



OWL GAZETTE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS

2024 NAAE CONVENTION
December 3-7, 2024 | San Antonio, Texas



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS
2024 EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL STATE ASSOCIATION AWARD

Attending the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) National Convention each year is a powerful opportunity for Agricultural Science and Technology teachers to grow personally and professionally. At the recent San Antonio convention, educators had access to a wealth of resources, including resiliency workshops to help them build mental toughness and strategies for overcoming challenges in the classroom. There were also hands-on curriculum sessions that provided practical tools and innovative ideas to engage students and enhance learning experiences. By attending, you can connect with a supportive community of passionate educators, reigniting your enthusiasm for teaching while gaining the skills to stay current and make a lasting impact. Remember, when you do what you love and immerse yourself in these growth opportunities, you're investing in your students' futures and your own teaching journey—be all in! - Steve Braun, WAAE President

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WAAE/NAAE Award Winners



Lifetime Achievement Award

Elaine Lewis

Teachers Turn The Key

Makenna Mihelitch

Ideas Unlimited

Hannah Schneider

Exemplary Professional State

Association Award

WAAE (Lori Sanderson)

Quick & Easy Recipes



Tracy Brown shares one of her favorite family recipes!

Base Layer Ingredients & Directions

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 cups flour
- dash salt

Cut in butter until mixture clings together. Pat into 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Lemon Squares

Lemon Layer Ingredients & Directions

- 6 eggs
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 8 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/3 cup flour
- 3/4 tsp baking powder



- Beat eggs; add sugar and lemon juice and beat until slightly thick and smooth (8-10 minutes).
- Stir together 1/3 cup flour and baking powder. Stir into lemon mixture. Blend until all is moistened. Pour over baked layer and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes.
- Sift powdered sugar over top.
- Cool, cut into bars.

[Submit your recipe idea here!](#)

NAAE Convention Testimonies

I wish that more of our members would attend NAAE. Sharing and gaining information about what we do at all levels is extremely important to keeping our work relevant in our classrooms. Being a WAAE officer allows me to go, and I appreciate the opportunity. I hope that our members will look at the new NAAE website and discover ways they can get involved and be recognized for their work.

Brian Ellis, WAAE Vice President

Agriculture Teacher By Choice, Not By Chance

"One truly great benefit of attending the NAAE conference is the opportunity to develop a network that can support you in your work. I have connected with so many people across the nation over the years, and as I continue to progress in my career as FFA state staff I am finding a great deal of value in the connections I have made."

Tamara Whitcomb, WA FFA Executive Director

CAN YOU GUESS THESE TEACHERS?

EARLY CAREER

I wear many hats, not your average ag teacher. Some call me Coach. My students call me "Mystery".



MID CAREER

My first ag teacher was Steve Ricarte. Graduated high school as a SPARTAN and currently still a SPARTAN



LATE CAREER

I am a Vandal from Oregon who likes sunsets, sunrises, photography, rocks, and waves!



to **Maddy Tanis** for guessing the Early Career teacher. We've got some WAAE Swag for you!

Answers from Fall 2024 Issue

Early Career - Makenna Mihelitch; Mid-Career - Amanda Mattingly

Submit your guesses to be entered in a WAAE swag drawing!

2025 **case learning** SCHEDULE

CASE4Learning Institutes and Briefcases in Pullman, WA

APT - Ag Power & Technology | June 30-July 1(Virtual); July 7-11 (In-Person)

NRE - Natural Resources & Ecology | July 7-11 (In-Person) *WA Teachers only

SGE - Small Gas Engines | July 14-16

AHVS - Animal Health & Vet Science | June 20-21

REGISTRATION OPENS ON JANUARY 5, 2025

See the Full Schedule of Institutes and Briefcases on the [CASE4Learning Website](#)

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Okanogan FFA

Okanogan Agriculture Education program teaches Ag Science, Natural Resources, Floral Design, Ag Mechanics, and Intro to Agriculture. As a true single teacher program, Melissa Rauch Allen is only the 4th agriculture teacher in the program since its chartering in the early 90s.



Above: Members completed a service project where they made hand-tied blankets for veterans who are experiencing homelessness.

Below: Okanogan FFA members traveled to the National FFA Convention this year where they were recognized for their **TWO STAR** National Chapter Application.





In November 2024, members received 2nd place in the WA FFA Tractor Driving CDE making this the highest the chapter has ever placed in any event.



In Fall 2024, Members joined with Omak FFA and made over 1200 apple pies for a fundraiser.

Okanogan FFA

Students built a trailer for the first time. Proud moment that the students produced something that is square and tracks straight when being pulled down the road!



Members earned 3rd in BBQ, 8th in ENR, and 9th in Milk Quality at the 94th WA FFA Convention!

Okanogan Trapshooting is a big deal with these members competing at state level last year.



Trevor Caswell earned his American Degree at the 97th National FFA Convention in October 2024.

In 2023-2024, Lane Carlton was Okanogan FFA's first ever State Star Finalist!





MEET OUR OWLETS

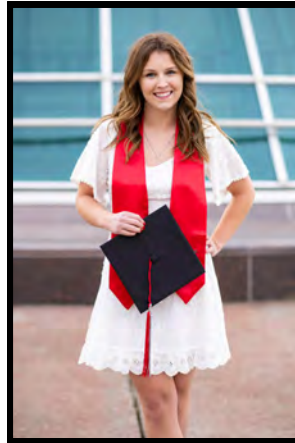


WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

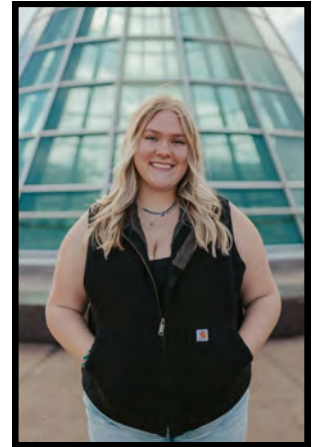
Samanta (Sammi) Gambonini
Garfield-Palouse High School
Mentor: Ryan Burtchett



Kadi Compton
Colfax High School
Mentor: Michael Heitstuman



Megan Ratzsch
East Valley (Spokane)
Mentor: Leah Lucero



"I am most excited about making connections as well as learning as much as I can!"

Nick Tanis
Asotin High School
Mentor: Glen Landrus



"I am most excited to learn how to give my students the opportunity to see their own success, particularly if they haven't truly found that yet in another part of school. From Ag Mechanics to Horticulture, I look forward to teaching the skills need to succeed after high school. "

SAE FOR ALL TIP

Foundational SAE Portfolio

Jason Bullock modified this portfolio from resources by other teachers. Check it out to provide options for your students' Foundational SAE.

Useful Links

[SAE Video Library](#)

[SAE Idea Cards](#)

[SAE FOR ALL WEBSITE](#)

Look for information about WA SAE For All trainings this spring/summer!



More NAAE Convention News



Lifetime Achievement Award - Elaine Lewis

"Elaine's career combined excellence with exhaustive hard work. Very well deserved."

Chris Carlson, WAAE Executive Director



Ideas Unlimited - Hannah Schneider



"Ideas Unlimited was such a great program to participate in! I met so many people at NAAE that had amazing ideas and it was really neat to be able to be a part of sharing ideas with other Ag professionals across the US!"

- Hannah Schneider

NAAE Exemplary Professional State Association Award

"I like NAAE because we get to learn not only as officers but teachers what people are doing outside our state. Getting new and fresh ideas for our state and for my own classroom has been a great perk of being a WAAE Officer. I went to some great workshops that I hope to bring back to our state this year, but especially the Mentoring Program Illinois has initiated that we could put a spin on and make it Washington's."

-Lori Sanderson



Teachers Turn the Key - Makenna Mihelitch



"Teacher Turn the Key was such an amazing and life changing experience. I appreciate being able to meet and collaborate with 35 other early career teachers from across the country. I enjoyed connecting with them hearing stories of what they do in their programs. As well, connecting and networking with new and previously made connections during the NAAE workshops. I highly recommend and encourage early career teachers to apply for this experience. Thank you WAAE and NAAE for making this opportunity possible!"

- Makenna Mihelitch

"Makenna's achievements and innovations are a shining reassurance that our Ag Ed future in Washington state is in excellent hands."

Chris Carlson, WAAE Executive Director

UPCOMING

| | |
|----------------|--|
| January 1 | FFA Membership Invoice Due |
| January 30 | Washington FFA Legislative Day |
| February 15-22 | National FFA Week |
| March 1 | Spring FFA Membership Roster Due FFA State Applications Due |
| March 7 | WAAE Spring Exec Meeting Moses Lake, WA |
| March 8-9 | Member Leadership Series |
| April 1 | Remaining WAFFA State Applications Due |
| April 15 | WAAE/NAAE Awards Applications due to WAAE ED |
| April 15-18 | Region I NAAE Conference Bend, OR |
| May 8-11 | 95th WA FFA Convention |
| June 22-26 | WAAE Conference Pullman, WA |



Let us know what you would like to see in the Owl Gazette or provide feedback for future issues.

[Email the Editor!](#)

Congratulations!
to
North Thurston FFA Member

Rowan Scholl

who received a
\$1000 National FFA Organization SAE Grant
sponsored by
Farm Credit!

SAE Grants

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Grants of \$1,000 are available to start or expand member SAEs. For continuing SAE projects, a limited number of large-scale grants are available to eligible members who can show three-year goals, a timeline and a budget for their projects. The SAE Grant application process opens in October and closes on Nov. 15. Eligible grant applications are scored and the grant recipients will be announced in mid-December.



WA State Ag Ed Resources



WA_AGEDUCATORS