



National ACTion

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Convention, Convention, CONVENTION!

C o m e O n e , C o m e A l l
Congratulations everyone on another successful year! I look forward to seeing everyone at the Agriculture Media Summit, *The Family Reunion!* The National Officer team has worked hard to make this Summit the best yet. The Summit is jam packed with fun events including great workshop speakers, interaction with fellow ACTers, as well as a dive-in movie at the pool and dancing on the final evening to cap off another great Summit! See you in **F l o r i d a ! !**

- Matt Splitter, NACT President-

F Y I s f o r C o n v e n t i o n :

This is a professional development event with industry professionals representing the Livestock Publications Council (LPC), the American Agricultural Editors' Association (AAEA) and the ABM Agri Council.

Proper business casual dress is important, which means no jeans during sessions. Don't be afraid to dress up a little. This isn't prom, but the last night is a cocktail affair so bring your dancing shoes!

There is an InfoExpo representing many agricultural companies—bringing a few extra resumes might get a foot in the door to internships or a future career.

For more information on convention visit: www.agmediasummit.com.

Rhett Laubach Helps ACT Members Stand and Deliver

With more than 15 years of experience in student leadership development and coaching high impact, motivational speakers, Rhett Laubach joins ACT in Tampa for a high-energy session on becoming an effective verbal communicator with major influence in not only academic and internship success but years beyond to jumpstart career success. He will engage members to capitalize on their personal communication style and deliver powerful and inspirational messages to any audience. Laubach is a professional communicator and founder/operator of Your Next Speaker, LLC, a leadership resource for organizations. Sit back and hold on for the enthusiasm you are about to embark on in this powerful session.

Dare to Face YOUR Fear



**Alyssa Bane,
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign**

If someone would have told me two months ago that I would move to Kansas City, MO to pursue a summer internship, eight hours away from everything I know, I would have laughed.

Growing up in an agrarian community, I have always been extremely close to my family and the idea of venturing outside of my safety net was out of the question. As a student at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, I have learned to be independent and challenge myself with the comfort of knowing that home is a short drive away. I was subconsciously limiting my potential by avoiding the experiences I feared the most, anything that would force me into the unknown alone. I avoided studying abroad and pursuing internships... until a friend helped me realize that there was nothing holding me back besides myself.

While many students push to break free from their safety net, I used it as security: security from failure, security from feeling alone, security from living on the edge. Then one day, it hit me. I saw an advertisement for an internship in Kansas City, MO and I thought, "Why not?" Anything I feared could be overcome. If I failed, I would learn from my mistakes. If I felt alone, I would make new friends and my family would be there for me when I came home. If I felt at risk, I would learn to be brave and self-sufficient. So I did it!

This summer I am working in Kansas City, MO as a Marketing and Communications intern for Agriculture Future of America (AFA). I coordinate their quarterly newsletter, write, design, advertise, plan events and blog. In the short three weeks I have worked for AFA, I have had the experience of a lifetime. Everything I do here is a compliment to my agricultural communications degree. I have made mistakes, I have felt alone and I have lived on the edge... and I survived. I have, and will continue to learn more about communications, the agriculture industry and myself this summer.

I challenge you to try something you have always considered to be out of the question. Don't be afraid to fail. I have learned more from my failures this summer than I have from my successes. Don't be afraid to live alone. I have discovered who I am living alone and best of all, I have a greater appreciation for those people who make my life whole. Don't be afraid to take risks. Some of the best results emerge from ideas that were once unthinkable. So whatever you challenge may be... GO FOR IT!

To learn more about Agriculture Future of America visit their website at agfuture.org. For information about current Ag issues, ideas to improve your professional life and motivation click on the AgriBlog link.



Have a great summer and best of luck!

UF Students Get a Lesson in Manners

Angelina Toomey, University of Florida

In an effort to become slightly more refined, 17 students from the University of Florida's Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow student organization spent an evening learning the basics of business and dinner etiquette.

The lesson was held at a local Italian restaurant where students practiced etiquette in an actual dinner setting on Feb. 20. Professional etiquette instructor, Robin Steele facilitated the dinner.

"The etiquette dinner was one of the most rewarding activities UF ACLT has ever held," said Toccara Shaw, a student in the department of agricultural education and communication and two-year ACLT member.

"Now, at business lunches or dinners, I am confident that I am eating and acting properly and with class."

Florida's local chapter paid for any willing ACLT member to participate. That expense was supplemented by UF ACLT receiving the Jim Evans Fund from their parent organization, the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow.

The Jim Evans Fund is offered through National ACT to help local chapters put on and host activities. The fund matches up to \$250 or 50 percent of the money spent on an event by the local chapter.

"With the Jim Evans Fund we were able to offer more students the ability to participate in the dinner and even gained a few new members as a result of the activity," said UF ACLT President Katelyn Crow.

The chapter held the event in an effort to better prepare students for the business environment and give them hands-on experience with a formal dinner setting, which most students have little to no experience with, Crow said.

Due to a combined Communication and Leadership Development degree, UF's chapter of the organization changed the name of its club from "ACT" to "ACLT" and has since incorporated leadership activities and experiences to reflect that change.



UF ACLT Members with Etiquette Instructor Robin Steele

Your chapter too can apply for the Jim Evans Grant to help fund your events! Apply at gonact.org at least one month prior to the event and see the success within your members!

Three Key Skills for AG Communicators

Written by Dr. James Evans,
Professor Emeritus University of Illinois

Submitted by Karlie Elliott and Jim Evans

"What's your passion?" an honored agricultural communicator asked during a recent visit with University of Illinois students.

Lyle Orwig, co-founder and chief executive officer of Charleston/Orwig Inc., Hartland, Wisconsin, was talking about skills these aspiring agricultural journalists and communicators may find most helpful in their careers. He spoke, in particular, from the perspective of careers in marketing communications, the field in which his firm serves.

"Look for those areas - crops, livestock, whatever - that really interest you," he advised, "and move toward them in your courses, internships and other activities."

Two other skills will be most helpful in careers as agricultural communicators, he suggested:

- Writing ability. "You will value your writing skills in whatever you do," he emphasized. "They will serve you well even if you are not writing news, web features, advertising copy or other media materials, day to day. You will be using them to communicate with clients, fellow employees and others."
- Self-starting skills. "When you lead - and when you take direction - your ability to use initiative and work on your own will be greatly valued."

Orwig was on the University of Illinois campus during spring semester to be recognized as recipient of the 2008 Award of Merit from the Alumni Association of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES). This honor is awarded on the basis of outstanding professional accomplishments, contributions to the College, and notable contributions to good citizenship and community service. He was a 1973 agricultural communications graduate of the University.

Staying Connected

The National Officer team would like to thank you for a wonderful year of service! We have seen tremendous growth in our members and chapters this past year.

We cannot wait to see ACT members once again and their smiling faces at convention. We encourage you to take part in the festivities, meet members from other universities and mingle with industry professionals. Convention will conclude our year as an officer team. If you are interested

in running for office, feel free to shoot us an email or ask us at convention.

ACT will also be featuring an internship program at convention where you can volunteer to work behind the scenes to pull AMS together. More information will be coming to you soon.

Look out for our last edition of ACTION shortly after convention with highlights, our farewells and welcome to the new officer team.

National Office? What We Have to Say

Matt Splitter, President

I would like to thank you for allowing me to be the 2007-2008 National ACT President! It was an honor to serve such a great organization. Working with such a great officer team and adviser made this year a success.

In leaving the National Presidency, I would like to challenge chapters to interact with neighboring chapters by sharing ideas, thoughts and by participating in events that involve different chapters. For example, have a joint tailgating event at a football game, have a jointly sponsored Relay for Life team involving other chapters, etc.

I challenge all ACT members to become leaders in their ACT chapters, their college and in their community.

Good leadership can open many doors for an organization, an institution or a community. Most importantly, it can open doors in your personal life that will lead to extraordinary things.

Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity to lead such a great organization!

Katy Teixeira, 1st Vice President

Hello from sunny California! I am Katy Teixeira, your 2007-2008 National First Vice President. This year as First Vice President, I was in charge

of the Critique and Contest, which is no easy task! However, with the challenge came many great rewards, and I have truly enjoyed my year of service. With the ending of my term drawing near I want to thank my fellow officers and Dr. Deb for all of their support throughout the past year! Thank you to everyone who participated in the Critique and Contest. There were more than 200 entries this year! I hope that you all are as excited about AMS in Tampa as I am! And for those of you thinking

about running for National ACT Office, I say GO FOR IT! The experience I've had as a National ACT officer is one I will never forget!

Katelyn Crow, 2nd Vice President

Hi! I'm Katelyn Crow and I hail from the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida.

On May 2, I graduated with a Bachelor

of Science in Agricultural Education and Communication. I am looking forward to beginning graduate studies for Leadership Development in the upcoming fall semester. A non-traditional ag-comm student, I hope to one day lobby for agricultural groups such as Farm Bureau on Capitol Hill.

Serving at the 2007-2008 National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Second Vice-President has been an extremely rewarding experience. Having the honor of serving on a national

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National ACT Officer Team

National Office? What We Have to Say cont.

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level gave me the opportunity to network and meet industry professionals from across the nation and even internationally. Working with National ACT also took me to states that I had not previously visited. By traveling I was able to witness agricultural operations very different to those I am used to in the South. It helped make me a more knowledgeable and well-rounded communicator and leader. It has been a rewarding experience beyond measure.

For those interested, I encourage you to run for National ACT office. The experience will strengthen your relationships with industry professionals, introduce you to new possibilities within the field and connect you with students around the country interested in agriculture. Good luck!

Melissa Leander, Secretary/Treasurer

We're not in Kansas, anymore, Toto! No, we're going to Tampa! I am Melissa Leander, your 2007-2008 National Secretary/Treasurer. I am a recent graduate of Kansas State University and, this year as secretary/treasurer, I was in charge of keeping an accurate record of minutes and finances for our organization as well as conducting fundraising for ACT. This year, specifically, we increased our donations considerably by reaching out to new or untouched agricultural communications and media outlets. As my year comes to an end, I'd like to give a much needed gratitude to

those companies and organizations who contribute financially to the success of ACT, without their support we couldn't have a great national convention like we do. As for those of you thinking about running for national office, what do you have to lose? It's an exciting time to be in agriculture and even more to have a hand in planning and fundraising for the future of students involved in ACT. I've loved meeting all the great people in agricultural communications and have thoroughly enjoyed this year as an officer.

Nicole Schaendorf, Editor

Hello! Hello! Hello! I'm Nicole Schaendorf and I have been serving you this past year as the National ACT Editor. I will be a junior at Michigan State this fall, majoring in Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications, with specializations in Agri-Business Management and Public Relations. I grew up on a dairy farm in southwest Michigan and my love for agriculture, talking and people has lead me to where I am today. As the National Editor I have been responsible for maintaining and updating the national website, managing and writing for ACTION, the NACT newsletter which you're currently reading, and producing press releases. This year has definitely been a learning experience for me personally. I encourage any ACT member who would call themselves responsible, enthusiastic, and wants to see ACT succeed, to run for office. I'm thankful for serving you and hope to see you in Tampa!

***Apply to become a national officer
at convention. See you in Tampa!***