



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois Extension - McLean County

NEWSLETTER

December 2009

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

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in programs and employment

McLean County Extension Service Foundation Gets a New Logo



McLean County Extension Service Foundation Board President Scott Lay congratulated logo contest winner Taylor Alsford.

The McLean County Extension Service Foundation marked its 30th anniversary this year. Founded in 1979 to supplement program funding for all aspects of Extension in our county, the organization was established to receive gifts, memorials and other support for McLean County-based programming, according to McLean County Extension Director Don Meyer.

In honor of the milestone, and in recognition of changes over the years, Foundation members decided it was time for a new logo that would more accurately reflect the contemporary emphasis of local Extension programs.

Youth Development Educator Sandy McGhee-Yanzy says the desire for a new image for the Foundation also offered an opportunity for the Leadership Design Team (teen leadership group established in 2009) to facilitate the process by working with 4-H members.

Two members of the group took responsibility for setting up a contest for the new logo and promoting it to 4-H'ers. Alison Korty and Allison Parks got a taste of the behind-the-scenes elements of running a contest.

"Any 4-H member in the county was invited to participate in the contest," says Alison Korty, adding that an important element was explaining the mission of the Foundation to potential contest participants. "Allison and I wanted to be sure that the contestants understood what the McLean County Extension Foundation is and what they do. We felt this would help to create a better product that identified the McLean County Extension Foundation."

Allison Parks says she and Alison agreed on a winning design, and then asked another LDT member, Addison Phillips, to help finalize their decision. She adds

that they were impressed with the various elements reflecting Extension that were included in the design they selected.

The winning design was submitted by Taylor Alsford, a four-year member of Home Spun 4-H Club. She describes her process as being very simple. "I just checked out the website, looked at all the great things the Extension (Foundation) supports, and put it all together." Taylor says she has considered graphic design as a career, but is now leaning more toward music and art therapy. "I want to be able to use my gifts, talents, and hobbies to help people," she adds.



Taylor Alsford's winning design for the new logo reflects the many elements of Extension today.

When you have questions, Extension has answers!

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For more information about events, programs and services offered by Extension in McLean County, visit our website:



www.mcleanextension.org
or call us at (309) 663-8306



Extension Update

4-H Program Fees Update

In 2009, Illinois 4-H announced a statewide \$20 Program Fee for each 4-H member. The McLean County Extension Service Foundation agreed to assist McLean County 4-H clubs with the new initiative. The Foundation agreed to find resources to cover half of the State 4-H fee of \$20.

Local 4-H Clubs were then challenged by our Foundation to find the additional \$10 of support for each club member as part of a Club Challenge goal.

As McLean County 4-H Clubs are prone to do, they excelled at meeting the Club Challenge! A total of 52 4-H Clubs and Cloverbud groups worked at and/or met the Club Challenge fee for each of their members, raising a total of \$10,830.

Many clubs turned the challenge into an opportunity to combine community service activities with fundraising--and got into "FUN raising."

State 4-H Director Denise Legvold recently reminded 4-H volunteers to focus on meeting the research-based needs of youth:

- o To know they are cared about by others
- o To know they are able to influence people and events
- o To practice helping others through their own generosity

- o To feel and believe they are capable and successful
- o Have fun and stimulation

Congratulations, McLean County 4-H Leaders and 4-H Members! You met the Club Challenge, while building your 4-H club and working with fellow 4-H members!



The following 4-H Clubs that worked toward meeting the Challenge will be awarded a special patch to display on their Club Banner. The patch was designed by 12-year-old Jessie Simpson, a member of the Stanford Silver Stars.

3-F, 4-H 4 Art, Ardent Tillers, Blazing Saddles & Cloverbuds, Bloomington Busy Bees, Blue Ribbon Kids, Bridle Path, Brigham 4-H Bobcat Heroes, Carlock Clever Cloverbuds, Clover Crew, County Capri, Danvers Industrial Youth & Cloverbuds, Downs Top Notchers, Ellsworth Tip Toppers, Equus & Cloverbuds, Gold Star Clovers & Cloverbuds, Golden Eagles, Gridley Golden Banner, Home Spun & Cloverbuds, Hot Shot Leaders, Hudson Ag & Cloverbuds, Learn & Lead, LeRoy 4-H, Lexington Blue Ribbon, Lexington Leprechauns, Linden Lead'em, Linden Learning Cloverbuds, McLean County Shooting Stars, Old Town 4-H, Olympia Pacesetters & Cloverbuds, Over the Top, Pride of Sabina, Saybrook Willing Workers, Silverleaf Let's Go Ag, Soar Youth, Sace Age Pioneers & Cloverbuds, Stanford Silver Stars, Stylistics, Towanda 4-H & Cloverbuds, Towanda Busy Bees, Vision Riders, Woodland Clovers & Rock Creek Cloverbuds

Sandy McGhee-Yanzy, McLean County Youth Development Educator

Mark Your Calendar for Money Smart Week®

Money Smart Week® 2010 will be held April 17 through 24 with more than 100 FREE classes offered in various locations in Bloomington-Normal. Money does not come with instructions, and these classes are designed to help individuals better understand their financial situations. McLean County Extension Consumer Program Facilitator Charlotte Talkington is the curriculum chairperson, and Extension will be involved with several of the classes and in designing the curriculum for the local program.

Event and class information will be available in the lobby of the Extension office and in other locations around town in the spring. Check the special website at mon-eySMARTweek.org/illinois



* DEADLINE FOR EXTENSION NEWSLETTER *

Deadline for submission of material for this publication is 4 p.m.

Monday, November 30, 2009 (items for January - February 2010 issue)



University of Illinois Extension - McLean County
 402 N. Hershey Rd., Bloomington, IL 61704
 Phone: (309) 663-8306
 FAX (309) 663-8270

If you need a reasonable accommodation to attend any of the meetings or events mentioned in this newsletter, please contact the McLean County Extension Office at (309) 663-8306



Nutrition, Family, Consumer



To learn the latest in nutrition and food safety look for Robin Bagwell's food column published in the LIFE section of the Pantagraph Newspaper every Wednesday! Her column is also in the weekly Community News as "In the Kitchen."

Cranberries for the Holidays

Cranberry season is coming. You know what? We would all be healthier if we ate cranberries year round rather than limiting their presence to a few special meals each year. In fact, cranberries (along with other related small fruited edible berries) help protect against a wide variety of ailments, including urinary tract infections, cardiovascular disease, cancer, attention-deficit disorder, diabetes and are the number-one antidote for aging.

In the Market

The wild cranberry has been replaced by cultivated varieties that are larger, glossier and more flavorful. Only about ten percent of the crop is sold fresh and the rest is sold either in juice or canned cranberry sauce. Fresh cranberries are most plentiful September through December for the holiday season.

Using Cranberries

Cranberries store well and can be frozen in plastic bags for future use.

The frozen berries can be cooked without thawing. Clean cranberries by placing them in a basin of cold water, twigs, leaves and unripe berries will float to the surface and can easily be discarded.

Cranberries are too tart to eat raw or unsweetened. They are often combined with a sweeter fruit, such as apples or pears so very little sugar is needed. The cranberry is one of only a few fruits native to North America. The Native Americans had used cranberries for medicinal purposes and as a natural dye for rugs, blankets and clothing long before the early settlers arrived.

Cranberries were plentiful in Massachusetts in 1620 and there is speculation that they may have been served at the first Thanksgiving dinner, although we have no way of knowing for sure. Today it is certainly found on most Thanksgiving menus.

Cranberries are most often thought of as a garnish for Thanksgiving

turkey, but are actually a versatile food that can be used in casseroles and stews as well as desserts.



Nutritional Content

Cranberries are low in calories, about 47 calories per cup raw, and a good source of vitamin C. Because they are so tart, cranberries are often made into sweetened sauces and juices adding more calories. They are fat free, sodium free and a good source of fiber.

Cranberries can be used in many ways:

- o Stirred into meat and poultry stews to provide tartness and some thickening.
- o Juice used to poach apples or pears.
- o Chopped and stirred into rice.
- o Dried cranberries (Craisins®) can be substituted for raisins in cookies and muffins.

Try the recipe below!

Cranberry-Apple Coffee Cake

Topping

- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1-1/2 cups cranberries, chopped
- 1-1/2 cups finely chopped peeled tart apple
- 1/2 cup orange juice or apple juice

Cake

- 1-1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3 Tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar

- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup lowfat milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Prepare topping: Mix together brown sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon in a medium saucepan. Stir in cranberries, apple and juice. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook, stirring until mixture thickens and the berries soften, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.

Prepare cake: Mix together flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda in a medium bowl. Beat oil and butter in a large bowl until well mixed. Gradually add sugar, beating until well blended. Add egg and beat until

smooth. Beat in half of the flour mixture until just mixed. Beat in the milk and vanilla. Add remaining flour mixture, beat until batter is smooth.

Place batter into a 9-inch round or square cake pan coated with cooking spray. Spread to edges. Spread fruit topping evenly over the batter. Bake at 375°F for 40 to 50 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon sugar. May be served warm or cooled. Serves 12.

Nutrition information per serving: 257 calories, 8 g fat, 25 mg cholesterol, 44 g carbohydrate, 112 mg sodium, 3 g fiber.



Nutrition, Family, Consumer

Give Toys that Stimulate Creativity By Cammy Seguin, Extension Family Life Educator



Gifts are part of the holiday season. It's been that way for generations. If your grandkids clamor for those expensive toys they see on TV, listen to what they have to say. Then check the toy for safety, cost, and suitability.

Before buying, ask yourself these questions when shopping for toys.

- Does the toy offer a wide range of creative possibilities? With a little imagination, can the child use it in many different ways? Or does the toy have one purpose and seem boring after a few days of play?
- Is the toy appropriate for the age of the child? Most manufacturers print the suggested age range of the toy on the box. It may not be accurate for all children, but it gives some

idea of whether the toy is suitable for the child. Keep safety issues in mind, too. Young children can choke on small pieces.

- Will the toy last beyond the first day? Will it withstand the abuse most children give their toys?

If the toy doesn't meet these requirements, the fun and joy probably won't last. Children are often disappointed when the toy advertised doesn't appear to be as exciting in real life. Advertisements can make toys seem to do more than they are designed to do. The toys children will enjoy for the longest time are the ones that stimulate their creativity.

From: Issue 31 of U of I Extension's
Parenting Again Newsletter
<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/grandparents>

Consumer Corner: Tips for Safe Use of Automatic Bill Payment

It does save time and paper to have bills paid automatically, but if you have authorized a financial institution to pay your bills for you, it does not relieve you from total responsibility. Here are a few tips to protect yourself when using automatic bill pay:

1. Maintain a list for all authorized payments including: account number, payment date and the amount of fixed payments.
2. Make sure the payments have been made in the correct amount.

3. If the money is taken from your checking account, be sure to record the payment in your checkbook register.
4. If you are billing to a credit card, protect your credit score by not letting the balance exceed 30 percent of your limit.
5. When you have made changes (switch due dates on accounts or have a payment charged to a different credit card) notify the institution that is paying your bill.
6. Read all automatic notifications you receive and check the bills received to make sure all the information is correct.

Extension provided a Resource Table at the "We Are Family" Grandparents Raising Grandchildren -- Relative Caregivers Raising Kin Event in November.

If you are raising your grandchildren and missed this event, copies of the Extension leaflets titled *Parenting Again* are available by calling the Extension office at (309) 663-8306 or e-mail: bagwell@illinois.edu. See Parenting Again website: <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/grandparents>

Four People

This is a story about four people... Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it.

Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could

have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when actually Nobody asked Anybody.



Nutrition, Family, Consumer

Want Your Kids to Do Better in School? Eat Meals Together!

The holidays are often the time relatives get together to enjoy meals and celebrate, but it's a good idea to make family meals a priority all year round.

"Research shows that kids who eat five or more meals per week with family do better in school and have fewer behavior problems," says Martha Winter, University of Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator.

There are plenty more good reasons to eat together:

- Teens are less likely to use drugs or alcohol
- Family communication improves
- Family traditions are often created around meals
- Kids understand their family's values
- Meals are more healthful
- Food dollars are better spent

With all of these great benefits, why are family meals rare these days?

"Many parents say that time is the biggest issue. But, meals don't have to be time-consuming," says Winter.



To help families "strive for five" meals together, U of I Extension has several quick and easy recipes on the following website:

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/challenge>. You'll find ideas for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Easy "skillet" dinners are even included. If you don't have Internet access, contact the Extension office for a print copy of the recipe booklet.

Source: Martha J. Winter, Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness, mjwinter@uiuc.edu

Check Out Our Monthly Consumer Nutrition Programs

Who: Normal Seniors
What: Monthly Consumer Nutrition
Topic: "Healthy Holiday Eating"
When: Monday, December 7
 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Where: Normal Community Activity Center
 #1 Normal Plaza, Normal

Who: Western Avenue Seniors
What: Monthly Consumer Nutrition
Topic: "Healthy Holiday Eating"
When: Wednesday, December 16
 9:45 - 10:45 a.m.
Where: Western Avenue Community Center
 600 N. Western Avenue, Bloomington

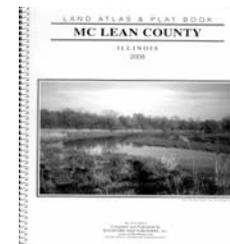


These programs are offered free of charge and are open to the public.



Looking for Holiday Gift Ideas?

Favorite Recipes of Illinois 4-H Through the Years
The 2008 McLean County Land Atlas & Plat Book
Gift Certificates for the 2010 Home, Lawn & Garden Day



Contact the McLean County Extension Office for details.



Nutrition, Family, Consumer

McLean County Association for
Home and
Community
Education

<http://www.mcleanhce.org>



For information about HCE programs and events, see the McLean County HCE directory. Contact information and calendar listings are included on our website:

<http://www.mcleanhce.org>

HCE Membership is the gift that grows in value every day with knowledge, friendships, trips, volunteer opportunities, and much more. Call Pat Pulokas at (309) 728-2118 for more information.

International Night Program Offers a 'Taste' of Argentina



Chris Unger answered many questions about his experiences as a student in Argentina.

Chris Unger spent a semester attending school in Argentina and shared pictures and experiences. He also provided details about the culture of the country and answered many questions from the audience. HCE members prepared different Argentinian foods including soups, main dishes, salads, breads, and desserts. Everyone enjoyed sampling these delicious dishes. Thanks to the International Committee for this great speaker and for the recipes!

The purpose of McLean County Association for Home Community Education is to provide educational opportunities for exchanging ideas.

Cruising the Canal with HCE



HCE members and friends enjoyed the view from the upper deck of the boat while learning about the history of the I & M Canal.

The McLean County HCE Fall Trip in late October was very enjoyable for the bus load of 53 people who traveled to the Utica and LaSalle area for the day.

The first stop was the Cattails Gift Shop in Utica, then we headed to Starved Rock Lodge and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch.

After lunch, we boarded trolleys that took us to the I & M Canal for a ride in the 1848 canal boat. A man on the bank guided the mule that pulled the boat while another man portrayed one of the workers who built the canal and gave us the history of the canal and the boat. It was pleasant standing on the upper deck and enjoying the scenery even though most of the fall color was gone. At the Visitor Center, we watched a film about Starved Rock and Mattheson State Parks showing how visitors can enjoy these parks every season of the year. The group took the trolleys back to Starved Rock Lodge and returned to our bus for the trip back to Bloomington. It was another fun trip planned by HCE!

IAHCE Annual Meeting "Unmasking the Possibilities with IAHCE"

March 23 - 25
Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center
in Bloomington

Registration forms and details are available from Kathryn McNeely. Register early in January.



4-H & Youth Development

'The Schoolroom'

by Randall Lloyd, School Program and Ag Awareness Coordinator



Chick It Out started in October with 45 incubators operating and 1,223 students participating. Many teachers requested that eggs be candled in the classrooms. It takes a little time and travel, but hearing the excitement in the 195 students' voices as they saw the embryo in the shell was well worth the effort. The next incubation period starts in April. A workshop for first-timers will be held April 12 at 4:15 p.m., and egg pick up for everyone else will be April 13. There is still time for teachers to enroll. We already have 56 classrooms and 1,598 students scheduled to participate.

The National Corn Growers Association has produced a video that can be found on YouTube titled *"Farming for Generations: A Portrait of American Farmers"* that highlights American farm families. Some facts in the video that are taken from the USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture:

- Family farms comprise more than 95% of all farms.
- Family farms manage 84% of all farm acreage.
- Family farms represent 78% of all farm sales.
- Family farms generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in corn exports.

This is not an ad for the National Corn Growers, but it does reflect, thanks to the USDA census, how family farms remain the foundation of the agricultural industry in America today, the balance being large corporation-owned operations.

On the subject of Agricultural Education, the following information comes from the annual report of FCAE (Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education). This data is reflected in the outstanding agriculture programs at area high schools.

Of the students statewide who participate in agricultural and horticultural education programs and FFA, 90% are non-farm residents and 35% are female.

Currently, 80% of high school ag departments award academic credit in math, science, language arts, social studies, and consumer economics for their agricultural courses. This model is followed in 21 other states. During the 2008-09 academic year, 29,048 students were enrolled in 319 agricultural programs in Illinois schools. While 89% of them were in high schools, 11% were 7th and 8th graders, a growing trend in agricultural education in Illinois.

Of these 29,048 students, 63% were male, 35% female, 9% were minority students, 10% lived on family farms and 59% were FFA members. Furthermore, 62% of the graduates went on to a post-secondary institution (three quarters of them at a community college) while the remaining 38% entered the workforce.

There are 401 high school agriculture teachers in Illinois. The following statistics describe these dedicated instructors: 70% are male, 30% female, 31% are at or under age 30, 24% are over age 50, 35% have 5 or fewer years of experience, 15% have more than 25 years experience, 37% hold a masters degree, and 90% are members of a professional organization for agriculture teachers in Illinois.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, 3,739 students were enrolled in "agricultural major" programs at Illinois State, Western Illinois, Southern Illinois and the University of Illinois.

All this information is available for review at the Extension office, or on-line at www.agriculturaleducation.org. The report also includes information on the "Improving Ag Ed Program" grant's third year of operation. Agricultural education in Illinois allows everyone from pre-K students to adults to learn where their food comes from, and to explore career opportunities in agriculture.



Diwali Food Drive Benefits UNITY

The fourth annual Diwali Food Drive donated non-perishable food items to UNITY Community Center in October. The food drive celebrates Diwali, the Festival of Lights, and is spearheaded by Sewa International USA in association with: Art of Living, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, HTBN, Illinois State University, Jain Society, Kannada Koota, Marathi Mandal, MCIA, Telugu Association, Tamil Sangam, and Hindu Society. Sharmi Shah (front row, second from left) was the Sewa International coordinator for the project and is also a member of the UNITY Advisory Council.



4-H & Youth Development



4-H Recognition Event Honors Outstanding Achievements

Thank you to all who attended the 4-H Recognition event at Central Catholic High School in November for the annual celebration of 4-H accomplishments and related honors.

See the special insert for details.

Corrections to 4-H Recognition Review

First Year Outstanding honorees should also include Kyle Steidinger, Space Age Pioneers.

Savanah Jacobs is the **County Medal Winner for Plant Science.**

Five Year Pledge honorees should also include Claire Weinzierl, Olympia Pacesetters

Learn & Fun Day 2010

January 23

at Heartland Community College

Choose from beginner and advanced level workshops on a big variety of topics. If you are a new member and have not enrolled, contact your 4-H leader for details. Forms will be mailed out in mid December and will be available online at www.mcleanextension.org.

Workshop topics will include:

- Renewable Energy
- Paper Pizzaz Party Boxes
- BioFuel Blast
- Wiggles & Wags
- Want to be an actor?

...and MANY more!

Leaders Like to Learn by Having Fun, Too!

Leaders' Learn & Fun Day is an example of the support and training offered to Extension Volunteers who work with youth. Thanks to the great volunteer committee members who planned the Learn & Fun Day for Leaders -- Kathy Weinzierl, Carolyn Hansen, and Linda Faye White. Workshop presenters were: Dr. Denise Legvold, director of Illinois 4-H/Youth Development, Interim Livingston County Extension Director Kathy Reiser, Michael and Don Meyer, Alisa Clary, Gracie and Hannah Weinzierl, Eric Hansen, Akasha Jackson, Marge Ruch, Kathy Weinzierl and Theresa Chambers.

Find Out More About 4-H: See What's in it for You!

Explore the amazing world of 4-H at the "4-H Find Out Party" Saturday, March 13, from 9:30-11:30 a.m., at the McLean County Extension Office, 402 N. Hershey Rd., Bloomington.

The program provides information about FUN and FRIEND-making opportunities, 4-H projects for the special interests of youth, club meetings and leadership, as well as

talks and demonstrations. It is all about how you and your child can create and enjoy a great 4-H experience!

Youth will complete several activities to learn more about 4-H, and parents/guardians will have a Q & A session to "Find Out" more about 4-H. Registration is available online at www.mcleanextension.org or by calling McLean County Extension at (309) 663-8306.

4-H Technology Academy

Saturday, March 6

Learn how to wire a simple switch, solder, start building a rocket, and more at the Workforce Development Center at Heartland Community College in Normal.

Registration information will be available in December.

Visit www.mcleanextension.org for details!

At right: Shawna Trunnell exhibited the Best of Show Electricity Project at the 2009 McLean County Fair. Shawna is a member of the Hot Shot Leaders 4-H Club





4-H & Youth Development

WANTED: 4-H Leaders

Would you enjoy creating and building:

A positive relationship with a child?

A warm, friendly environment where youth feel welcomed as part of the group?

An environment where young people are safe from physical or psychological harm?

Opportunities for children to build and master skills in areas of the young person's choosing?

Opportunities for youth to be heard, make important decisions, and participate fully?

Opportunities for young people to serve others and their community?

Opportunities for today's youth to see themselves as active participants in their future?

If so, you are the one to provide leadership for a club in McLean County Extension's 4-H program. Let's talk about how we can work together for youth in McLean County! Contact Sandy McGhee at the McLean County 4-H Office, (309) 663-8306 or email: smcghee@illinois.edu

(We assist volunteers to complete a volunteer screening/orientation, provide subsequent trainings, and offer the mentorship of seasoned 4-H Leaders.)

Great 4-H Debate Coming February 12 - 13

The 4-H Great Debate brings youth from across Illinois to Springfield to debate bills and learn about the legislative process. The conference will be held February 12 through 13 in Chatham, Ill. and is open to all high school age youth interested in learning about how Illinois state government works. Participants learn about persuasive speaking, find information on the legislative process, debate "mock" bills in the Illinois House of Representatives, and meet people from other areas of the state.

Register for the Great 4-H Debate online at:
<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mclean/greatdebate>

Learn more about debate techniques at a special coaching session organized by McLean County TILT (Teen Interactive Leadership Team). Members of Illinois State University's champion Debate Team will offer tips and encouragement Tuesday afternoon, December 29, at UNITY Community Center in Normal. ***This free session is open to everyone, but pre-registration is needed. Call (309) 663-8306 for details or visit www.mcleanextension.org.***



Students Involved with Technology
A technology conference by and for students since 2001!

February 20, 2010

Technology sessions on robotics, games, web safety, green technology, forensics, design, hardware and software tricks, video, animation, science and energy, creative projects and much, much more!

Registration deadline: January 29, 2010

Heartland Community College

1500 West Raab Road in Normal, Illinois

Online details at 4-H link at www.mcleanextension.org



4-H Calendar



January

- 14 4-H Alumni, Extension Office
- 23 Learn & Fun Day, Heartland Community College, Normal (HCC)
- 26 Volunteer Leaders Update, HCC

February

- 6 4-H Rollerskating Party, Skate 'n' Place, Bloomington (details TBA)
- 12-13 The Great 4-H Debate, Springfield
- 17 4-H Volunteer Orientation & Screening, Extension Office

March

- 6 4-H Technology Academy, HCC
- 11 4-H Alumni, Extension Office
- 13 4-H Find Out Party Extension Office
- 29 Oh the places you'll go in 4-H! - Records training, HCC

WHO DID IT?: CSI

A conference for youth 12 - 14

February 12 & 13
in Nauvoo, Illinois



Learn skills of investigating, examining personal traits and more at this interactive, fun-filled, overnight stay with hotel accommodations, food, and entertainment included.

Registration and details online at:
www.mcleanextension.org

The next Quarterly "4-H Volunteer Leader Update Meeting" is scheduled for January 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Extension Office. Registration is available online. Don't miss this opportunity to get the latest information from the office, and get the greatest from fellow 4-H Volunteer Leaders!



CED / COMPACT



Area Students Get to 'Test Drive a Career'



Students gathered around the Parkland College Automotive Department display to learn more about programs offered by the community college.

The third annual 8th Grade Career Expo, "Test Drive a Career," was held in November. The Bloomington Area Career Center teamed up with the COMPACT to host the event at the Interstate Center. More than 2,000 8th grade students from schools in McLean County and nearby areas came to the three sessions. Prior to the event, students completed the online assessment tool, *Career Cruising*, to narrow down their top three areas of interest so they could make the most of their time at the Expo.



A staff member from OSF St. Joseph Medical Center demonstrated some of the tasks performed by nurses.

The Expo is designed to give students early career awareness and to inform them about areas of study they will need to pursue as they prepare for high school and further education and training to enter the world of work.

More than 60 businesses, agencies and educational institutions from all over the area shared information about a broad spectrum of

careers. Bloomington Area Career Center departments also had displays about their programs. An optional homework

assignment was offered to increase interaction between the businesses and the students. Prizes were also awarded for the top three booths that best reflected the theme of the Expo.

Thank you to the following Career Expo participants:

State Farm Computer Systems, Paul Mitchell The School--Normal, Bloomington Fire Department, Bloomington Police Department, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, Hairmasters, INCCRRA, Little Jewels Learning Center, Midwest College of Cosmetology, Heritage Manor, Illinois State University Agriculture Department, Four Seasons Association, BroMenn Regional Medical Center, Illinois Laborers & Contractors Program, Orthopedic Sports Medicine Clinic, GreenView Nursery, Illinois State Police, Commerce Bank, Illinois Wesleyan University School of Theatre Arts, Ecology Action Center, Geek-A-Byte, Normal Fire Department, Bloomington-Normal Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, Parkland College Automotive Department, Normal Community West High School Agriculture Department, Caterpillar, Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano, Radar Recording Studio, Bloomington Cultural District/BCPA, Radio Bloomington, U.S. Army Recruiter, National Guard Recruiter, WEEK-TV, Heartland Community College, BLDD Architects, Illinois Central College Performing Arts Department, Illinois State University Police Department, WYO Tech, Joliet Junior College, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Fastenal, and the Illinois Math & Science Academy.



Representatives from BLDD Architects introduced students to elements of architectural design.

For more information about COMPACT programs, visit www.mcleanextension.org



CED / COMPACT



Leadership Class Gets a Lesson in Poverty

If you can't see poverty, then you can't do anything about it. Statistics for McLean County on the *2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates* show that 6.3% of the families in McLean County and 12.2% of individuals in McLean County live below the poverty level. Another way to see poverty is through media reports that provide the stories behind the statistics.

Words and numbers do not tell the whole story, and without firsthand experience, most people can really never completely understand all the facets of poverty. The Multicultural Leadership Program class took part in a Poverty Simulation facilitated by McLean County Extension staff member Sandy McGhee-Yanzy in October. This activity is a unique opportunity to "live" in poverty and really develop a sense of what it feels like to try to exist with inadequate resources.

MCLP Coordinator Christine Holmes was among the participants in the simulation, and like the others, she says it really opened her eyes. "The concept is simple. Everyone involved has a role. As a participant, I was a member of a family going through a difficult time. My husband walked out on me,

leaving me with unpaid bills, two teenage children, and ten dollars. I didn't have a job and our rent was overdue," she recalls.

Christine says she quickly realized that just having an education and trying to prioritize was not going to really solve the problems she and her "family" faced. During the course of the simulation, she came to understand that poverty in America is very different than it is in other parts of the world. "As a Peace Corps volunteer, I lived and worked in a community where people lived on less than a dollar a day. I lived in a mud hut and slept on a cot outside under a mosquito net for two years. I thought I understood poverty."

The simulation is set up to emphasize the isolation and frustration that accompanies poverty in this country, and as Christine and the others soon learned, people in need often find themselves attempting to overcome nearly impossible challenges.



Multicultural Leadership Program class members participated in a Poverty Simulation facilitated by McLean County Extension Educator Sandy McGhee at Western Avenue Community Center.

At the end of the exercise, the participants and the volunteers who played roles as community resource providers discuss the experience. The presentation also includes an overview of some of the real sources of assistance in the community.

"Poverty is a complex community problem that requires the entire community to look beyond the surface to the root causes and how everyone fits into the equation," says Christine.

This experience is just one of the opportunities to help MCLP class members to define their skills and strengths, and determine how they can help better the community.



Judy Vadala (standing at right) gave the MCLP group tips for making a good first impression.

First Impressions Count!

Etiquette coach Judy Vadala gave Multicultural Leadership Program participants some reminders about making good first impressions during a session at Central Station Cafe in Bloomington. Many first impressions take place over a meal or light refreshments. During a delightful meal, Judy discussed proper dining etiquette, which involves more than knowing what fork to use and where to place your napkin. She noted that the rules have existed for centuries with only a few modifications. How you place your order, how you eat and drink what you have ordered, and how you carry a conversation over the meal all determine the kind of impression you make on other people.



CED / COMPACT



Ag Students Learn About Biomass Fuel Production



LeRoy High School agriculture students learned about biomass fuels and energy sources at the Dudley Smith Farm in Pana, Ill. in November. Gary Letterly, Extension natural resources educator in Christian County, provided a brief presentation about energy recovered from miscanthus grass. Students were able to view miscanthus being grown at the farm. The group then used what they had learned about carbon footprints and alternative energy sources to design a display and a game for visitors at the 8th Grade Career Expo. *The Dudley Smith Initiative funds innovative projects that create knowledge about agriculture and its impact on the community and offers grants to area agriculture education programs.*

At left: Miscanthus grass grown on the Dudley Smith Farm at Pana, Ill. offered ag students from LeRoy High School a chance to learn about biomass fuels.

Community Resource Fair Helps Families of Students with Disabilities

The Transition Planning Committee (TPC) hosted its annual Community Resource Fair in October for families of students with disabilities to help them connect with area services. The fair began in partnership with U of I Extension, the COMPACT and TPC as an opportunity to reach those in care taking roles with a display of opportunities available to those they assist. The Fair has grown to include a large number of resources, and this year, thanks to a partnership with Access Allies, also featured a night filled with fun and support.

The displays at the 2009 Community Resource Fair included:

- Vocational /Day Training -- ODC, MARC Center, IETC, vocational coordinators in area high schools.
- Benefits -- Social Security Administration
- Supports Booths -- The Autism Society, Central Illinois Down Syndrome Organization, and NAMI
- Post Secondary Supports -- Heartland Community College and Lincoln College
- Transportation -- Show Bus, BNPTS, YWCA
- Residential Support -- Homes of Hope, UPC Land of Lincoln, Life Center for Independent Living, CHSP
- Recreation & Leisure -- SOAR, Prairie Heartland Special

Touch, Easter Seals, ISU--Best Buddy

- Self-Advocacy -- Illinois Voices, the Center for Human Services
- Other Resources -- CISA, attorney Todd Bugg, PATH

This event allowed families to work with various organizations and agencies to find the best resources. This was the largest Community Resource Fair and was well-attended. The TPC is now working on a strategic plan to continue to offer this information to the community.



A representative of Discovery Learning Program visited with parents at the Community Resource Fair.

McLean County Extension Newsletter Publishing Schedule

Online ONLY
 August/September 2009
 November 2009
 January/February 2010
 April 2010
 June 2010

Please note:
Issues of the newsletter are
always available online
at
www.mcleanextension.org

Print/Mail
 October 2009
 December 2009
 March 2010
 May 2010
 July 2010



Agriculture & Natural Resources

2010 Alfalfa Workshop -- Positioning for Success

February 8
via teleconference at the
McLean County Extension Office
402 N. Hershey Rd., Bloomington



Welcome and Introductions

Jim Morrison, Extension Educator, Crop Systems

What New Developments in Forages Mean to Producers (Reduced-lignin alfalfa, red clover persistence, protein utilization, etc.)

Neal Martin, U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center

Who Should Harvest my Alfalfa-a Custom Operator or Me? (Pros and cons, how do I decide which is best for my operation?)

Jim Endress, U of I Extension Educator, Farm Management

Harvesting Biomass Crops (Equipment & practices for switchgrass, Miscanthus, and corn stalks)

Kevin Shinnars, Ag Engineer, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Tips for Successful Stand Establishment (Keys factors or steps that improve the chances for a vigorous stand)

Keith Johnson, Extension forage specialist, Purdue University

**Pre-registration is required, and is available online at
www.mcleanextension.org OR by phone (309)663-8306
before February 5. The workshop fee is \$15.**

Continuing Education Units in Crop Management (CM) for
Certified Crop Advisers, totaling 2.5 hours, have been requested.

Ag & Natural Resources Calendar

December

- 1 -2 Illinois Ag Masters Conference, I Hotel & Conference Center, Urbana
- 15 Farm Management 2010, Interstate Center, Bloomington
- 15 Certified Livestock Manager Training, Extension Office, Bloomington

January

- 12 Illinois Corn & Soy Classic, Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center, Bloomington

February

- 8 Landowner 101 – Basic Agronomy for Landowners, Extension Office, Bloomington
- 8 Alfalfa Workshop -- Positioning for Success, Extension Office
- 10 Soil and Water Management Workshop for CCAs, Extension Office
- 12 McLean County Chamber of Commerce Ag Awards Dinner, Holiday Inn & Suites, Bloomington
- 15 Landowner 101 – Farmland Leasing and Economics, Extension Office
- 22 Farmer Series – Crop Insurance Decisions Extension Office
- 23 Pesticide Applicator training & testing for farmers, Extension Office

For more information about these and other events, call (309) 663-8306 or see the link under "Upcoming Events" at www.mcleanextension.org

2009 Illinois Farm Economic Summit

The Profitability of Illinois Agriculture: Profitability at a Crossroads
December 15 Bloomington - Interstate Center

University of Illinois Extension and members of the farmdoc team from the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics will host a Farm Economics Summit to address farm profitability outlook from several perspectives, including crop and livestock price prospects for 2010; speculation and price volatility; climate change policy and agriculture; using ACRE and crop insurance to manage risk; and how the economic crisis affects agriculture and farmland values. The event will include time for questions from the audience.

For details and registration, see: www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/IFES/2009
Registration deadline is December 7

*For up-to-the-minute farm management information and agribusiness news, visit the website at:
www.farmdoc.illinois.edu*



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Celebrating the Heritage of McLean County Trees



This huge tree has been through many winters in Funks Grove.

With the holiday season upon us, and many homes decorating a tree, this is a good time to think about trees, even though most of ours are in their dormant stage right now. However, spring will come and with it, new growth, leaves and shade. Now is a good time to appreciate those hardy trees withstanding a central Illinois winter.

The Oak tree can take 30 years to produce its first crop of acorns. Of course, we all know the White Oak is

the state tree of Illinois. In addition, trees are the world's greatest air scrubbers. A tree captures 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere every year.

Illinois averages 70 species of trees per county. And Illinois has lots of trees with more than 4 million acres of the state considered forestland which provides shelter to 75% of the state's wildlife.

Those forests, known as groves in this part of the state, were important to early settlers who established their homes in the groves. The trees provided shelter from wind and storms, wood for cabin construction and heat. Also, where there were trees there was water and wildlife. The groves were the first settlements when most of the state was covered with the tall prairie grass.

Some of those groves exist today. You can take a drive and still see Funks Grove, Cheney's Grove, Buckles Grove, Stouts Grove, Twin Grove, and Blooming Grove. It is more than likely that many readers live in or near one of these groves and don't know it. For a map of the county's groves, visit the Extension office. Blooming Grove is especially significant -- it names both a city and a street.

Look into the history of our county. The office here, as well as the local libraries and several websites have good resources for citizens of all ages. It's important to know the story of our county in order to appreciate where we came from or why we are here. Like that anchor, transporter of water and nutrients, and protector of the soil for a tree, it is important to know our roots.

*Randy Lloyd, McLean County
Extension Ag Awareness Coordinator*

Landowner 101 Workshops to Highlight Agriculture for Landowners

University of Illinois Extension will host two workshops designed for landowners who wish to know more about the Agricultural industry. Both sessions will be at the McLean County Extension Office, 402 N. Hershey Rd., Bloomington, from 6 to 8 p.m. The fee is \$15 for each seminar, or \$25 for both.

February 8

Basic Agronomy for Landowners

The first session, "Basic Agronomy for Landowners" will primarily focus on terms and technologies used in agriculture, how land is used by farmers, how crops are produced and harvested, basic agronomy, and how farmer decisions impact farmland values and leasing.

February 15

Farmland Leasing and Economics

The second session, "Farmland Leasing and Economics" is designed for landowners, producers, and others who want to learn more about current leasing practices including crop-share, cash rent, and flexible cash rent leasing options. Resources useful to both sides of this important business relationship will also be presented, and lease forms, crop economics and recent trends will be discussed.

Registration deadline is February 2. For more information and to register, call (309) 663-8306 or see the registration link at www.mcleanextension.org.



2010 Illinois Corn & Soy Classic
January 12 - Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center, Bloomington
http://www.cropsciconferences.com/Illinois_Corn_and_Soybean_Classic/



Garden Patch Dispatch

By the U of I Extension Master Gardeners of McLean County - Editors: Candace Armstrong & Barbara Schaad

Junior Master Gardeners: Creating Garden Space at Bloomington Junior High School

By Kathy Mundell-Bligh, Master Gardener, and Sharon Becker, Horticulture Program Coordinator

The McLean County Master Gardeners over the years have developed several children's gardens throughout the community. One of those gardens is the "Sesquicentennial Garden" at Bloomington Jr. High School. This special garden, still in its first phase, is being created as a nature habitat focusing on native plants, a sensory garden, a pondless waterfall, and an outdoor teaching area. The sixth through eighth grade students involved belong to a weekly after-school garden club sponsored by the McLean County Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners, as well as some teachers volunteer to work with the students in the garden.

The project began in 2006 with the installation of a pondless waterfall in a courtyard, which can be viewed by all students during the school day. Since then shrubs, perennials, annuals, and ground covers have been installed, thanks to generous donations of local garden centers. One goal for the garden is to increase the beauty of the schoolyard. While many teachers already currently use this area as an outdoor classroom, the addition of

seating in the future will enhance and expand this availability (currently students sit on the ground or along a low wall). Plans include having Master Gardeners and other educators to be brought in to conduct lessons. Lesson plans will align with the Junior High science and social studies curriculum. For example, the native plants garden will include prairie grasses which will be tied in with a lesson on the plants encountered by early settlers to this area. The sensory garden will be in raised beds which will easily be reached by our students in wheelchairs so that they can more readily enjoy the gardens.

Permanent feeding stations will be added to draw wildlife (particularly birds and butterflies) into the garden to be observed. There has already been an increase in wildlife with the addition of the pondless waterfall; a family of mallard ducks raised their young in the garden this past spring. The feeding stations and additional plantings will lure more animals into the garden. The community has also been able to enjoy the first phase of this garden during



community garden walks. Parents and others are always welcome to come and visit the garden.

Kathryn Mundell-Bligh, who is a Master Gardener and a teacher at the school, maintains the connection between the school volunteers and those from the Master Gardeners. She is the faculty sponsor for the garden club as well. Students do most of the maintenance of the garden, with support from adult volunteers.

Save the Date: Master Gardener Annual Home, Lawn and Garden Day



Home, Lawn and Garden Day 2010, sponsored by the University of Illinois Master Gardeners of McLean County, will be held at Central Catholic High School, 1201 Airport Road, Bloomington, on Saturday, March 6.

This full day event will offer several choices of workshops, exhibitors, door prizes, and lunch for \$40. Diane Noland, University of Illinois horticulture instructor and host of WILL TV's Illinois Gardener, will be the keynote speaker.

Registration forms will be available in January. If you have not previously attended, call (309) 663-8306 to be placed on the mailing list. If you are looking for a great Christmas gift for a gardener, certificates are available at the Extension Office 402 N. Hershey Road, Bloomington.

For answers to your gardening questions, visit the Master Gardener link at www.mcleanextension.org

McLean County Extension Service Foundation
402 N. Hershey Rd.
Bloomington, IL 61704

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In the Extension Spotlight

Teleconference on The Future of Soil and Water Management to be Offered

Learn about biochar, cap and trade legislation, water quality issues, web resources, soil water properties and new conservation tillage tools at a workshop to be hosted February 10 at the McLean County Extension Office, 402 N. Hershey Rd., in Bloomington.

Presentations on these topics will be made via teleconference, and 4.5 hours of Certified Crop Adviser Credit in soil and water management have been applied for.

The fee is \$45 per person, which includes materials and lunch.



Register online at www.mcleanextension.org, or by phone at (309) 663-8306.
Registration deadline is February 5

Extension Council Meetings

Tuesday, December 1

Thursday, January 22

5:30 p.m. - Extension Office

The public is always welcome.

Call (309) 663-8306 for an agenda.

The Extension Office will be closed

Thursday, December 24

through

Friday, January 1. (Holiday Break)

Please report address changes by
calling (309) 663-8306.



McLean County Extension Service Foundation Annual Meeting

March 4, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

Extension Office

402 N. Hershey Rd., Bloomington

The public is invited.

Call (309) 663-8306 for
an agenda.



Has your ZIP Code changed recently?

If so, please call the Extension Office at
(309) 663-8306 to report your **NEW ZIP code!**