

State FFA secretary trades rats for cats

BY SHEILA MILLER

PHILADELPHIA — Kathleen M. Jones returned to her alma mater, Walter Biddle Saul High School in Philadelphia, last Thursday.

The all-day annual D-Day served as the driving force to get Kathy to take a day out of her busy schedule to spend with her former school mates.

D-Day, or demonstration day, is a homecoming celebration for the graduates of the only full-time agriculture school located within the city limits of Philadelphia.

A graduate of the class of 1979, Kathy is somewhat of a celebrity at her old school. She serves as a model for many of the FFA students enrolled at Saul in that she has successfully achieved an office in the State Future Farmers of America organization.

As the state secretary, Kathy has many responsibilities which serving as her chapter secretary for two years has helped prepare her for.

Since taking office, she said, she has given talks to about 15 groups throughout the state. "At one speaking engagement, I was asked to speak to the students for 5 minutes and wound up teaching the 45 minute class."

Kathy said she enjoys speaking to groups and teaching parliamentary procedure and public speaking. Her experiences, she said, have reinforced her goals to become a teacher.

Prior to becoming the state officer, Kathy recalled she wanted to study veterinary medicine. This career goal was a result of her work experience project with the University of Pennsylvania in laboratory animal medicine.

She began working there at the age of 15 as a volunteer, and after she turned 16 she got her working papers and "took a demotion for a paying job".

Kathy described her work as interesting. "I was the assistant to the vet, which meant I did everything from research to writing schedules. One summer I had to cross teamster picket lines in order to come to work. That was scary.

"My first title as a paid employee was 'bottle washer'. By the following summer, I was promoted to 'animal technician' which meant I cleaned the cages.

Mostly, she explained, her work involved rats, but occasionally she had to come to the rescue of the 17 men who worked with her. "They would bring in sheep and pigs, and none of the men knew how to handle them. So, I would be called down to work with them—then I'd go back to the rats."

When asked if she wasn't wary of working with rats, Kathy smiled and said she was afraid a great deal at first.

"I handled 10,000 rats a day—I had to learn how to handle them. After a while, I got to know the rats in the different rooms. I could tell, too, when someone other than myself had been in the rooms.

"The other cage keepers would always play loud rock music while they were working, and this would make the rats fidgety. Me—I love to sing—and when I worked around the rats they would calm down. I could control them, somewhat.

"One thing for sure—loud music affects all animals and makes them nervous, humans included."

Since graduation, Kathy has been working at the Cat Hospital of Philadelphia. Here, she said, she is involved in clinical work rather than research.

It was through her experience in this phase of veterinary medicine that Kathy decided it just wasn't for her. "I couldn't tell people that brought their sick cats to me that I don't understand why their cats are ill, when I would know perfectly well that it was the pet owner's fault."

Now, Kathy said, she hopes to trade the real felines for the Nitanny Lion and study agricultural education and animal production, with a minor in agricultural communications at Penn State.



Kathleen M. Jones, a member of the Philadelphia chapter, is the present State FFA secretary.

After becoming a teacher, Kathy said she hopes to be an FFA advisor. "I've seen a lot of ag departments where I'd love to straighten out their FFA programs and get the students involved. It kills me when a teacher passes up the chance for an active FFA."

As an FFA member herself, Kathy has been quite active. She joined the Philadelphia chapter as a freshman and since then has earned her Greenhand, Chapter, and State Farmer Degrees.

She was a member of the chapter's parliamentary procedures, public speaking, and land judging teams.

Kathy chuckled as she recalled the first time the state officers of the FFA got together. "All of the other officers got up and told how big their farms were and how many animals they had.

"When I got up, I told them I live in Chestnut Hill on a quarter acre lot—half of which is covered by the house and the rest is front and back yard. My crops come out of my garden which is considered small by some, but is large enough for me."

In describing a typical 168 hour week, the daughter of Charles and Marie Jones said she spends about 60 hours on her FFA responsibilities, about 30 working at the hospital, roughly 15 working for her church, with the meager leftovers reserved for sleeping and socializing.

When asked if she would some day like to come back to Saul High School as a teacher, Kathy didn't hesitate one second. "I'd love to come back," she replied. "If they won't take me, I'll straighten some other ag program out and then come back.

With her determination and enthusiasm, Saul High School can't lose.

New Jersey 4-H clubs

4-H ENGLISH HORSE SHOW

CLEMENTON — There was no horsing-around at the first Camden County 4-H Qualifying Show held at the 4-H Center, Lakeland, New Jersey. 4-H'ers representing five clubs participated in the day-long event.

Judge for the day was Karyn Malinowski, specialist in horse management who evaluated each class and at the conclusion of each class, gave a short clinic to help the 4-H'ers improve and correct mistakes.

Winners in the 16 classes were Gene Schriefer Jr, Atco, in senior showmanship and grooming; Karen Valvardi, Erial, halter class growing and training,

hunter seat equitation (on flat) for seniors, growing/training pleasure; Karen Biemiller, Gibbsboro, senior halter, hunter seat equitation (over fences) Senior, working hunter horses; Kathy Brown, Cherry Hill, pleasure pony, hunter seat equitation (over fences), junior and working hunter ponies; Danielle Meshkar, Voorhees, pleasure hourse; Jill Beineman, Haddon Heights, handy working hunter ponies, Sue Ristow, Voorhees, handy working hunter horses and hunter seat equitation (on flat), junior and hunter back horses

The next 4-H English Qualifying Horse Show will be Saturday, June 21 at the

Camden County 4-H Center, Lakeland.

HUNTERDON COUNTY 4-H HORSE COUNCIL FLEMINGTON, N.J.

The Hunterdon County 4-H Horse Council met to discuss county-wide 4-H Program Activities

Mrs. Louise Homulak, show chairman, said that the July 26 Qualifying Show schedule has been modified so that the English classes will start at 8:30 a.m. and the Western at 1:00 p.m.

A guest speaker from Crossroads Farms in Bedminster talked about a Ride-A-Thon to be held on Saturday, June 21. The Horse Council donated \$100

to the Raymond Bastedo Memorial Campership Fund to help 4-H horse club members to go to summer camp.

Members of the County Horse Judging Teams were announced. Jennifer Griffith, Heather Wayne, Katrina Jackson, Donna Homulak, and Krista Hurst are members of the Senior Team The Junior Team is composed of Gail Homulak, Carey Moore, Gwen Griffith, Cheverly Wade and Michelle Trevina.

Nancy Funkhouser, Council News Reporter, added that more was discussed about fund raising projects. Suggestions included fixing up the public address system at Round Valley Youth Center.

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