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BLUE LETTER

January 2023

No. 3849



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Brand New Year, Full of Opportunity!

If my office had a theme for 2022 it was “We are hiring.” I am so pleased with the success we have had in hiring some outstanding new faculty. Going into 2023, I look forward to the arrival of a few more people we have hired but who have not started yet. I love the enthusiasm that new faculty often bring to these positions. The same can be said in many of the counties. We will likely always have county openings in an organization as large as we are; however, we have had some good success lately filling empty jobs and even finding funding to create a few new ones. I would say that at this point we are about full on our available positions.

Hiring all these positions is a lot of work. I want to thank Amy Hedges for her expertise and effort at keeping all the needed search committees for faculty hires together, organized and lined out! Those of you who served on these committees and participated in the interview process were part of a vital process in our organization, and I thank you and our Human Resources folks as well.

Our county intern program was also a big success in 2022. So much so, that we have more than 35 applicants

for 12 spots this year. The District Directors have a tough screening process ahead of them. My hope for this program is that eventually we identify individuals with a real passion to do extension work out in the counties. I appreciate everyone involved in making this project a success, and I know we will have another good cohort this year.

January and February are busy months as county meetings are in full swing both in the row crop and livestock counties. I have heard that attendance has been good at these meetings so far. The ones I have made it to have been outstanding. This was also true for the Arkansas Crop Management Conference this month in Little Rock. This shows that we have a good message, and there is need and support for our data and unbiased recommendations.

FCS and 4-H are also busy with spring meetings. I am looking forward to our upcoming 4-H Day at the Capitol on Feb. 28. We have a new governor, and it's a new legislative session. Events like these and others make sure that our state officials know who we are and the valuable service we bring to the state.

Here's to a successful and prosperous 2023! ■

INSIDE SCOOP

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Agriculture Awards

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences recognized excellence in the three land grant disciplines of extension, research and teaching at their annual Agriculture Awards ceremony.

The recognitions were presented by Deacue Fields, vice president-agriculture for the U of A System and head of the Division of Agriculture; Jean-Francois Meullenet, director

of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station and interim dean of the Bumpers College; and Bob Scott, director of the Cooperative Extension Service.

“These recognitions are a way to showcase excellence in what we do,” Fields said. “We have great people out there doing great things and this is

a chance to make sure we recognize them among their peers.”

Dr. Scott said he believes “it is important for our organization to recognize individuals and teams for their outstanding efforts.”

Each year, the Division of Agriculture recognizes its best with awards named in honor of John W. White, the organization’s first leader.

- **John W. White Outstanding Research Award** — Sami Dridi, department of poultry science.
- **John W. White Outstanding Teaching Award** — Christopher Estep, department of agricultural education, communications and technology.
- **John W. White Outstanding Extension State Faculty Award** — Yi Liang, department of biological and agricultural engineering.
- **John W. White Outstanding County Educator Award** — Mike Andrews, Randolph County Extension Office
- **John W. White Outstanding Team Award** — Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip team: Mike Daniels, professor and extension soil and water conservation scientist; Lee Riley, environmental science and crop management program associate; Rita Watson, virtual



Mike Andrews

education program associate for the Division of Agriculture; Mike Hamilton, irrigation educator; Julie Robinson, associate professor of leadership for the Division of Agriculture; Bill Robertson, retired extension cotton agronomist; Kerry Rodtnick, extension videography specialist; Samantha Barker, interactive communication coordinator; and Diedre Young, program manager.



Ryan Doherty

Support personnel within the Division of Agriculture were also recognized:

- **Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Award** — Ryan Doherty, department of crop, soil and environmental sciences; and Daniela Kidd, department of crop, soil and environmental sciences.
- **Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel Award** — Dianna Watson, department of animal science; Sandy Puckett, department of crop, soil and environmental sciences.



Sandy Puckett

Bumpers College recognized three for their teaching, mentoring and advising excellence:

- **Outstanding Honors Thesis Mentor Award** — Aubree Hawley, school of human environmental sciences
- **Bumpers College Alumni Society Outstanding Advising Award** — Leigh Southward, school of human environmental sciences
- **Jack G. Justus Award for Teaching Excellence** — Adnan Alubraye, department of poultry science.



The John W. White Outstanding Team Award - Winning Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip team.

Also recognized at the ceremony in Waldrip Hall at the Milo J. Shult Agricultural Research and Extension Center, were patents awarded to faculty during the previous year. ■

Sevier County 4-H Has a Busy December



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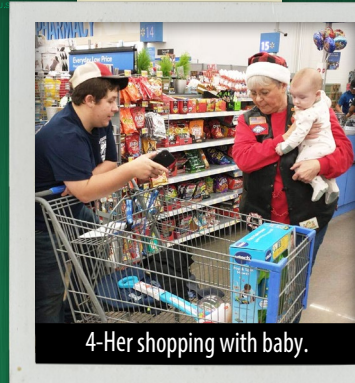
While the year was winding down, things were just getting started in Sevier County 4-H. During the month of December, 4-Hers were busy doing multiple activities. One successful project was a hospital fundraiser. Sevier County has been patiently waiting for the opening of their new hospital, set for this month. The Goin' Showin' 4-H Club chose to team up with the Sevier County Medical Center Foundation and hold a chicken lunch fundraiser. They raised \$1,585 for Sevier County's new hospital.

Sevier County 4-H also participated in a huge Christmas community service project. Not only did they deliver to 58 youth for the Sevier County Toys-4-Tots, but



Goin' Showin' donates to new hospital.

they also assisted with Shop With a Brother's Keeper and Shop With a Cop. Three 4-Hers stepped up and went the extra mile. Hunter F., Aubrey S., and Ethan W. helped families by providing food boxes, take-home crafts, multiple county resources, and even



4-Her shopping with baby.



4-Her helping hand out resources.

monthly hygiene products. In all, a total of 433 people were reached and more than \$30,000 was donated.

County clubs also had amazing activities. Froglevel Hoppers made homemade ornaments, the Goin' Showin' Club won first place in the Christmas parade with their float, and the Infinity Club worked on blessing boxes. ■

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Spring Walk Across Arkansas

Keep up your New Year's resolutions by participating in the spring session of Walk Across Arkansas! That's right! It is time for another season of Walk Across Arkansas!

Registration will open February 27, 2023, with competition starting March 13th and ending May 14th. Walking does not require a gym membership or expensive equipment! Join a team this spring to compete against other teams over the course of eight weeks. Registration can be found [here](#). The benefits of walking include improving sleep, improving mental health, improving cognitive function, and so much more. Start getting your

teams together (up to 30 participants per team) and we hope to see you walking with us this spring! ■





iLEAD – Forestry, Environmental Education and Cooking, oh my!

Our fifth session of the iLEAD program was based at the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM). This session was packed with interesting speakers that covered topics in forestry and natural resources, animal science, plant pathology, crop economics, and environmental education. Forestry and natural resources interest dominate the landscape and it was super interesting to learn about the work that is happening at UAM



and the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) in the southeast region of Arkansas. ■

Leadership Lunch and Learn Book Review Series

The Book Review series will give you the opportunity to hear the cliff notes version of many popular leadership development books. The next seminar will be February 22, 2023 from 12:15 – 1:00 p.m. on Start with Why reviewed by Cheryl Newberry, Oklahoma State University. Register [here](#).

See the full schedule [here](#). ■

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

STRENGTHENING ARKANSAS COMMUNITIES

Apply today! CLASS 20 DEADLINE: 2/24/23

LeadAR – Applications Still Open for LeadAR Class 20

The deadline for applications is Feb. 24, 2023, and the application can be found at bit.ly/leadar20app. The LeadAR Advisory Council will conduct interviews from March 6-17, and all applicants will be notified of the Class 20 selections by March 31, 2023. ■

Gnome Workshop

On Tuesday, January 10, the Attica Extension Homemakers Club hosted a gnome workshop at the Randolph County Extension Office. Fifteen ladies attended the workshop lead by Jo Scruggs, an Attica EHC member. Mrs. Scruggs demonstrated how to create a gnome using a wall hanging from a previous holiday and other items easily found at a local general store. Once the ladies completed the gnome, Mrs. Scruggs proceeded to demonstrate how to make a gnome ornament. All the



One of the finished gnomes and the ornament.

participants went home with both the gnome wall hanging that could be switched out for every holiday/season and an ornament. At the conclusion of the workshop, the ladies of the Attica EHC provided a wonderful potluck meal and fellowship. ■



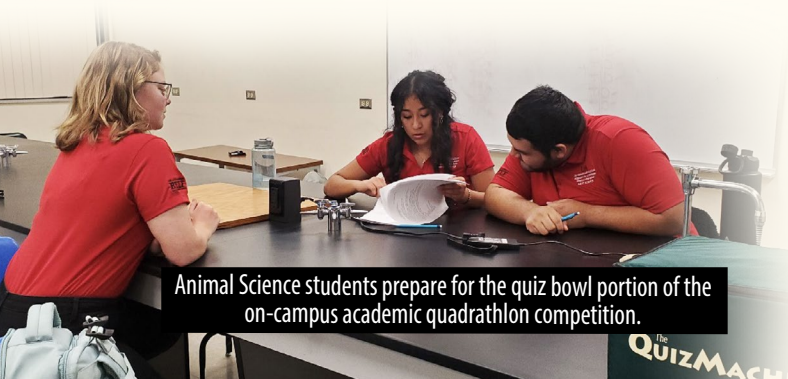
From L to R: Barbara Simington, Sue Fair, Veronica Rose, Wendy Ward, Bridgette Hays, Kay Inness, Instructor Jo Scruggs, Cathi Mohr, Cheryl Anderson, Diane Rodgers, Shannon Bettis, and Mary Ann Carroll. (Judy Downs and Kathi Bergman not pictured).

Students Prepare for Academic Quadrathlon

A team of four undergraduate students represented the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and Department of Animal Science at the American Society of Animal Science Southern Section meetings in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Southern Section Academic

Quadrathlon is an annual skills competition featuring teams of Animal Science undergraduate students from universities in the southern United States. Teams compete in a lab practicum, written exam, oral presentation, and quiz bowl, and the winning section team will go on to the ASAS National Academic Quadrathlon in July.

This year, Eva Berryhill, Taylor Looper, Miguel Montero, and Jimena Rodriguez will represent the University of Arkansas at the Southern Section meetings. Thanks to Kelly Vierck, Janeal Yancey, and Beth Kegley for coordinating this activity, as well as the ANSC graduate students for all their help with the stations. At publication time, this event was not complete. ■



Animal Science students prepare for the quiz bowl portion of the on-campus academic quadrathlon competition.

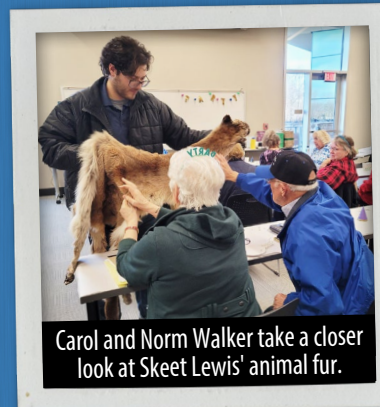
EHC Northwest Arkansas Extravaganza

At the beautiful Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center in Springdale, 26 Extension Homemakers Council (EHC) members from Benton, Madison, and Washington Counties participated in a day of training and fun on January 6, 2023. Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents Anna Goff, Washington County, and Trudy McManus, Benton County, were joined by Deb Teague, Arkansas EHC President Elect, to present the five-hour educational experience.

After an engaging presentation on wildlife and the outdoors by AGFC Educator Skeet Lewis, participants were encouraged to ring in the new year with EHC. Lessons included alternatives for prescription drugs for arthritis relief and instructions for how to develop an EHC Project Book. Mental health is the state EHC focus, and a top priority in both Benton and Washington Counties, so monthly Mental Health Moments sessions were shared, along with examples of how to incorporate them in their club meetings. Each participant also learned how to paint a three-dimensional tree.



Agent Trudy McManus (left) and Anna Goff (right) delivering their presentations.



Carol and Norm Walker take a closer look at Skeet Lewis' animal fur.

This was the first of four NWA EHC Extravaganzas that will be held in 2023. All members from Benton, Madison, and Washington counties are invited to attend. ■

Welcome 2023! A brand new year with brand new phishing attempts.

What is phishing?

Phishing attacks are counterfeit communications, usually email, that appear to come from a trustworthy source. These communications can compromise all types of data sources. Attacks can allow access to your online accounts and personal data, obtain permissions to modify and compromise connected systems and, in some cases, hijack entire computer networks until a ransom fee is delivered.

Is It Phishing?

Pay attention to the warning flags for malicious emails.

- The “From” email address is different from the “From” display name.
- Hover over links – if the address looks strange or irrelevant, don’t click on it.
- Spelling and grammar mistakes.
- Is the email addressed to a vague “Valued Customer” rather than you?
- Invoking a sense of urgency or fear is a common phishing tactic.
- Review the signature. Lack of details about the signer or how you can contact a company strongly suggests a phish.
- Assuming to know you.
- An email welcoming you to a new organization or claiming to be “John in sales,” could be a scammer using social engineering.

Always Remember

- Don’t click on an attachment unless you know

what it is and were expecting it.

- Malicious attachments that contain viruses and malware is a common phishing tactic.
- Phishers are extremely good at what they do.
 - Just because an email has convincing brand logos, language, and a seemingly valid email address, does not mean it is legitimate.
- Legitimate banks and most other companies will never ask for personal credentials via email.

Zoom Pro Tip – Meeting Templates

Do you often schedule the same type of meetings with the same settings? Do you wish scheduling the same meeting over and over again was simpler? If you said yes to both of these questions, then creating a meeting template is your answer. When scheduling a meeting, you can save its settings to use again in future scheduled meetings. All you’ll need to change is the meeting time and date, and add your alternative hosts, if any. After scheduling the first meeting you want to save, click “Save as Template” at the bottom of your meetings page in the web portal and give it a template name.

Hacks from Hump Day

No hacks in December 2022. Review resources on the Hump Day Hacks webpage.



Hump Day Hacks returns in January! ■

2022 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog page](#). More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss December’s Best of 2022 Tech Tuesday? Check out the [recording and resources](#).



Instructor Appointed as National Liaison



Nutrition Specialist Christine Sasse has been appointed as liaison between the National Salt and Sugar Reduction Initiative and the Association of State and Public Health Nutritionists, or ASPHN. This two-year appointment will include partnership building to further voluntary sodium and sugar reduction in commercially processed foods. By balancing constraints within the food industry, this collaboration will facilitate efforts to make healthy choices easier for Americans and complement evidence-based nutrition education and consumer behavior change efforts.

Sasse became a member of ASPHN, a national nonprofit organization that strengthens nutrition policy, programs, and environments through collective action and development of public health nutrition leaders, in 2015.

She has served on numerous ASPHN initiatives including projects related to early childhood obesity prevention, maternal and infant health, public health leadership, breastfeeding, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Christine Sasse

Sasse joined the Family and Consumer Science faculty in August 2022 and provides guidance and support for the department's general nutrition programming. ■



SAVE THE DATE



What:

Support Staff Conference

When:

April 18-19

Where:

Vines Arkansas 4-H Center

RAVE ALERT

To update your contact information for RAVE Alert (inclement weather, etc.): [Update Contact Info for RAVE](#) (uada.edu).

Note: at a minimum, you need to enter your work phone number. If you want RAVE notifications on your personal mobile phone, enter it under Home Contact as Mobile. You can also enter a landline number for your home if you have one. Only one can be primary.

Benefits Corner

Is Your Home Address Current in WorkDay?

Please access your Workday Profile Page to manage your personal and professional contact information.

To access your Workday profile page, click your Profile icon, then View Profile. Your Profile page displays. To Add or Change your contact information:

1. **Click the Contact tab.** The Contact subtab is selected.
2. **Click Edit.** Within each section, click the Edit button to change existing information or click Add to add new information. You can also click within a field to edit. Please review the privacy setting to make sure your work phone number is listed as “public”.
3. **Click Submit.**

Flexible Spending Account

You have until March 31, 2023 to submit

documentation to UMR for eligible expenses incurred through December 31, 2022.

Health Care Reimbursement Expenses include co-insurance, co-payments and physician charges that exceed medical plan limits or “reasonable and customary” fees, annual physicals, routine lab exams and x-rays, dental work not covered by a plan, eye exams, glasses and contact lens, hearing exams and hearing aids, guide and service animals, specially designed shoes, guide for a handicapped individual, medical data maintenance and retrieval, legal fees required for commitment to an institution or hospitalization.

Have questions? Human Resources can be reached at yourbenefits@uada.edu. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Expanding Arkansas Grown Hops	76,762	Amanda L. McWhirt	Arkansas Agriculture Department
4-H Military Partnership 23	11,000	Angie Freel	Kansas State University
Impact of Water Quality on Insecticide Applications	10,000	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
Determining an Economic Threshold for Tarnished Plant Bug	25,000	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
EXCITE 3 Design Phase 2	10,000	Bryan Mader	Extension Foundation
Urban Stormwater Education Program CY23	212,473	Katie Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
The South Plant Diagnostic Network 22 - 23	39,500	Sherrie Ellen Smith	University of Florida
Management Strategies for Southern Root-Knot Nematode	13,598	Terry Spurlock	Cotton Inc.
TOTAL AWARDS FOR DECEMBER 2022: \$398,333			

Have You Checked Your Ally Score?

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Accessibility Corner

What is Ally?

'Ally' is software created by the makers of Blackboard. This software allows us to scan all our digital content for accessibility errors. This tool is automated, scans every day, and gives us a report on the different accessibility issues it finds. From these reports, we can get a better understanding of our current accessibility issues, make a plan to correct these issues, and learn how we can prevent future errors.

Why do I need to use Ally?

Ally helps us identify ways we can improve the accessibility of our digital content. By tracking our scores, our errors, and our corrections, we can measure and improve our accessibility over time. Ally is a powerful tool to better understand how we may be falling short in our accessibility journey and how we can make a course correction.



Learn more about Ally, and how to log into your Ally account, by visiting uada.edu/accessibility or contacting accessibility@uada.edu. ■

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

Hannah Boyte – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Columbia County
Kimberly George – Administrative Specialist II, Washington County
Celeste Chmura – Administrative Specialist II, Garland County
Danilo Quadros – Assistant Professor - Small Ruminant Specialist, Animal Science, Little Rock
Amy Shepherd – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Lincoln County
Morgan Neal – County Ext. Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Crittenden County
Jamie Corker – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Calhoun County
Katelyn Kirkham – County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Science, Nevada County

Farewell to:

Bill Robertson – Crop Soil & Environmental Science, Cotton Agronomist, Jackson County
Judy F Belle – Administrative Specialist III, Woodruff County
Burl Scifres – Facilities Management, Facilities Manager, Little Rock
Angie Freel – 4H & Youth Development, Associate Department Head – 4-H, Little Rock
Brian Helms – Development/Stakeholder Relations, Director – Stakeholder Relations, Little Rock
Darlene Ward – Administrative Specialist I, Clay County
Janie McCoy – Madison County, 4-H Program Assistant, Madison County
James Churchwell – Information Technology, Sr. Network Administrator, Little Rock
Sophie Banks – Family & Consumer Science, Program Technician - Child Care, Little Rock
Olivia Marie Foster – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Carroll County
Thomas Zimmerman – Horticulture Program Technician - Horticulture, Fruit Research Station
Patti Spradley – Program Assistant-SNAP, Pulaski County
Heidi Marie Ward – Animal Science, Associate Professor - Veterinarian, Little Rock
Tonya McKenzie – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Ouachita County