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Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association

From The Nest

A Letter From The President Tom Hawthorne

I have heard lots of members say, "what does MATA do for me?" The board's major focus has been determining the needs of our members and producing results. So, if you have an idea let us know. Also, if you are doing a neat project or lesson, take some pictures do a short writeup and send it to Kelcey Trewin. She will include it in the newsletter.

Save the dates July 12-15, 2020 for the Region VI Ag Teacher Conference in Washington County. The next newsletter will have all the details for the conference. Quinn, Tom, and the Region VI planning committee have been working hard to put a great conference together.

Enjoy the holidays,
Tom



No Two Owls are Exactly Alike *Agriculture Educators From the Sea to the Mountains of Maryland*



will be implementing CASE Food Science and Safety in the 2020 school year.

Prior to teaching at Queen Anne's County High School, Brian attended Virginia Tech, where he studied Crop and Soils Environmental Science, with a concentration in Turfgrass Management. After graduation he worked on the grounds crew for the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball team, which led to him becoming the Head Groundskeeper with the Potomac Nationals, their High A affiliate. He held the head groundskeeper position for 2 years, when his former high school called him about teaching the landscape course that sparked his agricultural interests in high school. Brian taught at Thomas A. Edison High School in Alexandria, Virginia for 3 years.

While still teaching in Virginia, Brian and his wife, Maddie, bought a house on Kent Island, Maryland; which ultimately led to him teaching at Queen Anne's County High School. When he is not teaching or attending FFA functions, Brian manages his own lawn and landscape business, specializing in lawn maintenance. Brian enjoys classic cars, camping, and traveling with his wife and Labrador, Forrest.



Classroom >>>

It's the Holiday Season!

They say you shouldn't smile until the holiday but these classrooms know that smiling year round makes for some awesome memories. Here's what a few schools are doing to celebrate the season of giving.



Gwynn Park- Students are ramping up their community service by collecting donations to fill Blessing Bags for Family Matters Empowerment Center. As students venture closer to the holiday they may also choose to participate in a volunteer day making dog treats for Prince Georges County Animal Services, Division for Dog Treats! Students are truly experiencing the season of giving as they live to serve in their local communities.



Southern- As the leaves turn brown the students of sothern are partaking in a timeless classic of handmade wreaths and Christmas tree sales! On the 20th of November students unloaded Christmas trees and set them up to prepare for their sale!

SAE...
EXPERIENCE IT!

SAE for ALL!

With SAE for all Training in full swing lets reflect on what we have learned! SAE has experienced a big update from The Council! A few of these changes include Foundational SAEs and two new immersion SAE types including School Enterprise and Community Service. These updates are to ensure equal opportunity to develop a well rounded career ready student.

As of December there have been 7 training sessions hosted by our SAE training team. One in September at CTSO, one in October at COLT for both students and teachers, and five at each Regional Leadership conference in November. If you missed out on the training or would like additional info check out The Council's website or feel free to contact Terrie Shank for more information!

FFA >>>

COLT. National Convention. Regional Leadership! OH MY!

As many of us know fall is not only one of the busiest seasons for agriculturists it is the most tedious. This is no different for our FFA state officer team. This fall our state officers have spent their time in Massachusetts, Indiana, River Valley Ranch, and in each region of Maryland all in an effort to promote leadership for our FFA Members.

In October our State Officer Team hosted Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT) at the beautiful River Valley Ranch located in Manchester Valley Maryland. Here members engaged in workshops and chapter challenges that taught them leadership skills like inclusivity, discovering their passions, and navigating team interactions. Members spent this long weekend with one another learning how to become the best versions of themselves and take that lesson back to their chapters.

At the end of the month the team traveled west to Indianapolis where Officers Mallory, Sierra, and Jill served as delegates for Maryland FFA as they sat on the committees of Production Agriculture, Associate Needs, and Membership Experience. FFA members also had the opportunity to engage in workshops put on by sponsors, past state and national officers, and current state officers including one put on by our very own state officer Mallory!

For those who did not get the chance to participate in leadership development events at either COLT or National Convention State officers traveled to each region to facilitate workshops where members gained skills in advocacy, FFA opportunities, and finding your message while developing professional skills like elevator speeches and handshakes.

Stay tuned for more adventures to come with your State Officer Team!



As one Chapter Ends May Another Begin

Recognizing George Mayo!

Never underestimate the influence Ag teachers have with their students. It was my 7th grade Ag teacher who inspired me to choose ornamental horticulture as a career. Years later, once firmly entrenched in the Green Industry, I was again challenged by this same Ag teacher to help elementary education teachers learn how to use horticulture in their classroom.

Ultimately, these two encounters resulted in an unexpected and very rewarding 15 year career working with educators across Maryland and people in all areas of agriculture. Learning the vocabulary of education was nearly as challenging as learning botanical names for plants. Having highly qualified professional educators as partners was essential. Together, we advanced the mission of the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. (MAEF).

My first introduction to MATA was at their 2000 conference. I represented the Green Industry in a proposal to provide certificates recognizing students who had completed a course of study in high school Horticulture. MATA members liked the idea of an industry certification but wanted a complete program with curricula and assessments. Eventually, the stars aligned and in collaboration with the Green Industry, MSDE, MATA members, and MAEF, the Certified Professional Horticulturist (CPH) became an approved program of study in Maryland.

I was hired as director of MAEF in 2004 which was the third year of the Ag Tag as a revenue source. Even with this new revenue, funding was limited and required a constant monitoring of cash flow. Several years later the state approved increasing the background scene plate fees from \$5/plate to \$10/plate.



This initiative doubled the revenue from the Ag Tag allowing MAEF to expand programming and outreach.

Over time, MAEF's staffing increased to include directors for elementary, middle school & natural resources, high school/post-secondary, and Maryland FFA. Education and program support staff, mobile science lab teachers, and office support staff were increased as well. With these professionals, MAEF helped local school systems in five counties and Baltimore City establish new Ag programs. With assistance from MSDE, MATA, and industry, MAEF helped expand Maryland FFA, add Farm Based Education and Career Discovery for middle school, add distance learning for professional development, as well as expand the mobile lab and Maryland Agricultural Showcase programs.

Working with these amazing professionals and the Ag educators in Maryland and beyond has been rewarding beyond words. It all started with two inspirational encounters with a very dynamic and innovative Ag educator, Robert Keenan. I am forever grateful for Mr. Keenan and everyone's support through the years.

Lesson learned? Never underestimate the influence Ag teachers have with their students!!!

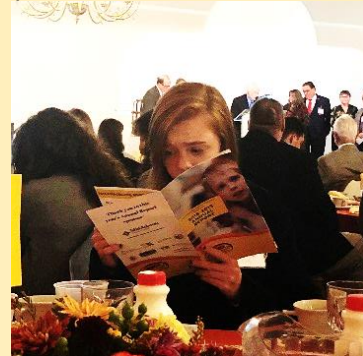
George Mayo - November 14, 2019



More than an Ag Tag MAEF Banquet and Auction

The 31st Annual Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation Banquet and Auction was held on November 7th, 2019. Friends, family, students, teachers, and colleagues gathered at Michale's 8th Avenue for a celebration of those who have been part of MAEF's ever unfolding story. Jim Ferrant emceed the program for the evening. Jim proudly boasted about all the great programs that MAEF has promoted and performed including one of the biggest achievements including the 1 millionth student to visit their mobile labs and their newest program in partnership with Goucher College titled "Infusing Agriculture In the Elementary School Classroom." Representatives from Maryland FFA, 4-H, Maryland Dairy Princess, and Miss Maryland Ag brought greetings and toasts to the audience. Soon after dinner was served.

Tables featuring arrangements created by students of Middletown Highschool were centered and surrounded by laughter and chatter as stories were shared and meals were enjoyed. As the program proceeded attendees were encouraged to bid on items lined up across the back of the banquet hall. Mr. Ferrant soon returned to the stage to honor members of the Maryland agriculture and education community who have assisted in helping MAEF achieve their mission "To promote the understanding and importance of agriculture in our daily lives." For more about the 31st Banquet and Auction and photos please visit the MAEF website!



Bridging the Gap

Year after year students enter our classrooms, participate in extracurriculars, and expand their passion for agriculture. However, if you are like me you probably ponder endlessly if the material that you are teaching your students is making a true difference in their lives.

Avery, a student of Westminster High, is a great example of how impactful our programs can be on student lives. Avery is a graduating senior planning to attend Kansas State University to study

animal science with hopes to become a Livestock Embryologist. Through out her 4 years studying Avery followed the Animal Science CASE pathway and formulated her Supervised Agriculture Experience on livestock showmanship and management of her families Angus Beef herd. In addition to being a stellar student Avery has also been a highly involved member of her FFA chapter. She served as Vice President and President of her chapter and participated in Horse judging, Vet Science, and public speaking Career Development Events. It was during Public speaking that she found an interest in Genetically Modified Organisms and the existing gap between the science and consumers. Avery choose to use this intrest to drive her capstone project titled



“Bridging the Gap Between GMO’s and the Public Eye.” Avery hopes to use information collected in her capstone survey to help educate the public on GMOs in a transparent manner.

If Averages series of stunning accomplishments are not already evidence enough of her bright future she claims that “The Ag Program has truly opened my eyes to a new world and has shown me my passions and how I can impact the world!”

-Kelcey Trewin



FFA Foundation >>> Westminster Highschool on Showcase!

Yearly the Maryland FFA Foundation hosts a Showcase dinner to highlight an FFA chapter and program to exhibit the chapters skills, accomplishments, community impact, and more. This helps to display how valuable funding the foundation is to assist in making successful programs happen. This year Westminster FFA was selected for the venue. In true FFAmily fasion Westminster shared the attention with 7 surrounding higschools in Carroll County.

Students from each chapter facilitated immersion experiences such as making boutonniere with Liberty, gene editing with Century, Chex-mix feed rations with Francis Scott Key, DNA extraction with Manchester Valley, Westminster High, capstone project sharing with Winters Mill, and FFA events exploration with South Carroll prior to the dinner and program. Guests milled about the classrooms participating in each experience as it painted a phenomenal picture of the agriculture programs in Carroll county.

At 7pm guests were welcomed find their seats in a cafeteria of blue and gold decorations hung by FFA members rocking the blue jackets. As guests found their seats and the program began Mr. Colby Ferguson, emcee for the evening, welcomed several distinguished guests including the commissioner Richard Weaver, Senator Justin Ready, Delegate Haven Shoemaker, Assistant State Superintendent for College and Career Readiness Ms. Tiara Booker Dwyer, Super intendent of schools Dr. Steven Lockard, Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation Executive Director Susanne Zilberfarb, and University of Maryland College Park Assistant Clinical Professor of Agricultural Education Dr. Melissa Welsh. Each distinguished guest recognized the signifigance and true value the program holds for students not only in Carroll County but also state wide!

If you would like to donate to the Maryland FFA Foundation to continue to fund amazing programs like Westminster be sure to reach out to Mr. Jason Watt the FFA Foundation chair.





After 22 Years...

Recognizing Diane Safar and Her Wild Safar-i through Ag Ed!

It was 22 years ago when I first stepped in to an agriculture classroom. Some of you may remember Joel Rosen and Dawn Knill, from whom I received my tutelage. I was hired as part time and the third instructor at Westminster high school. I taught an Engines and Power class and an equine science class. I also substituted for Dawn and Joel when needed. My first and most memorable experience as a substitute was in Joel's wildlife classroom when he left a simple video about squirrels for the class. As I settled into the small, packed classroom filled mostly male students that I did not know, I handed out the worksheet and turned on the innocent looking video about cute little squirrels. It wasn't very far into the video I realized the cute little squirrel video was about squirrel mating and not cute little squirrels at all. I found myself in a room packed with ag kids laughing, yelling and totally enjoying the squirrel sex video. I still have not forgiven Joel. Engines class had equally challenging issues. I found this was not my strongest subject area at the time. Thanks to Doug Hering, many MATA workshops and other professional development opportunities, over my years of teaching I gained valuable experience that allowed me to feel comfortable in the shop and even proficient in the area of shop safety and MOSHA laws.

Following my first year of teaching at Westminster high school, I was transferred to South Carroll High for three years. This is where I met two extremely talented agriculture instructors that would shape my teaching experience and future success. Mrs. Terry Adkins and Ms. Lori Powell (Mayhew) also worked at South Carroll high school during this time. Terry took me under her wing and taught me invaluable lessons about agriculture education, FFA and teaching survival in general. I learned from the best. I was then sought out by the principal-to-be of Winters Mill High School and asked to join the privileged team that would open the brand-new high school in 2002. What a wonderful opportunity! Not only for myself but for agriculture education in general.

I served my remaining 18 years of education at Winters Mill High school, in Westminster Maryland.

My favorite class to teach was veterinary science. Prior to the adoption of CASE curriculum in Carroll County, we taught animal care and veterinary science. This was the reason I went to work each day. This was my love and made me feel accomplished at my job. Local veterinarians sought to hire my students due to their advanced level of preparation. I loved the anatomy and physiology mixed with the pre-veterinary skills and medical terminology. I found creative ways to teach the advanced level material and students were successful. As the only agriculture instructor at Winters Mill high school, I taught all agriculture classes, including plants, animals, environmental, biotech, research and shop classes. I also served as the FFA advisor and coached many teams into competition at regional, state and national level. We ran a small FFA chapter, but the students were very active and successful.

I learned very early in my teaching career the MATA conferences would be my source of support. I think I only missed one conference in my 22 years of teaching. This is where I met experienced teachers such as Mike Harrington, Naomi Knight, Tom Hawthorn and Pat Beachy. I was inspired! Everyone was so very helpful and supportive. I strived to be just like them. Although I walked in their shadows, I was just one step behind them taking note of their every move and listening to their advice. In 2006, I was nominated to receive my first MATA Excellence award in Animal Science. I received many other awards following this initial award, including Excellence in veterinary Science, as well as NAAE awards such as Outstanding Secondary Agriculture Education Program, and Outstanding Agriculture Education Teacher. I also became a certified Professional Horticulturist, Pesticide Licensed and National Board Certified.

In 2008 I joined the Executive Board of MATA as the Membership Chair. From 2015 to 2017 I also served as President Elect, President and past president. In addition to my work as an ag teacher I was also nominated as a finalist in the county Teacher of the Year Program in 2011. I worked on many other committees at the school and county level and with the Employee Union. I continued my education in school law at Uconn to receive some of my additional credits beyond my master's degree.

Although receiving the above awards was humbling, I don't view them as my greatest accomplishment. My greatest accomplishment in my career was sharing my agriculture knowledge with so many young students at the level of my peers that I so greatly admired. I lived the dream. I grew up in the Pennsylvania agriculture community on a dairy farm. I then worked as a dairy herd manager for nine years, I studied agriculture in college and worked for the department of agriculture at the federal level. Then I had the privilege of sharing this life experience with the students seeking this knowledge through the Agriculture program at my school. I realize I would not have been as successful as I was without the support and guidance of the Maryland Ag Teachers I met through the years of my teaching. My most memorable experiences besides those working with students, are with the Maryland Ag teachers at conferences. Crab feasts, Bar-B-Q's, happy hour or just dinner on your own at a table for 21; MATA conference was the highlight of the summer. Now that I am retired, I will miss you all very much. One thing I look forward to is attending National convention without writing lesson plans! See you there!!

-Diane Safar
Retired Fall 2019



Get Certified

Interested in piloting new industry certifications? Looking to bolster the value-added associated with your program? Consider piloting certifications from iCEV as secured by MATA. Please take a moment to look at the certification options - <https://www.icevonline.com/industry-certifications>, and see if there are any you would like to pilot. To be eligible to participate in the pilot, you must complete a 90 minute webinar to help you set up your iCEV account. If you're interested, please email diane.herndon@fcps.org by December 13th with the certifications you're interested in piloting.



University Thoughts

Just a few updates and thoughts from our Land Grant and Flagship University, The University Of Maryland, with Dr. Melissa Welsh!



The importance to pause after the harvest season is most poignantly marked by the Thanksgiving traditions around family tables in November. A moment to share thanks and be blessed for the bounty of the land and the love of family and friends. In addition to close family ties, many agriculture teachers would be thankful for the close knit community that has become the school Ag family away from home. The amazing leadership of teachers who dedicate their lives to helping students find their way. I hope that you will consider becoming an informal mentor to our budding Ag teachers at UMD and invite our students into your Ag family. We have a growing student population at UMD that is eager to learn from those of you in the field ready to share your best advice

to share your best advice for teaching success.

We have a growing student population at UMD that is eager to learn from those of you in the field ready to share your best advice for teaching success. The role of becoming an informal mentor for our UMD students requires a minimum of a 1 year commitment to engage in at least 6 communications. Unlike the focused topics required by the formal mentor teacher/student relationship during the student's last year of preparation, these communications can vary. If you are interested in becoming a non-formal mentor for UMD Agricultural and Extension Education students check out the following link to learn more and sign up:

<https://forms.gle/zm37sNR1XKkbgKG56>

Classroom Visits from UMD for Ag

Do you teach students who have expressed an interest in a career in Agriculture? The University of Maryland's Agricultural and Extension Education Program will be visiting high schools throughout the state of Maryland during the 2019-2020 academic year! We will provide an overview of the current advancements of careers in Agricultural disciplines, conduct a supplementary instructional segment related to the unit area(s) you are focusing on in your classes, and discuss criteria for applying to our program. Contact Lauren Argabrite for more information on how to schedule a visit (largabri@umd.edu) and check out the following link to learn more and sign up!

<https://forms.gle/pGfrjRfuzo5w8AGo7>

coming soon >>>

*In The Next Issue
SAE for All -continued
Where are the Owlets?
FFA Week
An International Endeavor*



Do you have a student who has gone off to school to study AG ED! Contact the editor and share your story with some photos! We will be sure to pop it in an upcoming issue featuring our Owlets!!

Kelcey Trewin

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