



## Joe Get's a Student Teacher

By Gary E. Moore

Joe shoved a stack of record books into the back of the filing cabinet then sat down at his desk. Today had the earmarks of being a good day, he thought as he pushed the two wood planes from the center of his desk to make room for his feet. As he leaned back in his creaky swivel chair, he congratulated himself on wise planning and organization. He had just sent his freshman class to the library to do a research project on the types of milk used to make cheese in Saudi Arabia. Joe had planned for his classes to go to the library today so he could get caught up on his office work.

The first thing to do was to write that article for the newspaper about the district FFA meeting the chapter had attended last month. Joe shut his eyes to try to recall all the facts. Thirty minutes later the ringing of the telephone woke Joe from his slumber. "Hello, is this Mr. Scatterscrew? A youthful voice answered, "Good! This is Willie Wharton at State University. I'm a senior in agricultural education and am getting ready to do my student teaching, but I've got more problems than a dog has fleas." "I hope you can help me," the senior continued. "College costs lots of money these days and I'm about broke. I've got an uncle, Jeremiah Wharton, who lives in your school district who said I could stay with him if I could do my student teaching there at Bird Craw. He's even got an old '49 international truck that he said I could use to get around in".

"When I asked the college profs if I could do my student teaching there at Bird Craw they weren't excited, but finally gave in. I guess it's too far from the University or

something." "Would it be O.K. with you if I did my student teaching there at Bird Craw?"

This request caught Joe by surprise. He had never had a student teacher and at times had wondered why. Now was his golden opportunity to show those smart alec, cotton pickin professors at State University a thing or two. "Why sure, I'd be glad to have you." Joe replied. "I could sure use some help down here. I'm about plum tuckered out from working so hard. I could use a little rest for a change. When will you be down?"

"W-e-l-l, student teaching is supposed to start in two weeks but I don't know if I could make it until the 3rd week, if that is O.K. with you. You see I got this job at the Golden Girl Girdle factory and I figured if I could get in a whole week of full time work that would help pay my student teaching expenses. My uncle said you was a push-ov... I mean, real understanding and it would probably be O.K. with you."

Joe hum-hawed around a while before finally consenting to let Willie show up a week late for student teaching, but to show he meant business he closed the conversation by saying, "Since you are going to be late getting here you better be dang-ready to hit the ground running. I'll see you in three weeks!"

Joe sat for a while and pondered over this new change of events. The more he thought about it the more excited he got. With a student teacher on the scene he might be able to get those five acres behind the house plowed up. Also, Myrtle had been hounding him about putting in a garden and painting the house. With a

student teacher coming to take over the classes Joe figured he just might get these tasks done.

"Now let me see what am I going to have this kid teach." Joe mumbled as he hunted for his course outlines. After fifteen minutes of looking he gave up. "Dang if I need those course outlines anyway. I always teach crops and livestock in the autumn, FFA and Public Speaking in the winter, and shop in the spring when the kids get restless. Since this kid is going to State University, I'll just have him teach all the new fangled stuff in agriculture such as the new breeds of livestock, how to work them round hay balers and how the futures market works."

In no time at all the three weeks passed. On the day the student teacher was to arrive, Joe went to school early to straighten up the classroom and shop. It didn't take long to sweep the dirt under the workbenches and pick up the tools scattered over the shop and restroom. Joe was making good progress until he came to the grinder; it appeared that some kid had tried to coat the grinding wheel and wire brush with a layer of bubble gum. "If I ever get my hands on that kid that did this I'll..." Joe was interrupted by a loud roar in the distance. "Now what in tarnation could be making that noise. If they were any railroad tracks near I'd swear it was a freight train. Maybe it's an airplane about to crash." The roaring noise grew louder. Joe rushed to the window and looked out expecting to spot a tornado. Instead, coming up the road in a cloud of dust was a battered, sun-baked, '49 international half-ton truck. The left door and right

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## That Was Then, This is Now...

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relationship of the programs to the teachers in the field, they are in the best position to provide this service.

The "genius" in agricultural education, in my view, rests in the processes not necessarily in the content. The content is not static but is ever changing and teachers have to adjust to that need. Preparing teachers to operate in that manner is fundamental to the success of the program. Real teaching is much more than telling and with the research that has been done over the years about student learning; it is clear to me that this specialized type of teacher preparation, while labor intensive relative to other types of efforts, will be even more valuable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In reviewing the reforms taking place in schools and the significant changes in the agricultural industry, a new appreciation can be developed for the program. As a process, agricultural education programs have long been student-centered and community driven. This requires appropriate training based upon research and substantive experience. With the commitment to supervised experience and the associated home visits, to the FFA and all of the related programs, to using advisory committees, and pedagogically rooted in the notion of "Problem Solving," teacher education in agriculture will be important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If however, we give up the content base and processes that has made us unique and special, it is my view that the program will be in trouble.

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## Joe Scatterscrew...

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fender were missing and the windshield looked like a giant spider web. With a loud grinding of the gears the truck slid to a halt five feet from the ag. shop and out jumped Willie Wharton.

Willie was dressed in pink tennis shoes, faded blue jeans and had a tie-dyed T-shirt on. His blue eyes contrasted with his shoulder length red hair. "Mr. Scatterscrew, I'm Willie Wharton," he said as he extended his hand. "It's good to have you here," Joe replied uncertainly as he shook hands with Willie. "Let's go inside and make some plans."

In the familiar litter of his office, Joe started. "Since you are a novice in this here teaching profession, I thought I'd start you off slow, so you can observe me teach this morning and then I'll let you take over the two classes this afternoon and then tomorrow you can teach all the classes. I want you to teach on the latest development in agriculture." The bell rang and the freshman class came running and pushing into the classroom. "Now shut up before I detail some of you with my detailer," Joe yelled shaking his paddle over his head. "Tomorrow you are going to be taught by this here student teacher. He is from State University and knows all the latest goings-on in agriculture. So to get ready for him I want you to pick out some farm magazines from the magazine rack and look through them for the latest developments in agriculture. This way you won't appear so dumb and ignorant over what he is going to teach about tomorrow. Now get to it and I don't want to hear nary a word from any of you rascals."

This same procedure was repeated with the other two morning classes. During the lunch period Joe

asked, "Which new agricultural innovation do you plan to teach on this afternoon?" There was a glazed look in Willie's eyes and he seemed somewhat perplexed as he said something about not really being prepared and mumbled something about grass. Joe thought the school lunch of polish sausage and peanut butter sandwiches wasn't setting too well with Willie, but it would be O.K. for Willie to teach about grass.

After lunch, Joe introduced Willie to the junior class and then stepped out into the shop to listen. Joe didn't want to make Willie uncomfortable by sitting in the back of the classroom.

Willie started out by saying he was going to teach about grass. Joe couldn't hear everything that was said but did hear Acapulco Gold, Panama Red, and Columbian Weed mentioned. These were new varieties to Joe. After listening in for two or three more minutes, Joe decided everything was under control and decided to go down to the teachers' lounge for a cup of coffee.

As Joe walked down the hall he thought, "It sure is going to be nice having this student teacher. No more work for me for a while. I wonder if that Acapulco Gold, Panama Red, and Columbian Weed is used for landscaping or forage."

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