b>Montana Farm Bureau</b>	State Degree Dinner/FBM Scholarship
<b>Montana Farmers Union</b>	Parliamentary Procedure
<b>Montana Grain Growers</b>	Agronomy CDE
<b>Montana Range Days</b>	Enviromental and Natural Resources CDE
<b>Montana Seed Growers</b>	Agronomy CDE
<b>Montana Seed Trade</b>	Agronomy CDE
<b>MSU College of Ag</b>	Registration and Hospitality
<b>Mt Agri-Women</b>	Extemp Public Speaking
<b>Murdoch's Ranch &amp; Home Supply</b>	Scholarship Sponsor
<b>MVI</b>	1/2 page ad
<b>National FFA Living to Serve Program</b>	Day of Service
<b>Neal Family</b>	Livestock CDE
<b>Northern Broadcasting System</b>	Prepared Speaking
<b>Northern Livestock Video</b>	Livestock CDE

<b>Northwest Farm Credit Services</b>	Thursday General Session/ Day of Service
<b>NutraLix</b>	Proficiency Awards
<b>Opportunity Bank</b>	Saturday General Session
<b>Origen</b>	Vet Science Scholarship
<b>Peter Nelson Trust</b>	CDE's.
<b>Pioneer Meats</b>	Meats CDE/Workshop
<b>Ranch House Meats</b>	Parliamentary Procedure
<b>Randy Bogden Farm Bureau Financial</b>	Meats CDE
<b>Rimrock Auto Group</b>	Convention Host
<b>Selby's</b>	Workshops
<b>Sheridan College</b>	Newsletter
<b>Stockman Bank</b>	FBM CDE/American Indian/Advisor Luncheon/Ag Sales
<b>Torgerson's LLC</b>	Mechanics co-sponsor
<b>Tractor and Equipment Company</b>	Wednesday General Session Sponsor
<b>Tri State Trucking</b>	Ag Mechanics CDE
<b>Walter Wichman</b>	Sales & Mechanics CDE's
<b>WestBred</b>	General Sponsor
<b>Wilbur Ellis</b>	Friday Night General Session Sponsor



## Jessica Horan, Moore *State Parliamentarian*

### “Let it Shine”

Do you know humans glow? I’m not talking about the science experiment many of us did in elementary school where we held our hands under a black light to see all the “glowing” germs. No, humans ACTUALLY glow, just like the light of one of these lantern. It’s called bioluminescence, and the light is 1000 times weaker than the naked eye can see, but it has been seen by very sensitive cameras. I promise these weren’t taken by heat detecting cameras either! I don’t know about you, but this fact had me very excited when I found it! Humans may not physically glow as bright as the light of the lantern fish, but we each have a light inside of us that has the potential to glow brighter than any fish in the sea.

I remember a day at my little school in Moore where the gym was filled with the excited squeals of thirty elementary kids. Why were they squealing you may ask? This day happened to be a “Collaboration day” where the high school students spent an hour playing games and doing activities with the elementary. These young students were so excited that the high schoolers were paying them attention that they had suddenly found a hidden reserve of energy.

Now, there were about ten high school students in the room, so to keep all the elementary kids entertained, we decided to play a giant game of line tag. Everyone in the gym found their starting place, the “taggers” were chosen, and the “go” whistle was blown. Immediately the gym exploded with sound as everyone tried their best to escape capture. About halfway through the game, one of the high school boys, Tim, noticed that the kindergarten students were the first ones tagged and they were sitting on the ground longingly watching everyone else, so he ran over to Ben, a kindergartener, and told him to jump on, piggy-back style. That little boy’s face lit up and he jumped on board. Soon all the high school boys in the gym had followed Tim’s example. It wasn’t long before the game had turned into team line tag. As our hour together drew to a close, the boys put each of their kindergarten partners on their shoulders and lined up for a picture. When those young students’ feet touched the ground, they were walking on clouds. I have no doubt that some of those kids will not forget that day for the rest of their lives—it had that big of an impact. How often do we pass right on by opportunities to brighten someone’s day? If Tim hadn’t taken the time to simply walk over and give Ben a piggy-back, the magic of this day would never have occurred. (*Light the candle for Tim*) No action is too small. What would happen if we were just a little more observant on a daily basis and took the time to notice others?

I absolutely love being around kids; they have a way of finding joy in the simplest things in life and letting their lights shine the brightest. Six-year-old Kelsie is no exception. I was sitting on the stage at John Deere Ag Expo this fall announcing team sales prep, and the room was beginning to feel a bit like a small town gym during the last half of a boys basketball game...very, very warm, and it lacked two things: energy and enthusiasm. It’s an inevitable fact that FFA Sales and Service contests seem to last for ages, and despite the best laid plans of its coordinator, this contest was no different. The members in the room were ready for something more exciting than my voice to say the least!

That was the moment Kelsie and her mom walked into the room. I had met Kelsie's older sister, Kaydeean, for the first time at a visit earlier in the year to the Belgrade FFA chapter; just like the moment I met Kaydeean, I was immediately drawn to Kelsie's radiant smile and the joy that seemed to emanate from her. [short pause] Kelsie's mom and I had been talking for at least five minutes before I noticed little Kelsie eyeing the microphone. She had been patiently listening to our conversation and that bright smile still hadn't left her face. I'm not sure what caused me to ask Kelsie if she wanted to announce the next five teams, but I did and she immediately said "yes please" in her calmest possible voice.

I talked her through what she was going to say. When the time came for her to announce the names, she sat on the edge of the stage and repeated the names I told her into the microphone. The moment her clear voice came out of the speakers in the room, every single member looked up and uttered a sound that sounded something like "awwwwww". After she put the microphone down, Kelsie daintily hopped down from the stage and gave me one of the sweetest "thank you's" I've ever heard; her eyes were shining the entire time. (*light candle 2*) Kelsie's light was burning so brightly that she lit up that entire room with the happiness in her voice. Joy is contagious. Whether we realize it or not, a couple extra smiles or a simple conversation with a friend or stranger may be just the thing to encourage that person. Our every word and action—even the smallest gesture—has an impact. I want to challenge you today to make a conscious effort to share the same simple joy that Kelsie shared in your every action for the remainder of State Convention and beyond.

I have one more friend I want to tell you about today who has the same light as Kelsie shining in her life. Lauren and I did not meet the way most people normally meet. Each year during the first few days before classes start at Montana State, they put on an informational fair called Catapalooza on the campus mall. For those of you who don't know where this is, just picture the longest, widest concrete walkway down the middle of campus. During Catapalooza it is filled with tons of tents and lots of people. This fall, I had been moved in to my dorm room for a solid 24 hours, so I set out to explore campus a little bit. Now, I live in a rural community with maybe 300 people, barely 50 students in the high school, and exactly 10 students in my graduating class; so, I was feeling very out of my element. In many places, I had to rub shoulders with other students to continue any sort of forward movement—there were THAT many people. My friends that I already knew on campus were busy moving into their own dorm rooms, so I was navigating through this massive crowd of strangers by myself ... feeling rather alone. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, I hear a very loud "Jessica!" come from somewhere behind me, so I spun around to see who it was. "Jessica!!", Lauren hollered my name again from clear across the lawn, and I must admit, I had never met her before in my life. I was completely bewildered as to how on Earth she knew my name, but she was insistent that I come talk to her, so I walked over to the tent she was working at. It didn't take more than 30 seconds after I arrived for me to be completely comfortable with this new-found friend. As it turns out, she knew of me from FFA. (*Light the 3<sup>rd</sup> candle*) At the time, Lauren did not have the slightest idea how much that interaction would impact me. Rather, she saw a lonely, slightly overwhelmed freshman who looked like she needed a friend, so she joyfully called me by name. Since that day, I have come to find that Lauren is flat out one of the most joyful people I know, and that was evident in the short conversation we had that day. She continually invests in the lives of those around her, while spreading the joy in her heart. I'm sure yelling the name of a freshman she hardly knew wasn't the most comfortable experience in her life, but I'm sure glad she did it. Do you remember your first time at an FFA event or even State Convention? Maybe you were a freshman, maybe you were an upper classman, but chances are, you too were feeling a bit "out of your element" at first. Look around you, how many people in this room today have this feeling as they sit in these

chairs. Will you rise to the challenge, and invest in those around you and pass the joy in your heart on to them, even if it is uncomfortable to begin the conversation?

Lauren, Kelsie, and Tim are just a few of the people with brilliant lights I have been blessed to know—and they let their lights shine the brightest in their every-day actions. (*pickup guitar*) As I was reflecting on how each of these people have let their lights shine, the one thought that kept resonating in my mind wasn't a word, a quote, or even a memory. Rather, it was a children's song that goes something like this—feel free to sing along if you know it “This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine; let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.” You see, we don't have to do anything out of the ordinary to let our lights shine bright and ignite a spark of joy in the life of someone else. Like Tim, live each day serving others wholeheartedly, like Kelsie, don't be afraid to show and share joy with friends or strangers, and like Lauren, invest in others with a joyful heart. We each have a light inside of us, so why not LET IT SHINE!



## Shelby Morris, Missoula *State Sentinel*

### “Love”

What is love? Is it an action? Is it emotion? Really when you think about it, it gets more and more complex.

To be safe let's look in the dictionary (*gets dictionary out*). Definition one “an intense feeling of deep affection” Let's try number 2 “a person or thing that one loves” alright. Well, when thinking about love I think of my favorite NFL team the Seattle Seahawks, I think of my favorite food McDonald French fries and oh man... my ALC squashes (PHOTO). But really how do we define love? How do we show love? Technically it has 13 definitions but none of those are my definition and they are probably not the way you would define it either. Time,

Investment, and selflessness are the pieces of my definition. Now let me tell you my love story, and it's not what you are thinking.

#### Chapter 1.

Love is spelt T.I.M.E

It was 8<sup>th</sup> grade summer, going into my freshman year and oh man I want to learn to drive SO bad. I was visiting my dad in Alaska for the summer and I begged him every day to take me out on the ATV. For two weeks, it was the same answer “not today kiddo, I'm too tired”. Finally, my hopes began to diminish, until one-day dad came home, and he gave me the nod, I ran to the garage grabbed my gear and got i got into the driver's seat. As my fingers gripped the steering wheel I took a deep breath and could taste the freedom and a little bit of dirt but We are driving down the road, which was really just a backroad following the powerlines, I was going a whopping 30 miles an hour to me life, couldn't get any better, until I tuned into my dad, doing what dads do “best” (giving me endless advice) “hey kiddo keep both hands on the wheel”, “hey kiddo keep your head up, a moose could jump out” and of course... out of nowhere the biggest moose I've ever seen jumps out in the middle of the road and stares deep into my soul. I look at my dad and nothing could've wiped that smirk off his face when he gave me the “I told you so” look. As I realize what's happening my dad tells me we should switch seats. We do a Chinese fire drill and I am finding myself in the passenger seat. Before I know it, my dad is chasing this giant bull moose down the road! So here we are, dodging power lines and trees and quite honestly at this point, I was expecting death to be right around the next corner. Dad finally stops the ATV. He can't breathe because he's laughing so hard while I'm doing quite the exact opposite. I look at him with the biggest glare but my dad has a snort when he laughs and it wasn't too long before we were both laughing so hard tears were streaming down our faces. (message) If my dad hadn't come home and said “yes”, we would have never been able to experience that exact moment, the exact moment of pure and raw joy from each other's company. See the way you spell love is not the way I do, the way I spell love is T.I.M.E. My dad taught me that through spending T.I.M.E. with others I can show them my love. Are you texting at the dinner table instead of spending time with your family, are you binge watching Netflix maybe too much, instead of spending time with your friends or maybe doing your homework, hey! I'm guilty to all these things. But at the end of the day are WE spending time on the people and

things that are truly important?

Once we learn to spend T.I.M.E on the important things we can start to invest in those things or people.

## Chapter 2.

### Love is Investing

Let me tell you about my first FFA trip (pulls up freshman year photo) yup, that was me my freshman year of high school, to say the least I did not think FFA was the place for me. My AG teacher had bribed me into going to my first competition for a few extra credit points, but little did I know on this day I'd meet my best friend. So here we go, I went to the Missoula AG Center on a Saturday in my jeans and a fox hoodie and began to board the bus. As I got onto the bus I realized that everyone was wearing this odd blue coat thing and they all knew each other, I was the weird girl with purple hair all over again. I moseyed to the back of the bus and suddenly I had a desire for my seat to turn into quick sand as I slowly made myself invisible... I was good at that. I suddenly felt a tap on my shoulder, it was a girl, in a blue coat and she was asking if she could sit down next to me... being classic awkward Shelby I said uhhh, ya, and drew my attention right back to the ground. She sat down and began the conversation like any other person would. "Hi, my name is Neela what is yours". As we got over the awkward initial conversation it began to get deeper. I asked what this FFA thing was and she opened my eyes to the endless opportunity this organization has but in this moment she also unlatched her unto heart. She told me her dreams and desire to be a state officer and her biggest day dream of being a Ag Teacher and truly invest in the future of agriculture through her students. In this moment I knew that I wanted to invest in people like Neela had me. Because she sat down next to me this day, she spent that time to get to know me, for me, not just the weird girl in the back of the bus. She saw an opportunity to invest just a little, but what came of it was so much more. Neela taught me that investing your heart into people is the true key to unlocking friendship. Are we investing our hearts, minds, and abilities in the right places? Are we taking our T.I.M.E. to invest in showing our love to people? When we learn to do this, this is when our love becomes selfless.

## Chapter 3.

### Love = selfless.

It was 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and the day of my final volleyball tryout where all I wanted was to get on the "A" team. Personally, it was a grilling and over extensive tryout which left me feeling like my legs were noodles and the core that I used to have was an endless pool of pudding. I had been on the "A" team for both my 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade years, I was so nervous wondering if I was going to make it on the team again. Once the tryouts were officially over all the girls from the last years "A" team were going to get pedicures, except for me. At this point in time I couldn't afford to go. As I walked home with my head down low I was just thinking how sorry I was for myself. I finally got home, plopped myself on the couch and began to binge watch TV trying to avoid my inner feelings, until my mom came into the living room with a crock pot full of hot water and bubbles, she sat them down by my feet and (starts rubbing feet with a loofa) began to scrub them with a loofa. The thing that I didn't realize at the time is how selfish I was and how selfless my mother is. My mom was working 3 jobs just to pay the bills and she had been on her feet since 5am working. How selfish of me to have my mother on her hands and knees when it should be the exact opposite. My mother taught me that love is selfless. How many times do we sit and wallow in self-pity while others are helping us out, when really we should be the ones helping them? Why not? Why not take the TIME to INVEST in others and truly become SELFLESS.

Why not your love? These love stories have built the foundation of my love, but so have all of you...

Sydney pain taught me that through a simple smile we can cheer up anyone's day



Michael Gomes showed me that humor is a essential in life

Branden Shugg taught me to say thank you to the little moments in life

Lydia Rosparsky showed me the true meaning of being a mentor

Joe Lackman taught me how to get into mindset, for some healthy competition

Kyla Andres taught me what a good conversation can do to the heart finally

Anna Slivka taught me to turn every bad day into a good one, with a switch of a mind set.

See love is not the dictionary definition. It's the foundation of the way you are, the way you act, the way you care, for me at least. But for me love is spelt time, love is investment and love = selfless. That's my love story. Montana FFA, what's your love story?



## Kelsey Kraft, Laurel *State Reporter*

### “POOF”

It has taken years, months, and days. It has taken hours, minutes, and seconds. It has taken patience, perfection, and product. It has taken dedication. Now I bet your wondering what in the world I am talking about! (*show the picture of Mr. Maser*) I can tell that every single one of you have this same confused look on your face, just like Mr. Maser has daily. Well I am talking about the POOF of course! (*pointing to the poof*). What else would I be talking about!!

Throughout my year of service and being a FFA member, I have been asked so many times how do you do your hair? How do you get it to stay all day long? With getting asked these questions many times throughout my time in FFA, it has made me really think about my hair. I realized that my hair is very

similar to my life. Each part in creating the poof has symbolized parts of my story.

Let me take you back to my freshman year of high school, where I had one thing on my mind. Being popular. To be popular in my high school I thought you had to be on a sports team. So, that's exactly what I was going to do. I tried out for the volleyball team and I made the freshman squad! I was the only setter on the freshman team, so that meant, I never sat on the bench. You could say I was going to be known. My life was going as planned, I had made the team, and I was going to be popular throughout Laurel High School.

Freshman year flew by and I was on to sophomore year. It was about four days before school started up again, and we were in the midst of volleyball tryouts. Saturday came, and this was the day that we found out if we were going to make the team. I received my letter and it broke the news to me that I would not be playing volleyball this year. I was devastated. The question now was what was I going to do? How was I going to be known in Laurel High School? People would only know me as that girl that got cut from the volleyball team.

After being cut I went home to my family. I sat in my room and pondered about what I could do to overcome, what seemed to be a failure, in my life. I was not good at any other sport, so athletics were out of the question, and the only other thing I did in the school was FFA. My mom came into my room to comfort me and give me words of encouragement. She said Kelsey, it will be okay, it just wasn't meant to be, there are many other opportunities out there besides volleyball. Finally, it came to me! My mother was right, why only do one thing. Because of the encouragement from my mom I joined various organizations within the school. I was on my way to becoming a leader.

Without the help of my family to keep pushing me to do great things and support me in every way, I would never be in front of you today. (*grab the bobby pins*) My family is like all the bobby pins in my hair. They hold me up when I am weak and support me in my life. Just how the bobby pins help support the poof. My family is also like a can of hairspray (*grab can of hairspray*). They help glue all the pieces together, even if it's just the little things. Just how hairspray holds the poof together, and glues down those little loose hairs.

Everyone needs their pins and hairspray. I encourage you to go and find your can of hairspray and handful of bobby pins. Find those people who will be there to support and help you through your struggles.

Now, junior year came, and I was the President of our FFA chapter and I was honored. I was going to push myself to lead the chapter to the best of my abilities. I felt I did this by staying after school and working on FFA fundraisers, community activities, or helping plan trips. I spent extra hours helping students practice their CDEs and plan banquets. I attended every FFA event we did and made sure to make FFA my top priority.

At the end of junior year, it was time for the officer elections. Of course, I was going to run for president again. This meant the world to me, without being elected president of my chapter, meant that I was not a good leader. We went through the interviews and waited for the night of the awards banquet.

The night of the banquet came, and it was time for the announcement of the new officers. I was placed in the vice president position. I was devastated, I had failed. My life turned into a ratty and knotty hairball. Thoughts went through my mind that I had not been a good leader and I was never a good president. That I did nothing for my chapter.

Come to find out I was placed in the vice president position because the committee wanted it to be fair for the other seniors to have a chance at the president position. Although I wasn't happy with the new placement, I remembered and was reminded by my family to never give up and to push myself to bigger and better things. I have realized now that it is not a failure, but just another step in my poof. I was not going to let this ratty and messy part of my life stop me. I comb through the mess by running for various officer positions with the other organizations I was involved in at school. I added to my handful of bobby pins by surrounding myself with more people to help me prepare for CDE's and running for a state office.

As you can see I overcame this set back in my life. With combing through the knots and mess you can overcome any failure. From this experience I have realized that no matter what position or title you may hold on a team, you can be a great leader and make an impact. It's how hard you are willing to work that really counts.

Just because one door closes, that doesn't mean that **you** can't open another one. Even though your hair may be ratty that doesn't mean **you** can't comb through the knots. Overcome that obstacle in your life with hard work and dedication.

*(Abbey walks onto stage, with hair a mess, and sits in chair, I begin doing her hair)*

Even though your life may seem like it looks like this (*pointing to Abbey's hair, all messy*), remember that you can overcome that failure by combing and smoothing it out. When you fail at one thing in life, remember that it is only one door closed and you are the one that can take the initiative to open many more doors.

*(start when pinning)* Surround yourself with your bobby pins. Find those people that you can trust and lean on. People that you know will help support you in every way, just how our pins support our hair. *(start with hair spraying)* Have those people that are your can of hairspray that glue everything together and hold all the pieces of the poof in place. Even if its just the little things that they help with or the little hairs, remember that the little things are what matters, to create our finished master piece.

*(move to the front and center of stage, Abbey walks off)*

When life gets tough remember to grab your comb, and brush through those knots and find your handful of booby pins and can of hairspray, to help you make your poof a master piece. So, Montana FFA, how will you do your poof?!



## John Power, Wheatland *State Treasurer*

### “Stand Out”

It was the first week of college classes, and I was sitting in AGED 140, waiting for class to begin. This class had about 20 people in it, and I only knew one of their names. So, like in most classes the first thing that we did was introduce ourselves. However, this time was a little different. We were going to play a game that would hopefully help us to remember each other's names. We needed to come up with a word to describe ourselves that started with the same letter as our first name. Well how many words can you think of the start with J? I couldn't think of any.

I finally came up with the word jumping. Jumping John, that will work I thought as there was about 7 people left before my turn. Well the next thing I know someone else had the name John, and he used the word jumping to describe his name. “Oh great, now what am I going to do?” I thought as I began to panic. There was five people left, then four, then three, two, one.....and I couldn't think of anything. The first word that popped into my head was just. So, I said, “Well, I am just John.” Everybody laughed, and I didn't thing anymore about it as I focused on everyone else's names. However, later that day, I was thinking about what I had said. And I realized that by being Just John, I was really just being myself. Just like I can be myself, I know that you all have the ability to be yourself too!

Now most of you wouldn't expect it at first, but my dad is a huge classic rock fan. I grew up listening to songs on the radio from bands like AC-DC, Bad Company, and Def Leopard. One of his favorite songs is *Who Do You Love?* By George Thorogood. In fact, he loved it so much that it was our alarm clock every morning before school. The only problem was he was singing the song at the top of his lungs. Now, I am not calling my dad a bad singer, but he is definitely no George Thorogood. He would sing the song whenever it came on the radio, no matter who he was around.

One day he was driving in the pickup showing the ranch hand, Tel, who was newly hired what the ranch looked like. Tel was a really quiet person, it was his second day and he had known my dad for no more than a week. They happened to hear the song as they were driving over a hill. Now not knowing Tel very well did not stop my dad from singing the song in his signature style. I wasn't there to witness it, but I have heard it told that the look on Tel's face was priceless. I am sure that it probably scarred Tel for life, but despite my dad's great singing, they became really good friends.

If Dad hadn't sung that song, if he had taken a moment to think of what Tel probably would have thought of him for singing like that, then Tel never would have known that my Dad loves classic rock music. Who knows, if Dad hadn't been himself and sung “Who do you love” at the top of his lungs, then Tel might not have become one of my dad's best friends. Just like my dad was not afraid to sing “Who Do You Love?” at the top of his lungs in a car with someone he barely knew, you can live like no one is watching.

Some of you may have heard of Micheal Edwards, who might be more commonly known as Eddie the Eagle. Eddie had a dream of competing in the Olympics, and he was going to do everything he could to get there. It started out at a very young age. Eddie would spend endless hours in the backyard,

trying to discover exactly what event would make his dream come true. After years of broken glasses and crushed dreams, Eddie didn't let his parents, friends, or neighbors get him down. He kept trying and finally decided to settle on ski jumping.

All of Eddie's hard work, practice, broken bones, and bruises paid off when Eddie barely qualified for the 1988 Olympics in Calgary. Eddie decided that in addition to the 70-meter event, Eddie was going to compete in the 90-meter event as well. He started practicing right away, and he was flying down this 90-meter-long jump and set sail into the air, and then...baam.....he crashed. As you can imagine jumping off a 90-meter jump, this was no small crash, but did this stop Eddie? No way, he was back practicing again the next day.

So, Eddie practiced every day until finally it was time for the Olympics. The day of the competition arrived, and Eddie competed and was able to land both of his jumps in the competition. Eddie finished in very last place, and he was far behind the next competitor. Instead of letting that get him down, Eddie was thrilled with his performance. He had worked so hard to accomplish his dream of becoming an Olympic athlete, and on that day, he had finally accomplished his goal.

Eddie spent hours practicing and working to make himself better. He had countless people tell him that he wasn't good enough to be an Olympian, but that didn't stop him, Eddie worked hard and was able to accomplish his lifelong dream. I challenge all of you to try and be just like Eddie. If you practice, work hard, and give it 110% all of the time, you too will be able to accomplish your dream; you will become your better self. When it comes time for the competition, it doesn't matter if you finish first or last. The person that is sitting right next to you, it doesn't matter if you are better than them, what matters is that you are better than the person you were yesterday.

It was a couple weeks before Winter Speaking districts, and I had just finished writing my Prepared Speech manuscript. I practiced it a few times each day over the next few days. Then, finally, I was ready to deliver my speech to a live audience. That live audience consisted of my mom and my dad. And one thing that you must know about me is I hate practicing my speeches in front of my parents. I always get way more nervous to practice for them than I do for the competition.

Anyways, I delivered my speech and my parents listened. Once I finished I was feeling pretty good about it, and they asked a few questions so I could get some practice and prepare myself. Then Dad said, "Do you want to know what I think?" This couldn't be a good sign, I thought, but I said "sure" anyways. Dad proceeded to list off some changes that he suggested I make in order for the talk to make more sense, and the points to flow better. Then Mom had her tips for speaking voice and answering questions. While all of these seemed like valid points, I had my mind set that the speech was good enough and I was just going to keep it the way it was.

However, as I started thinking about their suggestions, I thought that a few of them might be able to work in my speech. So, I started to work on those changes, and pretty soon I realized that I had used all of my parent's suggestions. "That's just great," I thought. "Now I am going to have to memorize my whole speech." I started practicing, but I kept messing up. I was very frustrated, and I knew I should have just left it the way it was. I kept practicing though, and I finally memorized my new and improved version of my speech. I practiced it for my parents again, and they finally approved. After a few more days of practice, the day of districts had arrived. We made it down to Livingston where Park FFA would be hosting the district contest and I was prepared to give my speech. I thought the contest went really well and I couldn't wait to hear the results. Eventually the awards were announced, and I was thrilled to hear my name be called in first.

However, on the way home, I realized that if it wasn't for those changes that my parents had suggested, then I probably wouldn't have done very well in the contest. They took the time out of their busy schedules to help me, and I hadn't even said so much as thank you. That day, I realized that it is

great to work hard to better yourself, and it is great to live your life not influenced by other's opinions. But sometimes, in order to reach our goal, we have to accept help.

If I hadn't listened to my parent's advice and had been stubborn and given the speech the way I wanted to, I wouldn't have had success. If I hadn't listened to my parent's wisdom throughout my life I wouldn't be standing on this stage today. I had to realize that they know more than I do, and if I was willing to listen to their advice, I would be a much better person. Just because you accept the help of others doesn't mean that you aren't being yourself, you are letting others help you to become your better self.

There are many times when we get caught up in the world of conformity and popularity that we forget who we truly are. My dad showed who he was and stood out by living his life like there was no one watching him. He didn't care what we kids, Tel, or all of Walmart thought whenever he wanted to sing his favorite song. Eddie the Eagle showed who he was and stood out by working hard and becoming his better self. He set his mind on a goal of reaching the Olympics, and it took everything he had, but he worked hard to make himself better. My parents helped teach me that by accepting the advice of others I can still be myself. By listening to all of my mentors, I have been able to become Just John, but still stand out. So today, I want you to start living like no one's watching. I want you to work hard and become your better self. And I want you to realize that you can still be yourself when you accept other people's advice. Montana FFA, how will you Stand Out!



## Mikayla Comes, Fergus of Lewistown *State Secretary*

### “It’s All About YOU”

IT’S ALL ABOUT YOU. Within our service-based organization that isn’t really something that we hear very often. Living to serve, right? Right. But we are also an organization that is based around career success, premier leadership, and personal growth. Let me explain what I mean when I say “It’s all about you”, and I’m going to use three quotes from Dr. Suess to help me.

Dr. Suess’s words remind me of points that we must all remember every single day in order to live at our best YOU. But let me just clarify that what I’m about to tell you aren’t things that come naturally or easily to me. They just are little reminders that help me to address challenges and insecurities that I am

faced with on a daily basis. When we begin to remember to Compare you to you. Find the Confidence within YOU. And YOU get to decide your actions, is when YOU have the power to make that difference, to enact change, and create an impact.

Compare YOU to YOU.

“You are you, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is you-er than you”. My older sister Maddie and I are three years apart, meaning that we had the absolute privilege of attending high school together for one year. Which included me being in ALL of the same activities, sports and clubs that Maddie was in. And you see, this was a little bit of an issue. There was the issue of comparison, that feeling of being inadequate, stuck in an older siblings shadow. I don’t know how many times I would come home from a softball game or even just a practice, very, very upset by my performance, and the majority of the time it wasn’t even that I had done particularly bad, it was just that Maddie, (my sister that had three years more experience than me) had done better.... After a pretty tough game one night, I’m sitting at the counter with my mom.. my mom says-- “will you tell me what’s wrong please?” I’m silent for a little while and then reluctantly, I begin to speak, which quickly turns to me trying to speaking through tears I might add-- “mom, I just am never going to be anything compared to Maddie. I know what people are thinking as I walk up to bat, oh well here comes that other Comes girl, it’s too bad that she can’t hit like her sister.” My mom, lets me finish, and when I do She just kinda looks at me funny for a second. “Mikayla, you are the only one that is thinking that. And comparing yourself to Maddie is not going to help YOU get any better, maybe instead of focusing on how Maddie is a better hitter, appreciate that, and then focus on what you have to offer the team, and work to make yourself better” Hmm....well played mother. I hate to say it, but at that moment I wasn’t suddenly enlightened and able to only focus on bettering myself, but that conversation has stuck with me. We must remember that it’s a constant process to choose to focus on how we as individuals are growing, adapting, and becoming better ourselves rather than to focus on how we fall short in comparison to others. We all know how easy it is to get caught up in the comparisons.. I mean, look at the environment that we are living in— our social media feeds are filled with filters, Photoshop and impossible standards. But we must remember the reality of it, what good does comparing ourselves to others do? Comparing ourselves to others doesn’t improve US in any way—it doesn’t make us better athletes, students, livestock judges,



and it doesn't make us better people. But, when you compare you to YOU it gives you the satisfaction to see how you as an individual are growing, and it allows you develop your strengths, manage your weaknesses and share all that you are with others. I understand that this is easier said than done but it is all a matter of remembering what YOU are made of.

Find the confidence within YOU.

"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." I LOVE Harry Potter. So much. And I'm sure you all have read the books... or at least watched the movies. One of my many, many favorite parts in the series was the chapter when Ron had his first Quidditch match. I'll fill those of you in that aren't as obsessed about HP as myself. Ron was an absolute nervous wreck right before his first quidditch match, like Britney 2007 stressed. Trying to be a good friend, and maybe give Ron a little extra confidence, Harry plays a little trick on Ron, making him believe that he had spiked his juice with a "liquid luck" potion. Ron, thinking that he has that potion coursing through his veins, plays an amazing game and as it turns out, Harry hadn't put anything in his juice. Even though part of me is still waiting for my letter of acceptance into hogwarts, I realize that this story comes from a made up world.. But, it offers a very good lesson-- Ron was good enough to succeed, he just couldn't find the confidence within himself to do so. You know sometimes we get in our own way, we don't think we are good enough, we KNOW that there is NO way that we could ever be able to give that speech or make that shot or give that sales presentation. But we are the ones that are stopping ourselves, our confidence becomes buried under our insecurities, the fear of failure and other people's judgement. As individuals we can decide to stop letting insecurities and the fear of failure control our lives. Have confidence in what you have to offer the world. At times we may need a little bit of help unburying our confidence—like in my harry potter story. But it just takes that spark to realize the confidence within YOU. And when you do, run with it. Finding your confidence within opens doors to opportunities and experiences that we might not have been brave enough to do before. Find, unbury, puuulll that confidence from within—because there is absolutely not reason that any single one of you should not be confident in yourself. Find it!!

I could be like the Micheal Jordan of motivational speakers and inspire the heck out of you to only "Compare YOU to YOU" and to "find that confidence within you". But at the end of the day, I'm not the Micheal Jordan of motivational speakers, and it's your choice and decision to view yourself like that. YOU GET TO DECIDE.

YOU get to decide your actions. "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." My Grandma was a pretty amazing lady. Some of my best memories were made with her over on the ranch collecting treasures from behind the calving shed, playing cows, doing gymnastics through her flower beds, eating the BEST strawberry pie with my siblings and cousins, climbing the willow trees in the backyard (much to her worry) and of course playing dress-up with her Lancome makeup samples and her square dancing tutus. But, one of the things that I love most about my grandma, was that she always came to anything and everything that I was in. She and grandpa came to my preschool graduation, piano recitals, sporting events, grade school music programs (even through the recorder playing). They came to award ceremonies, concerts and Christmas programs. At about the end of my freshman year of high school grandma was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma Cancer. Earlier that year she had broken her back in two places, and due to a prolonged healing process, the doctors knew something wasn't quite right. Now let's stop right here because I want to tell you that this is NOT a sad story. Yes, we did lose her last July, and I miss her every day, but this experience has taught me a very important lesson – you might not be able to control anything else in life, but YOU get to decide your actions, and my grandma showed me this. Here's the thing, even though grandma was battling cancer, had two broken vertebrae, and several broken ribs due to complications



from her illness, you would never have known. She still came to almost every single one of my volleyball tournaments, softball games, and any other activity that I was in throughout my ENTIRE high school career... She didn't get to decide the ups and downs of her battle, but what she did decide was to focus on the opportunities and the LIFE that she could be experiencing, instead of focusing on all of the negative and challenging things in her life. You and I, you know we might not be suffering from several broke bones, or battling cancer... but, we still face adversity, challenges, and decisions in all shapes and sizes every single day —and YOU get to decide how you act. You get to decide if you are going to make the most of every opportunity, because you never know when it might be your last. You get to decide if you are going to study hard for those CDEs and LDEs, or just wing it. You get to decide how you spend the time that you have left in high school. You get to decide how you treat others. YOU GET TO DECIDE. What will your decision be?

Now, I'd say that Dr. Suess's words do a pretty good job of helping me sum up exactly what I wanted to share with you. . Comparing ourselves to others will not help us in any way. Instead, COMPARE YOU TO YOU and use that to make YOU better. Find, and unbury that confidence within, because YOU are good enough and YOU can most definitely do anything that you set your mind to. And finally, YOU get to decide your actions. Decide to try harder, decide to include others, decide to do good, decide to ... YOU get to make that decision.

"You are you that is truer than true, there is no one alive who is youer than you"

"Always remember that you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think"

"Uou have brains in your head you have feet in your shoes you can steer yourself any direction you choose."

Thank you, Montana FFA,... always remember that---- IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!!!



## **Abbey Dunn, Corvallis** ***State 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President***

**“LOL”**

Ugh. Dunn family boating day... Walk to the middle of the stage dragging oars with life jacket on. Growing up, these were the most dreaded days for 6th grade celebrity, Abbey. Why you may ask? Well... these adventures always consisted of my family, and our redneck aluminum boat.

Not to mention the holes that were barely patched up, oars that were heavily duck taped, and a motor that sometimes, maybe started, on a good day. You get the point, this was no speed boat. Now, as a very self-important sixth-grader, I had an image to uphold, and sitting in the middle of the lake on an aluminum boat wearing (god forbid), a life jacket, point to lifejacket was not my idea of staying popular. But despite my

constant attempts of getting out of these dreaded “lake days,” I always found myself standing on the dock as the designated “boat launcher,” with my atrocious orange life jacket on.

Now on this specific day, it only took my Dad about twenty tries to get the boat to sputter to life. Fifteen minutes later, we were smack dab in the middle of the lake when our motor died. My Dad, who had apparently become a certified mechanic overnight, spent the next ten minutes trying to fix the motor and I kept my head down, hoping none of the passing boats would recognize such a middle school celebrity like myself. Finally, my Dad announced that the motor “needed to take a little break,” and “good thing we have the oars!” Now, unfortunately for me, my Dad still had every intention of making it to the other end of the lake, even if that meant he had to row the whole way there. My parents got the oars ready, and my Dad started to row, and row, and row, with a huge smile on his face, that just wouldn’t go away no matter how much I glared at him. He rowed for about five minutes when all of a sudden, SNAP. One of the wooden oars snapped in half and floated away. We all looked at my Dad with huge eyes... what now?! AND as if things could get ANY worse... I heard my Mom say... Pete, I’m assuming this hole back here isn’t supposed to be letting in water, right?! My Dad looked at my Mom, tightened all of our life jacket’s like the captain of the titanic, then handed my Mom a Tupperware that was holding our day’s sandwiches and told her to start bailing water. What a waste of sandwiches. He then proceeded to stand in the middle of the boat with the one still intact oar, and began rowing our boat like we were on a canal in Venice and he was our tour guide.

But, were NOT in Venice. We were on a sinking aluminum boat in the middle of lake Como! Not to mention I could see all of my friends sitting on the beach. Luckily, they hadn’t seen me... yet. With my Dad still acting as our gondolier, I was relieved to see we were almost to shore. That was when I realized we were drifting right past where all my friends were camped out on the beach. Now, my Dad takes any and every opportunity he can to embarrass me. As I turned to my Dad in horror, already anticipating what was about to happen... he raised his hands to point to me and yelled: “ABBEY DUNN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE ONE AND ONLY ABBEY DUNN, RIGHT HERE.” At this point in my life, I honestly would have rather been stranded in the middle of the lake sinking. I was mortified. How could my Dad do something like that to me?

Now that I have had some time to “recover” from this incident, I look at it a little differently, and am actually very thankful for this memory and the lesson that it taught me. It may have been embarrassing, but everyone goes through these moments. Why did I think I was so important that being angry at my Dad for embarrassing me was worth missing out what now are some of the greatest memories of my life? I was so busy worrying about what other people thought of me, I didn’t realize the memories that we were making. Like the time I caught the biggest fish ever on my K-mart Spiderman fishing pole, or when my brothers and I served our time out on the boat together as punishment for fighting. I can still hear my Dad yelling, “don’t come back until you love each other again,” as I grumpily rowed away with my brothers.

It has taken me ages to realize this, but sometimes all we can do is laugh at the things that happen to us or the mistakes that we make. Now I totally understand that this is not the easiest thing to do. And if I am being honest, I have only learned to laugh at myself very recently. Having the self-confidence to be vulnerable and laugh at ourselves is tough, and there are lots of different things we have to do to be able to successfully laugh at ourselves. But first, we need to change our attitudes and perspectives.

Now, I am just kind of an overall embarrassing person. Falling, snorting, saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, and being just generally awkward are only some of the examples of embarrassing things that happen to me pretty much on a daily basis. If I hadn’t learned to laugh at myself and the silly things I do, I would be a pretty miserable person. Now, I know this is not always going to happen. Sometimes the embarrassing things that happen to us are just downright awful, and that’s ok. However, when I think about that day on the boat with my family, I wish I would’ve had an attitude more like my Dad’s. He was able to see the importance of living in the moment and being able to laugh at the silly and sometimes unfortunate things that happen to us.

We also need to know the difference between laughing at ourselves and making fun of ourselves. We need to remember to laugh, but never aim doubt at ourselves. Being self-deprecating in times of embarrassment is not truly “laughing at yourself,” it’s coming up with an excuse to make fun of yourself before others can do it for you. In order to be able to truly laugh at the things that happen to us, we need to have the self-confidence to own our mistakes.

As I mentioned, in middle school I was basically a celebrity. At this point in my life, I was an 8th grader, ready to move on to high school. But I still had one thing left I needed to accomplish. I was going to be voted “Class Clown” of our eighth-grade class. Every year at Corvallis Middle School, we vote on categories such as, “best smile,” “most likely to become famous,” and most importantly... “class clown.” I was funny, and most people liked me, so, I deserved that vote, right? That spring, when the school yearbook came out, I excitedly flipped to the right page. I ran my finger down the list, until I got to the bottom... “Hmm. Where was my name... this must be a mistake...”? I guess I just missed it. I started at the top again. Carefully reading this time. When I got to the Class Clown category, I realized there had been a huge mistake. Brookelyn Palin’s name was printed where mine should’ve been.

I remember going home that day feeling defeated and jealous. I cried to my Mom, ate some mashed potatoes and tried my best to move on. And for a long time, I forgot of this experience. However, I have now realized that it may be more relevant than I thought. All I wanted was to be elected Class Clown, or future Prom Queen. Which... I also fell short of. However, it wasn’t because I was actually funny, because all I really did was make fun of myself. I mean, people thought it was funny, but why? The more I thought about it, the more I realized. It was because I was so insecure, that I wanted to make sure I pointed out my flaws and weaknesses before others could do it for me. When it comes down to it, our embarrassing moments and our mistakes do not define us. Looking back on this year, I have embarrassed myself in NUMEROUS ways, SO MANY TIMES.

But I have come to realize, just because I fell a lot, did not affect the amount of fun that I had. It did not change the fact that I was able to make countless new friends, and it did not lessen the impact that this year had on me. This same thing applies for every one of you every day. Sometimes we get tunnel vision on bumner situations or experiences, and find it hard to figure out how it would even be possible to turn it into a positive. But in order to laugh at ourselves, we need to remember that when we are in situations that may be embarrassing or frustrating, it is so important that we take a step back and make sure our attitudes and perspectives are in the right place. Finally, in order to be able to truly laugh at ourselves we have to know the difference between laughing at ourselves, and making fun of ourselves. We all put in everything that we could this week. So, don't dwell on that set of reasons that you bombed, or be embarrassed by tripping running up on stage tomorrow. I mean, it's bound to happen at least once. Montana FFA, thank you for sharing this year and letting me laugh with you, but most importantly, always remember to Laugh at Yourself.



## Seth Rekdal, Shepherd *State 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

### **“In This Jacket...”**

Man, isn't that song such a bop! For those of you who don't know, that was Coat of Many Colors by Dolly Parton and it is by far one of my favorite songs for two major reasons; the first being the message it shares, and two is because it's based on a true story of Dolly's life. Picture this, Locust Ridge, Tennessee 1955, a scene that I'm sure we all can imagine, or, with it being over 60 years ago, at least Mr. Rose could imagine. At the time Dolly Parton is just nine years old, and coming from a family that didn't have much, she and her siblings would be thrilled to receive anything classified as “new.” However, it's safe to say that Dolly's favorite gift she ever received was a coat from her mom.

This coat was made of extra pieces of cloth the family had, each a different size and color, and her mom called it her “coat of many colors.” Dolly instantly fell in love with the coat, and of course wore it to school the next day; where, to her surprise, she was made fun of and laughed at.

Her classmates tried to take away her individuality, and they tried to tell her what she was worth because of what she was wearing. But despite their efforts, Dolly didn't let the words and opinions of others change the way she looked at herself. She wore her coats of many colors with pride and confidence.

Just like Dolly, I, like most everyone in this room, have learned quite a few lessons from a special “coat.” However, the two most influential things I have learned in my time in FFA are that you are unique, and that no one can dictate your self-worth.

Who in here knows the one and only, Mrs. Stacy Dietz? If you know Mrs. Dietz, you'd know that one, she is my advisor, and two she is one of the most unique individuals out there. What you may not know, though, is that the Dietz family and I used to be neighbors. Living next to Mrs. Dietz and her family I got to know them very well, but out of all the experiences I've had with them there's actually one story that is by far my favorite. It was a warm Montana day and my sister and I were relaxing at home enjoying summer break. Then, piercing the silence and tranquility, we hear bouts of high pitched yelling. Curious to see what was happening, and naturally a little nosy, we peaked our heads out of our back door to get a better view of the action. The scene we saw made us burst out into uncontrollable laughter. Lexy, Mrs. Dietz's youngest daughter who was around 6 at the time, was “running away from home!” After a simple family argument, she made her way down their long driveway, bags in hand of course, Russell, Lexy's father, came out of their house with a camera, and immediately began documenting the moment. Lexy had noticed this and of course tried to hide from the camera's lens by crouching in the tall grass on either side of the driveway. As you can see, she blended in very well. Meanwhile, Kolby, Mrs. Dietz's oldest daughter, was trying to calm down this situation and ensure that Lexy would be unpacking her bag very soon, in her room of course. Now while all of this was happening, Mrs. Dietz was simultaneously laughing with Russell, trying to calm everything down with Kolby, and was probably upset at everyone for pushing Lexy to the point of pack her bags.

I love this so much because you get to see each of the Dietz's as their truest self. Russell, able to make light out of any situation; Kolby, extremely kind hearted; Lexy, super loud and passionate; and Mrs. Dietz comes together as a seamless combination of the three. It wasn't until recently that I realized the lesson in this. Each member of the Dietz family is unique and has something to offer the world, but you know what so does every single person inside this room and outside of those doors. See without Russell this may not be something we are able to look back on and laugh; and without Lexy we may not have have a story in the first place. And just as Kolby, Lexy, Russell, and Mrs. Dietz are irreplaceable in their family, we have to know that not one of us are replaceable. We all have a place and a purpose in this world, and you know what, you may not know what that place is yet but recognize the fact that you have a place.

Recognize the fact that you are unique. Now trust me I am not saying that it's easy to embrace our individuality. However, it is so important that we do because when we show others why we are unique, our impact on the world around us is exponentially higher. Mrs. Dietz and her family have had a major impact on me because they are true to themselves at all times. However, they're not the only people who have helped shape me. My sister is, quite basically, the reason I'm even up here.

My very first state convention actually took place in this convention hall, back in 2011. I was a 7th grader at the time and my sister, Alaina, a senior, was running for a state office. I remember watching her and thinking "ok, I have to do that one day because it looks so fun." Mainly because I thought that running for a state office means you get to hang out with cool people which would then, in turn, make you cool, lol. While my sister may not have received an office that year, she did give a 7th grade Seth Rekdal the dream to be a state officer someday. After that state convention I just continued to fall more and more in love with the FFA. I made sure to go to as many events, contests, camps, and conferences as possible, each one only deepening my passion for this organization. FFA became my place. So now let's fast forward to my senior year. Finally, after years of watching others serve as state officers, it was time to try and turn my dream into a reality. I can remember walking through the doors to convention feeling nervous, excited, and ready to begin interviews. The next few days blurred together, up until Saturday morning that is. When the final session began I remember feeling restless as we moved through retiring addresses, advisor and parent recognitions, as well as CDE awards. And as quickly as the week went by, I was standing in the back of the room in a circle with all of the other state officer candidates, shaking uncontrollably. (Play Top Gun Theme) With the Top Gun theme song playing in the background 8 positions became 7. 7 became 6, 6 became 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0, but I was still in the back of the room. Shocked, angry, confused, and tears falling, I stood immobile as I slowly understood that my dream would not become a reality. What did I do wrong? I was puzzled at how could 6 years full of laughter and joy end so abruptly. I began to tell myself that the reason I didn't receive an office was because I wasn't good enough, and slowly that idea of not being good enough crept into my relationships and into anything I did.

I let an experience dictate my self-worth. Why? Why did I let not fitting into a certain position translate into not fitting into any position? So often we hear that what others think of us doesn't matter. And as true as that is, it still can be so hard to show our unique selves. The reality is, judgements that negatively affect our self-worth are almost always coming from people who are unhappy with themselves. So why should we let those people, or experiences, tell us what we are worth when the truth of the matter is that the only thing that should determine your self-worth, is you. After all, the trials and tribulations we face in life are not the defining factor of who we are. No, our defining moments occur when we overcome the obstacles we are handed in this life.

As leaders we face many hurdles, but in order to define ourselves as leaders we cannot allow any obstacle to stop us. You may stumble, and that's ok, but if we want to be the ones defining who we are

and what we are worth we must always keep moving forward. The moment when we stop letting others tell us what we are worth and we start telling ourselves what we are worth, is moment we take back the steering wheel of our life from those people or events that drive us down a path that is not our own.

Let's take a look back at Mrs. Dolly Parton. If we take a deeper look at her story it becomes easy to see that Dolly already knew she was unique, and she never let the opinions of others change how she viewed herself. Her coat of many colors was so much more than a gift from her mother, it represented who she was; and isn't that such a great lesson for each of us. Every single one of us has a coat of many colors, and that coat cannot be duplicated. Earlier this year at DLS I asked members to help me with a project, I wanted to know what the words are that make me unique. (Grab coat and show it to audience). Ten words, eight colors, each rag a different size and shape, and a one of a kind coat. Even if someone has the same words on their coat as you, those words will not be in the same spot, they won't be the same color, they WILL be unique. Look around, chances are no one in this room is quite literally wearing a coat of many colors, but I can guarantee that every single person in this room is unique. Charlie Palacios from the Corvallis FFA chapter shows the individual he is by always greeting you with a smile, kind words, and an enormous amount of energy. Kyla Andres & Saralyn Standley, also known as @ Kylyn Standres of the Missoula FFA chapter, show their individuality by owning and operating over 8 instagram accounts. Preston Long from the Hysham FFA chapter showcased the individual he is when he entertained the whole Southeastern district with some fire magic tricks a couple months ago. Each of these people wear their coat of many colors differently because they are different, because their coats, who they are, is unique. Our individuality is the reason we are the only people who can dictate our self-worth. Embrace the individual you are and wear your coat at all times; even under your blue jacket. But, why stop there? Our "jacket" doesn't have to be only this blue corduroy. Our jackets could be a basketball uniform, chef's apron, lab coat, overalls, scrubs, business suit, whatever we set our minds to. When we wear our coat of many colors under our jacket, when we are our true selves in every arena of our lives, the impact we have is so much greater. How will you wear your coat of many colors? More than that, Montana FFA, how you be your true self in your jacket!





## Sheridan Johnson, Conrad *State President*

### *“You Are More”*

*Announcer: Welcome back to the Montana Class B Eastern Divisional Softball tournament! It's the top of the seventh and the home team is down by one. They've got players on second and third with two outs. We're back at the top of the line up with Johnson up to bat.*

I step into the box. Ready to go and...a strike goes by. Strike one. It's fine. Step back in and...a ball. Okay, I'm good. I got this! Step back in. – This one's is perfect so it's a hard swing...and a miss. Shoot. If I get a good hit, my teammate gets home and the game is tied. Another inning; another chance. If I get out, the season is over for my entire team. \*deep breath\* No pressure. I step back into the box. My bat connects with the ball and I take off running. But wait – the ball goes straight to the shortstop and they throw me out at first. That's it – softball is over. When I realize what

happened, the tears come up instantly and I refuse to take off my helmet and face my teammates knowing what I just did – cutting our softball season short. I was heartbroken. If I had just swung at the first pitch or ran a little faster, we wouldn't be done.

The next day, we boarded the bus for home. It wasn't long before my coach called me up for a chat. When he asked me how I was doing, I recounted all of my feeling. Then, he gave me a bit of a reality check: “Sheridan, I know there was a lot of pressure on you in that moment, but it wasn't just you that lost that game. It took all of us – we win and lose as a team.” I finally realized I was giving myself way more credit than I deserved. There's no way I was *solely* responsible for the course of our team. He helped me put it all into perspective as he continued, “You are part of the most successful class to come through this program. You're a two-time state champion! Your softball career can't be defined by this one moment.” My coach's words still ring true. We are all more than the mistakes we make. They don't define us. They shape us, and change us, but there's more than just the negativity.

When you make these mistakes, no matter how big or small, don't dwell on how bad you feel. Reflect for a few minutes – jot it down in a journal or talk to mentor – as long as you understand exactly what you can fix for the next time. Use the lessons you learned to be the best you can be – study those plant mounts harder, practice your welds more, or start earlier on that big project. If there isn't a next time, like my divisional softball game, focus on the positives and the experience you gained. Time doesn't stop for us, so keep moving forward.

Before my softball career, I was involved in every activity I could. This meant I was constantly surrounded by change and found I was changing too. When I was five, if you asked me how I was doing the answer was always “Excellent!” Without fail. I was still in that little kid stage where I was a little bit invincible. As I got older, “Excellent” began to slip from my vocabulary. I moved up to the fourth grade and now my go to answer was an enthusiastic “Great.” It's still pretty positive, but I couldn't worry about being Excellent when I had homework to deal with now!

The next transition was to middle school. This was a big change to my schedule with all these different teachers and class periods and even *more* homework. I was still doing “Pretty good!” but I figured I wouldn't be excellent for a long time.

In high school, my most common answer to “Hey Sheridan! How are you?” was now a dejected “I'm alright.” Freshman year was rough. I was one of the youngest in the school with all these scary upperclassmen. I began to doubt my abilities in every area. Suddenly I was in volleyball and softball practice with super athletic



girls – my first thought was “I’ll never be athletic enough for this.” Next it was heading out to lunch – in Conrad we had to walk four blocks to the elementary school to eat and sometimes this walk was downright freezing. My other friends would grab rides with upperclassmen who had cars, but I never joined in. My thoughts were, “No, I’m not good enough for them. I don’t want to be annoying.” This continued all throughout that year – I wasn’t cool enough, pretty enough, strong enough, or good enough for anything, at least according to the standards I set for myself.

The summer after my freshman year I had the chance to attend the Alumni Leadership Camp, or ALC, in the Highwood Mountains. My stomach was in knots I was so nervous; I had no idea what to expect. I unpacked all my things into the big cabin, hugged my advisor good bye, and hoped for the best. As I jumped around meeting new people, I realized that this was an opportunity for a fresh start. None of these people knew anything about me and I let the real me flow into each of my conversations. Because I barely knew these people, I couldn’t set any unreasonable standards I needed to reach just to be liked. I could just be me.

Coming back after ALC, I finally understood I didn’t have to set unattainable goals and be unhappy. Who I was – who I truly was – was more than enough. At your core, you are more than enough to accomplish your purpose. When things happen, remember what makes you exactly you. You are on this Earth to serve a purpose, so go out and find it. Maybe that looks like jumping into a bunch of CDEs and activities to find out where your passions lie. Maybe it’s job shadowing at the local veterinary hospital to see if you could do that as your career. Take any step to get out of your comfort zone and focus on who you truly are. This experience helped me understand that we are more than enough as we are, but sometimes our perception can get in the way of understanding.

When you hear the word “Africa,” do you think of lions, deserts, poverty, or drought? What about cities, huge farms, great food, or leaders? This January, I had the opportunity to travel to South Africa with the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers. During the trip, my fellow travelers and I were led on a tour of the African Leadership Academy by a girl named Rati from Zimbabwe. When first I met Rati, it seemed like we had more differences than similarities. However, when I looked beyond my initial impression and learned the whole story, I found out Rati is full of energy and one of the sassiest people I know! We’re both 18 years old and love to swim. I admire her compassion about the world, and she’s taken action by creating a business with her classmates to address human rights issues across Africa. Once I took the time to look past what I first perceived, both about Rati and South Africa, I realized our perception may at first feel like the truth, but it is rarely an accurate image of reality. There is more than just your perception of the world.

When you think you know exactly what’s going on, take a step back and look for another point of view. You don’t have the full story until you’ve considered all perspectives. If one of your classmates is acting a little strange, go get to know them. They might just need someone to make them feel worth it. If you are living in fear of what people think of you, understand their perception of you probably isn’t accurate either. Taking the time to truly understand changes everything.

Our lives aren’t always easy. They’re full of events and experiences that can leave us with bumps and bruises. Sometimes our injuries might be more severe, and it takes a little while to get walking again. No matter how long it takes, the important thing is that we keep going. We can’t move forward if we’re concerned what people think of us and our actions or we’re slipping back into our insecurities.

Remember that you are more than your mistakes, you are more than the perception, and you are MORE than enough. Always.

Go out and show the world just how incredible you are when you know that YOU ARE MORE.