

Spring Break This Summer

2004 National ACT Convention with the Agricultural Publications Summit

By Rachel Bobbitt, National ACT Editor

It's almost time to start planning for Spring Break and start thinking about your plans for summer too. This year get the best of both by attending the 2004 National ACT Convention in Tampa, Fla.

This year the ACT will be meeting in conjunction with the Agricultural Publications Summit conducted by the Livestock Publications Council, American Agricultural Editors Association and the Cooperative Communicators Association. Their theme is Spring Break This Summer.

ACT members should take advantage of the wonderful seminars and workshops planned for the convention. A variety of workshops are being offered by APS as well as specific workshops for ACT members. The tentative schedule is posted to the left.

The convention will be held at the Saddlebrook Resort near Tampa, Fla. Check out their Web site at <http://www.saddlebrook.com/>.

Pre-registration for convention will be taken soon, so keep July 24-27 open for your Spring Break This Summer.

SUN., JULY 25

Morning: Board Meetings
Afternoon: Special Interest Clinics
Evening: Kick-off Welcome Event

MON., JULY 26

Morning: Golf Outing
Special Interest Clinics cont.
Afternoon: Issues Forums
InfoExpo Grand Opening and Beer & Bull

TUES., JULY 27

Morning: InfoExpo open until 3:00
Breakout Sessions

Luncheon with Keynote Speaker
LPC and AAEE Awards Receptions

WED., JULY 28

Morning: Annual Meetings of AAEE & LPC followed by
Brunch with Keynote Speaker
Event to end by noon

THURS., JULY 29

Post Convention Cruise from
Tampa to Cozumel, Mexico

Don't Forget . . .

2003-2004 National ACT Calendar and Deadlines

February 2004

- 1 All dues must be paid at this time for members to be eligible for the competitions.

March 2004

- 1 ACT scholarship application forms are due to National ACT second vice president.
- 5 Professional Development Event at University of Arkansas.

April 2004

- 1 Critique entries due to National ACT first vice president.
- 15 National Officer Intent-to-run forms due to National ACT president.

May 2004

- 15 Outstanding chapter (chapter of the year) packets are due to National ACT adviser.

July 2004

- 24 National ACT Convention in conjunction with the Ag Publications Summit at Saddlebrook Resorts near Tampa, Fla.

Keep checking the National ACT Web site, <http://nact.okstate.edu> for due dates for internships and scholarship opportunities.

Please send calendar updates to the ACTion editor at rbobbitt@hotmail.com.

National ACTion

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Sharing the Holiday Spirit

ACT Members Join Help Local Ronald McDonald House

By Cindy Herndon, National ACT Secretary/Treasurer

GAINESVILLE, Fla. - As the Ronald McDonald House geared up for the holidays, University of Florida ACT helped out.

Every year, the Ronald McDonald House, located in Gainesville, Fla., asks different organizations in the community to sponsor a Christmas tree. The sponsors are in charge of purchasing it, decorating it with a unique theme and then setting it up. The trees are placed both inside and outside of the house and help bring some Christmas cheer to the individuals and families staying at the house.

This year, the UF's ACT members sponsored a tree of their own. The theme for their tree was "A Country Christmas" with ornaments ranging from a cowboy Santa Claus to a dairy cow riding a sleigh. They set up their tree Dec. 8 and returned Dec. 12 for the open house and lighting ceremony.

"It is such a good feeling knowing we are giving back to our community and making someone's Christmas a little brighter," said Ashley Craft, UF-ACT president.

At the 2003 National ACT Convention, delegates voted to adopt Ronald McDonald House Charities as a group community service project.

"The National Community Service Initiative has given our chapter a goal to work toward, and all of our members have risen to the occasion," Craft said.

Earlier in the year, UF-ACT asked the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication to donate items for the Ronald McDonald House as an entrance fee to the department's welcome-back

barbecue. UF-ACT is also planning to cook dinner for the residents at the Ronald McDonald House sometime in the spring.

"We decided that we didn't just want to do one thing," said Allison Eckhardt, a member of UF-ACT. "It is an important charity, and we wanted to help year round."

For more information on the Ronald McDonald House Charities, visit <http://www.rmc.com>, or for ideas on how your local ACT chapter can help, visit the National ACT Web site at <http://nact.okstate.edu>.



Lisa Lundy (back to camera) and Amanda Ruth decorate a Christmas tree at the Gainesville Ronald McDonald House for its first Festival of Lights. UF-ACT was one of several local organizations to provide and decorate trees for the event.

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Lending a Helping Hand

National ACT Officers attend National FFA Convention

By Jacob Shellabarger, National ACT President

ACT President Jacob Shellabarger, First Vice President Laura Bodell and Oklahoma State University Agricultural Communications Instructor Julie Cox represented ACT at the 75th annual National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky.

The Convention brings together more than 50,000 FFA members, advisors and agricultural professionals from across the United States and its territories.

The ACT officers worked in the publicity office at the National Agricultural Career Show, writing news releases for exhibitors and taking photographs. Shellabarger and Bodell met with ACT members working at the career show and future ACT members who came to the convention.

"I really appreciated the chance to work with the Career Show staff and meet so many people," Shellabarger said. "Also, it allowed me to see a lot more of the diversity of American agriculture. The exhibits came from all over, from forestry to horticulture and citrus. New technology plays such a large part in what we as communicators need to be prepared for."



Jacob Shellabarger (left) and Laura Bodell take time to pause for a picture while working in the Career Show press room at the National FFA Convention.

Shellabarger and Bodell met with agribusiness leaders to discuss partnerships with ACT. Several businesses are working on improving their communication with the industry and the general public and would welcome the chance to work with ACT members. Some of those internship, job and involvement opportunities are posted on the National ACT Web site at <http://nact.okstate.edu>. Keep checking back, as new opportunities are available each week.

Recognizing the Best

Nominations for 2004 ACT Honored Professional Award

By Kim Waalderbos, National ACT Second Vice President

Every ACT member has been influenced by mentors throughout his or her life; they have provided inspiration, guidance and encouragement. Here's your chance to recognize them: nominate an outstanding person or group for the 2004 ACT Honored Professional Award.

Each nominee should be a professional agricultural communicator who is a major supporter of ACT, either at the national or local level.

Please send make nominations before Feb. 15, 2003.

For more information and the nomination form, visit <http://nact.okstate.edu> or contact Kim

Waalderbos, second vice president, at kwaalder@uoguelph.ca.



Past National ACT President Kendra Kelton (right) recognized one of the 2003 ACT Honored Professionals, Ricky Telg, at the 2003 National ACT Convention.

Making the Connection

Professional Associates Available to Help Members

By Rachel Bobbitt, National ACT Editor

ACT provides its members with a broad network of professional contacts who are helpful in guiding you in the direction of a top-notch communications career. Members of ACT have the opportunity to make professional contacts with supporting organizations:

- Association for Communication Excellence
- Agricultural Relations Council
- American Agricultural Editors Association

- American Horse Publications
- Cooperative Communicators Association
- Livestock Publications Council
- National Association of Farm Broadcasters
- North American Agricultural Journalists
- National Agri-Marketing Association

For more information about these associates and the opportunities they provide to ACT members, visit the National ACT Web site, <http://nact.okstate.edu>.

Do You Have the “Write” Stuff?

2004 National ACT Critique and Contest Update

By Laura Bodell, National ACT First Vice President

The National ACT Critique and Contest is one of the greatest benefits ACT offers its members. Please take advantage of this opportunity and submit your work. In addition to recognizing talent and effort, it also provides critiques from agricultural communications professionals. These individuals possess extensive experience in the field of agricultural communications and can offer advice on improving your communication skills.

Please note the new entry deadline of April 1, 2004. The decision to extend the deadline was made to allow students to submit more of the work they complete in the spring semester. The national officers hope this will increase the number and overall quality of entries.

Remember, senior members with graduation dates in December are still eligible to enter the contest.

Please note these additional changes:

1. There is no charge for each member's first entry.
2. Each additional entry is \$5 per entry. As always, each group entry is subject to a \$5 entry fee.
3. The research paper category has been revised and is now called “research-

related stories.” Please note guideline changes as well.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the critique, please feel free to e-mail Laura Bodell, first vice president, at lbodell@lycos.com or call (405) 820-3732.



Each year the National ACT presents many Critique and Contest awards. The 2003-2004 National ACT Officer Team prepares to present trophies to the winners at the 2003 National ACT Convention. Will you be next?

We Want You!!

Are you a writer? Do you have any stories you would like to see published? If so, ACTion needs you!

We are looking for great stories to put into our next newsletter.

By sending us your stories, you will not only help ACTion but also have a great opportunity to gather clippings for your portfolio.

Send your stories by e-mail to the ACTion editor at rbobbitt@hotmail.com.