

Summer Institute Provides Cooperative Experience To FFA

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selling sodas, gum sales, jail bails, picnic games such as a water balloon toss, and even taping a leader to the wall raised money for their four cooperatives. Students must also keep records of the money transacted, said Stoltzfus.

Additionally skits, discussions, role-plays, and an off-campus tour of a local agribusiness offered a chance for students to experience the inner workings of a cooperative. They also went through a fictional interviewing process after discussing what makes an applicant desirable to an employer.

The institute gave scholars the opportunity to write, speak and participate in discussion as they reviewed bylaws, elected officers, and mapped out ideas to generate cash.

Hal Doran, Boalsburg, was involved full-time as institute director for 26 years and spent most of his life in cooperatives. Doran was also instrumental in designing the state-level program.

"I think the fact that this program has lasted 40 years confirms that a lot of people over many years have put together something helpful and valuable," said Doran.

"The staff is mainly volunteers who have special interests and resources to plan and work the event," said Doran, who estimates that six to eight different areas of expertise are needed to give the students a well-rounded education.

"The resource people bring

different talent to different parts of the program," said Doran. "It works nicely because usually the resource people have been students once or twice in the past and have an interest in young people and in farming enterprises. It's a nice combination that all works together to maximize the experience."

Goals of the experience, according to Doran, include both academic and character growth. In the academic category, students gain knowledge and appreciation of business enterprise systems not taught in depth in school, said Doran, as they learn the value of cooperatives for both the producer and the consumer.

Besides academics, however, said Doran, leadership skills and character building are also important products of time spent in the institute.

Stoltzfus said that "the institute allows us to teach leadership by involvement. Instead of sitting and taking notes, it puts the students in the situation where they have to lead."

Students are from areas all over Pennsylvania, giving "a different community mix that builds on 4-H and FFA experience," he said. "It's interesting to see the group in the matter of hours become one group."

Several hundred people are involved in the regional program which raises money locally, from councils across the state, to sponsor the students.

Team-building activities, a square dance, a DJ dance, variety show, and picnic also gave



NICE scholarship winners and alternates are, from left, front row: Emily Grove, Shippensburg; Amy Kaucher, Mechanicsburg; Kristina Eshbach, Lancaster; Gabbriel Frigm, York; Cristin Neil, North East; Bernadette Nace, Newville; and Courtney Miller, New Holland. Back row, from left, is Jessica Erickson, Harbor Creek; Jared Zimmerman, Lebanon; Daniel Harnish, Willow Street; Andy Alwine, East Berlin; Craig Schoenberg, Shippensburg; Mark Fulton, Shippensburg; BJ Atkins, Lebanon; Heather Sisto, York Springs; and Jennifer Stover, Mechanicsburg.

the students a time to enjoy building friendships with their peers.

Many students were already selected from students in their area, since smaller, local conferences are conducted across Pennsylvania.

The institute closed with an

awards banquet where many scholars gave short presentations on highlights of the seminar. Also awards for the theme poster, variety show, game show, and various leadership and achievement awards were given out. In addition scholarship winners were announced.

The scholarship winners were selected to go to the National Institute for Cooperative Education (NICE) meeting conducted later this summer in Atlanta, Ga., which includes 400-500 students from all over the United States.

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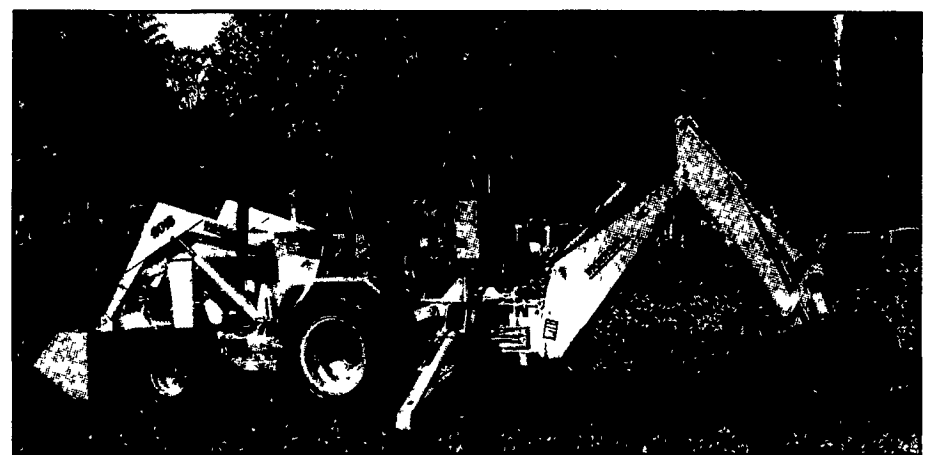


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