# **Local FFA travels to National Convention**

Submitted by Tiffany Bowman

On Wednesday, October 30th the Rockcastle County FFA chapter traveled to Louisville Kentucky for the FFA National Convention.

While at the convention, chapter members attended several helpful and fun workshops, shopped at Cabela's, and even went out to play a few heated games of laser tag and putt-putt golf. But, in the time at convention the members had much more fun, talking with other FFA members from various chapters around the nation, even from Puerto Rico. There were in all a total of approximately 63,000 members and guests

Rockcastle went to the national level to compete: Varsity Parliamentary Procedure team, and Nursery/ Landscape. The Parly team consisting of Charity Adams, Brittany Long, Katie Adams, Jeremiah

Brown, Eric Bullock, and David Gabbard, with alternates, Mary Bishop, Morgan White, and James Clay Ballinger, placed in the bronze category. While the Nursery/Landscape Team consisting of

Reynolds, Kyle Peacock, Bethany McKinney, and Elizabeth Lawrence, placed in the silver category.

We're very proud of both teams for their hard work and dedication. Congratula-



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<u>Kentucky Afield Outdoors</u>

# Sauger bite during the holiday season

Sauger hover just above bottom right now downstream of dams, waiting for a stunned shad to tumble into their orbit. Their numbers will grow in proportion to the downward slide of the thermometer. The peak concentration

of sauger below dams coincides with the coldest weather of the year. Sauger readily bite in water temperatures below 40 degrees, the most reliable winter fish With many Kentuckians

getting some days off during the holiday season, sauger provide a caststarved angler a chance to get away from the bustle surrounding the holidays and put some fish in hand.

"I think we are still a little early, the water is still a little warm for this time of year for sauger," said Ryan Oster, federal aid coordinator for the fisheries division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Re-

Oster usually starts his sauger fishing on the opening weekend of modern gun deer season as fish begin congregating below dams on the Kentucky and Ohio rivers. They also arrive in large numbers in the tailwater areas below Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and Lake Cumberland at roughly the same time.

"December is the start of the really good sauger fishing with the peak coming in February," he said. "The fishing lasts until late March when they spawn and disperse downstream."

Oster recently caught sauger up to 18 inches long on a mid-November trip below a lock and dam on the Kentucky River in central Kentucky. "I caught them vertically jigging a blade bait," he said. "It was an overcast day, so I used a gold blade bait. On clear days, I like silver and blue blade baits. They mimic the shad and shiners sauger eat."

Sauger also strike 3- to 4inch pearl, orange and black, chartreuse, orange and lime green curly-tailed grubs rigged on leadheads ranging from 1/4 - to 3/4-ounce. The weight of the leadhead depends on current. Oster will go up to a 1-ounce weight if needed to get the offering on the bottom. Lures that don't strike bottom regularly don't generate many sauger

"I also fish a 4-inch pearl soft-plastic jerkbait on a 1/2ounce leadhead when they are eating larger shad," Oster said. "The jerkbait seems to draw larger fish, but fewer bites. I also use a pearl 4-inch ringworm in the same situation.'

He prefers blade baits and curly-tailed grubs for numbers of sauger.

Presentation is critical for catching sauger consistently. "You have two options for boat anglers in tailrace areas," Oster explained. "If you have good flow, fish vertically and jig your lures off the bottom. At normal to low flows, hold your position with a trolling motor and scoot your lure across the bottom.

Bank anglers below dams should work current seams with grubs rigged on leadheads heavy enough to occasionally strike bottom, but not so heavy they hang up on every cast. Anglers fishing from the bank also catch many sauger fishing live crappie minnows on the bottom in these areas.

The Cumberland River just below Wolf Creek Dam

<u>Financial Aid Tip of the Month</u>

### Avoid these common financial aid mistakes

Many students spend more for college than they should by making some common mistakes when seeking financial aid. Follow these tips from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to make sure you get the help you need.

Some people don't bother to apply for financial aid because they don't think they'll qualify. But they should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to find out if they're eligible for state and federal student aid programs. Not filing may hurt their chances of getting more free money for col-

Another common mistake is waiting until the last minute to apply for financial aid. Some programs have deadlines, while others have limited funds. Students and families should submit the FAFSA as early as possible after Jan. 1 of each year.

Colleges send each student who has applied for student aid a financial aid package. Students and their families should look it over carefully. They should compare offers if they have received offers from more than one school to see which one is the best deal.

Students who need loans to help pay for college must be good consumers. They should apply for federal student loans before applying for private loans. Not all private lenders offer the same rates and benefits. Borrowers should pay close attention to what lenders call the back-end benefits: the interest rate and principal reductions offered when repaying the loan.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers Kentucky's student aid programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES). To find links to other useful education websites, go to www.gotocollege.ky.gov. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants,

www.kheaa.com; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call 800-928-8926, ext. 6-7372.

Email the Signal at mvsignal@windstream.net offers excellent bank fishing for winter sauger. The fishing platforms and bank access below Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley also make

The public recreation areas immediately downstream of Green River, Barren River and Taylorsville lakes offer excellent bank access. These spots will provide increasingly better sauger fishing in the years

to come, due to a stocking

effort begun in 2010.

highly productive bank fish-

ing spots for these fish.

"We saw sauger up to 17 inches in the Green River tailwater and up to 18 inches in the Salt River below Taylorsville Lake in our population sampling this past year," said David Baker, stream fisheries biologist for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "You can catch a combination of walleye and sauger in the Green River. Anglers are beginning to catch sauger up to 15 inches in the Barren River."

The Green River received 310,000 fingerling sauger while Barren River got 92,000 since 2010. The fisheries division stocked 60,000 sauger in the Salt River below Taylorsville Lake in that time. The stocking effort runs until 2016.

If screaming children, complaining relatives and overeating are giving you the holiday blues, lift your spirits by catching some tasty sauger.

Author Lee McClellan is an award-winning associate editor for Kentucky Afield magazine, the official publication of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. He is a life-long hunter and angler, with a passion for smallmouth bass fishing.

# Toy & Clothing Giveaway

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