By: Syrena Flowers

UT Martin Collegiate FFA hosted the Goodwill Tour Banquet on Tuesday, February 19, 2013. The Goodwill Tour Banquet is used to celebrate and kick off National FFA Week, which always takes place the week of George Washington’s birthday.

According to Christy Chicas, current State FFA Reporter and UTM student, said, “During National FFA Week it is our job as state officers to travel across the state to spread the goodwill of Agriculture Education and FFA.”

“At the beginning of the week, four of the state officers travel east and four state officers travel west and at the end of the week we as officers meet in middle Tennessee. We hope throughout the week to leave those we come in contact with a better knowledge of their food and where it comes,” she added.

John Adam Turner, current State FFA Vice President shared some of his highlights of the places they had traveled. “We visited Farm Credit Services, AgriCenter International, Ducks Unlimited, and the National Cotton Council.” “My favorite stops were Hillshire Farms and Tyson and seeing how our food is produced.”

During Tuesday’s Banquet, over 200 West Tennessee students and advisors shared the goodwill of FFA with the state officers and collegiate officers for UTM. Jai Templeton, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, gave greetings on behalf of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and left students with the challenge to step up and lead and to never forget to find the happiness in life.
UTM NAMA competes in Florida

By: Malorie Paine

Members of the UTM National Agri-Marketing Association, NAMA, traveled to Orlando, Fla. Feb 1 - 6.

On Friday, Feb. 1, several students and advisors began their journey to the Wyndham Orlando Resort Hotel for the 110th Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists’ Annual Meeting and Conference.

Because the conference covers all aspects of agricultural science, several other organizations were involved in the conference as well. The Southern Agricultural Economics Association, SAEA, helped make up the agricultural economists section of the conference.

Each year, the SAEA hosts a student quiz bowl in which students from different schools in the southern region of the United States are invited to participate.

UTM’s NAMA chapter brought one of the largest groups in attendance this year. The chapter provided 13 students to compete in this year’s Quiz Bowl competition.

In order to determine who would represent UTM, the organization held tryouts for students during the Fall 2012 semester.

After the tryouts, the chosen students were given examples of past questions to study over Christmas break. All of the students, with the exception of one, were new to the Quiz Bowl competition.

Once students arrived at the conference center, they were separated into 25 different teams. Typically teams were comprised of three people, each representing a different school. However, one UTM student was placed on a team with only one other person.

The Quiz Bowl portion of the conference lasted for two days. The competition began at 8 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 3 and lasted until just before noon on Monday, Feb. 4. Each round of the Quiz Bowl lasted 20 minutes and included as many questions as the competitors were able to answer.

The Jeopardy style questions covered topics that ranged from Macro and Microeconomics to which celebrity has the most followers on Twitter. The top three teams received a cash prize to be divided equally among the members of those teams.

The first place team also was given the opportunity to compete against The Legends, a team consisting of three current SAEA officers. Ending a losing streak, this year’s student team beat The Legends.

Along with competing, the students also attended the SAEA’s Presidential Luncheon. At the luncheon, the SAEA President gave a presentation that explained his research on the Gulf of Mexico since the 2010 oil spill.

Students learned that to this day, cities and towns are suffering from the effects of the spill. Students were also informed that BP is still going through trials to determine what they will be held responsible for.

The students not only competed in Quiz Bowl but were also given the opportunity to network with several schools that offer graduate programs in Agricultural Economics and Business.
Teaching came second-hand to dropout

By: Jesi Ogg

Dropping out of school at 16, no one pegged Al Smith for a teacher.
Albert Smith grew up outside of Shreveport, Louisiana, where his family grew everything they ate. Only basic needs like flour were bought at the general store.
Growing up milking cows and working on a farm, Smith said he was thankful for a disciplined life. It was a good experience that helped him later on.
Smith quit school at age 16 and began working in a creamery for $3.00 a day. He worked there a year and then was given the opportunity to go back to school. Already six weeks late into the fall semester, Smith changed school districts and finished three years of high school in just 23 months.
Upon graduating, he received a scholarship to Louisiana State University. He received his bachelor's and his master's while attending there. After LSU, Smith was given three opportunities to further his education. Penn State, Cornell, and Washington State all offered him scholarships.
Choosing to “go west” as he'd always been told, Smith headed to the Washington State University in the summer of 1958. While there, he worked as a teaching assistant and worked on earning his Ph.D.
Failing the prelims the first time, Smith and his wife moved to Western Illinois University to teach for two years before going back to Washington and completing his doctorate.
Smith took a job teaching at Oregon State from 1967-1973. In 1973, he was given a letter from Dr. Duck announcing an open position at UTM. Smith sent in his information, flew to Tennessee for the interview, and began his teaching career at UTM soon after.
Smith says he had a lot of good experiences at UTM. He was able to develop a curriculum for grounds management, travel to Guatemala and Ecuador, and he also taught forestry for a few years. Smith’s favorite memories of UTM are traveling with his classes.
Smith was known for coming to school early in the morning. Early meaning 5:00 a.m. Elsie left for work at five so Smith just did the same.
“You get more done from 5-8 than from 8-5,” Smith said, laughing.
Smith’s motto for his classes was, “Work hard and make an A.” He tried to encourage his students to perform well. He said it stemmed from his childhood where he was expected to do well and wasn’t allowed to use excuses.
You either produced or you didn’t.
Smith loved teaching and said it came second hand to him.
Also while in Martin, Smith was a scout master for the Boy Scouts for 16 years. Out of his troop of 15, 11 of them are UTM graduates, including Stan Dunagan.
The scouts camped every month of the year in temperatures anywhere from 15°F to 102°F. Smith remembers special memories with the group, where he learned just much as the scouts did. He also served on the Martin Beautiful Board.
After 24 years at UTM, Smith retired in 1997. He jokes that it only took him 59 years to finish school.
“The golden years of retirement were the first 10 years,” Smith said. He and Elsie traveled and camped all over the country, including Alaska for several months.
Turf Bowl represents UTM

The Turf Bowl Team recently competed at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Turf Bowl Competition in San Diego, California.

The team consisting of John Brewer, Colton Jones, and Joe Taylor placed 26th. They competed against 68 teams representing 34 universities across the country. Each university is allowed up to four teams with a maximum of four students per team.

“It took a lot of work, but we are proud of the placing,” said Wes Totten, the team’s coach.

The team added two new members this year, Brewer and Taylor, with Jones being the only returning team member. The team started practicing in mid-September, once a week for about an hour and a half. After Christmas break, the practices were twice a week. Totten worked around the student’s schedules to ensure everyone was available.

Last year UTM had two teams competing, each consisting of two members. Totten paired the members based on ability, effort and like mindedness. The teams placed 16th and 54th out of about 80 teams.

In order to practice, the team used the Rhodes Golf Center, the Plant Science Complex, and various golf courses in the area. The practice times were not including the travel time it took to get to some of the courses.

Team membership is also treated like a blackboard class. Totten posts study material on the website and the students are responsible for checking blackboard. Sometimes they learn things which they have yet to cover in class, and sometimes it is a double dose of things they learned in Totten’s classes on campus.

One shining star of the team is Colton Jones. Jones was awarded the Ernest Hardison Memorial Scholarship. He is also a finalist for one of two internship slots for the United States Golf Association Southeast Agronomist. If chosen, Jones will work for one week with an agronomist on various golf courses in the Southeast.

While in San Diego, the team was able to tour Petco Field. Grounds manager and Clemson graduate, Luke Yoder, gave them an idea of what they could be doing later on in their careers. Totten said it was an overall good experience.

Along with the competition, the group attended the Golf Course Industry Show, a large trade show taking several days to view, and educational seminars. The event rotates each year among San Diego, Orlando, and Las Vegas. Next year, it will be held in Orlando.

Kimmie Balkcom, a Military Science Senior Cadet, member of Sigma Chi Fraternity, and a Senior here at University of Tennessee at Martin, was selected as the Skyhawk Battalion’s 2013 George C. Marshall Award winner. Each of the Army ROTC programs in the country nominate one senior cadet each year to receive the award and take part in a four-day conference held in April on the campus of the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA.

Cadets have the opportunity to engage with senior leadership from the U.S. Army, Department of Defense and the U.S. State Department during the course of the conference. Cadet Balkcom is a graduate of the Leader Development and Assessment Course held at Joint Base Lewis–McChord, in Washington State where he represented UTM extremely well by earning the selection as the overall number one Cadet within his Regiment.

Upon completion of his Public Relations major, he will be commissioned in May, and will serve on active duty as a military aviation officer.