

# The Visitor

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

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## THE FAMILY

By  
Ed Sisler

Much of the satisfaction derived from an enjoyable experience is the fun of sharing it with others. I would like to use this article to do this.

I am presently a student of the University of Minnesota and housed in the Agricultural Education Department on the St. Paul Campus.

For one who has looked at this Department from the outside for many years, being on the inside is a truly unique experience.

This opportunity has shown me that the Agricultural Education Faculty here covers the waterfront, both from the standpoint of their individual differences and abilities, and their activities and responsibilities. "Walking in their moccasins" for a period of time has been an eye opener. The Department reminds me of the old Seven Corners on Washington Avenue which had traffic coming and going in every direction. With Jeanine directing traffic and preventing and breaking up jams, and Claire, Susan and Judy struggling with the professors' handwriting and punctuation, and the staff coming and going from every place, the Department is a busy place.

The staff is busy not only operating the teacher making machine, but spreading the Agricultural Education gospel world wide, working intensively at the national and state legislative levels to influence the environment in which we operate, representing Agricultural Education and being a part of the Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Economics, general vocational education and the Colleges of Agriculture and Education.

Because the Agricultural Education staff is so "multi-abled," their involvement in activities above and beyond the actual teaching and practical citizenship involves them with a busy schedule indeed.

It is exceedingly important that a family keep in touch. We all have a way of drifting away from each other, even though tied by the common bond of professional objectives. And to be truly effective as a family, communication linkages which involve not only awareness, but also understanding

and communion are necessary. It seems that today's society is "hell-bent" toward destroying such relationships, and it is only with hard work and sincere effort that these bonds are maintained. I suppose any group is subject to buffeting, strafing, and attempts to separate the herd. We know that we in Agricultural Education feel these real pressures.

Anyway, since I now have the opportunity, I am writing a letter home (to all of you) bringing you news and views from the rest of the family.

Paul Marvin, our Chief, is grey-haired and with due cause. After all, he's trying to ride herd on a complex group of guys who are all individuals within their own rights. He is looking at Agricultural Education student recruitment, quality of the product, the environment for his teaching staff, what's ahead 10 years (or more), cooperation between his and other vocational and/or agriculture departments, relationships between our University Agricultural Education and other states' Agricultural Education. While Paul is watching over this, he sometimes forgets to watch over himself.

Gordon Swanson seems to have different vision than some of us — while we are fighting the trees, he is looking at the forests. While we can't sometimes understand him at the beginning, he seems to get a chuckle when we tell him "do you mean that," and we have his concept. Gordie's roles cover from Agricultural Education to Vocational Education and he is comfortable in combat with about anyone at any level. He has the respect of vocational education and academic education nationwide and world-wide. He is truly a vocationalist and **really** preaches the principles of Agricultural Education.

If there is a person who is as outspoken as I on the Staff, or who comes anywhere near it, it is Ed Persons. He believes in what he is doing, and you'd better too. He doesn't seem to be content with status quo, for he is continually developing or encouraging the development of something. He likes to rattle cages, and becomes outraged and indignant at those who should "know better." He is Mr. Farm Management and Mr. Small Business Management on the Staff. He does not seem to realize that there may be a limit to his endurance.

If ever any group of us needed help, the provisionally certificated group of instructors do now. And Milo Peterson is traveling the state, supporting and guiding these good people. Milo's experience with people, and with certification requirements make him a natural for this role. He is no easy touch for these people and insists that they follow the rules, for after all, during these 30 years or so he has made the rules. I can't imagine how we could be so fortunate as to have him in this position.

What do I need for a good Agriculture Shop, how do I select the equipment, are there individualized teaching units, will you help me? These are familiar questions to Forrest Bear and he loves them. He spends his teaching time in the Agricultural Engineering Building and turns students on to Mechanized Agriculture. Frosty, with the rest of the faculty, spends much time teaching out-state. When he enters a door, and he fills a doorway, you can expect action and you get it.

Can you believe that Roland Peterson taught me this past fall? He is so enthusiastic, he believes that he can teach anyone. His primary area is that of teaching methods. Pete is so effective in his teaching methods that he is attracting non-Agricultural Education students to his class. Even if he does wear his glasses upside down, he is a benevolent character who has the responsibility of placing student teachers for their practice teaching.

George Copa spends one-fourth of his time in Agricultural Education and three-fourths with the Minnesota Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational Education. So we only own a piece of him. His time away is spent in research in the area of planning and evaluating vocational education. We use him for teaching senior Agricultural Education students how to plan and evaluate their teaching programs. He prefers to be called a link (he says **not** the missing one) between research in the broad field of Vocational Education and research and instruction in Agricultural Education.

We will forgive Curtis Norenberg for his North Dakota background, because after all, he is also a member of the family. Curt is 30% Agricultural Education and 70% Office of Special Programs. We know him because he organizes and coordinates the State FFA Convention each year. We need a bridge between Agricultural Extension and ourselves and Curt is that bridge. He tells me that the traffic gets pretty heavy

strong back. Curt teaches Extension Education courses in Agricultural Education.

South Dakota's loss is our gain. Gary Leske returned to Minnesota with excellent experience and we are using this to good advantage. Gary worked hard with Ed Persons on the Monthly Mail-In Analysis Program during his graduate days and who is concentrating on the Supervised Occupational Experience areas and has broadened his interest area from that of off-farm to all occupational experience areas. He is also known as Mr. FFA and will expound the virtues of FFA with the slightest encouragement.

You know, of course that the Department is not satisfied to just turn out new students. Much time and energy is directed toward helping these new teachers during their first year on the job (and there is thought about extending this to the second year also). They try hard and do develop vigorous off-campus and summer educational offerings for all of us who wish to improve. So, the entire staff is involved with post-graduate educational course offerings.

During their supervision of student teachers this spring, the staff accumulated 10,000 miles, almost all at night, and during their first year teacher meetings they added up an equal distance.

Now let me tell you something about the students who keep this department so busy.

There are 14 Ph.D. candidates, 2 from Thailand, 1 from Korea, 1 from Egypt, 1 from Alaska, 1 from Texas and the rest are Minnesotans. Two additional Ph.D. candidates are Home Economics majors who have chosen this department for guidance.

Presently 90 Master Degree and 85 Master of Education and Agriculture students depend upon this staff to encourage them, untangle registration snarls, and keep them going in the right direction.

One hundred and forty-two undergraduate students are registered in Agricultural Education, with 47 graduating this Spring.

What happens to the graduates from this department? Such a story could be told! Most of them become VoAg Instructors. But there are also farmers, state and national legislators, foreign missionaries, and international program directors, extension and experiment station administrators; farm credit employs many in Farmers Home Administration, Federal Land Bank, and banks. In addition research attracts some and vocational administration and agribusiness claim their share.

reminds us that these men are located all over the world, in positions of administration in many fields, including world food organizations, United Nations, colleges, and universities.

Well, there you are. If you thought several times as you read this, "I didn't know that," you are no different than I. The staff is concerned about you and what you are doing. They want to help. They feel strongly that we are all family and share the same concerns — such as teacher recruitment, teacher effectiveness, professional improvement, like what can they do to help, like what are the problems, and yes, like how are the wife and kids. In spite of their busy schedule, they all have time to listen, sympathize and chuckle and support us.

They are fine, healthy, and wish you all well. They said to tell you, "Y'all come and see us."

If I've seemed personal in my naming and description of these men, it is because that is the way they are. A part of the family.

As I look back over what I've written and think about you all back home, and at Capitol Square, and I can only say, "WHAT A FAMILY!"

\*Ed Sisler is a graduate student this year, on leave from Thief River Falls where his position is ag area coordinator at the Thief River Falls Area Vocational Technical Institute.

#### WHY I AM A GRADUATE STUDENT

The following articles have been written by graduate students in Agricultural Education.

**Earl Bracewell** (Palmer, Alaska) — Go to Graduate School? Why would anyone want to do that? Oh no, not me, I've better things to do with my time. I said those things and more, but I went to Graduate School. Why did my attitude change? What am I doing here?

I recall a story told to me once about a duck. It seems this duck was asked by other ducks on their southward journey, "What are you doing here?" and his response, even as his world became smaller and smaller and the last ducks were leaving was, "Just doing what I've always done, just being a duck." His own desire to be a duck trapped him one day and he could no longer do those things ducks do. And in the glories of Spring he was only a duck memory.

Thus it can be with work and with life sometimes, but Graduate School can put you on wings anew. You can soar to new heights with a better job, faster advancement, better pay. Graduate School gives

interest, develop new skills, gain exposure to new ideas, in an atmosphere of freedom and stimulation.

**Roger E. Palmer** (St. Paul, Minnesota) — The story begins late in my senior year of high school at Frazee, Minnesota. At no time prior to that had I seriously considered even attending college, let alone a career in agricultural education. No one in my immediate family had ever attended college. In fact, few of my close relatives had gone beyond high school. At the urging of my vo-ag instructor, Lambert Schilling, I made application and was accepted at the University of Minnesota in agricultural education. Having made that commitment, I knew that additional graduate courses would always be part of my life.

The opportunity to become a full-time graduate student during the past two years was prompted by several factors. The unsettled conditions surrounding my job as an area vo-ag coordinator at Duluth started me looking for other avenues in my professional career. Secondly, I was encouraged by members of the staff to return for graduate studies and to work on the development of the Small Business Management Program. A third factor involved an unfinished masters program and the opportunity to complete it. The fourth factor, and the reason for the second year of graduate studies, was the possibility of obtaining additional administrative coursework and to complete a doctorate.

While the circumstances and development of my graduate program to not tend to suggest definite planning or specific goals, the story is a reflection of my basic philosophy. That is to serve the people who need my talents and abilities wherever they may be and whenever needed.

I have not become selfish to the point of not heeding professional encouragement for position change or advancement. This has meant a certain amount of hardship on my family from the view of moving, changing schools, leaving friends, etc. They have understood and accepted generously. While I am looking at my next position, possibly in the administration of an AVTI, and the possibility of settling down for a number of years, I cannot say that another call to serve my profession in another area will go unheeded. I have enjoyed my graduate studies. It has added a dimension that cannot be explained without actually experiencing it. For this I thank fellow students, staff and many others for the

**Sung Soo Kim** (Suweon, Korea) — In 1971 my country, Republic of Korea, negotiated a loan from the I.B.R.D. (commonly known as the World Bank). The purpose of this loan was to upgrade and strengthen vocational education in the secondary schools and teacher training in selected institutions. Included in the project were business and commercial, mechanical, industrial, electrical, architectural, and of course, agricultural education. This is a long range project and is now in Phase III. It involved physical facilities as well as program development. Dunwoody Industrial Institute of Minneapolis was awarded the contract for Technical Assistance in program development and I was one of two Koreans recruited as Counterparts for the two American Consultants in Agriculture. The American consultants in agriculture were Mr. Lambert Schilling, vo-ag instructor from Frazee, Minnesota and Dr. Milo J. Peterson, University of Minnesota. I guess that is why I am here.

I was born and raised in a small farming village in the Republic of Korea. It was the sacrifice of my father and family that made it possible for me to be the first person from our village to graduate from college. I studied agricultural education at the College of Agriculture of Seoul National University and completed the Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees. Of course, I also served in the R.O.K. army for an allotted period of service. Before joining the World Bank Project I was an instructor in agricultural Education at Seoul National University.

I am a graduate student in agricultural education at the University of Minnesota primarily because of the opportunity given me by Dr. Marvin and the Division of Agricultural Education. My goal is to learn everything I can about the culture, philosophy, principles, objectives, programs and people who contribute to vocational agriculture in Minnesota and America. If I can accomplish this I believe I can be more effective in contributing to my people in Korea. When I return to my country I plan to resume my position in the Department of Agricultural Education at Seoul National University. I want to thank Dr. Paul Marvin and his colleagues for giving me this opportunity. I hope to be a credit to the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Milo Peterson has said that the future of the land is the man on the land. I believe this is what agricultural education is all about and that is why I am here.

**Marvin Kleene** (St. Paul, Minnesota) — Will it ever be finished? This perhaps, is the most frequent question a graduate student asks of himself. Four of my past six years in Agricultural Education have been working either part or full time on a graduate program. Within this time span, I have worked with high school students, adult farmers, teacher educators and college students. Missed vacations, late nights and long weekends become a part of graduate endeavors, but the question still persists.

It is possible however, the "when" or length of graduate tenure is not an accurate focal point. We, as professional educators, need avenues to discover and to test new ideas. Research indicates we will remember very little of the vast storehouse of data brought before us. As I work toward my graduate degree, perhaps the most important issue is the professional philosophy that is developed. This becomes the foundation on which we base our careers. It plays an important part in our every day activities. From it, we decide the approach to our education program and consult with students about their every day problems. It is a base to give our efforts some consistent direction and scope.

It is the on-going practical application of our vocational philosophy that is important. The completion of my graduate program is not an end point but a bench mark. The philosophy I have developed will help direct the pursuit for new ideas. It should continually serve in the search for new and better ways to help students achieve their goals.

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