

## Six Legs up on the Competition

The FFA "Bug Team" advances past the Area IV contest onto state.

Avery Fulton, staffer  
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It's a rare sight to see four girls sitting around a computer looking at images of what appears to be some sort of insect monstrosity at twelve in the morning, taking turns shouting out answers as to what metamorphosis and order the creepy bug belongs to. This scenario has become routine for the members of the FFA Entomology "Bug Team."

"Entomology is a branch of zoology associated with the study of insects," Lindsey Smith, junior, said. "I joined the entomology team my freshman year because I really wanted to be a part of a CDE [Career Development Event] team. My agriculture teacher, Mr. Anderson, was trying to get an entomology team together for a senior who really wanted to do it, so I joined."

While these four juniors, Avery Fulton, Alison Haughey, Lindsey Smith and Sam Zike, devote a large portion of their spring semester studying a list of 150 insects for their CDE, the girls are all irrationally afraid of at least one or two insects they've come face to face with during a competition.

"It's really ironic because we all hate bugs," Smith said. "Yet, we study them pretty much every day."

Since the team has to memorize what each insect looks like plus its common name, order, metamorphosis, mouthpart and significance, the group has found creative ways to learn all the information.

"We motivate each other by having a sleepover the night before the contest, play games and invent memory tricks. And, of course, we are all competing for food at these study sessions," Smith said. "One of our weird memory tricks is for the katydid and tree hopper that resemble each other. It's 'Katy did climb that tree,' and for the significance of the katydid, we say 'Katy did climb that tree, but then, she fell off and broke both her arms and legs.' It's both good and bad, so we remember that the katydid is variable. Then, we started this joke where we say 'Knock knock. Who's there? Not Katy,' so it sticks in our brains."

After being the first entomology team at Wakeland to qualify for state after their competition season last year, the Bug Team was feeling the pressure.

"The most difficult thing about CDEs this year is that there seems to be a lot more people competing, and the competition seems to be getting more intense," Smith said. "Also with entomology, the specimens have to be consistent and good quality so that you can correctly identify them, and that hasn't happened this year."

In order to advance on from the area contest, teams in Area IV had to place within the top five teams overall. Wakeland was up against a total of twenty one teams at their area competition at Tarleton University April 8.

"I was very nervous before I found out the results," junior Alison Haughey said. "There were a few bugs that were tricky, but after I was very excited that we got fourth and was going to state again."

Three out of the four team members had gone to state last year and are looking forward to improving their scores when they return to Texas Tech University April 25 for this year's state contest.

"We're clearly going to win because we're obviously the best team in Texas," junior Sam Zike said. "Those are unrealistic expectations, but that's okay."

- See more at: <http://wakelandaccess.com/news/2015/04/17/six-legs-up-on-the-competition-2/#sthash.WJFcAmUX.dpuf>

