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News Release
Mariposa 4H Office
966-2417
by Wain Johnson, Farm Advisor
August 21, 1995

4HERS FOCUS ON LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

July 4th in Washington, DC, what better way to learn about the history and operation of our Federal government! Following two years of fund raising efforts and studying local and state government, 4H Washington Focus delegates from Mariposa joined nearly a thousand 4H members from throughout the states at our Nations capitol. Chaperone Tom Williams, Sr traveled with his delegates Tom Williams, Jr, Joe Lebow and Will Johnson, who were flying for the first time, for the 8 day study program in Washington, D.C. Staying at the National 4H Center, the delegation spent the next week visiting our nations historical monuments and sites such as Gettysburg and Arlington. Tours were also made to bureaucracies such as the FBI building as well as the Kennedy Grave, Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers and of course the Lincoln, Jefferson and Washington monuments (although the elevator was not working and the group only viewed the outside of the monument). Here they viewed first hand what they have only been reading about in school.

Several of the highlights of the trip were the tours of the Capitol, the Smithsonian Institute and Gettysburg. Congressman Radanovich's staff went out of their way to provide a special tour for the Mariposa delegation, allowing the members to go onto the Assembly floor. Touring the Capitol, they were awed at the history and tradition of the Capitol building noting especially the construction history and special transportation facilities between the Senate building and Capitol. Unfortunately, because of the Independence Day holiday, the legislators were back in their respective districts and unable to meet with the delegates. Staff members, however, outlined the duties of the senators and congressmen. The Smithsonian held special awe to the delegates who say they needed another week to see the many fascinating exhibits. "It was awesome in itself" noted the

members, "there is so much to see, learn and enjoy there". At Gettysburg you could almost feel the presence of the Civil War soldier, a lot of history was there noted the members.

Being in the Capitol on the 4th of July was really special as the fireworks displays were something to watch. With the display over the Washington monument and the reflecting pool they couldn't help but feel a tremendous patriotic pride in America. Dances, BBQ's and socializing were also a part of the Focus program as 4H members from across the nation were in attendance.

Delegates Tom, Joe and Will wish to express their appreciation to their chaperone Tom Williams Sr for his help at the Focus program and especially to those organizations and individuals who helped to sponsor the trip. The Mariposa Tax Payers Association, Cathey's Valley Garden Club and the Mariposa Chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Clover Pioneers 4H Club and the Triangle 4H Club each donated funds towards the trip. Mr Bernie McDaniels of BootJack Feed and Equipment and Mr John Newman of the Newman Ranch donated firewood for the group to sell. During the past two years the Citizenship project members have cut and sold firewood, sold tons of baked goods at bake sales and catered many local functions with the Citizenship Project dinner service. Other members of the Citizenship project helping with the many functions are: Kendra Taber, Desiree Ritter, Jeff Richardson, Jason Lebow, Michelle Williams and volunteer leaders, Tom & Margie Williams, Mike & Julie Lebow, Wain & Jackie Johnson, Sue Richardson, Jim & Sandy Taber and Steve & Renee Ritter.

How did the Washington Focus delegates get there? The 4H Focus program is a multi level government study project beginning with our local Mariposa government. Members progress from a study of local government functions to the State government and finally to Washington, DC, where they put it all into perspective. Over the many project meetings, elected and appointed officials from each of the county offices outlined their duties and discussed how the various offices fit into the operation of the county. First

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studied was the Judicial system including the courts, Sheriff's office and probation department where the members learned the progression from the crime to the trial and finally probation of the offender. How the county functions was the next step. Where does the money come from to operate the county? How is property assessed and collected? How is this money invested and managed? Who decides how to spend and distribute the finances? Who manages the county? Who is ultimately responsible? These and many other questions were answered by our county officials, Judge Carlos LaRoche, Sheriff Roger Matlock and Sargent Billy Green, James Moffit, Probation Officer Assessors Gary Estep and Becky Crafts, Ken Hawkins, Auditor, Tax Collector, Don Phillips, County Administrative Officer, Mike Coffield and Supervisor Garry Parker.

As part two of the Focus program, members attend California Focus, a five day study trip to Sacramento. California Focus brings the members knowledge about the functions and history of their state government. Generally this trip is held in the same year that members participate in Mariposa Focus. At California Focus delegates participate in a mock state government of the state of Sierra Cascade, join a political party, may run for one of the 7 constitutional offices (can you name them all?), write, sponsor, debate and lobby for various bills and conduct the business of their newly setup government. Sandwiched in with their governmental duties, the delegates tour the many historical landmarks and museums depicting the development of California.

This year 8th grade member Michelle Williams and her mother, Margie were the Mariposa delegates to California Focus and are working towards attending Washington Focus in 1998. Michelle was especially impressed with the voting procedure at the capitol, noting that she thought that the voting procedure was private. The way it works, says Michelle, is that everyone can see how you vote so that you are responsible to your voters. With the many tours of Old Sacramento, Crocker Art museum and the train display as well as the governors mansion, "you got a real feel for the history of California", says Michelle. I learned and saw so much from the trip that I had only read about in books.

The 4H Citizenship project not only studies and learns about the three levels of government, but also participated in a special community service project. Volunteer 4H leader Sue Richardson got the membership busy last year working on Buddy Bears. Buddy Bears are used by law enforcement agencies and the child protective services to help children involved in trauma to cope with the situation. Using a simple bear pattern the members made and stuffed over 50 bears, putting on happy faces and the 4H emblem. Last week they delivered the bears to the Sheriff's office, CPS and the Victim/Witness program.

You don't have to belong to a 4H club to join the 4H Citizenship project, just call the 4H office for more information, 966-2417.

Cooperative Extension programs are available to any individual or group without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap.

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