

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Filling the Hort Gap

Whether it involves growing backyard tomatoes for summer BLTs or nurturing bushels of berries for agritourists, horticulture has a wide footprint in Arkansas. Between retirements, aging publications and the growing numbers of commercial growers and Master Gardeners, expanding Extension's reach in horticulture has been one of our most urgent needs. This spring, we've been able to fill the gap with the hiring of Amanda McWhirt, specialist - horticulture - crops, and Jackie Lee, specialist - horticulture - integrated pest management.

McWhirt comes to Extension with a background in both horticulture and soil science and has worked with small-scale vegetable producers in Honduras with the Peace Corps. (Her profile, in case you missed it, can be found here: http://www.uaex.edu/about-extension/docs/BL_may2016.pdf.)

Lee is an Arkansas native from Yell County and comes to Arkansas after three years working for Oklahoma State's extension service as a horticulture specialist. Before joining OSU, she spent five years as a field scientist for Dow AgroSciences. She earned both her master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas.

Please join me in welcoming both to our ranks. McWhirt can be reached at amcwhrit@uaex.edu or 501-671-2229, and Lee can be reached at jalee@uaex.edu or 501-671-2191.

– Tony Windham

2016 Soybean Science Challenge award

The 2016 Soybean Science Challenge student research winner was announced at the 62nd annual Southwest Energy Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair April 2 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board member Joe Thrash presented the \$1,000 award on behalf of the board to Evan Buckner, a junior at Pine Bluff High School. Evan was also presented a \$300 award for winning the regional round of the contest at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Science Fair in March.

Evan is the son of Drs. Edmund and Anissa Buckner. Evan's father is the interim dean of the School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences at UAPB and his mother is Biology Department chair and project director for the Arkansas Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in the STEM Scholars Academy.

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ASP Board member Joe Thrash and Evan Buckner with award check

UofA

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas,
United States Department of
Agriculture, and County
Governments Cooperating

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DR. TONY WINDHAM
Associate Vice President for
Agriculture - Extension and
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

Chi Epsilon Sigma names 2016-2017 officers and award winners

The Beta Chapter of Chi Epsilon Sigma, Extension's classified support staff professional association, held its annual meeting at the 2016 Support Staff Conference at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center May 12-13.

Ursula Crow, warehouse specialist at the Little Rock State Office, presented a program on the importance of participating in leadership roles in the organization and led the group in an activity to improve the members' listening skills.

New Chi Epsilon Sigma officers elected for the 2016-17

year are **Sandra McGinnis**, Lawrence County, president; **Johnny Woodley**, facilities management, vice president; **Glenda Sutherlin**, Union County, secretary; **Cecilia**

Harberson, Howard County, treasurer/membership chair; **Beverly Brown**, Dallas County, administrative adviser; **Diane Cunningham**, Monroe County, annalist; and district directors **Burnita Hearne**, Crittenden County, Delta District; **Dana Stringfellow**, Sevier County, Ouachita District; **Debra Schneider**, Crawford County, Ozark District; **Authur Smith**, Family and Consumer Sciences, LRSO District; and **Rose Dearin**, Greene County, past president.

Two member awards were given at the meeting. Support Staff Member of the Year 2016 was **Glenda Sutherlin**, Union County, and Rookie of the Year 2016 went to **Ginger Ellison**, Montgomery County.

Scholarship awards were presented to **Elizabeth Ann Fish**, daughter of JoAnn Fish; **Patricia Johnson**, human resource specialist; **Alta Lockley**, administrative specialist, Arkansas County; and **Gabriel Rooney**, son of Laura Rooney and also an intern with Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences.

Congratulations to our new officers and award winners. We look forward to the 2017 Support Staff Conference on May 11 and 12 at the 4-H Center. ■



Left to right: Sandra McGinnis, Glenda Sutherlin, Cecilia Harberson, Beverly Brown, Dana Stringfellow, Diane Cunningham, Burnita Hearne, Authur Smith, Debra Schneider and Rose Dearin

Glenda Sutherlin and Ginger Ellison receive awards at Support Staff Conference



Glenda Sutherlin

Glenda Sutherlin, administrative specialist for Union County, and Ginger Ellison, administrative specialist for Montgomery County, received awards from Chi Epsilon Sigma at the annual Support Staff Conference at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center May 12-13.

Sutherlin received the Support Staff Member of the Year award. Each year a deserving employee from one of Arkansas' 75 counties is chosen by his or her peers to receive this award.

Glenda was nominated by her staff chair, Robin Bridges, who said: "Her dedication to serving the staff and clientele of Union County is unequalled. I have served as a county Extension agent for nearly 30 years and have never seen an administrative staff member with the passion for doing a job well like Glenda. She is well respected by both staff and clientele. Clientele who visit the county office are greeted warmly by a lady who is professional, both in dress and manner. Glenda's work ethic and attention to detail have been used as a model for state Extension and Research new hires in the Peer

to Peer session in 'Jump Start for New Hires.' Glenda is a dedicated professional who believes in the mission of the Division of Agriculture. She is always on time, always personable and professionally attired. Union County Extension and Arkansas are well served by Mrs. Glenda Sutherlin."

Ellison received the Rookie of the Year award. This award is presented to a new member who has been with Extension from one to three years. The recipient is chosen by his or her peers to receive this award.

Ginger was nominated by her staff chair, Amy Monk, who said: "From day one Ginger has jumped right in. She is undaunted by large tasks and in spite of numerous computer, internet, software, phone and technology issues, she continues to have a positive, 'can-do' attitude. Through her efforts on our website and Facebook pages, Ginger has increased our followership exponentially. The various Extension groups have taken an immediate and strong affection for Ginger because she conveys a friendly, congenial personality. Even state office personnel have commented on Ginger's competence and congeniality. She seeks out information and makes every attempt to not just learn her job but understand how every system operates. She has innovative ideas on how to maximize our efficiency. Her knowledge of Extension is extensive for a new employee. Ginger actively seeks out ways to help the agents and 4-H program assistant and genuinely desires excellence in what comes out of our office. Her attention to detail is excellent." ■



Left to right: Ginger Ellison and Cecilia Harberson

Arkansas 4-H'ers mow down competition at Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest

Arkansas 4-H Grassland Evaluation teams mowed a wide swath through the competition, taking top honors at the 2016 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest on June 8 in Springfield, Missouri. Arkansas students took first, second, third, fourth and fifth high 4-H individual, tied for overall high individual and took first-, third-, and fifth-place 4-H team and overall high point team. The contest included a field of 19 teams from five states including Arkansas, West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri.

The Cleburne County 4-H team, coached by Cleburne County Staff

Chair Michelle Mobley, took first-place 4-H team and first-place team overall, scoring 1,075 points out of a possible 1,200 points to edge out a close West Virginia FFA team for top honors.

Team member Stephen Wilson was high 4-H individual and tied for overall high individual. Rachel Wilson was second high individual, followed by Luke Wilson as third high 4-H individual.

Kathryn Bechdoldt competed as an individual from Cleburne County in the contest and placed fourth high individual. Blaine Huddleston from Randolph County

4-H took fifth high 4-H individual and rounded out the Arkansas sweep of 4-H high individual awards.

Randolph County 4-H, coached by Randolph County Staff Chair Mike Andrews, took third-place team. Madison County 4-H took fifth-place 4-H team and was coached by Madison County 4-H Agent Jerry Jo Hamm.

Van Buren County 4-H, coached by Van Buren County Staff Chair Danny Griffin, and White County 4-H, coached by Amy Heck and Brett Gordon, also competed. Heck said “This was our first experience and it was a great one. We look forward to returning next year.” ■



Cleburne County 4-H team – First-Place 4-H Team and Overall High Point Team at the 2016 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest



First-, Second-, Third- and Fifth-Place Individuals at the 2016 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest



Third-Place 4-H Team – Randolph County Mid-America Grassland team



Fifth-Place 4-H Team – Madison County Mid-America Grassland team



Van Buren County Mid-America Grassland team



White County Mid-America Grassland team

Soybean Science Challenge winner (cont.)

Evan's project, “Fighting *Pythium aphanidermatum* in Soybeans: Part II,” tested three chemical fungicides to see which one would show the most resistance to the plant pathogen.

Five regional awards were presented across the state in addition to the state competition.

Other regional science fair winners were Victoria Reid, Central High School; Darrin McFall, Buffalo Island Central High School; Landon Medlock, Alma High School; and Makenna Madden and Breanan Cromeans, Emerson High School. ■

Program and Staff Development hosts stress management series

Starting in July, the Program and Staff Development department will host a four-part webinar series on Stress Management. The Arkansas Employee Assistance Program will present the Brilliant Life Webinar Series.

Brilliant Life Webinars are designed to not just help us cope with the everyday issues of life but to fill our lives with BRILLIANCE! Staff from EAP will talk about how to make our relationships, our jobs and ourselves better.

Sessions

- **July 13:** Mindfulness at Work
- **July 27:** Anxiety and the Negativity Bias
- **August 10:** Managing Time and Energy for a Better Life
- **August 31:** Ho! Ho! Help!: Stress Management and the Holidays

For more information contact Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uaex.edu. ■



All sessions take place at 11:00 a.m. – noon | via Zoom | Enroll in Learn

BENEFITS CORNER

Changes to the University of Arkansas System Health Plan and Retirement Plan Effective July, 2016

Health Plan changes:

- University of Arkansas employees covered under the health plan will see a premium increase. The overall increase to the health plan will result in a 2% increase in the employer contribution and a 2% increase in the employee premium.
- There are no changes in copayment, coinsurance or deductible; however, Applied Behavior Analysis therapy services associated with autism spectrum disorder treatment will be expanded.

Retirement Plan changes:

University of Arkansas System employees enrolled in the UARP retirement plan (TIAA-CREF and Fidelity Investments) who contribute at less than 1% will have a pretax mandatory employee contribution of 1% deducted each pay period. The University's base contribution of 5% to your retirement account is not changing.

Each July the mandatory employee contribution will increase by 1% until it reaches 5% in July 2020.

For benefits-eligible employees hired on and after July 1, 2016, the vesting schedule will change from one year to two years. Vesting applies only to the contributions made by the University; your contributions are always immediately 100% vested.

This information was emailed, mailed to your home address and in July will be available on the Benefits Website. ■

What's new in publications? Find out at:
<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

Meet the *new* employees!



Jane Ahrends
4-H Program Assistant
Washington County

- **What's your background?**

I am from Northwest Arkansas. I have an M.S. degree in recreation resource management with a thesis in environmental education.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

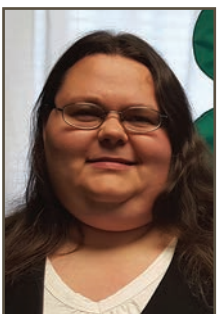
I have a variety of professional experiences developing and leading nonformal educational programs and events. I especially enjoy leading hands-on outdoor activities or environmental education programs for children of all ages.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I am excited for the opportunity to enhance my skills and abilities working for the Cooperative Extension Service because I feel there is a wealth of information available to me, the 4-H families and the general public. I look forward to providing assistance to staff and 4-H families. I hope to empower youth to be their best by engaging them in 4-H opportunities.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy family time, our son's sports activities and most outdoor activities such as horseback riding, fishing and hiking. ■



Elizabeth Easley
County Extension Agent - 4-H
Mississippi County

- **What's your background?**

I graduated from Arkansas State University in 2005 with a degree in wildlife ecology and management. I've worked with the Arkansas State Parks system for about five years as a

Park Interpreter before working with a small town newspaper for three years. In 2014, I began as a 4-H program aide with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff stationed in Lee County.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I'm bringing to Extension my years of planning and delivering park-based programs, tours, school days, day camps and so forth. I also have experience in managing volunteer programs, working with local media and building community relationships.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

Most people call me Z, and I'm a sucker for adopting strays (which can get me into a lot of trouble).

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

My first-year goals (or at least the three biggest goals), in no order of importance, would be to grow 4-H club membership, to help develop a strong multidisciplinary school program with coworkers and to develop strong community relationships throughout the county.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

The opportunity to work with youth in 4-H. I love the feeling of helping youth accomplish a goal and seeing their personal growth, knowing that I helped facilitate part of that growth. I value Extension's ability to reach all aspects of a community with the ultimate goal of helping others improve.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Reading – whenever I find the time, home schooling a preteen, my mischievous cat Bu Tao, trying NOT to adopt every stray in the neighborhood, and gardening – especially native flowers and vegetables. ■



Shelly Garth
Administrative Specialist
Independence County

- **What's your background?**

I came to Extension after working for over 20 years at our local newspaper.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I've had a long history of working with all different types of people.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I really love to work with people and to deal with the public.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

This first year I just hope to continue to learn more and be helpful to our staff as well as the public.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

The welcome I've received from Extension has been amazing. It's so nice to know that there is a whole network of people ready to help.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Outside of work, my time is spent with my family. My husband and I have 7- and 12-year-old boys whose activities keep us very busy. ■



Vickie Perkins

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences
Columbia County

- **What's your background?**

Former Head Start director with 16 years of experience working with children, families and community leaders.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I assisted the director in managing broad program operations and managed identifiable units of the program (service area manager, division director, division manager, associate director, unit manager).

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I will complete the job/assignment given with excellence. I'm easy to correct and instruct . . . I'm teachable.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to increase the knowledge base for individual and community decisions and develop the skills necessary to achieve individual and community goals.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

Longevity of the employees and the retirement benefits. Teamwork within offices, with clientele and with the educational partners.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy reading, love shopping and driving and sightseeing different places (city, state-to-state, country road, paved/unpaved). ■



Bob Powell

County Extension Agent - Agriculture
Yell County - Danville

- **What's your background?**

I was raised on a beef/dairy cattle farm in eastern Oklahoma. I received my B.S. degree from Oklahoma State University in 1983 and spent the next 32 years teaching vocational agriculture.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

My knowledge of agriculture along with 32 years of working with students and their parents has taught me a lot about working with people and what it takes to have a successful program.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am very excited about this job and look forward to getting to know and to work with everyone.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to establish a good relationship with my clientele in the county and let them know how working with Extension can benefit them in their farming operations and everyday life.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

As a teacher, I often worked with Extension and have always been impressed with their eagerness and ability to assist the citizens of our county.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy hunting, fishing, kayaking and spending time with my friends and family. ■

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

JaNan Abernathy

Budget and Position Control Manager, Financial Services, effective May 2, 2016.

Tyler Brown

Region Program Associate - Obesity Reduction, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective May 2, 2016.

Kaycee Davis

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Howard County, effective April 18, 2016.

Matt Fryer

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Crawford County, effective April 18, 2016.

John Grissom

Administrative Specialist, 4-H and Youth Development, effective May 9, 2016.

Andy Hendricks

Accounts Receivable and Funds Manager, Financial Services, effective May 2, 2016.

Samantha Kroll

County Extension Agent - 4-H and Youth Development, Miller County, effective May 2, 2016.

Jackie Lee

Extension Specialist - Horticulture IPM, Horticulture, effective May 9, 2016.

Brittany Riley

4-H Program Assistant, Union County, effective April 18, 2016.

Whitney Rook

4-H Program Assistant, Hempstead County, effective May 2, 2016.

Jenny Ross

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Lonoke County, effective April 18, 2016.

Shana Williams

Administrative Specialist, 4-H and Youth Development, effective May 9, 2016.

Extension says goodbye to:

Ocsie Barnes

Program Assistant - EFNEP, Chicot County, Lake Village, effective May 31, 2016.

Kristen Gilley

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Franklin County - Ozark, effective May 13, 2016.

Morgan Lassiter

Program Assistant - 4-H, White County, effective May 13, 2016.

John McFarland

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Jackson County, effective May 31, 2016.

Kara Newcomb

Program Associate - Child Care, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective May 31, 2016.

Felicha Thompson

EFNEP Program Assistant, Desha County, effective May 3, 2016.

Andy Vangilder

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Clay County, effective May 2, 2016.

Denise White

Administrative Specialist, Ag. Economics and Ag. Business, effective May 10, 2016.

Grants and contracts

for Month Ending May 31, 2016

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
2016 NRA Foundation Montgomery County 4-H Shooting Sports Cash Awards	\$ 800	Anne Sortor	National Rifle Association Foundation
Rice Enterprise Budgets and Production Economic Analysis	6,000	Archie Flanders	Rice Research Promotion Board
Field Survey of Foliar Diseases of Cotton and Their Relationship to Potassium Nutrition Status	2,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Provisia Rice Field Tests	4,200	Bob Scott	BASF Corporation
Market Development Soybean Protocol	7,300	Bob Scott	Monsanto Company
Weed Management in Rice	103,004	Bob Scott	Rice Research Promotion Board
HPPD x RR2 Xtend Soybeans: Evaluation of Mesotrione-Based Weed Management Programs by Universities in Medium Soils – Regulated	11,500	Bob Scott	Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.
Insect Management in Mid-South Pest Management: AR II	15,000	Glenn Studebaker	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of Experimental Fungicides in Insect Management Systems BASF	4,850	Gus Lorenz	BASF Corporation
Rice Insect Control	42,614	Gus Lorenz	Rice Research Promotion Board
Eco-System	42,516	Gus Lorenz	Rice Research Promotion Board
Potential Exposure of Honey Bees to Insecticides in Rice	20,000	Gus Lorenz	Rice Research Promotion Board
Rice Verification	184,906	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Arkansas Rice Performance Trials	80,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Continuation of the DD50 Program to Include Seeding Date Affect on Grain Yield and Development of New Cultivars	72,731	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Agronomic Production Practices for Rice	128,338	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Promoting the Use of Multiple Inlet and Evaluating Intermittent Flood Potential in Arkansas	1,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Understanding Autumn Decline – H2S Pathology	2,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Economics of Fungicide Application for Sheath Blight Disease of Rice	2,000	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Developing Irrigation Tools for Furrow-Irrigated Rice	1,500	Jarrold Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Manage Grape Myrtle Bark Scale, an Exotic Pest	3,505	Jim Robbins	Texas A & M University
Prevention of Mycotoxin Development and Quality Degradation in Rice During On-Farm, In-Bin Drying and Storage	1,500	Sammy Sadaka	Rice Research Promotion Board
Evaluation and Implementation of New Herbicide Technology Systems in Arkansas Cotton	25,000	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
Tolerance of Glyto Liberty Link, Enlist and Xtend Cultivars to Glufosinate and Glufosinate Tank-Mixes	4,000	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
A Team Approach to Improved Weed Management in Rice	91,294	Tom Barber	Rice Research Promotion Board
Rice Breeding Program Pathology Tech Support	9,113	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Development of Practical Diagnostic Methods for Monitoring Rice Bacterial Panicle Blight Diseases and Evaluate Rice Germplasm for Resistance	62,000	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Development of Short-Term Control for Bacterial Panicle	47,900	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Understanding Autumn Decline – H2S Pathology	21,878	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Economics of Fungicide Application for Sheath Blight Disease of Rice	10,100	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Economics of Fungicide Application for Sheath Blight Disease of Rice	11,900	Yeshi Wamishe	Rice Research Promotion Board
Total Awards for May 2016	\$1,020,449		

Pursuant to 7 CFR § 15.3, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services (including employment) without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, sexual preference, pregnancy or any other legally protected status, and is an equal opportunity institution.