

## I Pledge

My Head  
to Clearer Thinking

My Heart  
to Greater Loyalty

My Hands  
to Larger Service

My Health  
to Better Living

For My Club,  
My Community,

My Country,  
And My World.

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University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
4-H Youth Development Program



# THE CLOVERLEAF

of Contra Costa County 4-H

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## Letter from the Editors: *March Madness*

This is a term well known by all college basketball fans. Every year in March, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) hosts a huge tournament for the top college basketball teams in the United States lovingly called, *March Madness*. Here, they battle it out, in what is roughly a 3-week tournament, where eventually one team will come out on top. In this single-elimination tournament, the stakes are high for both the teams and the spectators. Being number one is the goal of most, and the ultimate victory. Along with this, many fans fill out a bracket where they pick which team will win and lose each round, which leads to an ultimate winner. The goal is to get the highest number of correct predictions and end with the same top teams. This is a fun ritual that my family does every year. We never submit them; however, we always have a competition within ourselves. I have only won one year, by a single prediction!

Outside of college basketball, March is a crazy time of the year for 4-H. By this time, all livestock members have their animals and have begun their training for show. Day by day, progress will be made toward the ultimate goal for most in our county, the Contra Costa County Fair. This takes a lot of work and preparation, so good luck to all the showman in our county.

What else can possibly occur in the month of March you may ask? Saint Patrick's Day! With the roots dating back to the 1760's, this holiday has evolved over the years. Today, we typically associate Saint Patrick's Day with leprechauns, gold, and green. There are fun parades, leprechaun traps, and plenty of chocolate coins.

I wish everyone an exciting month of March from college basketball fans to the lucky Irish, and all members of 4-H!

*By Sam Gianelli*

## A 4-H'er in Japan

*By Araceli Carrillo Medrano*

My name is Araceli Carrillo, and I'm a 16 year-old American teenager, born and raised in California. I'm currently living in Japan courtesy of Lex/Hippo family club and States 4-H International.

Before I went to Japan, before I had younger siblings, before I ate raw fish on nearly a weekly basis, all I had was an idea. I was sitting at home and the thought popped into my head.

*How cool would it be if I could go to Japan.* Now, most 14-year-olds don't avidly follow their whims, but for some reason I decided that this was a great idea. A few days later, I brought it up to my mom in the car. And to my surprise, my mom entertained the idea. We started by asking 4-H if they had a program that could send me to Japan. We were told that because I lived in California, the program did not exist anymore. After that, we started researching different programs that could get me to Japan, but none of them really seemed right. The next year was spent interacting with the liaisons of those programs and finding out what needed to happen in order for me to go. And then by some stroke of luck, my mom decided to try the 4-H office again. And at first they said no, then maybe, then I found out that I could apply.



*Continued on page 4*

## Science Matters

*By Cara Rubin*

The Science Matters Project is a multi-county project with Alameda County that focuses on important issues in our community. The project allows its members to create and build on a project to make an impact in the community.

Most of our team members are from Pleasanton, and they noticed that there was an excessive amount of plastic waste in the nearby schools and littering the ground in the nearby area. After choosing the community issue of single use plastics, we made our team name- Team Zero Waste- and got to work!

Part of the Science Matters project is traveling to the Agri-Science Conference at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This conference isn't just about agriculture and the project, it's also about having lots of fun! We were able to do a night tour of the memorials, like the Vietnam memorial, the Lincoln memorial, MLK Jr. memorial and many others. Throughout the conference, we had time to work with our team and develop our plan of action. It was also extremely interesting to learn about the other state projects and what they planned on doing about their community issues. Florida focused on plastic waste (like us), Missouri was focusing on homeless pets, and New Jersey's focused on school water quality. We were also able to attend a range of workshops, such as learning how to graft a tomato plant to learning how to protect monarch butterflies. A total of 180 youth attended with 28 states represented, which was a record for the Agri-Science Conference. Since the conference, we've been hard at work with our project. We plan to focus on informing the youth about plastic waste and what they can do to lower their plastic footprint. We hope that our project will make a lasting impact on our community but we know that our memories from the Agri-Science Conference will never fade.



## Our Hands to Larger Service

*By Melody Hollingworth*

What can we do to “Pledge our hands to larger service”? Serving the community is often a difficult task, but a great one when achieved. One problem that is rather common in certain areas is littering and trash. What can be done about that? If you guessed a clean-up, you guessed correctly! In the past few years, Claycord 4-H has taken part in Clayton Cleans Up, where everyone gathers trash and garbage from streets, parks, and other locations. The trash is then put into designated spots where it will later be picked up and disposed of. After going around, everyone meets back where they started and are given a hamburger, some chips and a drink to cool down. When the event is over, everyone is rewarded with a cleaner city and the contentment of serving the community.

Likewise, your 4-H club can organize an event just within your club or with others to clean up the area around it. A simple event like this can not only benefit one area, but can also inspire others to start cleaning up and not to litter. It may be a difficult task but it has a great reward.



### Help Countywide 4-H Domestic Exchange Program!

Everyone purchases gift cards for family, friends and co-workers for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions. If you need gift cards consider purchasing them through this 4-H project. It's fast and convenient!

#### 4-H Members:

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or Karen Sherman:

[kranedude@aol.com](mailto:kranedude@aol.com)

Questions: Julie 925-890-8212

We will have complete gift card list at Showmanship Clinic too!



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### CIRC Updates

*By Evelyn Young*

Class of 2019: CIRC scholarship information is up on the county website and applications are due by March 29<sup>th</sup>. Go to the county website, resources, youth member resources, and then scholarships. CIRC will award two \$500 scholarships for seniors who will be attending vocational school, community college, or university next year. The application includes your 4-H resume and two letters of recommendation. Be sure to check the application directions for more details.

4-H'ers planning on doing a record book: If you haven't already, you should start putting events into your record book. The deadline will come up faster than you expect. Remember to keep recording events in a journal or phone.

## A 4-H'er in Japan (*Continued*)

*By Araceli Carillo-Medrano*

The application process was long and strenuous for me and my parents. The application was 27 pages long, which included a whole slew of questions and a letter, and much of it had to be written in Japanese. The questions ranged from what kind of instruments do you play to how do you plan to fit in with your host family. Mind you, this is all before I knew who my host family was. Along with this I had several phone meetings with Ben, the 4-H program manager, who was kind enough to answer our many, many questions. It was around that time that I started learning about some of the consequences of living abroad. For example, I can't get school credit while I'm in Japan, I wouldn't know about my host family until shortly before my departure date, and there were many strict rules about what I could and could not do in Japan.

After months of prepping, weeks of packing and days of unbridled anticipation, we finally arrived at the airport. Ahead of me was a 19 ½ hour flight which included a layover in Taiwan. Arriving at the airport in Japan was probably one of the most stressful experiences of my life. After going through TSA I had to get an ID card, which would have my picture and my host family's address on it. The only problem was that I didn't know that address. So when they pulled me aside into another room, you can imagine why the circumstances made me feel despondent. Thankfully, I wasn't in any trouble and the only problem was with making my ID card. I continued down the escalator, gathered my luggage, and after it was checked, I proceeded out the gates. My host family was there waiting for me with a sign that said "Welcome to Japan" and a lei made out of origami flowers. After lots of photos and introductions, we finally, finally headed home.

Being thrust into Japanese culture is a really scary experience, with no small degree of publicity, thanks to Hippo. From day one I was constantly introducing myself in front of crowds in my very broken Japanese. This is the part that I thought I would be fine with. I was not. Even after years of experience of public speaking in 4-H, public speaking in a language I'm not comfortable or fluent in is a completely different challenge. Despite this, all the Hippo members constantly complemented me on my Japanese skills and pronunciation and were always ready to help me learn a new word, as well as immensely encouraging. Since arriving in Japan, even with my initial culture shock, my Hippo family has helped me so much when it came to anything and everything I needed. I feel like I've grown so much being in Japan and learning Japanese customs. Even though I'm always stressed with school, my host family, Hippo and everyday life, I also feel like I've really found out how to be more patient with myself and feel less pressure while still getting things done.

This entire experience, from the idea in my head to where I am now (5 months in Japan), has really helped me grow as a person. I am so grateful to everyone both in America and in Japan that are helping me make it. I am so excited for what the coming months will bring and when I come home, I can't wait to put my experiences to good use.

## Food Fiesta

By Bettina Curletto



This last month, for the first time, I participated in the County Food Fiesta. The theme was “A Cook’s Guide to the Galaxy” and had an outer space theme. I competed in two categories: a table setting (“Flying Cups and Saucers”) and food preservation (“Getting Ready for the Journey”). It was a great opportunity to try out my ideas for Fair. Food preservation was nice, too, since it could be organized in advance so no last-minute cooking would stress me out. There were over 40 youth exhibitors and most of them entered 2 or more categories, so there was a lot going on. So many interesting ideas and really colorful designs.

Two different judges judged each category. They tasted my cranberry sauce and asked me some questions about how it was made, why I liked it and some nutritional questions. Then they tasted it and wrote down some judging comments which I got back at the end. After the judges were done with everyone’s food, it was time to sample everything! My favorite items were the upside-down pineapple cake (from the “Rings of Saturn” category) and the Galaxy Toffee made by Tess Morici.

I ended up getting 2 blue awards, which is the highest score. I was really proud and inspired to compete again in these categories at Fair. I hope you will also participate at Fair. And, if you’ve never tried it before, now you know it can be very rewarding to go to Food Fiesta!

### **Bettina’s Entry in the Food Fiesta Food Preservation Contest** **“Space Meteors Cranberry Sauce”**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 (12 ounce) package fresh cranberries
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 pint fresh blueberries

#### **Directions:**

1. Wash and pick over cranberries. Place in a medium saucepan with water, and sugar. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, stir and simmer for 10 minutes or until cranberries burst.
2. Slightly mash the cranberries with the back of a wooden spoon to insure all skins are broken. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice. Mix well.
3. Remove from heat and mix in the blueberries (don't be afraid to break a few, but don't over mash either). The sauce will thicken as it cools. Transfer to a bowl, cool slightly and place plastic wrap directly on top of sauce to cover. Refrigerate until chilled.



## Project Skills Day

By Evelyn Young

Project Skills Day was held on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the county office. I started the event last year as my Emerald Star Project and am very happy to see that it has continued. Project Skills Day is an event where members create an educational display board about something they have learned in one of their 4-H projects and present about it in a one-on-one conversation with an evaluator. This



is a great introduction to public speaking for those who don't have a lot of experience because speaking to one person at a time is less intimidating than talking to a room full of people. It is also important that kids learn to speak directly to an adult. Congratulations to Johanna Busk, Olivia Flamino and Emily Travers who were selected as the age group winners for their presentations.

This year there was an increase in presenters, and they came from all over the county. In addition to the presentations, 4-H members could participate in community service activities like cards for veterans and tie blankets. It was a lot of fun, and I encourage you to go next year.

## Shine Like Gold: Based Upon Real Presentation Day Events

By Aly Adams

"Ten minutes," my mom said, glancing at her watch then the schedule placed on the opposite wall. Its golden lettering twinkled in the Fire Fairies' lights.

"Ten minutes," I repeated. Rubbing my hands on my cloak while trying to get the sweat off them, I glanced at my parents. My mom was now busy fixing a scarf on one of the Merlin members while talking to Olive, leader of the Potions project. My dad was busy conversing with Nick about who knew what. I sat staring at the opposite wall until a hand touched my shoulder. Turning around I was met with two pairs of eyes.

"Ally, why are you staring at the wall?" my friend Sally asked, sitting down beside me. Her wand almost fell out of her pocket but she grabbed it in time to reposition it.

"Walls are interesting," I said laughing.

"Sure seems like it," Ashley said, sitting on the other side of me. "You ready?" she asked. I shrugged. I busied myself by tapping my ebony wand on my palm.

"Ready as I'll ever be," I replied. "You?" She nodded and picked up her scroll, pointing to the enchanted paper. A picture of a Mooncake caught my attention and suddenly I was hungry, but food could wait. Instead, my mind flitted about like an anxious Dragon, more bumped around in my stomach.

*I've presented before, I reminded myself, then why am I so nervous?* Before I could ask what Sally was doing for her presentation, the small Pearlem Dragons screeched, announcing a speech. *Continued on next page*

“Can I have your attention?” said a small voice. “Presentations are about to start! Please stay for the opening ceremony—” My mind wandered again and before I knew it, people were moving. *Room 21A*, I said over and over again. As I turned the words in my mind I made my way there, dodging small kids and other Wizards.

My room was small. A History classroom filled with colorful posters and people from the past. I didn’t recognize them but my attention wasn’t on the posters anymore as soon as I caught sight of the judges. Two, I’ve never seen before. Men with long beards, most likely part of the council and expert judges. A lump formed in my throat as they made eye contact. The Silvercloud Dragon situated on one of the judge’s shoulder screeched and took to the ever extending ceiling.

The one judge I did recognize, Stacy, was a familiar and comforting sight to see. She gave me a thumbs up as I entered and I gave her a small smile. Immediately presentations started as soon as the order was arranged. It went from proper spell casting to how to make a potion . . . it when on and on.

“Alexandra Adams?” the judge with the dragon said. I felt the urge to sink down to the floor and hide under the table but my knees wouldn’t let me, so instead I rose.

“And what are you presenting?” the judges asked simultaneously. All except for Stacy whose eyes remained on me and my board.

“Con . . . juring,” I stuttered. They wrote it down and the lump in my throat stayed stuck as I swallowed.

“You may begin.” And I was off.

My words started off shaky and spaced out. It suddenly felt as though English was not a thing anymore and instead I was speaking gibberish.

“Conjuring uses four main movements . . . blah, blah, blah . . .” I heard. It was tongue twisting. My brain flitted about again, thoughts like “*is it a bad time to say I have to go to the bathroom?*” and “*How far does that ceiling go up?*” interrupted me but I caught myself. Curse my strange, wandering brain of mine! But as I went along, things got easier, the words flowed off my tongue a little more naturally and my confidence was boosted. The eyes on me from other presenters no longer felt like a sun’s ray burning a hole in my head.

“And that concludes my presentation,” I heard myself say. I was done. I had done it. *I had done it.* Relieved I waited until everyone had finished, then dashed like a madman down the halls to my friends.

“How did you do?!” Sally exclaimed, pulling me into a hug.

“I did it! I don’t know how well but I did it! What about you?” I asked.

“Great!” The squealing of the owls again alerted us to a speaker. This time a new voice announced the final ceremonies. Taking a seat on the bleachers between my parents I waited anxiously for my results.

“Starting with Informational . . . we have Alexandra Adams, with gold!” My club applauded as I stepped off the bleachers and made my way to the front. Back at my seat I looked at the golden pin in my hands. I rubbed it with my thumb as if I couldn’t believe it was real.

“Next, Ashley Dove with . . . gold!” More applause, mine standing out. “Sally Green with . . . gold!” More applause. Down the list, more and more of our members were announced.

Gold, gold, and more gold. I felt giddy and happy, our club got all gold! When the ceremony ended, our club shrieked with joy and soon enough, we were all congratulating each other. Hugging and glancing at each others pins.

I glanced at my pin again, it was identical of course to the other Wizards in the gym who got it. But I felt . . . I felt that something about it was unique to me. But I couldn’t place it.

“We did it!” Sally exclaimed. “Great job Ally!”

“You too!” I said to her before waving goodbye as we went out.

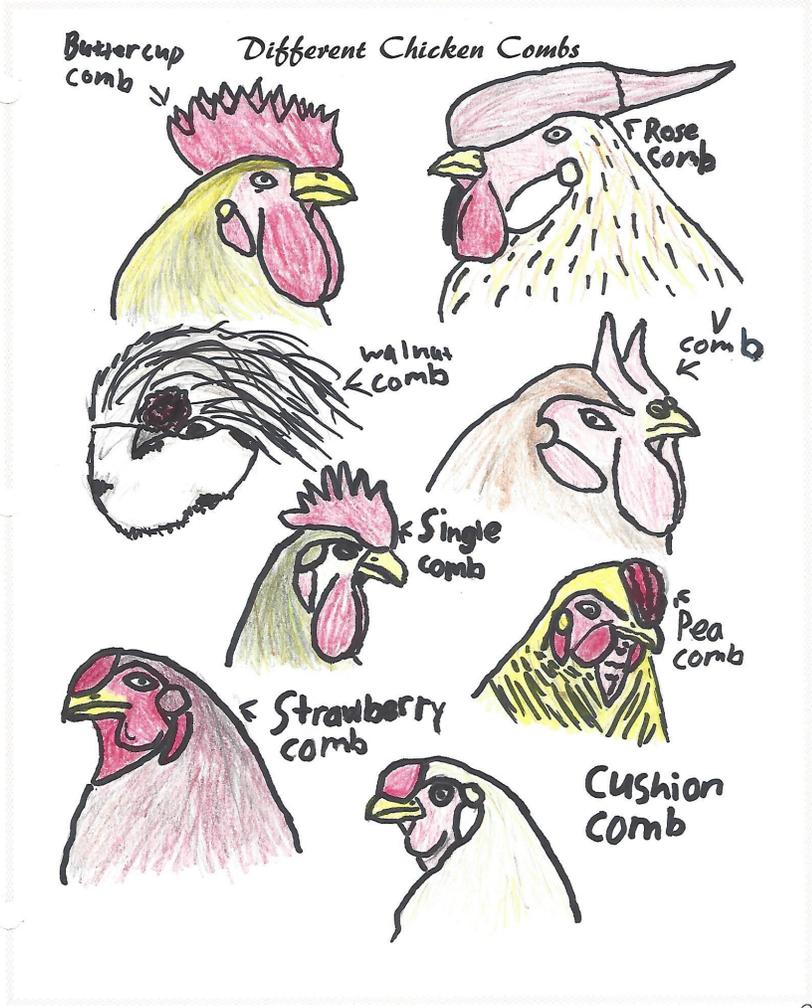
Again, the pin caught my attention. I now noticed something. Instead of a small dragon clutching the four-leaf clover (our symbol) a small Hamster was clutching it. *Hamster?* Hamsters were traditionally used on pins for those who were thought to be able to succeed to higher levels. Strange as it was, a hamster being a tiny and adorable fur ball, it was big deal when one was on a pin. I squeezed the pin and smiled to myself. *Next year, I thought, next year.*

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Inquiries regarding ANR’s nondiscrimination policies may be directed to John I. Sims, Affirmative Action Compliance Officers/ Title IX Officer, University of California, Agriculture and natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1397.



Poultry Combs by Warren Brockman



### Upcoming 4-H Events

Check the County Calendar at <http://4hcontracosta.ucanr.edu/Calendar/> for more information.

#### 35th annual California 4-H shooting sports match

Date: March 4 2019  
 Time: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
 Location: Siskiyou County Leaders Council

#### 4-H County Scrapbook Night

Date: March 9 2019  
 Time: 1:00-4:00 PM  
 Location: Contra Costa County 4-H Office

#### Contra Costa County Showmanship Clinic

Date: March 16 2019  
 Time: 8:30-11:45 AM  
 Location: 1035 Castle Rock Rd, Walnut Creek, CA 94598, USA

#### Area Presentation Day

Date: 23 March, 2019  
 Time: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
 Location: Dozier-Libbey Medical High School

#### County Fashion Revue

Date: 27 April, 2019  
 Time: 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM  
 Location: Old River Elementary School

#### 2019 California State 4-H Horse Classic and Horse Bowl Contest

Date: June 27, 2019 to June 30, 2019  
 Time: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 Location: TBA

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