

THE GAVEL

HITTING YOU WITH FACTS

MONDAY, JULY 18, 2016

Wise Words

By: Payton Holcomb, Caroline Schulze, Lauryn Luttrull

Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Dr. Doug Steele, is eager to see what leaders will discover through the mind-wrenching legislative process from previous experiences of coming to Texas 4-H Congress. Dr. Steele says that it is a very unique opportunity for the 4-H members to get together and learn how a Capitol operates and how the roles of citizens can play into the legislative process. Stating that Congress is his highlight event because of its focus on leadership and citizenship, Dr. Steele is looking forward to seeing the two come together to make a difference. Stating that it takes support for the legislative process to work, the Director's words of wisdom are "people putting themselves behind others and working together is what 4-H is all about."

Dr. Chris Boleman is the 4-H and Youth Development Program Director and Associate Professor. Living in Brazos county and having graduated from high school in 1992, Boleman has a much more traditional 4-H career because he grew up with agriculture and livestock. With age comes wisdom...he has a lot of wisdom. Before he was the director, Boleman helped Dr. Lepley at Congress, stating that this informative event allows young people to defend their thoughts and share their ideas. He believes Congress helps in the real world because it gives the 4-H members an understanding that is bigger than them. It is also about their passion and not just about them as it can impact others. His words of wisdom are to embrace the moment because if one leaves Congress saying, "I wish I would have done this", then they've missed the point.

Dr. Toby Lepley, the Texas 4-H Congress coordinator, expressed that "it is an educational opportunity for young people (especially 4-H members) 14-18 years of age to be able to experience the legislative processes in Texas."

This has been a great and unique opportunity as four bills that were written by 4-H members became state laws. Dr. Lepley is grateful that Representatives and real legislators view Congress as a very valuable opportunity for young people. His words of wisdom have encouraged delegates to be aware that this is a great opportunity for them to learn government and really experience government.



Dr. Steele Addresses the Delegates

2016 TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS PROUDLY SPONSORED



The More You Know...

By: Will Whitaker & Javier Ramirez

Fun Facts

1) The height from the seal on the floor in the rotunda to the star at the top of the roof in the rotunda is 266 feet, whereas the Statue of Liberty from base to torch is only 151 feet.

2) The Texas state capitol is 308 feet tall from the ground to the top of the statue. However, the national Capitol in Washington D.C. is only 288 feet tall from the ground to the statue.

3. The XIT ranch was 3 million acres of farmland that was then sold in order to pay for the state capitol's building material. The XIT ranch is responsible for the beautiful building which exists today.

4. The first college founded in Texas was Baylor University in 1845.

5. Texas has 267,339 total square miles which is 7.4% of the United States of America's total square miles.

Fill in the Blanks

1. How old is the state capitol? _____

2. What is the statue on top of the State capitol made of? _____

3. What were the six flags flown over Texas? _____

4. What is the official state food? _____

5. What year did Texas become a state of the United States? _____

6. What type of rock is the Texas capitol made of? _____

7. Who were the 2 women governors of Texas? _____

8. What is the official state fish? _____

9. What city was the capitol of Texas before it was moved to Austin? _____

10. When was the first Texas 4-H club started? _____

Answers on next edition...

Governor's Reception

By: Ishani Pandya



Select Representatives, Senators, and lobbyists met in the President's Suite yesterday evening at 5:00 for the Governor's Private Reception.

The spotlight of the event was certainly Governor Lyndi Luttrull's speech at the end of the reception, when she highlighted important personal issues; most notably her stance on education and the role of the school to prepare students in responsibilities beyond the classroom.

"Any bill such as the 'Life 101 Class Required' bill or the 'Financial Freedom For Students' bill is something I'm in support of, because we need to be preparing our students for life after high school."

Governor Luttrull also threw her support to proposals which add agriculture to school curriculum and legislature to reduce distracted driving.

"One of the most popular cause of accidents in Texas is distracted driving...so I'm in full support of a bill that makes using a cellphone [while driving] illegal," Luttrull said.

Above all, the Governor implored the attendees to put the greater good above their own personal needs.

"We all have our own personal values but we need to think on a larger scale and to think what is best for Texas instead."

"Inside Thoughts of Your Texas 4-H Lobbyist"

By Jayme Deville and Sarah Richter

In a recent interview, Ms. Shelby Lepley from Walker county, District 9, shared:

"So far it has been amazing. I'm really excited to see how it turns out as we go into the days where we are debating and presenting bills in different committees. I am really excited to see some of the bills come forward, especially things regarding agriculture and education within the classrooms, things protecting our rights as citizens our well being and our private property rights, and those covered in the constitution."

Lepley is interested in *Job Assimilation H.B.189/S.B. 389* which restricts Texas' welfare program in order to hold American citizens accountable to work for a pay check. Current Texas welfare checks would be disbanded. Local entities within our government would be able to ask for jobs from the state and once granted these jobs, would have their paychecks come from the government instead of having one from welfare. It would teach people accountability and self-reliance while supporting our local government entities.

"A few other bills of my interest are *Student Privacy in Public Schools H.B.157/S.B. 357*, any bills on agricultural education, private properties, and classrooms."

Lepley enjoys bills that bring up heat to the floor and positive debate. She encouraged us to remember our constitutional rights to our own property. This would be regarding bills such as *Limiting the Height of Shoe Heels to Three Inches H.B. 257/S.B. 457* and *Don't Smoke in Texas H.B. 243/S.B. 443*.

We're in for an exciting debate!

Blast from the Past

By: Merah Winters & Myrah Geter

Fourscore minus two...and for those of you who cannot do math, that would take us to the “Dinosaur Age” of 1998. Here starts the first of many Congress “History Wiz” articles! Our muse came from one of the current Press Corps Advisers, Justin Saenz from District 9. He provided us with old Newsletters from 2006 and 1998! We interviewed him and learned his perspective on what Congress was like as a 17 year old 4-H member attending Congress in 2006, as part of the House of Representatives. When he was at Congress, delegates were given “complete access” to the Capitol as the experience was “very hands on.” He “had [his] own desk [and] felt like an actual representative.” Saenz said that this opportunity impacted him and was his “favorite event as a 4-Her.” Texas Congress has molded and influenced his life in exponential ways, which resulted in him coming back as an adviser for the Senate and now Press Corp. This is the kind of history we hope repeats itself; the kind that continues Making The Best Better! Not that we are calling you old Justin...buuuuutt...

This is our *drumroll please* intro to the 2016 Blast From The Past! Keep a lookout for more of our quirky, quizzical, and just plain informational “History Wiz” articles. #HistoryRepepepepeats



Sponsors Lend a Helping Hand

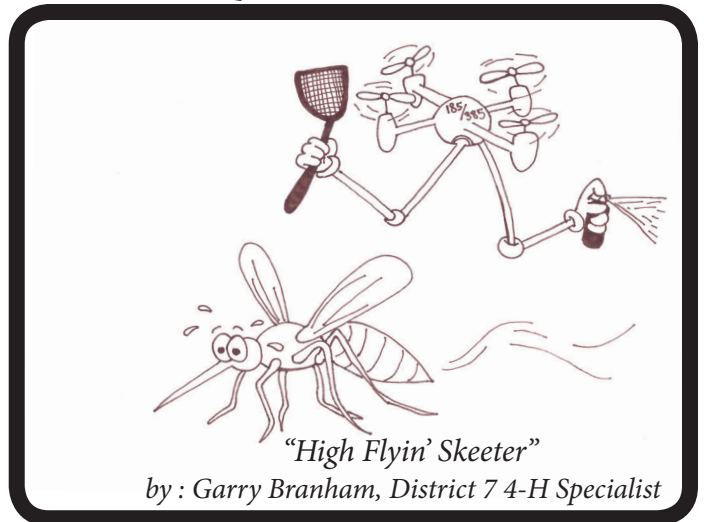
By: Christian Dieterich

For this week of Congress, more than 300 different leaders and members are attending one of the Texas 4-H program’s largest events, Texas 4-H Congress. This event wouldn’t be possible without the amazing support from these 8 different organizations --- TransCanada, Ed Rachal Foundation, The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, TXU Energy, Luminant, TIBH Industries, and the Austin Rodeo. Together, they have donated over \$129,000!

You will have the opportunity to express your gratitude by writing thank you notes before you leave Congress. Please remember that each of your letters is a reflection of you so don’t forget to make them as genuine and professional as possible!



Garry's Giggles!



Secret Meetings?

By: Sarah Richter and Jayme Deville

Word on the street says that there have been some suspicious secret meetings going on behind the scenes of Texas 4-H Congress. The members of Press Corps have been working hard to get the inside scoop on what could be going on.

As Congress Delegates arrived word was spread that the Lobbyists were having a secret meeting to discuss bills. When questioned by the press they would not share any information. Governor Luttrull released a statement to confirm that there was indeed a secret meeting. Press Corps member, Clara Raabe, interviewed Ms. Bezner and discovered that felt like they were able to accomplish more without the press present. Is that the whole truth or could there be more?

On Sunday afternoon there was sighting of Lobbyist and Calendar Clerks entering a conference room to collaborate. Editors Ben Hall, Trent Warwick, and several other Press Corps reporters awaited outside the meeting to gather information on what the meeting entailed. Lobbyists Katherine Bezner and Blake Tatsch gave us a few details after their meeting concluded.

Our interpretation is that the County Clerks and Lobbyists are pushing these four bills to the floor: *Provision for 18 Year Old Adults to Carry Firearms H.B. 268/S.B. 468*, *Stem Cell Research H.B. 280/S.B. 480*, *Working Welfare H.B. 289/S.B. 489*, and *The Legalization of Recreational Marijuana”H.B. 287/S.B. 487*. So be sure to study up on these bills before they hit the floor. Looks like we’re all in for a juicy week. XOXO Press Corps.



The Young and Defenseless

By: Taylor Maberry

At the age of 18, the citizens of the United States of America can vote and serve their country, though many people believe they should be able to defend themselves by carrying a concealed hand gun. This will be discussed many times throughout Texas 4-H Congress. As *Concealed Hand Gun License for 18 year Olds H.B. 225/S.B. 425* states, This act shall give 18 year olds the ability to acquire a concealed handgun license in the state of Texas without being active military.

Texas laws currently state that only citizens 21 and over may obtain a concealed carry permit. Many people feel that these young adults are not responsible enough to handle a gun or don’t want guns on college campuses. In reality, concealed carry states have the lowest crime rates in the country.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the year after this law to conceal carry weapons passed, murder rates fell 50% faster than the national average. Assaults fell 250% faster in the second year. According to the same source, the facts show that concealed carry holders are 14 times less likely to commit a crime, and its five times less likely that, that crime will be violent. While crime is less likely to happen on a college campus in the United States, it is always a possibility.

Imagine being 18 and getting approached by someone who wants to do harm. You have no self defense and cannot fight back. What if you did have a way to fight back, a way to protect yourself and the ones surrounding you?

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Twitter/Instagram: @Texas4H

Facebook: Texas 4-H Youth Development

#Texas4H #TX4HCongress

#TrueLeaders

Use of Drones in Mosquito Management

By: Ember Reed

Due to the recent outbreaks of the Zika virus more people have turned a fearful eye towards all the mosquitoes in our state, but are they really seeing the nature of the threat or are they just taking this at face value? *H.B. 185/S.B. 385* is the proposal of using unmanned aircraft systems with UAS commonly known as drones, to locate, research, and deliver control systems to remote, rural, or underserved areas that are not protected by municipal systems. This is considered to be important because according to Sonja L. Swiger, assistant professor and Extension Entomologist, knowledge of diseases like the Zika and Chikungunya viruses could have been discovered and controlled even before the initial contact with humans. According to the Integrated Pest Management Extension Agent of Hale, Swisher, and Floyd counties, Blayne Reed, mosquitoes transmit diseases because of their evolutionized life cycle. They are considered to be classified in the insect order Diptera and display what is known as holometabolis which means they go through all the metabolis stages; egg, larvae, pupa, and adult. Contrary to popular belief, not all mosquitoes bite and not all the time, female mosquitoes are the only parts of the species that need a blood

meal and usually only once before laying a cluster of eggs. At all other stages of their life cycle, even the female mosquitoes, feed on nectar and pollen. The disease-transmitting problem originates from mosquito species that lay more than one cluster of eggs because of the amount of time the disease takes to cultivate within the insect. These species become infected by feeding on an infected blood meal before laying their eggs the disease then spreads through the insect and, finding the mosquito an unsuitable host, moves into the insect's salivary glands where it transmits to the next blood meal. This process usually takes three weeks. This bill would allow faster discovery and control of the affected species therefore preventing the spread and protecting our state's populace. Really, the only debatable section of the bill might be the use of drones, which is addressed by the bill's statement that all Federal regulations, restrictions, and permits will be acknowledged by the UAS used in the program. All in all, the bill seems a very feasible addition to our state's repertoire.

Controversial Congress

Keeping you posted on the biggest bills of the 2016 Texas 4-H Congress!

By Clara Raabe

Education- No Public Schools Transgender Bathrooms Act

One of the most heated and frequent issues debated in 2016 was about transgender restrooms. The No Public Schools Transgender Bathrooms Act *H.B. 134/S.B. 334* urges its own view on the issue to be implemented as law in Texas. Despite the clear opinion expressed by the act's title, the actual text of the bill doesn't seem to have quite as strong a position, stating in Section 2 that "the act shall give local School Boards authority over their buildings and how funds are used to maintain them." This text leaves the option for transgender bathrooms in public schools for individual School Boards to decide, shifting the debate away from bullying and alienation of transgender students versus student safety, and towards government choice versus schools' choice. However, the issue of transgender bathrooms still remains as hot a topic as ever.

Other bills to look out for:

Shorten Standardized Testing In Public Schools H.B. 150/S.B. 350

STAAR At All Levels H.B. 152/S.B. 352

No Suspension Of Children Under Second Grade H.B. 135/S.B. 335

Capitalism In Education H.B. 105/S.B. 305

Agriculture Awareness Curriculum for Public Middle Schools H.B. 101/S.B. 301