

# FFA...from Page 1A

might was them running the show," said John Clark Pettit, FFA Advisor and Union County High School agriculture teacher. "Everything from the audio/visuals all the way to the speaking parts. That's the way we try to do things, let the kids do as much as they can on their own."

The 2014-2015 FFA Officer Team turned things over to the 2015-2016 Officers, who were elected in March. There were some new and some returning faces, and the camaraderie was nearly palpable.

President Austin Brys, Vice President Austin Dyer, Secretary Andrew Holden, Treasurer Caine Brewer, Reporter RJ Brown, Sentinel Peyton Brewer and Junior Representatives Jake McClure and Andrew Collins opened the meeting as the 2014-2015 officers.

President Brys, Vice President Dyer, Secretary Devan Anderson, Treasurer Caine Brewer, Reporter Andrew Collins, Sentinel Cassandra Carlton, Historian Heidi Davenport and Chaplain Jake McClure closed the meeting as the 2015-2016 officers.

These young future farmers spent much of the meeting honoring the achievements of others throughout the year, a year filled with much activity, such as the Blue and Gold Auction that raised more than \$70,000, and the livestock sale, which featured market hogs raised by the students.

Several members were awarded bronze pins for their commitment to achieving their Greenhand Degrees.

FFA Greenhand Degree recipients were Devan Anderson, Andrew Collins, Cole Payne, Brady Tanner, Scottie Williams, Ryan Fortenberry, Madison Hart, Autumn Hughes, Addie Stevens, Jake McClure, Hannah Priebe, Emily Floyd and Justin Jackson.

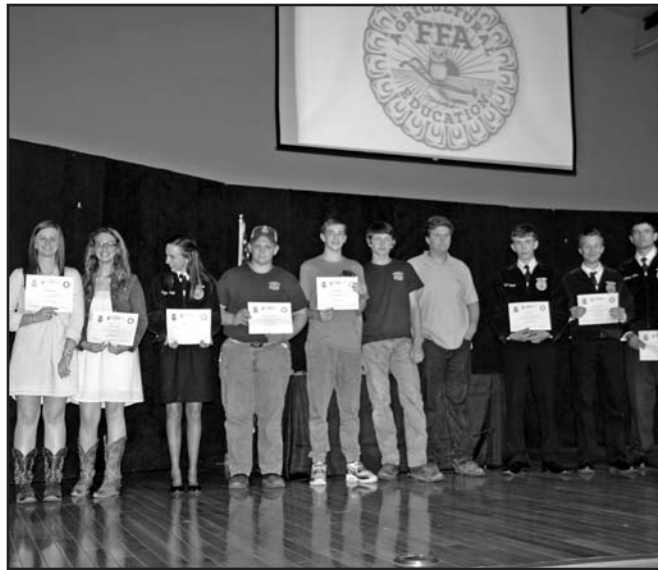
"The pin worn by Greenhands is made of bronze," according to the Official FFA Manual. "Because of its hardness and endurance, bronze has been used for ages by those who sought a better substitute for crude stone instruments. May those qualities of hardness and endurance carry you far in our organization."

Special honors were also awarded to individual members Friday night, such as Star Greenhand to Jake McClure, Star Chapter Farmer to Austin Dyer, Outstanding Member to Austin Brys and the Blue and Gold Award to RJ Brown.

Also in the banquet, Sarah Loughridge was announced as the new upcoming agriculture teacher at Union County Middle School, and Ethan Phillips will be the new Young Farmer teacher - two more signs that the FFA and agricultural education is growing in Union County.

The meeting also served as a chance for members of the community, including parents and past FFA alumni, to see how their involvement in the students' lives has influenced the program.

Terry Queen, Harrison Bradley and Jim Allison, all past agriculture teachers for Union County Schools, were present Friday, and many parents stood and were recog-



nized as former FFA officers in past years.

Every year, the Union County FFA honors a few sponsors with specially made plaques commemorating their contributions. This year, Nelson Tractor Company, Blairsville Paving and Akins and Davenport, Attorneys at Law, received honors, though many more helped the students.

Andy McClure of McClure Trucking, who was elected to serve as FFA Alumni President for the upcoming year, was voted by students to become an Honorary Member of the FFA, an honor also bestowed upon Pettit that night. The FFA Alumni organization acts as a booster club for the FFA.

Dinner was provided by Jim's Smokin' Que, and guests were treated to a silent auction featuring items from local Union County businesses.

Three of the higher dollar items went up for live auction toward the end of the evening, and Pettit, who

will be attending auctioneer school over the summer, led the auction. The items were Lady Antebellum concert tickets featuring a Meet and Greet package, a fly fishing trip for two and a pledge for two Greenhands and Pettit to work four hours of physical labor for the highest bidder.

In a remarkable show of support, the officers presented Pettit with a surprise at the end of the night - they had gotten together to pay for his tuition to attend auctioneer school.

All in all, the evening was filled with good emotions and laughter - a sense of warmth that swept through the fellowship hall. The young men and women of the FFA who led the evening were clearly transitioning to levels of leadership reserved primarily for adulthood.

"The things we do mean a lot," said Pettit. "Everything we do is not always the most refined and the most polished, but everything we do is real. For the kids, it's more than just another class or club."



# Hope...from Page 1A

the event from Facebook.

"I thought it would be something that I would really be interested in," she said. "Christ is the center of Drug Court. If someone wants to pray, my office is always open and they know they can come to me and I'll pray with them if they ask me to. You can go to Christ and lay it at the Cross and overcome addictions."

All three stories by the young ladies included coming to grips with their problems through the help of Jesus Christ.

The goal was to raise awareness of addictions among young people, and to let people know that treatment centers don't work without a personal relationship with Christ, said Daniel Lopez, Candace Lopez's brother.

"Young people need a Christ-centered facility to help them with their addictions



Kacie Young delivers her testimony at Hope Benefit at First United Methodist Church on Saturday. Photo/Charles Duncan



Sherlay Noel

versus a medical treatment facility," Daniel Lopez said. "Candy has been in medical treatment centers and they pump you full of medicines to

keep you calm and it doesn't really deal with the problem. To really deal with the problem of addictions, it has to be Christ-centered."

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