

Conservation Conversation

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Annual Meeting Held in Spite of Weather

By Tony Pals



1st Place Winner

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District held its 63rd Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 21st at the American Legion Hall in Vandalia. We had 80 people in attendance this year.

Considering the fact that it was probably the worst weather we've had for an annual meeting, that was a good turn out. John Gehrke, Farm Loan Specialist from the Farm Service Agency, gave the invocation. The meal, catered by Miller Market of Ramsey, followed. After the meal, and a slide presentation of conservation activities in the county, the poster contest winners led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. A short business meeting followed, including the election of three directors. Jake Hortenstine was re-elected for another term, and Susan Holdeman and Matt Runge were elected to replace the retiring Dale Jahraus and Kelly Tarter. Mary Ann Hoeffliger, District Conservationist then gave a short report on all of the conservation activities in the county this past year.

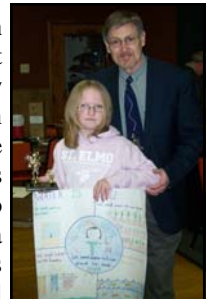
Steve Henna, representing the Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District and the First National Bank of Vandalia, then awarded a plaque and sign to the Lee Stokes family as the Conservation Farm Family of the year. Lee, son of Howard and Mary Stokes, was raised on the family farm near Ramsey, graduating from high school in 1964. Lee attended the University of Illinois, graduating

in 1972 with a degree in accounting. He later got his law degree and now has his own law firm in Bozeman, Montana. Lee is married and he and his wife, Judy, have two grown children, Rebecca and Ethan. Lee's mom is

a retired school teacher, having taught 31 years in the Ramsey school system. She was also very active in the community. The present day Stokes farm has been in the family for over 150 years. In the past five years Lee has: installed three acres of grass waterways, a block chute, and repaired over 8100 feet of some of the first tile outlet terraces in the county. On part of

his farm, he is going to a Management Intensive Grazing System, putting in a water well, 3780 feet of pipeline with six hydrants, a stream crossing, and 7243 feet of fence, with additional cross-fencing. Lee's operators are Dave Marley and Brad Lay.

Tony Pals, standing in for Jerry Reed from the First National Bank of Brownstown, then presented the awards for the 4th grade poster contest. This year's theme was "Water is Life". Winners were: 1st place – Patrick Hannagan, from St. Elmo Grade School, 2nd place – Spencer Hulsey, from South Central Grade School, and 3rd place – Robbi Edwards, also from St. Elmo Grade School. They received \$100, \$75, and \$50 savings bonds respectively, and each was given an engraved trophy. Patrick's poster will now enter competition at the state level. The winners of the annual soil judging contest were



3rd Place Winner



2nd Place Winner



Lee Stokes Farm Family

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Could that be a halo

No expense spared for the speaker - Mr. Anthony Pals.

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Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

Here it is time for another newsletter, seems like the time goes faster and faster all the time. We sure have had some nasty weather so far this year - rain, snow, sleet, freezing rain, and wind. Some days we had all of it in one day. On the day of the district annual meeting, we had wind, freezing rain, sleet and snow. Janice and I went to town early that morning to beat the weather but it was snowing before we left. We stopped by the office and told Tony that if it got any worse we weren't going to be back that evening. Well, it got worse. I heard that a good crowd of brave souls showed up. I'm sure that it was a good meeting as usual. Maybe the weather will be better next year. One evening this past month we went to Salem to watch Jordy in the school's Scholar Bowl. He's in the sixth grade, and I'll tell you, the questions they had to answer were hard. I really don't think they would want me on their team. Jaron is on the High School team. We went to one of his competitions the other day. I didn't even understand the questions, let alone know the answers. Anyway, Jordy had a basketball game that evening too. That was the evening the wind blew like the dickens. We were in a parking lot with the truck, and the truck would rock back and forth. Power was blinking on and off, trash blowing all over. And rain, I mean it rained. John called us on the phone when it finally let up a little, and said that they were at the Wal-Mart parking lot. We went over there. Most of the spotlights were off, and we found out that the lights were out at the gym, so we came home. The north end of Salem was out of power. We drove from there to the Fayette/Marion line and no one had any power. That was sort of



erie. Jordy's ball games are over; they did better than I thought they'd do. They even won the consolation game in the tournament. It was a thriller. They had the lead most of the game, but with less than thirty seconds to go our team is down by two points. John is the coach, he's tense, Granny and Mom are tense. I'm sort of calm - well, you know. Our team brings the ball down, Jordy gets the ball. He looks around, no one open. He shoots a three pointer, the gym gets quiet. Then all you hear is the bottom of the net as the ball swishes through! We lead by one. The other team gets the ball. They bring it down and take a last shot, but it doesn't go in. The buzzer goes off and the game is over. WE WON! Now, we all know that the last shot did not win the game, but for a Pa Pa and Granny, it was thrilling. Jordy did win a free throw contest last month, too. Well, while I'm on the grandkids subject, Tim went to Las Vegas again with his work. Travis got an award at his work. Jaron and a bunch of senior boys danced with the Salem girls' dance team. That was a show and a half! By golly, I almost forgot about the varmint update: That skunk is digging the place up. Every time the ground is thawed some here, he comes out to eat. I always thought they slept during winter, but this one (or more than one) doesn't. When this weather turns warmer, I'll have to get serious about taking care of them. Here's a question, "Why are benches called stands when they're made for sitting?" The old saying, "You can think without speaking but don't speak without thinking." Hope the weather is a lot nicer the next newsletter.

Annual Meeting Held in Spite of Weather

By Tony Pals

(Continued from page 1)

then announced. This year's winning team was from St. Elmo. Team members included: Colton Booher, Blake Wright, Fletcher Morrison, Chelsey Durbin, and Lucas Mitchell. Their advisor is Bill Waggoner. Vandalia won the area Envirothon competition again this past year. They were presented with a traveling trophy for their efforts. Team members included: Drew Bell, Taylor Wollerman, Zach Roper, Sara Schwarm, and Austin Wollerman. Their advisor is Barbie Elliott. The logo for the

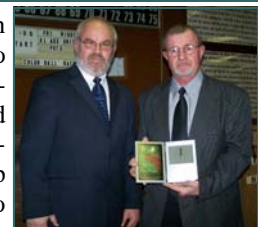


Vandalia Envirothon Team and Advisor receive award



Bill Waggoner - St. Elmo Soil Judging Team Advisor

Fishing and Conservation Club, always volunteers to give a presentation at Conservation Field Days and Vandalia Lake Appreciation Days. Barbie lines up high school students to help at the previously mentioned events, has helped with a trail plan for the Vandalia Lake area, and been an active participant with the Envirothon since it was started.



Kelly Tarter receives award

Dale Jahraus and Kelly Tarter were then presented with engraved clocks for their dedicated service to the district as board members for 12 and 6 years, respectively.

back of the tee shirts worn by Envirothon competitors is decided through a competition in the vocational art class at Vandalia High School. This year's winner and recipient of a \$100 savings bond was Megan Schultz.

The district also presented engraved clocks to Barbie Elliott and John Blythe as a token of appreciation for all of their help with the district's conservation education program. John, representing the Vandalia Sport



Barbie Elliott receives award

The district spared no expense in securing the services of the principal speaker this year - me. I gave a PowerPoint presentation on Global Warming and what each of us can do to help fight this very serious problem.



Dale Jahraus receives award



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Conservation Calendar

<p>April 2008 22 - Earth Day 23 - Administrative Professional's Day 24 - SWCD Board Meeting 25 - Arbor Day</p>	<p>May 2008 9 - Jake Hortenstine Birthday 11 - Mother's Day 17 - Armed Forces Day 22 - SWCD Board Meeting 26 - Memorial Day</p>
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District Funding

By Tony Pals

Some of you have probably heard that districts, as of this writing, have received only one-quarter of their allocation of grant funds for FY 08 (July 1, 07 to June 30, 08). Several districts will be closing their doors in May if budgeted funds are not received. Most of the 98 districts in the state cannot last a year without restored funding or major cutbacks in programs. And while the Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District is not yet in extreme financial hardship, we will be discussing ways to reduce spending at the next board meeting later this month. I can't speak for the board, they have to make the decisions, but one way to reduce costs would be to cut back on the number of issues of this newsletter. It costs us \$1000 to do each issue. Another option would be to continue the newsletter on our web site. It would cost us nothing to do that (other than time). If we can get everyone that has access to the internet to send us your email address, we will send you a reminder that the new news-



letter has been put on our website. We can save money and still get you information on conservation (and, of course, "Nelsie's News"). But this will only work if we get enough people to send us their email address. You can send it to; Karen.Sanders@il.nacdnet.net. Our website, if you haven't checked it out, is; www.fayettecountyswcd.com. When you go to that site, you'll notice that the newsletter is multi-color instead of two-color like the printed version. So this article is to let you know two things. First, if we can get enough folks to get the newsletter over the internet, we can continue to publish it every two months. Otherwise, if the June-July issue of "Conservation Conversation" doesn't show up around June 1 the district board may have chosen to reduce the frequency of issues. Funding seems to go in cycles, and, being around as long as I have, I've seen the good times and the bad times several times. Hey, that's almost profound!

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. This policy covers all programs, services, and procedures of the district, including employment.