

# Convention Proceedings

## 90<sup>th</sup> Annual State FFA Convention Montana FFA Association



**Virtual Convention**  
**Bozeman, Montana**

## **State Officers**

Caroline Roeder, President  
Choteau  
Lucas Oelkers, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Culbertson  
Isaac Sponheim, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Richey  
Emily Evans, Secretary  
Fairfield  
Andee Baker, Treasurer  
Park City  
Anna Slivka, Reporter  
Winifred  
Kyla Andres, Sentinel  
Missoula  
Andrew Ferrat, Parliamentarian  
Broadwater/Townsend

## **State Staff**

Jim Rose, State Advisor  
Bozeman

## **Special Guests**

Mamie Hertel – National FFA Central Region  
Vice-president



## **FFA Foundation**

Gwynn Simeniuk- Executive  
Director  
Katharine Taylor - Program and  
Office Manager  
Kasey Schultz - Director of  
Development  
Jacob Martin - Marketing and  
Development Coordinator  
Saralyn Standley - Program and  
Events Coordinator

Curt Robbins - Foundation President  
Columbus  
Scott Aspenlieder - Vice-President  
Billings  
Belinda Darlinton - Secretary  
Great Falls  
Mark Sinnard - Treasurer  
Wilsall  
Jay Meyer - Director  
Stevensville  
Jack Larson - Director  
Miles City  
Kelsey Kraft - Alumni President  
Laurel  
Lucas Oelkers – Association 1<sup>st</sup> V.P.  
Culbertson

## **Alumni Association**

Brian Engle, Past President

Big Timber

Kelsey Kraft, President

Laurel

Cindy Johnson, Secretary

Conrad

Todd Lackman, Treasurer

Hysham

Ken Johnson, Glacier District Rep.

Conrad

Emily Standley, Judith Basin District Rep.

Lewistown

Trevor Motley, Western District Rep.

Bozeman

Tanya Flowers, 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

Lucas Oelkers, State Officer Rep.

Culbertson

## **Convention Facts**

*This was the first ever virtual convention to happen in Montana. This was due to the Covid – 19 pandemic.*

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

## **Agriscience Fair Winners:**

Animal Systems: Rylee Jessop - Corvallis

Social Systems: Makayla Dines - Geraldine

Power, Structural and Technology Systems:

Macy Herman - Simms

Plant Systems: Taylee Abrams and Maya Niles - Shepherd

Food Products & Processing Systems:

Dacey Robertson and Jerzee Carr - Fromberg

Environmental/Natural Resource Systems:

Hudson Rohrer - Simms

7. Sawyer Reagan - Missoula
8. Kylee Coates - Shepherd
9. Kathryn Lillie – Kalispell
10. Sage Willis – Shields Valley

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

1. Belgrade
2. Big Timber
3. Stevensville
4. Miles City
5. Ruby Valley

## **Agriculture Communications**

1. Cascade
2. Fairfield
3. St. Regis
4. Fairview
5. Carter County
6. Big Timber

## **Agriculture Issues**

1. Cascade
2. Corvallis
3. Shepherd
4. Stevensville

## **Agricultural Sales CDE**

1. Shepherd
2. Missoula
3. Kalispell
4. Forsyth
5. Shields Valley

## **Ag Sales Individuals**

1. Joe Lackman - Forsyth
2. Teagen Turner - Missoula
3. Lexy Dietz – Shepherd
4. Kylie Lemburg - Shepherd
5. Molly Sutherland - Kalispell
6. Raney Sutherland - Kalispell

## **ATMS Individuals**

1. Nate Jenkin - Belgrade
2. Amber Johnson - Choteau
3. Jackson Whitaker - Belgrade
4. Joe Lackman - Forsyth
5. Jacob Marko - Cascade
6. Cade McParland – Ruby Valley
7. Kameron Lescantz - Stevensville
8. Wyatt Muggli – Miles City
9. Casey Farrar - Missoula
10. Tyler Brown - Stevensville

## **Agronomy CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Stevensville
4. Miles City
5. Shields Valley

## **Agronomy Individuals**

1. Amber Johnson - Choteau
2. Michael Zielinski - Stevensville
3. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
4. Ethan Bay - Kalispell
5. Maria Bay - Kalispell

6. Logan Turner - Missoula
7. Sawyer Reagan - Missoula
8. Luke Heupel – Kalispell
9. Gus Turner – Missoula
10. Joel Warneke - Winifred

### **Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Brianna Olsad - Shepherd
2. Jake Chulyak – Big Timber
3. Rosalyn Daniel - Corvallis
4. Miranda Johnson – Huntley Project

### **Jr. Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Alyssa Robertus - Laurel
2. Jordan Leach - CJI
3. Grace Mosher - Shepherd
4. Emma Lou Slivka - Winifred

### **Conduct of Meetings LDE**

1. Shepherd 1
2. Shepherd 2
3. Park City
4. Joliet

**ENR – Not contested this year**

### **Employment Skills**

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Lexy Dietz - Shepherd
3. Gracie Smith - Victor
4. Kylie Lemburg - Shepherd
5. Brooke Mehlhoff – Twin Bridges
6. Melanie Power - Wheatland
7. Kaitlin Kitchin - Shepherd
8. Berkley Stroh - Roy
9. Makayla Dines - Geraldine
10. Megan Bittner - Belgrade

### **Extemporaneous Speaking LDE**

1. Colton Young – Stillwater Valley
2. Gracie Smith - Victor

3. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
4. Kole Chatriand – Broadwater

### **Farm Business Management CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Big Timber
3. Missoula
4. Belgrade
5. Park City

### **FBM Individuals**

1. Joey Teselle – Belgrade
2. Hannah Brence – Miles City
3. Matt Glimm - Kalispell
4. John Cody Gilbert - Hobson
5. Raelynn Thomasson – Big Timber
6. Hope Gasvoda – Big Sandy
7. Brayden Young – Big Timber
8. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
9. Max Andres - Missoula
10. Jessica Waldo – Park City

### **Farm Bureau Speaking Contest**

Not contested this year

### **Floriculture**

1. Missoula
2. Miles City
3. Plevna
4. Fairview
5. Fromberg

### **Floriculture Individuals**

1. Justice Betts - Missoula
2. Claire Standley - Missoula
3. McKenna Quirk – Missoula
4. Sophia Schumacher - Plevna
5. Nyssa Schairer - Corvallis
6. Dacey Robertson - Fromberg
7. Maya Roginske - Joliet
8. Brianna Olstad - Shepherd
9. Jaeda Paul – Plevna
10. Alexa Woods – Gardiner

**Food Science CDE**

1. Forsyth
2. Fairview
3. Choteau
4. Richey
5. Shepherd

**Food Science Individuals**

1. Brianna Rainey - Forsyth
2. Jessica Waldo – Park City
3. Lauren Kjos - Fairview
4. Nyla Redding - Forsyth
5. Delilah Puckett – Twin Bridges
6. Kortney Deaton – Electric City
7. Becca Deming - Fairview
8. Martina Madsen - Corvallis
9. Amber Johnson - Choteau
10. Adaline Reilly - Forsyth

**Forestry CDE**

1. Belgrade
2. Missoula
3. Deer Lodge
4. Kalispell
5. Mission Valley

**Forestry Individuals**

1. Logan Turner – Missoula
2. Joey Teselle - Belgrade
3. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
4. Sawyer Reagan - Missoula
5. Jackson Whitaker - Belgrade
6. Aidan Thompson – Deer Lodge
7. Tucker Collins - Belgrade
8. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
9. Teaghan Guffey - Belgrade
10. Casey Farrar - Missoula

**Horse Evaluation CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Mission Valley
4. Hot Springs
5. St. Regis

**Horse Evaluation Individuals**

1. Holly Vranish – Belgrade
2. Taylor McCormack - Belgrade
3. Cassie Hull - Roundup
4. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
5. Amy Chilcote - Missoula
6. Rachael Stevenson - Hobson
7. Colin Cox - Missoula
8. Cloe Hoover – Mission Valley
9. Sarah Nalls - Stevensville
10. Madelynn Beals - Belgrade

**Livestock Evaluation CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Miles City
4. Mission Valley
5. Big Timber

**Livestock Evaluation Individuals**

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Bailey Lake – Kalispell
3. Amy Chilcote - Missoula
4. Libby Twitchell – Miles City
5. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
6. Wyatt Dooley - Gardiner
7. Heather LaBree – Carter County
8. Abby Fritz - Kalispell
9. Coleman Gilman – Ruby Valley
10. Tyeson Gravenhol - Roundup

**Marketing Plan**

1. Cascade
2. Choteau
3. Park City

**Meats Evaluation CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Fergus
3. Kalispell
4. Grass Range
5. Deer Lodge

**Meats Evaluation Individuals**

1. Claire Standley - Missoula
2. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
3. Max Andres - Missoula
4. Justice Betts - Missoula
5. Lucas Lawrence - Stevensville
6. Levi Boyles - Fergus
7. Zach Nichols – Electric City
8. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
9. Levi Poser - Fergus
10. Logan Turner - Missoula

**Parliamentary Procedure LDE**

1. Miles City
2. Shepherd
3. Kalispell
4. Shepherd

**Prepared Speaking LDE**

1. Nora Goodwin - Victor
2. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
3. Brighton Lane – Huntley Project
4. Brooke Mehlhoff – Twin Bridges

**Vet Science CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Grass Range
3. Belfry
4. Red Lodge
5. Mission Valley

**Vet Science Individuals**

1. Colin Cox - Missoula
2. Nola Goss – Grass Range
3. Morgan Corean – Grass Range
4. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
5. Hannah Stolfus - Kalispell
6. Skylar Kurr - Kalispell
7. Raney Sutherland - Kalispell
8. Audrey Erbaugh - Corvallis
9. Justice Betts - Missoula
10. Megan Bittner - Belgrade

**Team Sweepstakes Winner**

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Big Timber

**Individual Sweepstakes Winners**

1. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
2. Logan Turner - Missoula
3. Amber Johnson - Choteau
4. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
5. Sawyer Reagan - Missoula
6. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
7. Heather LaBree – Carter County
8. Joe Lackman – Forsyth
9. Joey Teselle – Belgrade
10. Hannah LaBree – Carter County

**State Talent Contest**

1. Aubree Bohrer – Deer Lodge
2. Ryan DeSaye – Dawson
3. Rylee Jessop - Corvallis

**Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS**

1. Beaverhead - STAR
2. Shepherd
3. Missoula
4. Kalispell

**Star Greenhand**

**\*STAR\*** Tyeson Gravenhol - Roundup  
Big Muddy: Josh Sponheim - Richey  
Eastern: Heidi LaBree – Carter County  
Southeastern: Tyeson Gravenhol - Roundup  
Southwestern: Gaven Garrison - Beaverhead  
Western: Shaun Billingsly - Missoula  
Glacier: Baylee Herman - Simms  
Southern: Tandy Planichek – Stillwater Valley  
Judith Basin: Lance Rutledge – Big Sandy

### **Star in Agricultural Placement**

**\*STAR\*** Lexy Dietz - Shepherd  
Ryan Bogden - Cascade  
Aaron Lang - Kalispell  
Zoe Lee – Ruby Valley

### **Star in Agribusiness**

**\*STAR\*** Max Andres - Missoula  
Elise Crago – Cascade

### **Star Farmer**

**\*STAR\*** Rachael Stevenson – Hobson  
Alyssa Gruszie - Chinook  
Abby Fritz - Kalispell  
Sadie Johnson - Roy

### **Hall of Chapters**

1. Fromberg
2. Dawson
3. Little Big Horn

### **Reporter Event**

1. Amy Chilcote - Missoula
2. Jordan Leach - CJI
3. Elise Crago - Cascade

### **Secretary's Book**

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Kady Braaten - Broadwater
3. Kaitlyn McColly - Hinsdale

### **Scrapbook**

1. Missoula
2. Richey
3. Hinsdale

### **Treasurers Book**

1. Caleb Senner - Richey
2. Coleman Gilman – Ruby Valley
3. Megan Johnson - Broadus

### **BOMC Awards**

1. Fromberg
2. Missoula
3. Shields Valley



# **Scholarships Awarded**

## **LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS:**

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

Jaina Meador – Deer Lodge

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

Reatta Wood – Hysham,

Nickia Harris – Deer Lodge

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

Devan Birrer, Fromberg

Morgan Friede, Chinook

Jerzee Carr, Fromberg

### **Sam Cornthwaite Memorial WLC**

#### **Scholarship:**

Trevor Zimmerman - Missoula

Matthew Slivka – Winifred

Reace Lannen – Shields Valley

Amy Chilcote – Missoula

Hailee Varner – Wibaux

James Aldrich – Fergus

Gianna Boyd – Bainville

Ashlyn Knieb – Missoula

### **WLC Scholarships:**

Joe Lackman - Forsyth

Abby Riska - Missoula

### **Irene Andres Memorial National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Amy Chilcote - Missoula

### **Holt Family National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Joe Lackman - Forsyth

### **John Bliss National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Abby Riska - Missoula

## **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS:**

### **AMTOPP (*Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals*) Scholarship:**

Maria Bay, Kalispell

### **Lars Ronning Memorial Scholarship:**

Allyson Young, Fairview

### **Stockman Bank Next Generation Scholarships:**

Lexy Dietz, Shepherd

Sawyer Reagan - Missoula

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

Logan Turner – Missoula

Paytyn Wilson - Bainville

### **Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:**

McKenna Quirk - Missoula

### **Murdoch's Scholarship:**

Kaitlyn Cardwell - Forsyth

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

Makayla Dines – Geraldine

Taylor Noyes – Broadwater

**Blue Shows Through Scholarship**

Zoe Lee – Ruby Valley

**Leave a Legacy Scholarships:**

Alyssa Thormahlen – Belfry

Justice Betts – Missoula

Max Andres – Missoula

Kenna Millhouse – Twin Bridges

Maria Stringari – Clarks Fork

Gracie Smith – Victor

Serena Oyler – Clarks Fork

Raney Sutherland – Kalispell

Matt Glimm – Kalispell

Molly Sutherland – Kalispell

Holly Vranish – Belgrade

Benjamin LaVelle – Chinook

Gracie Orem – Cascade

Aiden Fouhy – Opheim

Khloe Berdine – Missoula

Ellie Ward – Cascade

Avery Durfee – Big Timber

Zach Fauth – Opheim

Amy Chilcote – Missoula

Lauren Kearns – Corvallis

Dawson Laverell – Big Timber

Hailey Miles – Corvallis

Cole Taylor – Opheim

Jayna Jackson – Corvallis

Justice Betts – Missoula

**Montana Water Resources Association**

Alex Young – Fairview

**Coyne Family Fund Scholarship**

Shelby Morris – Missoula

**Bulls for Blue Grant**

Torin Ceele – Chinook

Alyssa Thormahlen – Belfry

Seth Carroll – Plevna

Shyla Benzing - Chinook

**SAE Grants**

Tiffany Ioder – Corvallis

Delilah Puckett – Twin Bridges

Timothy Lake – Fort Benton

Sasha Helmer – Missoula

Max Andres – Missoula

Severin Heimburger – Big Sandy

Jordyn Whitmus – Fromberg

Madelynn Beals – Belgrade

Lance Vranish – Belgrade

Devan Birrer – Fromberg

Elise Crago – Cascade

**CDE Scholarships**

ATMS – Noah Salo, Joliet

Agronomy – Caroline Roeder, Choteau

FAM – Joe Tatarka, Belgrade

Livestock – Walker Antilla, Joliet

**Star Greenhand** – Mackenzie Serrano,  
Roundup

## **State Officer Nominating Committee**

Luke LaLiberty (Facilitator), Matt McKamey (Facilitator), Leah Graf (Facilitator).

Chase Hibbard, Helena. Caroline Roeder, Choteau. Emily Evans, Fairfield. Glen Kitson, Cascade.

Karli Johnson, Choteau. Deanna Fritz, Conrad.

Officers Selected: **Brooke Mehlhoff**, Twin Bridges - President; **Bailey Gasvoda**, Big Sandy - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; **Chad VanDyke**, Dawson - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; **Mckenna Quirk**, Missoula - Secretary; **Gracie Smith**, Victor - Treasurer; **Gracie Tooke**, Carter County - Reporter; **Max Andres**, Missoula - Sentinel; and **Allyson Young**, Fairview - Parliamentarian.

## **Proficiency Award Winners**

Max Andres, Missoula - Ag Mechanics Design and Fabrication

Preston Long, Hysham – Ag Mechanics Repair and Maintenance

Aaron Lang, Kalispell - Agricultural Processing

Claire Stevenson, Hobson - Beef Production Entrepreneurship

Isabell Gilleard, Stevensville - Diversified Ag Production

Lexy Dietz, Shepherd – Diversified Livestock Production Placement

Amber Johnson, Choteau – Equine Science

Riley Bricker, Cascade - Outdoor Recreation

Caroline Roeder, Choteau - Sheep Production

Abby Fritz, Kalispell - Swine Production

## State FFA Degree

<i><b>First Name</b></i>	<i><b>Last Name</b></i>	<i><b>Chapter</b></i>
Violet	Azure	Bainville
Karisa	Goebel	Bainville
Aubrey	Picard	Bainville
Cash	Atkinson	Beaverhead
Hunter	Bockting	Beaverhead
Kash	Kemph	Beaverhead
Hunter	Probst	Beaverhead
Tate	Raymond	Beaverhead
Tristen	Setzer	Beaverhead
Timothy	Sigman	Beaverhead
Alyssa	Thormahlen	Belfry
Nicole	Green	Big Horn
Gracie	Fleming	Big Timber
Dawson	Laverell	Big Timber
Riley	Prather	Big Timber
Nathan	Ruth	Big Timber
Cody	Stene	Big Timber
Raelynn	Thomasson	Big Timber
Joziah	Brost	Broadus
Kortny	Cathey	Broadus
Garrett	Cunningham	Broadus
Megan	Johnson	Broadus
Kyle	Minow	Broadus
Gavin	Severeide	Broadus
Deanna	Twedt	Broadus
Taylor	Noyes	Broadwater
Hannah	LaBree	Carter County
Heather	LaBree	Carter County
Gracie	Tooke	Carter County
Ryan	Bogden	Cascade
Riley	Bricker	Cascade
Taylor	Brown	Cascade
Elise	Crago	Cascade
Kaitlynn	Lummer	Cascade
Kaitlyn	Wade	Cascade
Alyssa	Gruszie	Chinook
Jace	Pursley	Chinook

Kurtis	Slaughtner	Chinook
Rielly	Wiegand	Chinook
Wilbur	Bechtold	Choteau
Lila	Bradley	Choteau
Amber	Johnson	Choteau
Serena	Oyler	Clarksfork
Mariah	Stringari	Clarksfork
Leisha	Cahill Stadel	Columbus
Meaghan	Reed	Columbus
Charlie	Palacios	Corvallis
Ashtyn	Ator	Culbertson
Mariah	Cathey	Culbertson
Jacob	Crowder	Culbertson
Rachael	Gilbert	Culbertson
Gabe	Granada	Culbertson
Tyler	Wilbanks	Culbertson
Eli	Williams	Culbertson
Chay	VanDyke	Dawson
Keonna	Cunningham	Denton
Meseret	Econom	Denton
Lacey	Rabel	Electric City
Becca	Deming	Fairview
Allyson	Young	Fairview
Jacy	Ayers	Fergus
Allison	Denton	Fergus
Kaitlyn	Cardwell	Forsyth
Megan	Clark	Fort Benton
Shelby	MacDonald	Fort Benton
Brayden	Goodman	Fromberg
Aspen	Haman	Fromberg
Hunter	Holstein	Fromberg
Dacey	Robertson	Fromberg
Lyndsey	Turley	Fromberg
Grady	Cunningham	Gardiner
Makayla	Dines	Geraldine
Ellie	Meeks	Geraldine
Halle	Beil	Hinsdale
Elise	Strommen	Hinsdale

Cordell	Younkin	Hinsdale
Isabella	Long	Hobson
Rachael	Stevenson	Hobson
Sydney	Jackson	Hot Springs
Sage	Jackson	Hot Springs
Laci Ann	Lien	Hot Springs
Karina	Kuzo	Huntley Project
Madison	Batey	Hysham
Preston	Long	Hysham
Jordan	Grewell	Joliet
Brooke	Miller	Joliet
Caleb	Miller	Joliet
Tysa	Oswald	Joliet
Zayne	Songstad	Joliet
Maria	Bay	Kalispell
Cody	Bicknell	Kalispell
Madison	Brandt	Kalispell
Keith	Eberhart	Kalispell
Abby	Fritz	Kalispell
Matthew	Glimm	Kalispell
Luke	Heupel	Kalispell
Kajus	Holloway	Kalispell
Juniper	Isaak	Kalispell
Garrett	Jewett	Kalispell
Aaron	Lang	Kalispell
Kathryn	Lillie	Kalispell
Shelby	Olsen	Kalispell
Jackie	Petersen	Kalispell
Raney	Sutherland	Kalispell
Molly	Sutherland	Kalispell
Gabe	Gonsioroski	Lambert
Alyssa	Hill	Lambert
Blake	Lien	Lambert
Hunter	Watson	Lambert
Skyler	Daniels	Laurel
Emily	Hergenrider	Laurel
Jakob	Drabbs	Malta
Kendall	Moore	Malta
Georgia	Orahood	Malta
Kimberly	Frisk	Mission Valley
Ty	Smith	Mission Valley

Hailey	Weible	Mission Valley
Kyia	Hendrickson	Mission Valley
Max	Andres	Missoula
Justice	Betts	Missoula
McKenna	Quirk	Missoula
Sawyer	Reagan	Missoula
Logan	Turner	Missoula
Teagen	Turner	Missoula
Kodie	Booth	Park
Annica	Estes	Park
Joleen	Frost	Park
Madison	Morean	Red Lodge
Shaye	Salt	Red Lodge
Kodi	Bireley	Richey
Neale	Kelly	Richey
Chance	Senner	Richey
Sadie	Johnson	Roy
Berkley	Stroh	Roy
Ana		
Sophia	Du-Pond	Ruby Valley
Madison	Fabel	Ruby Valley
Grace	Larsen	Ruby Valley
Zoe	Lee	Ruby Valley
Cade	McParland	Ruby Valley
Kylee	Coates	Shepherd
Lexy	Dietz	Shepherd
Mason	Henry	Shepherd
Kaitlin	Kitchin	Shepherd
Kylie	Lemburg	Shepherd
Jesse	Matthews	Shepherd
Jessica	Tiry	Shepherd
Rylee	Fisher	Shields Valley
Seth	George	Shields Valley
Emmett	Gilbert	Shields Valley
Jaiden	Huttinger	Shields Valley
Tori	Johnson	Shields Valley
Kara	Lykins	Shields Valley
Cayla	Parks	Shields Valley
Dylan	Taylor	Stanford
Sydney	VonBergen	Stanford
Wes	Brown	Stevensville

Britaney	Eyre	Stevensville
Kaitlin	Garoutte	Stevensville
Isabell	Gilleard	Stevensville
Tanner	Pendergast	Stevensville
Kylie	Rhoades	Stevensville
Hunter	Rodrick	Stevensville
Zacc	Degele	Stillwater Valley
Kennedy	Ekwortzel	Stillwater Valley
Justin	Helbert	Stillwater Valley
Kaiya	Holmquist	Stillwater Valley
Tymber	Jensen	Stillwater Valley
Brandon	South	Stillwater Valley

Matthew	Hesla	Sweet Grass Hills
Brooke	Holland	Sweet Grass Hills
Landan	Omdahl	Sweet Grass Hills
Bailey	Postma	Sweet Grass Hills
Lillian	Challinor	Victor
Gracie	Smith	Victor
Melanie	Power	Wheatland

## **2019 AMERICAN FFA DEGREE RECIPIENTS**

Katelin Aisenbrey	Clarks Fork
Kyla Andres	Missoula
Jenna Barker	Conrad
Tyler Barnett	Electric City
Elizabeth Brennan	Missoula
VICTORIA LYNN BROWN	Electric City
Trent Cox	Cascade
Kolby Lee Dietz	Shepherd
Bailee Marie Doering	Beaverhead
Kaleb Flowers	Shepherd
Heidi Froelich	Park City
Jordan Lynn Grindheim	Roy
Julia Marie Grubb	Denton
Nicole Halfpop	Big Horn
Cheyenne Hall	Electric City
Tanner Harrell	Shepherd
Nate Harris	Plentywood
Mamie Hertel	Moore
Lainee Hill	Broadwater
Sheridan Johnson	Conrad

James Paul Kramer	Beaverhead
Dalton Lemburg	Shepherd
Colton Jay Liddle	Chinook
Jacob Martin	Culbertson
Hailey McMaster	Chinook
Kohltrane Michels	Shepherd
Logen Mydland	Joliet
Tyler Noyes	Broadwater
Kaitlyn Ohmstede	Clarks Fork
Makayla Paul	Electric City
Donny Robertson	Fromberg
Andrea Rutledge	Big Sandy
Saralyn Standley	Missoula
Abigail Jean Stevenson	Hobson
Ethan Turner	Missoula
Morgan Weidow	Corvallis
Gustav Karl Wenz	Shepherd
Tayler Wright	Joliet
Zachary Zimmerman	Missoula

## **Honorary State FFA Degrees**

Bill Lombardi: MAAE President

Mike Kaiser - Missoula Bus Driver

Brent and Tracie Roeder

Gordon and Ardis Oelkers

Paul and Cindy Sponheim

Rodney and Brenda Evans

Mike and Roni Baker

Shane and Erin Slivka

Tom and Shelly Andres

John and Samantha Ferret

Katie Thormahlen

## **Friend of the Foundation Award**

Ron and Becky Nelson

Bill and Ramona Holt

## **Lee Boyer Lifetime Achievement Award**

Lee Boyer (named in his honor)

## **State Convention Sponsors**

Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
Anderson ZurMuehlen
Animal Blessings Pet Hospital
Ann Newhouse
ARMtech Insurance
Association of Montana Aerial Applicators
Bank of the Rockies
Bayer Crop Science
Billings Farmhand
Bitterroot Stockgrowers
BNSF
Carroll College
Century Companies, Inc.
Church, Harris, Johnson, & Williams, P.C.

Colleen Barnard
Collegiate FFA of MSU
Cottonwood Vet Hospital
Curt & Meredy Robbins
DA Davidson
Dawson Community College
DryFork Ag
Eastern Wyoming College
General Distributing
Hubbard Feeds
Jay Armstrong
Laramie County Community College
Lyle Armstrong
MaxAg of Montana

McDonald's Montana Co-op
Merck Animal Health
Miles Community College
Montana 811
Montana Agribusiness Association Foundation
Montana Army National Guard
Montana Association of Agricultural Educators
Montana Contractors' Association
Montana Department of Agriculture
Montana Farm Bureau Foundation
Montana Farmers Union
Montana Grain Growers Association
Montana High School Rodeo Association
Montana Livestock Ag Credit
Montana Rail Link
Montana Range Days
Montana Seed Growers Association
Montana Seed Trade Association
Montana Timber Legacy Foundation
MSU College of Agriculture
MSU Collegiate Young Farmers & Ranchers
MSU Econ & Ag Econ
MSU Northern
National FFA Living to Serve
Neal Family
North 40 Outfitters
Northern Broadcasting

Northern Livestock Video Auction
Northwest College
Northwest Farm Credit Services
NorthWestern Energy
NutraLix
Opportunity Bank
ORigen
Peter Nelson Charitable Foundation
Pioneer Meats
Ranch House Meats
RDO Equipment Co.
Reach Higher Montana
Rock & Kristen Swenson
Senator Steve Daines
Sigma Alpha Sorority
Stockman Bank
TC Energy
Torgerson's, LLC
Tractor & Equipment Co.
Tri-State Truck & Equipment
University of Montana
University of Montana Western
WestBred
Wichman Ag Supply
Wilbur Ellis
Wood's Powr Grip





## Andrew Ferrat, Broadwater *State Parliamentarian* *A Place for Everything*

Does anyone else have that one thing that drives them absolutely crazy? One of those things you JUST BARELY witness and you are instantly mad, like slow walkers, loud chewing, or the word moist. I got a few of you out there with that one I can tell. Yeah? I know I did for the longest time. Mine started when... actually, I don't remember when my disdain for this started. I just know whenever I had to clean my room, I heard it. I'd walk in, look at the disaster zone that was my room (sigh), then from out in the living room I'd hear, "A place for everything and everything in its place!" My dad's favorite quote to use against me as a child. I HATED this saying. Mainly, I didn't want to clean my room. So, to guarantee that everything had its place, I threw open my closet door, pulled open all the drawers under my bed, and shoved

anything that would fit into those respective places. My room looked great until I needed to grab something. I'd reach into my closet and I would accidentally nudge something causing everything to spill out of my closet, and I was back to square one. Now frustrated, I heard my dad's saying again, "A place for everything and everything in its place," because he knew I did it wrong. Finally, I learned how to "properly" clean my room and I had a place for everything, and it wasn't shoved in the closet. We have similar times in life where we pack too much into each day, especially when we want to do everything.

Let's skip ahead to just before freshman year of high school. It was "Freshman Orientation" at Broadwater High School, and personally I didn't see the need to have a freshman orientation in a Class B high school of 200 kids, max, but I went because I had to. The teachers and principal went through their spiel and then we took a tour of the classes on our schedule. I searched up and down my schedule and looked at my dad, puzzled. "There's no ag class on here," I told him. The closest thing was Woods, and I didn't really want to take that class. Nothing against it, but I wanted to do FFA. After our tour I went straight to the school counselor and switched into the first ag class that worked for my schedule. Turns out that my first ag class wasn't your typical 'Ag 1' or 'Ag 2', at all. It was Natural Resources. Instantly, I was signed up, fifth period, first class right after lunch; it was going to be great or... maybe not so much; sorry, Mrs. Loughery. The first couple days of that class had me questioning if I actually wanted to stay there, not because of the class material, but some of the people in the class itself. It felt like none of the students wanted to be there. There were a lot of seniors who were just there to get their last couple credits. As a freshman, you want to learn from the seniors, but instead I felt like I was teaching them. Now what would a freshman do when they aren't sure about something? Try something else, and that I did. I was involved in a lot of stuff throughout high school. I participated in football, pep band, National Honor Society, and BPA. All of these things were great, and I had a good time with them, but they all had one thing in common. I had to make my own place within those groups. I had to find where I fit, what I even wanted to do. But FFA, that was different.

The first time I put on an FFA jacket was back in 2015 for John Deere Ag Expo. I met the bus outside Toston: white shirt, black jeans, black tennis shoes. Yeah, I didn't have much my first trip. I got on the bus and found my seat. My advisor walked up to me and said, "You need to try on one of these jackets." After going through a few chapter jackets we had on the bus that morning, we found one that fit just enough and a tie to complete the ensemble. I competed in only extemporaneous speaking that year, which was new from what

speech experience I had before. I was actually super nervous for this event because I hadn't had any practice before that day. To be honest, leading up to the event, I was watching Netflix with my friend Louis. The time came where I had to go give my speech and I had two options of how I was going to get through the speech... because there was no backing out at this point. 1, Either my advisor was coming in with me to watch, or 2, someone from our chapter was going to have a video camera taping the whole thing. I did NOT want my first competition ever to live in infamy on camera, so my advisor came in and watched me. This was probably the most nervous I had ever been for a speech before. Sure, I had given 4-H speeches and demonstrations for about 6 years at that point, but this one felt like there was more behind it. After my speech was finished, my advisor asked me what I thought about the whole thing, and THAT was when I knew there was something special about this organization.

The next year, I met two of the most influential people, I think I will ever know... Albert and Ashley Koenig, alumni of the Belgrade FFA Chapter. While they were serving as state officers, I was a sophomore in high school, completely in awe of everything they did. They showed everyone around them their passion for agriculture and being a part of FFA, making everyone feel at home with a hello as they passed by or a multi-hour conversation while helping a CDE team practice. After getting to know them, I KNEW I had a home in this organization. Whenever I put on the blue jacket after that, it felt...right.

We as FFA members will always have a family here in the blue jacket, no matter where we go, no matter who we are. We can all bring something special to the table. You just have to give it a shot and find your place. "A place for everything and everything in its place." Montana FFA, where will you find your place?



## **Kyla Andres, Missoula** ***State Sentinel***

### ***Letting Go of the Edge***

"Okay class, we're going to start with some warm ups. Everyone hop in the pool."

I sat on the bench.

"Kyla, go ahead and jump in and join the class."

Slowly, I dipped one toe into the water, then two, my legs, my body, and quickly grabbed the edge of the pool before I could go completely underwater.

"Okay awesome. Let's start by swimming out to me." My instructor moved ten feet towards the middle of the pool and gestured for us to

go. I hovered in the pool, clinging to the edge. Every command he stated, I simply ignored.

You see when I was in 1st grade my mom put me in swim lessons and that is about how they went, two hours a day, five days a week- for the next THREE YEARS. While my classmates practiced diving, kicking, and the backstroke, I would sit back and observe being too afraid to even try any of the techniques. When I did work up

the courage to even get in the water, I would never let go of the edge. I would clutch it so tightly my knuckles would turn white and my swim teacher would beg me to move even five feet towards the middle of the pool. I refused every time. You see for me the edge of the pool was safe, sturdy, and familiar- so I held on. These are words that I like, words that almost everyone likes. There are lots of us who are afraid to let go of the edge, and I don't just mean the edge of the pool. I mean the edges of life that are predictable and comfortable. Maybe it's because it's easier, maybe it's the fact that we don't like to take risks, or maybe it's because the edges don't scare us. If we never let go of the edge we can't get hurt, we can't make mistakes, and we can't fail.

Now, I remember a time when I let my fears get in the way of my life. One of my biggest fears is water. This is completely due to the fact that- secrets out- I'm twenty years old and STILL don't know how to swim. However, this summer, my sorority had the brilliant idea of going white water rafting. Being fairly new to this group of ladies and not wanting to miss out on this chance to bond with them I decided to come along. On the big day I woke up, got ready, arrived at the house we were meeting at and immediately began wondering how in the world I was going to get myself out of this NIGHTMARE. As I saw it, I had two options- 1.) Teach myself how to swim in the twenty minutes before we left OR 2.) Come up with a really good excuse. My mind started going a million miles a minute: "Maybe I should tell them I just have way too much homework- no that wouldn't make sense considering it's August." "I know! I'll tell them I pulled my bicep... lifting weights... at the gym" \*look at arms\* "Yeah, that's not convincing." "I'll just go with the tried and true: I can't go... I'm sick." I was patting myself on the back for this plan when one of the girls found me "Hey Kyla! Hurry up- we're getting ready to leave." I didn't even have the chance to object, I was pulled into the car and before I knew it I was standing with a helmet and lifejacket on and a paddle in my shaking hands. We began with a safety presentation during which I only cried twice and moved towards the river.

Now at this point, I was accepting my almost certain death when our raft guide, Tatum, yelled: "Is there anyone in this group who can't swim?" I raised my hand and looked around at the group which had people of all ages- including children. No one else had their hand up. Our guide pointed at me and said, "Alright, little lady I want you to sit yourself right here in front of me that way I can grab ya if you start to fall out." This probably would put most people at ease- I, however, am not most people. I was absolutely terrified that there was even a chance of me falling out. By the time that we set off, I had already thought of every single thing that could go wrong and every scenario ended with me underwater. However, before I knew it we were casually floating down the river.

Tatum began teaching us rowing commands and gave us a few more safety precautions. Everyone else in my raft practiced as Tatum called out things like "paddle forward, paddle backward, left-back, right-back." I sat with my paddle across my lap, clutching the safety grips. We started moving quickly down the river as we received more commands. I was sitting there when I saw another groups' raft pass us by. Now, I HATE water, but do you know what else I hate? Losing. Without even thinking, my paddle was in the water. With every stroke, my fears took the backseat to my determination. I stopped thinking about what I couldn't do and started thinking about what I could do, which was help my team get to the end of the river. My group was one of the first to get to the end and I was able to bond with people I now consider my best friends. I can't imagine what would have happened if I didn't go on that trip.

There are lots of times when we tend to put the most focus on the things that scare us, what we can't accomplish, or the obstacles that just seem too big. However, there is no use in focusing on the negative things in life. It's not very productive and more than that, it's just not any fun. During this white-water rafting adventure, my friends helped me let go of the edge.

This year I have had the absolute privilege to meet FFA members that aren't afraid of letting go of the edge. From Fort Benton, Monse could hold on to the edge by sticking to the familiar contests, but she chose to venture out and try the Agricultural Education CDE. Her risk paid off as she was awarded the high individual at JDAE this year. Casey from Forsyth is fearlessly himself through the jokes he tells and the stories he shares. He could keep to himself, but instead he lets go of the edge and brings joy to those around him.

These members and so many others in this organization live in the deep end. They aren't afraid of diving into their own lives and truly living. They don't allow fear to control them and we shouldn't either. It is time to let go of the edge, it is time to be brave enough to live your life without fear. You owe it to yourself to live, in fact that is the only person that you owe it to. Letting go of the edge means letting go of the expectations of others.

When I think of someone who lives without the weight of obligation, I think of my best friend. Saralyn and I met in second grade in Great Falls at the state FFA convention in 2008. From that moment we were inseparable. Always cracking ourselves up with all kinds of shenanigans including writing our phone numbers on clipboards during contests, insisting that everyone refer to us only as Kylyn Standres, and forcing our advisors to let us stay up past lights out to "study."

Like I said, we did everything together, including running for state office---twice. This year, at the end of the selection process, when Saralyn and I weren't selected to serve together, I worried that our times of being side by side were over. Well, let me tell you something, I was wrong. Saralyn knew she was born to serve regardless of a title and didn't let other people determine her worth. She stood by the sides of members as she volunteered during almost every competition, she inspired others through her work as a facilitator at national convention, and she continues to look for more ways to guide and mentor as she pursues her degree in agricultural education. Purpose is something I see consistently in Saralyn. Purpose is something that I saw time and time again throughout this year.

Charlie, a member of the Corvallis FFA chapter, knows his purpose lies in making everyone feel welcome and included. He organizes chapter bonding experiences so everyone knows they have a place and is a friendly face for everyone he meets. Tanner from Shelby has a natural talent for making others laugh and doesn't let anyone dull his light. He constantly reminded me and everyone around him that it's okay to not take life too seriously. Like Saralyn, Charlie, and Tanner we can find our purpose, but we need to do it for ourselves. Letting go of obligations is scary because it requires us to wade into the deep end and not let others simply tell us what to do or how to live. However, finding your purpose isn't an unreachable task. It's simply finding what makes you happy, motivates you, and gives you fulfillment. Now I'm not telling you that this means you don't have to ever do your homework again, clean your room, or wear your seatbelt just because it doesn't make you happy. Instead I'm challenging you to separate motivation from obligation. Pursuing our passions, achieving our goals, and even serving others has to begin with a decision, your decision. Action requires motivation and motivation comes from us. It doesn't come from your peers, teachers, or even your parents.

There's a quote by Mr. Theodore Roosevelt that sums it up perfectly:

"It is not the critic who counts; the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming. But the one who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms and the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause"

We are the man in the arena. We are the ones who are in charge of our own lives. We are the ones who have to decide we are going to let go of all of the fears and obligations that constantly keep us from being able to look back and say "I did it all."

It's so easy to let life pass you by. I could've chosen to play sick and let my fears get the best of me. Saralyn could've chosen to listen to those who told her she couldn't serve, but on she went serving. I challenge you to dare greatly. I challenge you to not only let go of the edge, but to dive into life. The time for you to live fearlessly and freely is right now. Life starts today. Life starts with you trying a new CDE, inviting the shy kid to sit next to you, deciding to be the first person in your family to go to college, and it starts with not allowing yourself to be held back with fears and obligations. We owe it to ourselves. Montana FFA, life starts with letting go of the edge.



## Andee Baker, Park City *State Treasurer*

### *Seize Every Moment*

Tick... Tick... Tick... Tick...

Time seemed to be the one constant throughout all my life. I never had enough of it during basketball wind sprints, but it would always find a way to slow down to a crawl during long road trips. I was always watching the clock, waiting for an FFA Contest to start, or scheduling upcoming events. Time controlled my life.

Tick...Tick... Tick...Tick...

It was a typical January Thursday afternoon, and I was waiting for the final bell of the day to ring. The ticking of the clock made me think about what my afternoon would consist of. I had 15 minutes to run from the ag class to my car, put my homework away, get changed, and be ready for basketball practice. The practice would last two

hours, and before the practice was even over, I was thinking about what needed to be done at home. I would have to eat dinner quickly and then head down to the farrowing barn to help pull pigs or check the new piglets. I would come back to the house, do my homework, shower, and pack for the next day's game or practice. When I woke up the next day, I would do it all over again.

(Does this sound familiar to anyone?)

As the days continued to go on, I realized the things that used to bring me happiness were nothing more than a task. I wasn't finding joy in the small moments, and all day I just wanted to go to my room and be alone. Luckily, I wasn't the only one noticing that I wasn't acting like myself. My mom came and sat on the couch like she did every evening. But instead of looking at the screen, trying to guess the next Jeopardy answer, she turned off the TV. The silence grew, but she broke the silence first, saying, "Andee, you've been acting different lately, are you okay." I responded by saying, "Yeah, I'm fine," but the tears filling my eyes told her the truth. My mom knew what to do. She said that we should see a doctor, and for a moment I looked at her because I was in perfect health, but I then realized the health issue I was having wasn't one that you could see.

Tick...Tick...Tick...Tick

Went the clock of the waiting room. The sound was consistent, but I could barely hear it over the racing of my heart. I began questioning myself, asking, "Why am I here, I'm normal." "I'm happy most of the time." "I have lots of friends." "I don't look like someone that would have mental health issues." And lastly, "I'm just overreacting, and I am strong enough to deal with this on my own." After what felt like a century, I found myself following the nurse into another room. She broke my endless thoughts by handing me a questionnaire to fill out. It asked questions that I never thought anyone but me understood. It asked questions like, "Have you been feeling down even though on most days, you're happy." Or "Do you have feelings that you are a failure and have let your family down." There were even questions asked that I thought had nothing to do with mental health, such as, "Do you have trouble concentrating" or "Do you have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much." I found myself answering yes to nearly all the questions on the form. I was stunned. I thought that I was having an off month. I thought that even though I felt alone for a while, that I was fine. That day my life was changed. I have anxiety and depression. For years, I tried to conceal this fact and told no one, but today I own it. It took time for me to learn how to control, understand, and sometimes love my anxiety and depression. At first, I was angry, disappointed, but also relieved. Realizing for the first time that I was not alone. Time let the relief grow into understanding and, eventually, acceptance. During this time, I made time for myself. I checked in to listen to my emotions, understanding what I was really feeling. I practiced saying "no," and instead of going out with friends on a Friday night, I stayed in and cooked dinner with my family. I learned to invest time in me, and from there, I began to understand the importance of investing time into other people.

Tick...Tick...Tick...Tick...

The seconds are counting down, and no matter how hard we try, there is nothing we can do to stop or slow down time. Throughout this past year, I have had the opportunity to meet a wide array of members that don't try to slow down time but instead seize the moment. They seize the moment, but not for themselves. Each of these members seize the moment to better those around them. When my year was just beginning, I was invited to the Big Timber FFA Banquet. I had a fantastic time, but at this banquet, one member went above and beyond. Riley Prather. Like many FFA banquets, there was an auction. I was there with four of my fellow officers, and we pooled our money together to try and get a pie. Together we had \$60, which is a lot for college students. The apple pie we all had our eye on ended up going for over \$200. We were laughing and enjoyed being able to bid, but after the meeting was over, Riley approached all of us and offered us an extra apple pie her family had. Riley did not have to do this; she went above and beyond. Riley invested her time in others by showing compassion. As the year continued, I attended my first ever ALC (Alumni Leadership Camp), I was totally unsure of what to do until I met a group of members and we began a game of volleyball. One member stuck out to me on that day, Monse Archuleta. Monse showed up to ALC in crocs, and throughout the week, I learned just how much she loved Crocs. She made me and others feel more comfortable where we were by being open and unafraid to be herself. Monse invested in others around her by being fearless. All these students understand the importance of investing time into those people around them. They push themselves to seize the day. These students are just a few examples I have seen throughout the year, but I know that everyone in this room can invest time in others, and I encourage you to do so. Time can be spent understanding ourselves, bettering those around us, but time can also be used to benefit teams, events, and organizations we care about.

Tick...Tick...Tick...Tick...

We have met some incredible people that have invested in the other people around them, but I have also met members that are dedicated and passionate about FFA. These individuals help with giving FFA an excellent reputation by leaving a lasting impact on people in their communities and throughout the state that they hardly even know. I was invited to give a greeting at the Livingston FFA banquet. While I was there, I had the chance to help the craziness that happens on banquet night. I was helping move flowers, put out papers for their silent auction and even got to help serve their dinner. After many of the other members had gone to get ready, Nik Pierson stayed behind and helped. I helped him serve pulled pork in the dinner line, and he was the last member to receive food at their banquet. Nik greeted all the community members with a smile and infectious happiness he shared with everyone. Nik invests in FFA by serving those around him. This last fall, at JDAE (John Deere Ag Expo), we had about sixty Bozeman 7th graders come and get the chance to experience FFA. As this was coming together, we thought that it would be beneficial if these students had the opportunity to hear the FFA Creed from members that were competing that day. With short notice, Victor FFA members did not hesitate. Kyah, Olivia, Hannah, Chloe, and Daniel gave the creed in groups to their peers. They answered questions about FFA and left a lasting impact on these future FFA members. Kyah, Olivia, Hannah, Chloe, and Daniel invest into FFA by relentlessly sharing their passion. In these uncertain times there are some outstanding FFA members that have continued to represent the FFA by adapting virtually and overcoming obstacles. I am not the most active on social media but I have seen the Roundup and Fromberg FFA Chapters work around fundraising challenges as they have been selling their greenhouse plants online. Gracie Smith of the Victor FFA Chapter has been making masks and sending them all across the nation to anyone that needs them. The Wibaux FFA advisor, Mr. Igo, brought us laughs as he competed in our photo challenge and showed us his love of the Office. Every member that has made a post, adapted to the challenges in the chapter or even called a friend just because has invested into FFA by being willing to be a light to those around them. Montana FFA, does time control your life? Do you never have enough of it, or are you always waiting on it? Time can drain happiness, cause worries, and force you to never live in the moment. But I challenge every person in this room to seize their moments, to use time to your advantage, and invest your time in your passions. It is okay to spend a Friday night alone in your room. It is okay to devote time to a passion. It is okay to invest time, not in everyone, but instead invest time in people who need it and will use it. Use your time to light up those around you. Montana FFA, I challenge you to use time to seize your moment.





## Emily Evans, Fairfield *State Secretary*

### Make Your Wagers

They turn for home, a roar floods down the length of the grandstands, and there I stand, winning ticket in hand. Three weeks earlier, in a Salt Lake City hotel room, I was glued to the tv screen, holding my breath as I watched American Pharoah win the second leg of the Triple Crown. As he crossed the finish line, my family, in the spur of the moment, decided to wager one weekend of our lives for the chance payout of witnessing history. So, on June 6th, an \$18 general admission ticket found me standing on the rail at Belmont Park, directly across from the finish line. 90,000 people and I watched as American Pharoah won the Belmont Stakes and the Triple Crown, a feat which had not been achieved since before many of our lives had begun. Strangers hugged strangers, wanting to embrace anyone and

everyone - wanting to embrace the day we would all remember for the rest of our lives. That day, I experienced a phenomenon of human nature worth more than any payout from a betting window. As I took in the magnitude of our last-minute bet on the Belmont Stakes, I realized that each of us makes wagers every single day. We weigh the costs of our bets against the payouts we are looking for. And, although we don't always get what we are hoping for, if we look closely, we will see that there are times in life when our risks provide unforeseen payouts. Sometimes it's the meticulous analysis of the odds and conditions and sometimes it's just luck. When I was 9 years old, we had a little horse race of our own, of which I was not the lucky winner. Like most kids, Elizabeth and I had little red wagons. This one particular day, we decided that the best way to spend our time would be to hitch one of those wagons to Max. Behold, our mighty steed!

Okay maybe mighty steed may not be the most fitting title for our little pony, but the little red wagon seemed to fit just right, so we put our money where our mouth was. Mum helped us secure the wagon to Max...and when I say secure I mean secure. Elizabeth had a good hold on the leadrope and I was just about to climb aboard the wagon when we decided it would be best to see if Max would even pull it first....my one intelligent decision for the day. Ready. Set. One rattle and he took off like the Ghost Light was on his heels. Straight into the barn he went. Bang! Crash! \*insert comic book graphics on screen\* Out he came again, nearly tearing the door off its hinges. The wagon was airborne at this point, missing both back tires, and three more ponies were in hot pursuit. It's Max for the early lead, the wagon close behind. Belle is in third position in between horses. Thunder is running in fourth on the outside. Molly is about 3 lengths off the lead, leaving Dad at the back of the pack! The first furlong is gone in 56 and one half seconds. Dad has a lot of ground to make up. As they round the north west corner, Max is at the head of the pack but he can't shake the wagon off his heels. Dad moves up on the outside. Max is all out at the pine tree. And it's Dad for the win with a hold on the rope! That day may have ended with a red piece of metal that was flat as a pancake and the opposite of a wagon trained pony, but our family ended up with one of our most memorable stories. Sometimes life's wagers bring us a far more profound payout, as I discovered at National Convention when I went on what should have been a ten-minute sandwich run across the street to Jimmy Johns. Just as I was about to turn a corner, an older African American gentleman on a bicycle stopped and said, "Excuse me. I have been seeing jackets like yours all week and was wondering

what you guys do.” My wager: some time and a sandwich. The expected payout: the opportunity to share FFA with someone. I decided it was more than worth the wager. He nodded with approval as I explained the tenets of FFA. I learned he had always wanted to be a musician and was still pursuing that dream. In fact, he was the man we had seen playing the buckets on the street corner the night of the Garth Brooks concert. Our conversation was interrupted by a phone call from my advisor summoning me back, and I offered a handshake in leaving. When he reached out to me, there were tears in his eyes as he said, “I’ll never forget this moment. Most people just assume they know what people are like, but you stopped to talk to me.” I stopped simply to explain something I loved. I had not expected that wagering twenty minutes outside of a Jimmy Johns would payout such a rich change in perspective. I knew I would not soon forget him either. This past year, I have met so many members who have taken those wagers in FFA and in life. Colton Noyes of the Broadwater FFA chapter decided to take a shot at parli pro and was on a state champion team as a freshman, earning himself the opportunity to compete at national convention. Mandy Brandt, originally from the Del Oro FFA chapter in California, left her family and everything she knew to pursue higher education at Montana State University. That wager brought her lifelong friends, one of whom I am honored to be, and many opportunities she would not have found in California. Montana FFA, I encourage you to take life’s wagers. So, in the words of my hero, Roy Rogers, “Goodbye, good luck, and may the good Lord take a liken to ya.”



## **Isaac Sponheim, Richey** ***State 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President***

### **Won't You Be a Neighbor**

Howdy Neighbor! How are you today? Man, this sure is some deal going on around here this week, huh? The State FFA Convention has always been my favorite time of year. The jackets, the contests, the themes... speaking of themes, Stationed by Success. Ya know, that really got me thinking, neighbor. You and I, we've always had a pretty good thing going. I ask to borrow a cup of sugar, you borrow my weed eater and don't return in for 3 and a half months. Do you have a few minutes? I've got just a couple things on my mind I'd love to share with you. You're not busy? Awesome, let's talk.

#### **What is a neighbor?**

If you Google “neighbor”, you’ll most likely find a definition that relates to proximity: like a next-door neighbor. Is that really all? Do we really have to limit the word neighbor to those in our immediate area? I’d like to offer a different definition. I asked Ivan Loutzenheiser from the Baker FFA what he thought the word neighbor means. He said, “A neighbor isn’t someone you just live next to, a neighbor is somebody within a community that you partake in.” I personally love this definition. It takes away the need for proximity and replaces it with the groups we are surrounded with, rather than be by choice or by circumstance. For the sake of analogy, let’s call these groups neighborhoods. Each “neighborhood” has a few different types of neighbors in it.



You've got the hermit for example. The hermit always stays in unless *absolutely necessary*, detached from what's going on, isolated for whatever reasons. There's also the over-eager neighbor who will simply not ever leave you alone. A plate of cookies for every holiday, a helping hand even when you don't want it, and maybe just a little bit too much interest in your personal life. Oooh yeah, can't forget about the grumpy old dude next door who, for whatever reason, hates everything about you. When you stop and really look at it, the neighborhood doesn't seem all that great, save for the last neighbor. Kind and helpful are a couple of ways they could be described, but for lack of a better word they're just... neighborly.

I've got some thoughts on that word "neighborly" in a sec here, but let's take just a moment and think about what neighborhoods you're in. A sports team? A club? Your FFA chapter? Now, if you take an honest look at yourself, which neighbor are you? Do you stay off to the side like the hermit? Do you maybe try to do too much or push too hard like the over-eager one? All the extreme types of neighbors can have negative impacts on us and those around us, that is why we need balance. That is why we need to be... neighborly.

**What is being neighborly?** I think I've got "being neighborly" down to three main parts. Don't worry it's not too complicated, just follow along here.

I can remember countless times as a kid running around the house with my siblings, whether it was with legos, lightsabers, or any other potentially painful object. Inevitably, somebody hit somebody else and a loud, "Moooooooooom" would ring out. When my mom showed up to referee whatever scuffle had broken out you would hear nearly every time without fail, "Well I didn't mean to" as if that somehow excused the need for an apology. You see, the intent of the action was never to cause our siblings pain, but that really didn't matter. The impact it had on them was the same either way. Intent vs. Impact carries through many areas of our interactions with neighbors. It's one of those things that is easier said than done, but you've got to come to the conclusion that it doesn't matter what you intended. The only thing that is of any consequence is how the other person interprets what you say or do.

Do you ever just kind of decide what you think of people. Now, let me explain; I know I've been just sitting around the library and maybe someone I barely know walks by. It's not something I'm proud of, but sometimes I find myself just deciding I don't like them. This is my critical heart. Sometimes I catch myself in these moments and I'm reminded of the parable of the speck and the plank. Imagine that you're sitting across the table from your neighbor and you can tell they have a little speck of sawdust in their eye. Now, it's everything you can do to not tell them they have something there, or even to just reach over and take care of it yourself. What is holding you back? There is a big 'ol 2x4 sticking out of your eye. This little story is a reminder that while, yes there are things in other people's lives that we may not be a fan of, we have plenty of our own stuff to deal with, and until we take care of it we are in no position to comment on their speck. That is why it is so important to check your critical heart.

So, show of hands... how many of you have heard the term "servant leader". If you're not familiar with the term, a servant leader is someone who shows leadership by putting the needs of others in front of their own. Coincidentally, this is also a trait of a good neighbor. Putting the needs, and sometimes even wants, of others before your own can make you into the neighbor everyone wants to have nextdoor. For example, maybe this looks like being willing to pick up the phone and talk to a friend, no matter how late it is. Or maybe these days, that looks like maintaining a little social distance.

Fred Rogers, often better recognized as simply Mr. Rogers, has been a staple of children's television programming since the late 60s. Every single one of the 912 episodes begins the same way. With the bright, peppy intro and Mr. Rogers putting on one of his many assorted sweaters. Mr. Rogers never failed to bring a new nugget of wisdom, week in and week out. You remember that whole "Stationed by success" thing? Well, 'ol Fred had something to say about success. He said that, "There are three ways to ultimate success: The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind."

As cheesy as that may be, just bear with me for a sec. There is a lot of truth here. Everything that goes into being neighborly boils down to kindness at its core. Intent vs. impact: being kind with your words. Checking your critical heart: being kind with your thoughts. Putting your neighbors needs first: being kind with your

actions. These three simple ways of employing kindness, of being neighborly, put us on the track that will station us by success.

Where can Intent vs. Impact be put into action in your life? Can you take a look at your tone of voice? Make sure that you are coming across the way you think you are?

What areas could you check your critical heart? Maybe in making judgements based off of first impressions?

Making assumptions about someone's behavior without knowing the whole story?

Where can you put your neighbor first? Picking where to eat? Giving up your free time to help a friend do homework?

We are all called to station ourselves by success, you can start by just doing your part, by just being neighborly.

Well hey, I've gotta rock-n-roll here, but thanks for stopping to talk for a bit. \*walk back and open the door\*

Real quick, do me a favor? Maybe pass on what we talked about? Awesome! I'll see you around neighbor. \*shut door\*



## **Lucas Oelkers, Culbertson** ***State 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President***

### ***Playing Your Song***

*(Walks out, sits on piano)*

Hello Montana FFA, to start with, I want everyone to sit back, to pause, and to close your eyes. Now I want you to answer the question of why you are here. Maybe, why are you watching this video, or why you decided to be in FFA?

I want everyone to think of the reasons behind this. This reason could be your advisor, it could be the friends that are in your chapter, or it could be the family members around you that pushed you to join FFA. Everyone can open their eyes now. Whatever your reason was for why we are here, behind everything, there was someone who cared about you. There was someone who put forth

the energy for you to be here and they want you to be the best that you can. That all started with someone caring, someone caring about you. This person did not care about themselves, but they cared about the people around them, and that was you.

Now, if we don't care about the things that we do or the people around us, it is almost like we are just waltzing through life. Isn't it nice to just sit back, and relax ... It is nice to just go with the flow, but what happens when we do this, Nothing!

Waltzing through life is an example of an action and a feeling. There are a million action and feeling pairs. Let us take a look at some of these possibilities.

Let us think about the first time that you saw your beautiful crush walking towards you. You were just star struck, you were on cloud 9.

So, you mustered up some courage, and you walked up to this girl to introduce yourself, but you got so anxious, so nervous, that you could not even say your own name.

You blew it man, this girl doesn't want you anymore, some other guy comes around, and whisks her off. So, what do you do? You become angry.

But you forget about the girl, you realize that we all make mistakes, that there are other fish in the sea. So, what do you do? You become happy.

I mean who can't be happy during Christmas music. But you take some time to reflect, and you become sad again. It was false happiness! Have you ever listened to sad music because you were sad... Right!? All of us have, we listen to that kind of music because it is our emotions, it is our feelings.

Another example, who here has listened to crazy music because they are trying to get hyped up for a football game? Or walked into a store and heard our favorite song being played and it started to make us feel happy? In life, there is music all around us during the day. There is music on our phones, music in stores, music in the way we walk. Everything around us produces a sound, and it makes us feel a certain way.

If music puts us in a certain mood, why would we not try to surround ourselves with music that is right for us. This music can be actual music, as well as hypothetical music. This hypothetical music is the way that we are acting and the way that we are feeling. The interactions that we have with other people is a form of music. We must make sure that we are playing the right music, and we must be around others that are playing the right kind of music.

Let's get an example going of a time that I realized that I wanted to be around others who play the right music. Now, it's the summer of 2012, it's the 4th of July to be exact. Imagine, Little Lucas- a foot shorter, just the same weight. Sitting down next to one of my cousin's new boyfriends. This was the first time that he's been around the whole family and I wanted to work my magic. I started asking him questions about his life, and it started to turn south pretty quick. I realized that this man grew up with a hard life, the song that he was playing to me was rough, but he told me one thing that I will never forget today. And that was that I should count myself lucky because I had all of these family members around me, none of these people are arguing, fighting, or having a bad time. He said that everybody has been so welcoming to me. I never thought twice about having a different style of family. One where you dread to see the in-laws, one where you never want to see your family members again. From that day on, I realized that my family's song was one that I always wanted to be around. And I realized that I wanted to show others that song. Montana FFA, a time where I see this similar song being played is when I am around you. This organization has become my family and you are all a part of it. Each and every one of you plays a note in its melody and it is beautiful.

So, Montana FFA, what I'm telling you to do is to find your song in life. Remember us waltzing through life, why would we do that when there are people all around us that truly care about us. If you don't believe me, look at my jacket, there are over 5,000 members from across the state that put on a blue jacket that is just like this one. We are united by this jacket. All of these people I consider a family, and as should you. Always know that someone around you cares about your song. Montana FFA, go out and play your song.



**Caroline Roeder, Choteau**  
***State President***  
**AND**  
***Anna Slivka, Winifred***  
***State Reporter***

***Keep On The Sunny Side***



**Caroline:** How many of you absolutely love swimming? Truthfully, I'm not much of a swimmer myself, but I took a bunch of swimming lessons when I was younger. My favorite thing to do was diving. I loved pushing myself deeper and deeper descending into the marvelous stillness of below. I could stay there forever enveloped by the water and with the noises of life were muffled. I could just be. But then, my lungs would start to burn. In the back of my mind I knew I could stay there, under water, that burning in my lungs could intensify, my limbs would start to tingle from lack of oxygen. I could continue to enjoy the murky deep silence of underwater, but my body reminded me it was time to ascend. And then, I would look up. There, above me was a dancing, shimmering light. There was the sun, shining deep under water.

I would point myself towards that glistening pool of light and reach my arms upward. My ascent would accelerate faster and fast until I broke the surface. And then, there it was - my parents, my brother, my friends, the sunshine, the green grass, the brilliantly colored flowers all bathed in the warming light of the sun. My lungs no longer burned and my heart beat settled to a steady throb. The birds sang sweet melodies and the wind rustled through the trees. How beautiful the world is in the presence of the sun! How unlike the surface world are the murky yet alluring depths of water! The sun shines there in a manner reminiscent of life above the surface.

**Anna:** I heard you were talking about swimming! I love swimming! Have you ever done a belly flop that ended up being so painful that your whole body is numb for a few hours? I totally did that once... never again.

There is nothing I love more than to be able to spend a day repeatedly jumping into the river or swimming at the pool whilst imagining I am a mermaid... yes, I still do that. I have not always enjoyed the water though. I took swimming lessons for the majority of my childhood in the summers, and one summer, when I was four or five years old, I was terrified of going underwater. I imagined the water surrounding me entirely, closing in on me, and not having the strength to escape its weight. My philosophy was that I would not go under, because the world above water was so much easier to exist in. Above water, I had the freedom to breathe, the whole world to explore, and the warm sun shining above me. If it was all up to young Anna, I would never, ever go under the surface. Unfortunately enough, I was not in charge. Swimming lessons often ended with jumping off the side of the pool into the arms of our teacher. I practiced my acrobatics as I flung my body through the air and hit the water over and over. However, the next thing I knew, (pause) my teacher let my body plunge under the surface of the water.

**Caroline:** I'm drowning! I'm drowning! Earlier, when I mentioned swimming, I didn't mention that I almost drowned one time. I got carried away by a strong river current and was forced into deep water. To make it worse, I got caught up in the branches of a willow overhanging the river. I couldn't get out. I felt the time and my life slipping away. I panicked, and I was suffocating. I thought I was going to die. In those murky depths, the sun was gone. I couldn't escape the powerful focus I felt on me and my personal troubles. I certainly couldn't find joy.

**Anna:** We all have to go underwater sometimes, even when we do not wish to. Even if you have the stubborn will of a four-year-old and enough spunk to fight Chuck Norris, you will face a time when you are suddenly sinking down below the surface. Life is not always filled with time spent in the sun with a seemingly endless supply of happiness. This worldly happiness is temporary. Hard times, trials, and grief are all parts of life that we cannot ignore when we plunge into the cold, dark, unknown below the surface. We cannot control when we face trials, but we can control our reactions to being submerged in those trials.

It is easy to see the sunlight when we are above water. Happiness seems to be easy to find when life is good. There are flowers, green grass, and dogs to pet. But when life takes a turn, happiness cannot seem to be found. Happiness does not last. However, joy can be found in the good times and the bad. Joy is everlasting. When we have to take a dive into hard times, you will never see the sunlight streaming through the water if you close your eyes. Open your eyes when you face trials and find joy. When you're underwater with your eyes open, you will not be able to see the flowers, green grass, or your dog, unless maybe he likes swimming too. However, you will see the sunlight. Even if the water is clouded with swirls of dirt and covered with a film of algae, you can still make the choice to open your eyes and find the light. Sometimes, that choice is harder than others. Maybe the chlorine stings your eyes. Maybe you are scared of the pressure. Regardless, the sun shines through the good times and the bad, whether we are at the bottom of the pool or standing in the shallow end. It is your choice to open your eyes, look up, and find the light.

**Caroline:** The elementary school I attended had no affiliated high school. Therefore, when I graduated 8th grade, I had to pick a local high school to attend - there were quite a few within reasonable driving distance. Believe it or not my final choice was dead opposite of what my parent's thought was best for me. Long story short, they made me go to Choteau. Today, I am incredibly thankful they did this - it was the right school for me. But then, I was outraged. I wanted to go to the same school as all of my friends. I did not want to be told what to do, and I absolutely did not want to go to Choteau. My parents even had a stipulation that after one year I could switch schools. I just had to give it a try. I started volleyball coming into my freshman year to get acquainted with some people prior to the school year beginning. My brother was a senior playing football so we drove the 60-mile round trip to Choteau together for two-a-day practices. That is a lot of silence to fill twice a day in a single cab Chevy pickup. I was not adjusting well to my new high school and several times I silently cried on the way home. How could my brother not notice this?

Not long before classes began, one of the junior girls on the volleyball team, Katie, who I admired, stopped me and said, "You know Caroline, adjusting to Choteau is probably going to be rough, but your brother just wanted me to let you know it's going to be okay. It's good to hear that sort of thing from someone other than family".

When I made the transition from my elementary school to attending Choteau, I was absolutely consumed with self-pity, anger, and frustration. I was drowning in my emotions and my life circumstances. I felt like I couldn't control what was happening - just like when I was literally drowning. It seemed that nothing good could come from this transition. But then Katie, said "it was going to be alright". And there it was, the sun. Shimmering, just faintly in the murky waters that I felt my life had become. With the help of my brother, Ben, Katie transformed my disposition about my new high school. I had opened my eyes to find joy. This change did not happen instantaneously, but it gradually overcame my feelings of self-pity and disappointment.

**Anna:** We all face trials. Maybe you are facing something difficult in your life right now. I would like to ask you all a favor. Take a moment and imagine you are sitting in the four seasons arena in Great Falls, where Montana FFA members, advisors, parents, sponsors, and guests are all gathered in front of the stage. The blue and gold lights are sweeping over the crowd as you pull at your corduroy jacket from floating above your shoulders in one of those audience seats that induces extreme back pain. Surrounding you is a sea of individuals who have all experienced grief in their lives. Your advisor, your best friend, and even that kid who sleeps during session. Instead of focusing on the grief you have experienced, take the time to help others find joy. You have the power to learn how you can be a light for your advisor, your best friend, and even the sleeping member. Will you help others find joy? The LaBree sisters from Carter County help me find joy. Even though I was exhausted at CDE days last year, they continued to encourage me with endless energy, even though they were probably tired too. Cole from Opheim helps me find joy. He exemplifies an attitude of kindness to each and every person he meets, even if that person might not return kindness. Miya from Gardiner helps me find joy. This girl lights up every room she enters, and gives her all to everything she does in her busy life. If I can accomplish one thing with my life, it is to shine this miraculous gift of light that I have been given and shown time and time again and help others find joy.

Helping others find joy brings a sense of joy in itself. Therefore, focusing on your own ability to find joy and helping others do the same goes hand in hand. These two dynamics create a harmony in our lives whether we are holding our heads above water or not. In music, harmony is created with the composition of two individual sounds that appear to be one. When we listen to harmony, it is hard to distinguish the two pitches separately, but when those frequencies are released together, they blend to form a new and unique sound. When you face grief, trials, and the hardships of this world, you have the choice to find that stream of sunlight underwater. When you see someone struggling to reach the surface of the waves, you have the choice to bring them to the

light. When you leave your living room, your bed, or wherever you may be watching this, you have the choice to create a harmony of these two actions in your life. Find joy. And help others do the same. So, Montana FFA,

There's a dark and a troubled side of life  
But there's a bright and a sunny side too  
If you meet with the darkness and strife  
The sunny side we also may view

*(Caroline and Anna sing)*

Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side  
Keep on the sunny side of life  
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way  
If we keep on the sunny side of life  
(one of us shouts quickly "Montana FFA,"  
Keep on the sunny side of life

**Caroline:** Sometimes in our life, we are figuratively forced to stay underwater. Perhaps the circumstances of our lives or the circumstances of our minds hold us in the depths. But then, we look up. Whether it be by our own initiative or the help of someone else. And there it is, the sun. Suddenly our face warms from its brilliancy. We think, I can handle the depths of the water. Even if I'm forced to stay here, the sun still shines above me and at some point, I will be able to rise above the surface. First, though, to see it, to see the sun, we must choose to look up. So, look up.