Exhibit Season Kicks Off!

4-H gives members the opportunity to start building public speaking skills at an early age, developing a life skill that will serve them in any career they pursue. Because public speaking includes a wide variety of styles and is a skill that must be practiced and refined, 4-H members are required to give a talk or demonstration at a club meeting each year.

The 4-H Show season officially began on May 25 with the Public Presentations Contest. Kenzie Reber selected the extemporaneous topic “Are Too Many People Attending College.” Extemporaneous speeches are the most challenging style of speaking where presenters draw a topic and have 45 minutes to prepare a 4—6 minute speech.

Prepared formal speeches were given by Daniel Cornell and Sarah Campbell. Their topics were “Guitars” and “Official FFA Dress,” respectively. Cameron Harmon presented an entertaining Oral Interpretation speech portraying the dialog between a teen and his mother about responsibility and consequences entitled “How Do You Spell Miserable—GROUNDED.”

Oral Interpretation speeches can be humorous, dramatic, or even a reading, whatever the members is the most comfortable presenting. Kenzie Reber, Daniel Cornell, and Cameron Harmon were selected to represent Christian County at the IL State Fair on August 14.

New Environmental Study at the U of I / Dudley Smith Farm

A new project being launched at the U of I / Dudley Smith farm near Pana will study the impacts of growing new bioenergy crops in the Midwest. Some biofuel crops being studied may use more water than corn, the main ingredient used to produce biofuel ethanol. The effects of large land conversion to alternative biofuel crops will likely impact water resources and could affect the overall hydrologic cycle.

Collecting data on evapotranspiration, light reflected by the crop, and other parameters will help predict the effects of cropping changes and allow validation of other needed weather-climate-ecosystem models that are being tested. Measurements are currently being taken by Andy Vanloocke, a U of I Atmospheric Science graduate research assistant.
University of Illinois Extension offers educational programs to residents of Illinois—and far beyond. Extension’s programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer and more profitable for individuals and their communities.

May Contacts:
AGRICULTURE—
105 crop system and livestock recommendations were made to Christian County producers.

HORTICULTURE—
21 plant, plant disease, insect identification and horticulture specific recommendations were provided to Christian County residents.

ECON. DEVELOPMENT—
16 contacts

4-H—
300 youth contacts

AG LITERACY—
400 program contacts

FNP—
1,275 youth contacts
650 adult contacts

We’re on the Web!
www.extension.uiuc.edu/christian

LOCAL STAFF
Linda Smith
County Extension Director
smithll@illinois.edu

Gary Letterly
Natural Resources Educator
letterly@illinois.edu

Nancy Briggs
FSNE Program Coordinator
nbriggs@illinois.edu

Jodi Heberling
4-H Community Worker
heberlin@illinois.edu

Ann Lupton
Ag Literacy Coordinator
alupton@illinois.edu

Pat Moreland, Secretary

Nancy Marsh, Secretary

A unique collaboration between the Greater Taylorville Chamber of Commerce and U of I Extension Christian County brought Extension Computer Training Specialist, Tom Ward, to Taylorville twice a month to teach a variety of technology related classes. Tom began his treks to Christian County in February when he presented a program on “Social Media In the Workplace.” He explained what Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, myspace, and other Internet sites are and how they operate.

Fish in the Sea Snack

Pana Head Start children follow a different theme or program idea each week during the school year that coincides with the lessons being taught. One week in May the theme was “Fish in the Sea,” and the six Headstart classes at the Stonington and Pana sites prepared gelatin blocks to help teach and reinforce this theme. Blue, green and yellow gelatin blocks provided an opportunity to feel, taste, smell and combine colors of gelatin blocks to form new colors all in one lesson. The students cut the gelatin into blocks and put them in a cup creating a place to put “gummy” fish to complete their snack. Everyone had fun jiggling their gelatin pieces and eating the finished product.

Farmer Boy Visits Christian County

Kathy Kennedy’s fourth grade class at St. Mary’s School received an Illinois Ag in the Classroom grant this year to study American farm life in the late 1800’s. Farmer Boy, by Laura Ingalls Wilder, tells the story of Almanzo Wilder who lived on a big farm in New York with his brother and sisters working from dawn to supper no matter what the weather. From shearing sheep and milking cows to training young calves, the book depicts the hard work farm families endured to sustain themselves in the 19th century. The class purchased enough books so everyone could read together and participate in various activities throughout the spring semester to help them appreciate the differences between farm life today and 150 years ago.

Business professionals learned how various social media work and how these sites can benefit local businesses as they attempt to reach out to new audiences.

In March, April and May, Tom taught two sessions each month covering six of the most widely used Microsoft Office 2007 programs: Word, Publisher, Access, Excel, Outlook and PhotoDraw.