



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

### **September 25—Business and Industry Tours**

Brian and I have been looking forward to this Business and Industry visit for months. When we all arrived in Nashville we went to Jackie and Justine's hotel to have dessert and possibly watch a movie. However, there were no movies to be seen, but plenty of dessert to be eaten! Brian and I arrived at the hotel we were staying at and were pleasantly surprised. The Marriot we stayed at was ultra nice. We got plenty of rest for the next day because we had to start at 7 a.m. I met Jana downstairs, and we headed to Legends Club golf course for a day of fun and supporting the FFA. Tractor Supply Company's vendor conference was held this past week. The kickoff to this conference is a golf match where all of the proceeds benefit the National FFA Organization. I played both the morning and afternoon flights of golf. In the morning I played with Mr. David, Mr. Norm, and Mr. Robert, all of which have become some of my favorite people. The game was best ball. However, I somehow scored higher than my teammates. They devised a plan to help rid me of what they thought a nasty little habit. I would earn one additional stroke every time I said "sir" or "Mr." I heard I was in triple digits...after three holes! My afternoon group found another way for me to show them respect without using "Sir" or "Mr." I had fun playing golf with Tom the Great, King Tim, and Just Matt. That night we had Bar-B-Que and Brian addressed the group about what agricultural education is and its importance. Awards were given out for the best three best teams in the morning and afternoon. I was humbled to witness every one of the winning teams forgo their winnings to the FFA. Funny awards were given out as well. I received the megaphone awards for being the person who had to shout "Fore" the most! Tuesday, we started our meetings. We had five 30-minute meetings plus lunch with some of the vendors. Tuesday evening was the banquet where the vendors of the year awards were given. It is also where the national officer usually addresses the group. Tuesday night was my turn to give a speech. No one meant to cause any pressure, but I kept hearing how excited people were to hear what I had to say. The reason being because officers in the past have done superb jobs! Needless to say I was a little nervous following my predecessors who have delivered great speeches. I did feel really good about my speech after all was said and done. Mr. Robert tried to keep me calm by giving me a pair of those huge sunglasses to block out the bright lights of the stage. In the end I felt the vendors could see I was really appreciative and had one of my most enjoyable experiences all year long here in Nashville with all of them. Wednesday was our final day at the conference. Brian had to leave early so he missed out on going to Sony Music Nashville. Montgomery Gentry is a sponsor of an FFA scholarship. We met with some of their representatives about helping spotlight music artists more and what they can do to get more involved at national convention. Jana, our regional director from the FFA foundation, and I received three CDs each for free! It was a sweet deal. We returned to the hotel for one more meeting and then I had to get on a jet plane destined for Atlanta, Georgia! Time for a little R&R!





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

September 23-25

We found out that most of our team was going to be in Kansas City this weekend. Being so close to Kansas, we all pushed our flights back and spent the weekend in Kansas City! Saturday, Justine took Jackie, Emily, Brian, and I to Manhattan to tailgate with her Dad and see more of Manhattan. We were all decked out in purple supporting K-State. After we met up with her Dad and brothers, Austin and Jordan, we then left to go tour the campus. None of us had tickets so we spent our time exploring Manhattan.



We also ate at Mike's which even though it was slow, was awfully good! Throughout this journey Justine's friend, Sandy, was also with us. Sandy is a past state officer as well. We all had a lot of fun running all over the place. A few stops on our journey were Wal-Mart, Walgreen's, and Sonic. Besides those normal places we went to the K-State student center, bookstore, library, and walked across campus. We visited Justine's sorority house Chi Omega. It was very nice and pretty. It reestablishes that I really need to get involved in Greek life! I last stop of the day was Justine's grandmother's house. We did our laundry- thank goodness- and had a home cooked meal. Her grandmother really out did herself. It was delicious! We then took Sandy back to her apartment but not before leaving Brian and Emily to drive around the block. However, when Justine let Brian back in the vehicle, he in turn left her! We all got back together and traveled back to Kansas City. Along the way we had very meaningful discussions about what's been going on in our lives. Sunday morning Emily left us at 6 a.m. to go to Wisconsin. I awoke early and decided to go running! When I returned we were all up and ready to get our day started. Justine, Brian, Jackie, and I went in to the heart of Kansas City- got lost a few times- and ended up at the Plaza. We all had lunch at Buca de Bepos where Justine's friends, Meagan and Alisha, met up with us. After lunch we headed to the airport where we caught our flight to Nashville, Tennessee.



I arrived in St. Louis at 5:25 p.m. The flight was slightly uncomfortable for this motion-sickened passenger! For an hour and fifteen minutes we rode on a prop plane that was incredibly HOT! Mrs. McBee (Moberly Advisor's wife) and Whitney (Moberly Chapter President) met me at the airport; however, I was incognito and they did not recognize me. I walked right past them thinking 'I bet they are here for me'. As I passed they thought 'I wonder if that was her?' We figured it out and loaded everything up and headed to Moberly, Missouri. I had dinner with Whitney's family- my first home cooked meal in weeks- and then we stayed at her grandmother's home. Tuesday was a super busy day! I started off at Moberly, then to Madison, Macon, Atlanta and Knox. Madison, Macon, and Atlanta are all cities in Georgia; however, quite different from the ones in Missouri. In Macon, I finally met Mr. Womack, the area teacher who set up my schedule. I ate lunch with Amber, Brian, Nick, Ryne, Jessica, Austin, Amber, Shelby and Brian- the chapter officers. Mrs. Marsh, Atlanta advisor,





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

drove me to Knox where I stuck around with the members from about 4-9 p.m. I went to trap shooting practice. At the end, Cody allowed me to borrow his gun- scary thought I know- and shoot a round of 25. I have shot a gun only once in my life when I was eight. I was only shooting at air then too! I only shot three of the clay pigeons. It was so much fun though. I then went to Pizza Haus with Cindy, Addison, Cody, Tasha, Cory, Josh and Jessica. Afterwards we all went to the high school for an FFA meeting where I spoke to them about the opportunities in the FFA. Ms. Basinger and I made a trip to Wal Mart to put together Cody's Spiderman outfit for the leadership conference. Once we pieced together the perfect outfit- which I could not wait to see- I was dropped off at the Holiday Inn Express in Kirksville.



I started Wednesday bright and early at seven a.m. when Mr. Garr picked me up. I spoke at Kirksville, Novinger, and Schuyler County. Emily and Katie showed me a good time at Novinger by giving me a tour of the school. They were quite entertaining. I also met Kim- who does a remarkable impression of Sméagol from Lord of the Rings! Mrs. Pantry, Schuyler County advisor, picked me up and raved about her class. I have to say she was quite right; they were an awesome group of ninth graders. The leadership conference for Area III was held at Schuyler; therefore, I was able to relax for about thirty minutes before everyone started to arrive. I was able to see Mr. Zach Kinne, Missouri FFA President, again and meet two more Missouri officers, Miranda and Mike. That evening I presented a twenty minute workshop four times. Let's put it this way, it went *fast*! The area officers presented a skit complete with three area officer, two aliens, a spaceship, batman, Spiderman, wonder woman, superman, and cat woman. Their theme was "Take Me to Your Leaders"! It was quite funny, and Spiderman's costume was excellent! Then, I sent them off with a challenge to take a chance and try new things. When it was all said and done, I rode the Putnam County bus with Willy, Britney, Troy, Devan, Brady, Stephanie, Amy, and Chelsea. Amy took me in to her home where I had a great dinner and stayed with her family. Finally, I had a relatively early evening 9 p.m.

Putnam County was my first school of the day. After I spoke, the student fled to the PEP assembly. This school had a rather interesting mascot...the midgets. The sign Amy had created the night before for the football team read "M&M: Midget Mojo" with snack bags of M&Ms glued around it. Derek and Derek retrieved me from Putnam and took me to Milan. Milan is also another town in Georgia. Milan was an experience! Everything went well; then Mr. Forrester- former Ag teacher now principal- called me in front of the group and asked me a few questions. "You're 20?" "You're a sophomore at UGA?" "Would you consider working in Missouri?" I started wondering where this was going then he asked, "You're single?" Apparently he wanted to help out his teachers and especially a recently graduated history teacher. Mr. Fountain and I both were quite red in front of the student body! It was quite funny though. Have no fear, I got Mr. Forrester back. Although I did tell him he had good taste for me, Mr. Fountain was actually pretty nice looking! Bucklin was my next stop on the route.



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

Mr. Don Cable was my driver. He is a former Ag teacher now a pastor. He was a trip. We had a good time on our drive and then an excellent lunch with his wife Carol. I spoke to fifth through ninth graders for my first thirty minutes; then, ninth through twelve for two segments of thirty minutes. Apparently the seventh graders enjoyed my spill because they stayed for all three. The baseball players informed me that they had a game that evening and that if I came I could throw out the ceremonial first pitch. My entire afternoon was actually open after four o'clock. This was my earliest day by far. The Martin family took me in as their guest. Mr. Martin is the FFA advisor at Bucklin. He and his wife allowed me to be their guest and I had a great time with their three children: Miriam, Joel, and Audrey. I did make it to the softball game that evening, but missed the opening of the baseball game because we were expecting company. The Brights'- neighbors of the Martins'- were coming for dinner. They are Jersey dairy farmers, which was totally cool! The next morning- my last in Missouri- Mrs. Martin drove me to Brookfield high where I presented a workshop about FFA opportunities. Jaylel was one of my most active participants and Logan my helpful assistants. Basically I presented to 14 boys- most which were football players, and one girl! Needless to say we all had a good time. I then headed to Mendon to speak to the student body. Brunswick was the next stop to talk to the FFA members. I finally had a school lunch too! I asked for it as well. I told Mr. Zeilstra that I felt deprived the whole week because I did not get to enjoy one school meal. I ate chili dogs and Fritos with Leeza, Jordan, Ryan, and most of the junior class. Keytesville was the final stop on my whirlwind tour of Missouri. I heard that Keytesville is a rival of Brunswick! I presented my all school assembly speech and then hit the road running for Kansas City! Mr. Bondy drove me to the airport while Josh sat behind me and picked on me. Don't worry I can take it, but I can also dish it out! Pretty much I had a great time in Missouri and want to thank all of the members and students that helped to make it so!

### **September 11- Convention Planning**



Great to be back with the team! Our time together is getting short which is quite sad. It seems every time we get back together we have even more fun together. This week we finalized our session scripts and worked on finalizing our Retiring Addresses (RAs). We have also picked out music for walk-ins, closing sessions, convention in review, parent recognition, and advisor recognition. We also went to an undisclosed location to film our parent thank you! We had lots of fun there! Earlier in the week though, we headed to Louisville to tour the exposition center. We also took in a play the night before the tour. It was hysterical!!! It was called something like "Smokey Mountain". Whatever it was it was great. We were there to study how the actors utilized a stage in the round. Basically, how they handled having people all around them and not ignoring anyone. We were able to meet Ella Kate, Mr. Wilburn's new baby girl while in Indy. Toward the end of the week all of our focuses shifted to preparing for our leadership camp week in Missouri.





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

Emily, Justine, Jackie, and I were all going the first week to leadership camp and Jay the second. Brian went to Wisconsin for their conference. Even though we were going to be in the same state we were all over the place, not together. We worked on workshops and speeches and the like. I was the last to leave. I left on Monday to St. Louis. The evening before I left, I did get to meet up with some of my friends at Purdue. It is really weird how I am not from here but I feel totally comfortable up there at Purdue and driving in the state of Indiana. Oh yeah and before I forget...I have my cell phone back- yay!

### September 2-10: Home Time

Home again. We had our annual McCall family reunion on Saturday. We ended up with about thirty people having dinner at our home! It was a great celebration and opportunity to catch up with my family. My niece, Riley, thoroughly enjoyed my room...everything sparkly that is! We took a new family portrait in which we all wore red and khaki, last year it was white and denim. We were also in the same places last year, which Jackie finds quite humorous. During my stay at home I also took a trip up to UGA to look at an apartment for next year. All I have to say is Polo Club rocks! My grandmother accompa-



nied me up to Athens, and then we shopped our way back home. We are not a good pair to send off with money un-chaperoned. My friend Chris who helped me move out of my old apartment also came over and helped scope out the new neighborhood. In fact, he was the one who recommended it. I spent most of my home time doing research on my Policy Paper which needs to be turned in before the semester's end so I can complete the course. If any one is interested in helping a girl out just give me a call! Just teasing! My friend Ashley's birthday was on the seventh so I gave her a jingle to wish her a happy 20<sup>th</sup>! I was very sad I could not be there. Maybe next year. Fun, exciting news was that my best friend Brittanie joined a sorority at Valdosta State University. She is

now a member of Alpha Delta Pi. I researched everything about her sorority so I could get her an appropriate gift. I am now empowered with the knowledge of their colors, flower, motto, and history! It makes me want to join in the Greek Life so badly! Anyway, the week went way too fast. Before I knew it, I was headed to Albany to get on a plane to Indianapolis. I realized right before I was about to leave that I had forgotten my cell phone...GREAT!!! At least I did not forget the Blackberry. I had some form of communication. For anyone who called me I am sorry, I am **not** ignoring you!





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

### August 28- September 2: Business and Industry Visits

My second home- Indianapolis! I arrived at noon and Brian was not scheduled in until seven. I called Mr. Wilburn to make sure I could rent a car and discover that his wife, Chrissy, was in labor! It was so exciting. Their daughter Ella Kathleen Wilburn was born at 4:13 p.m. that day. I then rented a car and drove to the FFA center so I could get some work done. I worked until seven and then I left to pick up my teammate. Our meeting the next morning was at 9 a.m. to discuss our visits for the week and what the goal of each one was. We then departed the center at 10:30 a.m. for Decatur, Illinois where we would meet up with three of the Illinois state officers (Jenna, Kayla, and Jake) and proceed to a reception with Archer Daniels Midland. We had a great visit there and were able to meet with individual contributors to FFA. After the reception Ms. Tammy (our FFA Foundation leader), Brian, and I went to Mr. Mulhollem's home for dinner. Mr. Mulhollem is the Chief Operation Officer of ADM. We were surprised that we all were having dinner at his home! We were very honored and excited to be invited to his home. We met his wife Mrs. Valerie and their four year old daughter Claire. We then traveled back to our hotel in Champaign. The next morning we went to the Farm Progress show. It was vast! Everything you could ever want had to be there, including the Toyota 4runner I have always dreamed of! It was so cool just to walk around and learn more about the latest with agricultural technology, equipment, and policy. At lunch we met up with a former national officer who is also an individual contributor. Mr. Ron Cook, his wife Karen, and brother Albert had lunch and shared conversation. We all then split up and spent about two hours roaming about the show. Ms. Tammy, Brian, and I met up again and departed



for Chicago. On the way we stopped by Brian's Grandmother's home. We met her and saw where Brian Hogue spent two weeks of his summer each year. It was such a nice farm and house. It was so cool to get to see a piece of where my teammate grew up. We arrived in Chicago around nine and along the way found out that our visit for the next day had been canceled. Therefore we decided to spend our time up until our flight's departure site seeing. Our hotel was next door to an IKEA. I had never been to one before so this was our first stop. It was wonderful! We all then embarked on our site seeing journey. We walked all over Chicago, had a Chicago hot dog for lunch, and then were trapped on one side of the draw bridge because it was stuck in the air. At about four o'clock our touring came to an end and we drove to Chicago O'Hare. Brian and I left for Nashville, Tennessee to continue our Business and Industry (B&I) Visits.

Brian and I decided to order pizza and watch a movie, The Interpreter, since we felt like lounging after our flight. Jana Kennelly had now inherited us from Ms. Tammy as our Foundation



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

leader. Our first visit was on Thursday morning with Tractor Supply Company (TSC). We had lunch with several key leaders and supporters of our organization present at the lunch meeting. Brian and I learned about the merchandising end of the company on Thursday and then on Friday we came back and visited with the marketing end of the company. We both became very informed about the company, why it sponsors FFA, what the future holds for them, and what they believe in. Also on Thursday we met with Mike Alday owner of Alday Associates an agency that helps to market Durango Boots and Georgia Boots. Friday we met with J.T. Everett and Associates who are associated with TSC. We then went back to TSC then to Doane Pet Care (the meeting which was unfortunately canceled), then to our final visit of the trip, Agri-Sales and Associates. Business and Industry visits are always so much fun because you learn so much more about the way a company operates and what it takes to be successful. Brian and I then checked into the airport and each departed for home.

### **August 18- 28:        Home**

I finally arrived after hours of delays. In Orlando I was held on the plane for an hour because of a thunderstorm in Atlanta. Then in Atlanta I waited for about two and a half hours for my flight to Macon. On the ride home, I received a phone call from my old roommates. All day some of my friends had been calling me, telling me about the first day of school and how they wished I was there; however, this call was a little heavier. It was time for me to move my belongings. They had finally found another person to take my place. I coaxed my brother, mother and good friend Chris into helping me move on Saturday. Friday was a day of errand and rest! Saturday morning I arrived at nine o'clock to my old apartment in Athens and started packing up. It is a three hour trip so I had been up for a while. It was kind of funny that I had been packing stuff up for about two hours before any of the girls woke up! My brother loaded up his trailer and carried my stuff home. I have to say I am very disappointed and sad that I will no longer be living with Beth and Ash. I will miss being their roommate because they were some awesome roomies! My friend Chris took it upon himself to cheer me up and took me to the movies! We went to see Skeleton Key. Neither of us can determine how we feel about it, but we think it was good. We also did a little online apartment hunting, and I think I now know where I will probably live next semester! I then left Athens for home, but not before I stopped by the old apartment and told Beth goodbye. I had forgotten to do so before I left and couldn't leave her like that. I went to church on Sunday and saw my church family...which is always a treat. I really do love my church and miss getting to go. Throughout the week I began working on my term paper that I have to write to complete my grade for Agricultural Policy. I have nearly a book of information! I also began working on my retiring address and catching up on e-mails. Tuesday I had my first haircut in months! Thursday I met with Mr. Wilkinson to discuss my remarks for welcoming governor Sonny Purdue to Wilcox County. About a week or two before I was scheduled to come home, Mr. Wilkinson called and asked when I was going to be home because he had a call from the Governor's office asking to have me welcome Governor Purdue to Wilcox county for a town hall meeting. I gratefully accepted! Once my comments- which were to last only about a minute- were drafted it was time to just commit them to memory. The next morning I





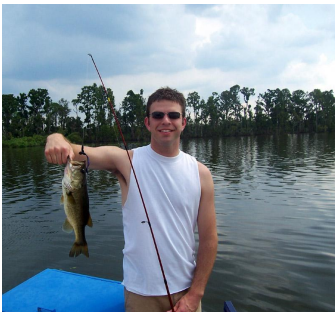
## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal



went to the Rochelle Agricenter, where there were at least 30 FFA members in official dress present, to welcome the Governor to Wilcox. We had a pretty good turn out for our Governor, and it is always nice to see him again. Afterwards I traveled to Tifton, Georgia to stay the night with my grandparents. I always like to visit them when I come home. Grandmama and I, of course, did a little shopping. I went home the next day, Saturday, and started packing my bags for a week of business and industry visits. I had no sooner zipped up my packed bag when one of my high school classmates called me up. We did what every does in Rochelle...leave and go to Cordele. It was a great night to catch up with an old friend. Luckily my flight was later than usual, 9 a.m., so I didn't have to leave the house until 7:30. I came home, set the alarm, and went to sleep.

### August 14- 18: Team Retreat

Orlando, Florida...not our final destination yet! We flew in and then headed to the FFA camp. We were there while the Made For Excellence (MFE) conference leaders were there. For those of you attending MFE this year, you have some AWESOME presenters coming your way. I was totally surprised to see my good buddy A.J. who was a state officer with Joel two years ahead of me. It is always good to see a fellow Georgia Bulldog! I also was reunited with my WLC Goonies leader Laura. It was sad that the day we arrived was their last day there. The first thing we did on our team retreat was go on an air boat tour with Captain Fred; he has already sent us a one page calendar with our picture on it. We tried to see gator however; the only one we saw was a baby at the dock on the way out. Some of my teammates were amazed to see cattle swimming in the water. Each one of us had the chance to drive the air boat...so much fun!!! Later that afternoon we all went fishing



off a boat for about two hours. I kept getting nibbles, but never quite snagged one! Jay, however, did manage to catch one and then threw it back. That night we ate at this little ole back of the woods place called Cherry Bottom or Cherry...something! I am sorry I can't remember! When we returned we all cuddled up together and watched a movie. On day two we had a meeting in our respective groups for our plan of attack for Magic Kingdom and Epcot and MGM. Jackie, Jay, and Brian were in charge of MGM. Justine, Emily, and I headed up the Magic Kingdom and Epcot. That evening we had a dinner cruise planned. We had dinner by the pool, swam a little, played a little sand volleyball, and then went on an hour long boat cruise around the lake. When we returned we decided to play games all night. We played Scene It and scrambled to find batteries for Catch Phrase. Those of us who de-







## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

cided to tough it out stayed up a little longer and watched What Women Want.

The third morning we left bright and early to get to MGM studios. The first ride of the day was tower of terror... it rocked! But it didn't rock as hard as the Rock'n'Roller coaster. We saw the Voyage of the Little Mermaid and the Muppets. Then we were fortunate that as we passed "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" they needed exactly seven people to be the fastest finger! We road tons of rides, saw shows galore, and had an awesome day thanks to the planning of Jay, Jackie, and Brian. When we arrived at our hotel, which was a surprise, we were delighted to find that we were staying at the Gaylord Resort! I had heard great things about this hotel but



when I arrived...WOW! It was nice! That evening, in our luxurious rooms, we decided to make the calls to those we had decided on for nominating committee. It was so much fun to hear their excitement and gratitude. Even later that evening we went and lounged by the pools, slid down the water slide, and soaked in the hot tub. On morning number four, we started out for Magic Kingdom. The first ride of the day was Thunder Mountain Railroad. I was the official runner for Fast Passes. We also rode space Mountain, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Stitch's Great Escape. Unfortunately, the Haunted Mansion and Splash Mountain were closed that day. We did however get stuck on Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger and conclude Magic Kingdom with It's a Small World. I can't forget seeing the carination of Cinderella at her castle with every Disney princess and prince imaginable present. We did have an unfortunate incident of a lost ticket where Justine and I abstained from the Carousel of Progress to retrieve a new ticket. After It's a Small World. We all journeyed to Epcot. We rode Test Track, saw Honey I shrunk the Audience, became queasy on Mission Space, and waited about an hour to ride Soarin'. A few of our attractions- Body Wars and the Making of Me- were sadly closed at this time. One of the things Justine, Emily, and I were excited about was the surprise place we had planned to have dinner. We went to through the World Showcase portion of the park and had dinner at Marrakesh which is in the Morocco exhibit. When we finished dinner we went outside to watch the fireworks. This was the coolest firework show I had ever seen! We went back to the hotel for our last evening together! Brian, Justine, and I attempted to watch Ocean's Twelve but were so tired we conked out before it was over. Day five, for the first time in about two and a half months, I am finally going home!

### August 6- 14: Convention Planning

Back in Indianapolis, together again with our entire team! This was an opportunity for us to work on any unfinished work we had and begin sorting through our duties at this little thing called national convention. We also had the opportunity to baby-sit Mr. Wilburn's daughter, Maddie. While in Indy we caught up with national staff members and had an ice cream social with them where we gave everyone an update as to where we had been and what we had



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

been doing. T.J. Abbey and Mr. Wilburn met with us and gave us our convention notebooks. The notebook were HUGE! They probably measure about 3-4 inches and rightfully so because each session averages about 80 pages! We began sorting through our scripts and revising them. We pitched our idea for a retiring address to Mr. Wilburn before the week was over as well. That about covers what we were up to during this week. Everything from scripts, RAs, convention music, reflections, everything! On the 14th our first draft of scripts were due and we departed for our surprise retreat to Florida.

### July 31- August 5: West Virginia National Leadership Conference for State Officers

Jackie and I arrived on Sunday afternoon in Morgantown, West Virginia. I had never before been to West Virginia. Jackie attended their convention so she knew a few people. I met someone she had met there, Ashby. We decided to treat ourselves to a movie our first evening in town after we toured West Virginia Tech. Wedding Crashers was a riot!!! The next day we began setting up for the conference. It was also my sister Haley's 26 birthday, we celebrated over the phone! Anyway into the wee hours of the night we finished our preparation for the next day, our final NLCSO. We met with all of the state leaders from each state: Hawaii, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Maryland. This was actually the very first



time Hawaii has ever attended a NLCSO. Every one was so excited for them and was looking forward to meeting them. However, our Hawaiian friends' luggage was lost and the second day had to wear the clothes they arrived in. We did all, however, wear the conference T-shirt the



first day so they were able to wear a clean shirt. Melvin, their chaperone, finally got their luggage for them. Kim, Jenna and Tiffany were going to teach us to hula, but I guess we ran out of time. We did get to witness a little hula and experience some Hawaiian music while at the NLCSO dance. This was the only conference Jackie and I had been to wear they had a dance. Keith and Darren decided to play a cruel joke on me and replace my beautiful red and black name tent with some gosh awful blue and orange identification tag. That didn't work so I re-made one! Anyway, our week was such a success. All fifty state officers present did an awesome job at their respective reflections, flag

raisings, and invocations. Some of the highlights of the week were touring West Virginia Tech and the school farm, meeting the Commissioner of Agriculture- Commissioner Douglas, meeting the West Virginia Teacher of the Year- Mr. Jason Hughes, and gettin' down at the dance! B.J. was my dancing partner...she has got some *moves*! Brian of West Virginia a.k.a. Forest tried to be a wall flower so with the help of some other officers, we pulled him onto the floor. During the dance the D.J. had eight of us pair off and participate in a little friendly competition.



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

Jackie and I did the wheelbarrow race to retrieve the Mountain Dew and bring it back- Jackie holding my legs- and then the carrier would chug it down. Jackie drank as quickly as she could but was no match for Darren! Oh well, we were second! I also had the pleasure of meeting Sidney, West Virginia's National Officer Candidate. He was nice enough except for the hideous hat he wore! Let's put it this way- he was originally from Alabama. Those Auburn fans are every where! I am just kidding, I didn't hold that against him. Jackie and I left for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday to meet up with our teammates for convention planning.

### **July 13-18: Board Meeting Indianapolis**

I arrived in the late evening to Indianapolis. It was so great to finally be reunited with **all** of my teammates. The next day we had a day of preparation for the board meeting. We met with Mr. Loudenslager- our Chief Operation Officer- to discuss issues of concern and what issues would be brought up during the board meeting. Ms. Kelly Horton also brought us up to date on LifeKnowledge so that we could be well educated about it before stepping into the board meeting. The first two days of board meeting center around presentations and furthering understanding of issues. Then the last day the actual meeting begins. During this meeting we vote on the issues based on the information that we have heard and learned from the previous two days. It's not all just business though. It is very important to us to get to know our board members and spend time with them. One evening the board members and consultants attended the Symphony on the Prairie, on another occasion those who wished to attend church services with the Loudenslager family did so, and then afterwards everyone attended brunch at the Loudenslager home. Mrs. Barbara Loudenslager is an extraordinary cook. We have been invited to their home on numerous occasions and she never fails to have a delicious meal prepared. In fact, our second evening in town, the officer team had dinner at their home and I learned a new game. I hear it is pretty big in Ohio- corn hole?! It is so much fun, our team is now addicted! Now when we go to the Loudenslager home, they have the game all set up. Another cool thing we had the opportunity to participate in was a conference call with members from Virginia who were canoeing down the Chesapeake to test the water quality down the river. We thoroughly enjoyed this conversation. It was so fun to talk to those students who were still in route on their trip. The students who talked to us walked to a pay phone to talk to us. The students on the venture were on a month long trip. Everyone in the FFA Center and all board members and consultants were present to hear the call. Overall, board meeting was so much fun. We had the opportunity to meet the new board members, reunite with the old ones, and spend time with the old hoot owl himself- Dr. Larry Case.

### **July 6-9: Alumni Camp Oklahoma**

After my short venture to Washington state, it was off to Oklahoma Leadership Camp a.k.a. Alumni Camp! I have been excited about this for weeks. The officer who attends will be incognito until her true identity is revealed right before her workshop. Mr. Boggs said it would be hard for me to blend because I went to Oklahoma's convention. He was right! I was very sur-





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

prised to see Ben, Cheyenne, J.D., and Ryan. All recognized me on the spot! Ben even pulled out my business card and showed it to me. That was slightly flattering! However, I held true to my identity as an FFA member from Freedom, Oklahoma; and I just happened to have the same name as a national officer. My white lie worked on most of them, or at least they humored me. Chase, Katie, Josh, and Sara became good friends of mine during the week. I even sat next to Chase when Whitney, Oklahoma State FFA President, introduced me to present my workshop. Needless to say he was slightly surprised. The workshop went over very well I believe. Everyone participated, had a good time, and hopefully learned a little bit about being an authentic leader. Oh I almost forgot to mention the camp theme was based on movies and la-



beled "*Authentic Action*." Basically, they stated that movies about real life, authentic movies, are more powerful and hold life lessons for us all. During my stint as a member, I joined Kirby's group- Group 20! The camp leaders (SLs) were all great fun to hang out with! During the day I enjoyed being a member and participating in events, and in the evening I joined the SL's for happy gram writing and FUN! Tracey, Travis, Cale, Clayton, Brent, and Josh were all there as SLs. It was so cool to get to see people again after meeting them at convention! Before camp was over the new staff came in and I was able to see Shawna, Courtney, Mike, Isaac, and Matt. But back

to camp, Water Olympics was EXTREME! I joined up with Jarrod's group after my identity was revealed and became a member of Group number five for a short while. We tried our best to win some of the events or at least be the most spirited, loudest group! However, we were unable to make either happen...we think we were gypped! This was also a great opportunity for me to see the newly elected officers in action. Whitney, Travis, Austin, Hannah, Kelli, Dayla, Dexter, and Jarrod all did a jam up good job! They were so professional and prepared. I was thoroughly impressed with each one of them and enjoyed my time at the Oklahoma FFA camp. The culmination of camp was at a very nice banquet held the night before. A great dinner along with a great program presented by the members there at the camp. Campers try out for positions on the program and I swear almost every one of them tried out! There was great participation at Alumni camp along with camaraderie. It was the perfect blend of recreation, leadership camp, fun, and fellowship! It further deepens my love and high regard for OKLAHOMA FFA!



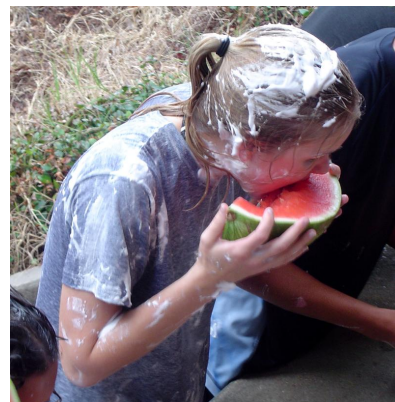




## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

### July 9- 13- Mississippi Leadership Camp

A little miscommunication allowed me to stay the evening in Jackson, Mississippi for the evening. Unfortunately, Hurricane Emily prevented the State Leadership Conference (SLC) from starting on schedule. We started two days later and had a GREAT time. I stayed with Mrs. Amy Green, her husband- Jason, and daughter- Morgan and was able to go to church for the first time in awhile! I have been looking forward to seeing the state officers in action because at National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) this was the project they chose to work on. Jackie and I had the privilege of training Suzan, Ilesha, Carla, Brian, Jason and Casey in June. The officers planned a great conference with a *speedy* theme! They chose a race car theme entitled "Crank It Up!" It was a great theme that they executed well. The officers thought it was hilarious though when I would try to get them to change it to "let's get crunk." Clay, Travis, and Justin made the conference interesting for me with their *bets*. Clay and Travis also brought their make-shift hair-dryer constructed from the motor of a vacuum! I had the privilege of being the one to test it out! One thing I found totally cool was that the advisors prepared **all** of the meals for the entire camp. Let me tell you those Mississippi advisors know how to cook! They also know how to instigate and wage wars with people! I'll put it this way, one night I left soaked from head to toe from water gun warfare. To my three water gun enemies, don't worry I'll be back! SLC include a great tradition of **Water Olympics**! After much coaxing, I tried my weight at a belly flop. It definitely flopped! I am no good what so ever and it hurt...both times. I did regain some dignity when I was second in the water-melon eating contest. However, the biggest challenge that earned me the most respect was musical chairs. This isn't your ordinary musical chairs. These musical chairs includes shaving crème- which burns like the dickens, whipped crème- kinda tasty, and buckets of dirty water and ice- just plain nasty! Oh and I cannot fail to mention the ongoing stream from the water hose. I believe the officers enjoyed their job just a little too much. Yes, this was a whole lot of fun, however, the next day it was back to busy. I did actually do work everyone! I presented a workshop, did an icebreaker, and helped to judge the Creed Speaking contest. Unfortunately with the conference being pushed back, I had to leave before the conference ended. I sadly missed ice skating- that's right ice skating in the summer, in Mississippi. Oh well, the officer, Mrs. Amy, and Mr. Chandler saw me off to the airport. Off to Indianapolis!



### July 18- July 21: Wisconsin

July 18 marks a day of discovery! The day that Brian, Emily, and I arrived at the home of Jackie Mundt! We had a few days in between the board meeting and State Presidents' Conference so we decided that since Jackie opened the invitation, what a great opportunity to see



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

where this girl came from! We were all dog tired when we finally got to her very, very nice home. That evening we met two of Jackie's best friends from high school. We also met the infamous Michael Mundt- Jackie's little brother- he is such a cool, cute little kid! The next day we toured the Mundt ranch- on four wheelers! It was a BLAST! When we returned home we watched a movie and enjoyed a home cooked meal. While in the community we also saw the sign



that designated Pittsville as the geographic center of the state! We also witnessed the high school Jackie attended and Hardware Hank's- where Jackie worked for YEARS! We had a fun time getting to experience Wisconsin; of course I had to find my postcards for all at home! It was a relaxing time to get work done and rest. Our two days were full of tons of fun, great home cooked meals, milk, and memories!



### July 21- July 31- State Presidents' Conference

We had been planning and looking forward to SPC since we decided on the theme "Cultivate the Experience. We arrived on Thursday afternoon and toured the hotel in which the conference was held. We had five days before the state officers would arrive. During that time we finalized our scripts, reflections, the schedule, and our opening video! We decided on an "Anchorman" theme starring Brain as the anchor man Ron Burgundy and spoof field reporters Robin Leach (Jackie), Kay T. Jelley (Jay), Sustine Jerling (Justine), Hemily Eorton (Emily), and I, Machael RacCall. We reported from all scenes we would visit during SPC: from Arlington National Cemetery to the Capitol; Lincoln Memorial to the Smithsonian; and the United States Department of Agriculture to- must we forget- the Metro. Our team had a great time gallivanting around the capital, but we did devote hours to working with our partners on



making the reflections and days as memorable as possible. The five days of SPC had a theme for each day: Tuesday, Cultivate the Experience; Wednesday, Cultivate the Experience through Service; Thursday, Cultivate the Experience through Commitment; Friday, Cultivate the Experience through Dignity; and Saturday, Cultivate the Experience. Our team celebrated our hard work by going to a play- "Peter Pan". We also celebrated the birth of one Miss Jackie Mundt as she turned the big 2-0. We teased that she was no longer a teenager anymore. One thing that truly excited us all is that for the first time in a few months, we would

finally see our parents and family.



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

Our families receive an invitation to attend SPC as well and watch us in action. After about two months on the road it was great to see my Mama and Daddy along with my Grandmama and Granddaddy. This was actually my grandparents first time in Washington, D.C. They all had a wonderful time sight seeing, meeting fellow national officer families, and getting to know FFA officers from around the country. The night before the conference beginning, we saw officer all over the hotel and around town. It was awesome getting to see people you knew and



NLC SO not being the last place you ever see any of the officers. I ran into Jimmy, Stephanie, and Mr. Parker on the street; Susan, Jason, Megan and Randy in the lobby; Sean and Bruce at registration; Meagan and Peter at the elevator, I basically got to see everyone since we took pictures with each state officer pair present. We had such a good time in D.C. with the officers. For some it was their first time in Washington D.C. and riding the Metro was an experience for us all. I know how the WLC presenters feel now when they are responsible for making sure everyone gets on and most importantly *off!* As many of you have seen and heard all of us had the opportunity to spend about 40 minutes with the President of the United States of America- George W. Bush. Second to being excited to speak with the President we also toured the President's home- the White House. We saw the red room, green room, and met in the state room. We felt so privileged to have the White House opened to us especially since it has been closed to the public since 2001. The culmination of our week came when we revealed to the officers what the surprise celebration was. Some how rumor got out that we were going to Six Flags over America. Well the officers and I trampled that rumor and fibbed a little by telling them we were going to Mount Vernon- home of George Washington. However, I don't think many of them fell for it. We came outside, all six of us in a line and each of us holding a flag.



The officers then put it together that we were in fact going to Six Flags. One thing I dare not forget is sending a shout out to all of Justine and my *Crazy Cool Corduroy Cruizers* also know as *C-quad* and the *C-quad squad!* Our bus was so lovingly named the *Crazy Cool Corduroy Cruiser!* We definitely were the most efficient, coolest bus- with the help of our bus driver, Jimmy! I would like to thank all of the officers for being their normal wonderful selves and conducting themselves so well while in D.C. Every one of y'all represented your states, teams, and our organization very well. I

heard several people say that the FFA officers were some of the most well behaved, respectful young people they have ever met. On our last evening after Six Flags, we had reflections at the FDR Memorial where the officers received their 'giveaways' as we call them. It was very important for our team to make sure that everyone felt the impact of SPC and remember to *Cultivate the Experience*. Each officer received a cultivator key chain; however, they received more than just two. They received enough for themselves and their teammates back at home. Sunday morning Jackie and I began I journey to West Virginia.

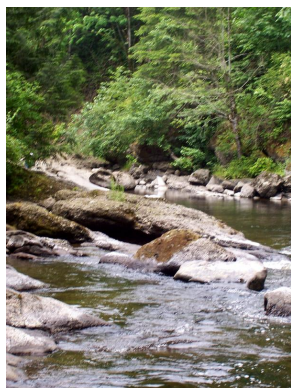




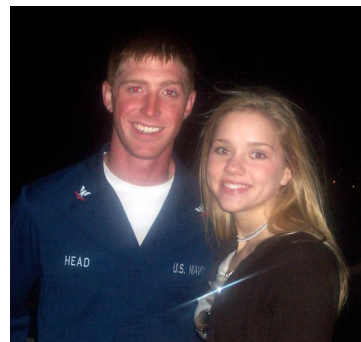
## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

### July 2-5

I arrived in Washington-state around 4:00 p.m. and waiting for me was my friend from home! It is so nice to see those that have known you forever. I decided that since I only had three days off and it takes five and a half hours to fly home; I would spend time visiting my friend, Cory, who I have not seen forever. The evening



of my arrival, we all went and rented some movies- The Pacifier, Miss Congeniality 2, and The Diary of a Mad Black Woman- all of which were good! I spent the first day in Seattle playing video games and walking around. Then on the fourth Cat and Eddie took me shopping and to the barge where I met up with Cory, who was on duty, to watch fireworks over Seattle. Cory and Cat are in the Navy- sorry I forgot to mention that. The next day, Eddie, Cory, and I went to the mountains and hiked down to a river that flows through it. Now, that was FUN! I love hiking and nature. Then, we scurried back to Seattle so I could catch my flight to Oklahoma.



### June 26-28

I arrived in Roanoke, Virginia. I rented a car...thank goodness for the *Preferred* Avis card. It was my saving grace of getting a car. I even receive the car I had been hoping for...a Pontiac Grand Am, like the one I drive. It was a very pleasurable drive to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. Once I arrived I proceed to explore campus. Mr. Seibel sent Carlee after me to show me where I could get settled. He also gave me the afternoon to catch up on whatever I needed to...such a great man! I ate dinner with the officer team as well as some of the volunteers. I met Laura who is one cool cat and Cindy, one of my suite buddies! The officer team- Allen, Katie, Kent, Callie, Elizabeth, Christy, Tim, Tiffanie, and Laurel made me feel very



welcome and made sure I had everything I needed. This convention is definitely unique. It is so full of history, and I LOVE it. The members stay in the dorms on campus and eat in the dining hall (which had excellent food). At the opening session the Area Creed winners posted the colors and the officers presented their opening skit and I delivered my speech. I failed to mention that it had rained cats and dogs before we all walked to the session- which is forever and a day away. Needless to say I looked like a drowned rat when I spoke on stage! Hopefully I didn't look that bad; I tried to dry off as much as possible.





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

I also met Christina the state president from Delaware. I can't wait to see her again at SPC. One more person I was surprised to see when the elevator doors opened was Mr. Bud Matthews himself- the past state president for Maryland and nominating committee member! I met his teammate Oscar as well. We all (Christina, Oscar, Bud, and I) went Wal-Mart with Tim and to some special gas station...I can't remember the name but it has made to order subs. Basically it was almost like a grocery store. While at Wal-Mart, Oscar won the Madagascar penguin from the stuffed animal machine. He gave me the penguin and now it travels everywhere with me as my 'Traveling PENGUIN' named Virgil. My last day there I went with FFA members to Christina's workshop and then to lunch with the officer team again. I had to leave right after lunch and head back to Roanoke to catch my flight. However, I could not leave without getting a picture in front of the table that the FFA was created around! I tried to create myths about the table like...if you go in the dark of night you can still see the ghosts of C.H. Lane and Henry Groseclose around the table. I even had some of the officers pose around it and take a picture to say that I saw the ghosts. Oh well, I doubt it will fly, but it was fun and funny!



I had a horrible experience trying to get to the airport and make my 3:11 flight. I left Roanoke at 1:00. It only takes about 35-45 minutes to get to Roanoke; however, an accident on the road kept me from making the deadline! I was very upset because the agent told me that there was no way I could get to Portland, Oregon tonight. I had to get there because NLCSO began at 7:30 a.m. He told me the earliest I could get there was 11:00 a.m. I called everyone frantic! However, I couldn't get a hold of anyone who could tell me what to do. I decided to try and get closer to Oregon and took the flight to Cincinnati. I was put on standby and by some miracle managed to get on. However, that flight was delayed about an hour and then took an hour to board. I finally made it to Portland at about 12:30 a.m. I felt so bad for Mrs. Stebbins who had to pick me up and then drive an hour to Salem. I talked her ear off the entire way because that was our deal if we were to drive all the way back. We arrived at the hotel at 2:00 a.m. I was so glad to finally see a bed!

### June 24-26

I flew into Ronald Reagan International Airport at Eleven o'clock. I then proceed to take the Metro! Picture this...a blonde, young looking twenty year old waiting for the metro late at night. One passenger proceeded to tell me that there was a beautiful moon out tonight. I've got to tell you, rather scary! I enjoyed my adventure on the blue line from the airport to Roslyn. I had made the venture before so to tell you the truth I was not scared just uncomfortable carrying about 100 pounds of luggage. I finally made it to the hotel!



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

Washington Leadership Conference (WLC), I was finally back! I attended WLC the first week of the summer of 2001, my sophomore year. I had breakfast with the members and saw some old friends from convention. Lindsey Calhoun, Tyler Bradley, and Allison Brown were there along with Dane White, Ron, Joni (my small group leader from Nebraska), and Mary. I also finally met Kirk Maag, the new director of WLC. All I was to do was hangout with the members at both Roslyn and Eisenhower. Eisenhower was the hotel I stayed at when I attended so many years ago. When I went over there after lunch, Laura allowed me to join her small group, The Goonies. One of our Goonies was hearing impaired so the rest of the group learned the Authentic Leaders Creed in sign language! It was so cool...they even taught it to me! Tyler, I have been practicing, and I show people every where I go.

I have to send a shout out to some of the members I met while there Taylor, Travis, Brittney, Liz, Matt, Dylan, Blake, Sara, Samantha, Justin, and Jessica. The coolest thing happened; I met another girl named Justine! I met more WLC presenters at Eisenhower: Mandy, Laura, Tommy, J.D., and Ryan. I spent my mornings at Roslyn and evenings at Eisenhower. The Eisenhower crew told me their dance was kickin' and that Eisenhower is were the party's at. Since I was invited, I couldn't turn down the invitation. Ryan's rendition of the worm was astounding!!!

WLC has changed since I went. I truly enjoyed going with the Roslyn bunch to gleam Kale and Collard Greens. Looking at the mounds of food we had harvested in only a short amount of time made me realize first hand just how much we can accomplish together. It also should me just how much good we can do and what quality members we have in our organization. I believe that that experience will be one of my most rewarding! I had two great days with Wisconsin, Iowa, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Minnesota members! Thank you to all of you for making this such a memorable experience for me.

I left WLC for my final state convention of the year...Virginia! When I arrived at the airport off the Metro my bag weighed in at a weighty 49.5 pounds! The ticket agent said I was good. I told her I was lucky!

**P.S. Sorry everyone for the lack of pictures on this entry. My batteries died!**

### **June 14-16**

S-T-A-T-E C-O-N-V-E-N-T-I-O-N!!! Indiana is like a second home. I have been so excited about this convention for weeks! I arrived in Indianapolis at 7:30 a.m. where I met Tim, a past Indiana state officer. We stopped by the FFA center so that I could get some supplies as well as catch up with national staff. On the way up to Purdue, I saw several buses headed for West Lafayette. After the second bus, I made a sign that read "Indiana Convention or BUST!" Every time we past FFA'ers I held up the sign and a thumbs up! I arrived at the hotel and got right into meeting members. I saw my good friends from Clinton Central: Ashley, Bethany, Troy, Jerod, Clayton, Blake, and Brant. The exhibit that Clinton Central put together made it to the final four, which was very exciting! I am not exactly sure who won though? I went to the delegate luncheon where they actually served duck! However, I was too late for the duck and



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

Ryan decided to partake of my cheesecake which was fine, I didn't need it anyway.

I sat with District 1 and adopted South Newton as my chapter! Krista and her friends came to the first general session bearing signs for Brian- their pianist friend. He was to entertain us during the session, but his performance was postponed to the night session. I was finally able to meet the state officers. They keep pretty busy the entire convention. Matt, Sara, Joey, Todd, Eric, Jill, and Jennifer were very welcoming and accommodating. An awesome speaker, Mr. Keith Hawkins of Sacramento, California, spoke at the first session and did a marvelous job. He is a great motivational speaker! Something different about this convention is that their dance is the first night of convention, in order for students to go and meet people. After the dance the state officer candidates asked me to accompany them to Steak -n- Shake, or as Melissa calls it Shake-n-Steak. We did stay up pretty late, but it was well worth it. Katie, Mike, Shawn, Jessica, and Kayleigh were a blast to hang out with!!! The next day I presented my workshop and had an incredible turnout! That afternoon I was hypnotized! It was rather relaxing and funny I hear...it's still coming back to me! I attended the session that evening and finished rather early, so I decided to go for a run. Liz and Jessica joined me and we exercised it up. The next morning I delivered my speech, and I honestly believe it was my best delivery ever and the most well received by those listening! Bruce, Melissa, Sawyer, Nathan, Shawn, Jessica, and David were the newly elected officers. I really had an awesome time at convention! However, all good things must come to an end and so did Indiana's convention. My good buddy Ben Leu drove me back to Indianapolis where I stayed the evening before I flew out the next morning to Arkansas for NLCSO 2005- ***Dare to Soar!***



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

### May 19-June 3

I flew from Texas to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I decided to spend some of my home time with my aunt, uncle, and cousin, Emily Ann. Emily Ann had just graduated the day before I arrived. I spent three days on the beautiful beaches of Fort Lauderdale. Life is so hard! Just teasing! I had a wonderful time on my mini-vacation. However, all good things must come to an end, and I rode back to Georgia with my grandparents. For two days I hung out at my house all alone because my parents were in North Carolina visiting my new nephew. Green with envy, I decided to make the journey to North Carolina to see my new nephew, Parker. My Aunt Janet decided to be my traveling partner. We had an adventure! Between getting lost in some not so friendly parts of North Carolina and fighting the invasion of sixteen wheelers, we made the drive relatively safe and sound. Spending three days with my brother, Mark; sister-in-law, Brandi; niece, Riley; and Parker was so awesome. I had not seen them forever. My sister had also been visiting my brother so she rode back with my Aunt Janet and me. With only one more week left before I depart for Mississippi and Kentucky's conventions, I believe I will finish up some work and make tons of flipcharts for NLCSO!



### June 4- June 13

The night before I left for Mississippi, I had the opportunity to help with the annual Miss Cantaloupe pageant. For an added bit of information, Rochelle is the Cantaloupe capital of the world! We are so proud! Anyway, I watched my best friend, Brittanie, win the pageant. I was so happy; it was so worth the time! I departed Macon Airport at 6a.m. for Hattiesburg, MS, which meant I left my house at 4a.m.....my poor parents! I arrived at 10a.m. I have finally found an airport that is as small as my beloved Macon airport. Hattiesburg airport is SMALL! Avangelia, one of the Mississippi state officers picked me up and we headed for Hattiesburg.



Since we could not check into the hotel we decided to run errands which include: going to Petal to pick up her brother Jeremy, who was a junior officer; getting workshop supplies; and eating! That evening I met the entire officer team; Cody, Riley, Amber, Kayla, and Kristy, whom I had met at Nom Com. Mississippi really made me feel useful. I had the opportunity to really help them with convention. They allowed me type things up before convention started and help set things up. Monday was the day before convention when all of the members arrived. I presented two workshops that day and had great participation. I met Scott, Cliff, Jessica, Megan, Bianca, Thomas, Preston, Samantha, and so many more. There was a great turn out for both of my workshops, and I appreciate everyone coming! On Monday I had the chance to meet the





## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

officer candidate for South Dakota. It was so great to see him there; we had an awesome time catching up! Amber emailed me the newly elected officer teams' names. Congratulations to President-Susan Everett, Vice President-Jason Camp, Secretary-Bryan Collins, Treasurer-Carla Williamson, Reporter-Neil Whaley, and Sentinel-Casey Wagner! Stacia, Amy, and Christy were at convention as well. I enjoyed having the three of them keep me company as roommates. I also accept the challenge they placed before me. The night before I left, they had their talent show. I was allowed to emcee the talent show and had an AWESOME time! It was so much fun and they had some really talented members. Emma, Misty, Kayla Marie, Hannah, Aaron, drum playing Zack, guitar stringing Jonathan, and the grease dancing trio did a great job entertaining the crowd and kicking off convention! This was the first time I was unable to stay the entire time at convention. I was very sad to leave early because I was so siked about their convention. I said my good byes and headed off for Kentucky. Shannon Mayo drove me to Jackson airport and I found out Cody was right: they are always fifteen minutes behind in Jackson. Fifteen minutes was how delayed my flight was. Usually once you are on the plane it takes off, well weather was not to great in Atlanta so we were grounded...for an hour and a half. Needless to say I missed my connecting flight in Atlanta. They went ahead and booked me for the ten o'clock flight. However, the weather was bad in Washington D.C. and they could not get down to Atlanta to pick us up. Our flight ended up leaving around eleven, leaving me to arrive in Louisville at about 12:30 a.m. I had to catch a cab to the hotel. Now picture a young twenty year old female, 1:30 in the morning, in official FFA attire trying to catch a taxi. Granted the cabs are sanctioned by the airport, I was still a little nervous about the ride. However, I pity the person who would try and get in the way of me and that hotel room...I was beat! I was so sad that my flight problems prevented me from attending the first session, hearing Dave Reaver speak, and witnessing karaoke by the members. I attended the first session on Wednesday morning. There I met Sheldon, Jessie, John, Whitney, Carolyn, Thomas, Devin, and Samantha. I also met the state officer team: Charlee, Coty, Brittany, Sarah, Matt, Bradley, Andrew, Brandi, Sara Jo, Whitney, and Brian. I was very fortunate to get to know Charlee, the state president. She was my dinner partner at several of the banquets. At Kentucky's convention, I saw one of the best retiring addresses ever. Charlee challenged the members to "climb every mountain" and face every challenge that comes their way and not to let obstacles deter them from achieving their goals. On Wednesday I attended the session,



two banquets, the alumni convention, and, of course, the dance. The dance was so much fun. I met Brian, Danielle, Alex, and Matt at the dance. Before the dance Brad and I had a talk about the concept of the Wall Flower also known as the Wall Fly. We perused the room for wall flowers and surprisingly found that most people were up dancing and having a good time. This was one of the coolest dances I have been to. They had a big screen showing music videos and sometimes just the people dancing around the room. I was able to catch up with Josh McCubbins, last year's candidate for national office. The next day was the last day of convention. I hung around for everything. I saw the new officers installed and had dinner with the past team and the newly elected team. My flight left for Atlanta at 2:22p.m. I arrived in Macon at 7:30p.m. and spent the rest of the evening with the new Georgia state officer team after they had their BLAST Off training with Mr. Doug Kueker.



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

### **May 9- May 20**

Reunited again! Our entire team together in College Station, Texas! It was so great to have the gang all together. I missed all of my teammates and even though we had a ton of work to do and sleepless nights, it was nice just to be around each other. The first thing on our agenda was a conference call with the board of directors. It was a rather funny site, all of us bringing our phones from our hotel rooms and hooking them up to each other! It reminded me of attaching cups with strings! We presented National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) to a leadership class at Texas A & M. We received great feedback from the students. It was actually kind of intimidating facilitating a workshop to students older than you! Earlier in the week, in order to help us prepare for the conference, Mark Reardon worked with us on our presentation skills. HE IS THE BEST!!! He tells you like it is and helps you to get better. I can not thank him enough for opening our eyes and helping us to be aware of all that we do. Each of our classes had sixteen students. Jackie and I are NLCSO partners. We like to think that we had the best group. We had some really great thinkers in our group that offered great feedback about the conference. This dry run was so helpful. Lori, Travis, Brooke, Steven, Adam, Diane, Sloan, April, Lindsay, Shari, Regina, Scott, Larra, Ricky, Kimberly, and Markley were our Aggies for four days. Along with ways to improve our conference and presentation, we also learned some Texas Aggie lingo and traditions. Farmers Fight! Saw 'em off Aggies! Whoop! Gig 'em Aggies! Howdy! Good bull! Bad bull! Were some of the yells we learned. My favorites: Farmers Fight! and Whoop! The last day of the conference the team had a maroon out! That is were everyone wears a Texas A&M shirt. Our team has now been there, done that and bought the T-shirt. We even bought the bracelets with the "Spirit of Aggeland" written on it. Our last day in Texas was spent packing and planning for State President's Conference (SPC). I left College Station, Texas to spend a little *down* time in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Life is so hard down here! Just kidding! I now have two weeks at home! One more good thing happened while I was in Texas, my nephew William Parker McCall was born. He arrived three weeks early and still weighed 9 pounds and 2 ounces! I am so excited! I will be going up to North Carolina some time during my home time to see him! Thanks for letting me brag!

### **May 2- May 8**

I have a whole week at home! To some of you, I am probably starting to sound like a bum. Yes I have had a good bit of home time this month...that will soon end!

Monday morning I visited Telfair County High School and spoke with their chapter about the opportunities FFA has and where it can take you! Monday evening I took Whitney Conner, a Wilcox County FFA member and Area V Treasurer, to Tifton for the Area V banquet rehearsal. I had to drive my Dad's truck back from Tifton. Let me tell you, that was an adventure. Whitney's job was to pray for our safety and hope we made it back! Tuesday evening I attended the Area V banquet and gave a few remarks, which went over really well. I love being from the



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

South region, especially Area V. Our region did really well this year at convention. We won all CDEs except two! That is quality! Thursday was the Wilcox County FFA Chapter Banquet. It was really eventful. Mr. Wilcox, our Vocational Supervisor, and Dr. Ellicott, FFA Advisor and Young Farmer teacher, both retired. Our banquet has really grown and now includes an FFA chorus. That's right we're uptown!!! I was able to see my best friend Brittanie who received the coveted Blue& Gold award. I am so excited that we have nearly 30 greenhands! Brent, Ben, Brittanie, Cameron, Holly, Beth, Anna, Charles, and Colton presided over the banquet. All of them did an excellent job this year as officers as well as at the banquet. Luckily, I escaped having to clean up by taking pictures with everyone. It was a great strategy!

Jesse's attire for the evening of clean up was rather interesting with work boots and swim trunks...we have some interesting characters! Early Friday morning, my aunt and I set



out for Athens, Georgia. As most of you know by now, home of the GEORGIA BULLDOGS!!! My sister Hailey graduated from Vet

School on Saturday, May 7. She had been planning this day for four years! It was a very personal celebration of the success of their class. The ceremony was so nice and relative to their class. We had a big shindig afterwards at her house with her two roommates, Rebecca and Brianna, - also veterinarians-

and two other classmates. I arrived home late that evening, finished packing, and finally went to bed. The next morning I left for Texas!



### April 25- May 1

Off to Oklahoma's state FFA convention! I arrived around 1:30 p.m. in Oklahoma City where Dallas and Amber picked me up. We headed over to the hotel and convention center. After dropping off my luggage I wanted to meet the state officers. I arrived at exactly the right time. Cortney, Whitney, Bethany, Shawna, Clayton, Cale, Mike, and Travis had just finished going through the convention. We sat down and shared a few stories. I have to say that they were a good looking team and could make me laugh my head off. Monday evening was the night of what is affectionately called 'The Last Supper' for state officers. Afterwards, the officers were rehearsing sessions so I decided to go watch. I saw Tracey Smith and met Jason, Brian, Greg, Jonathan, Matt, and Chancey. Tuesday members appeared out of the woodwork, thousands of them! I ran into Brandi Christie, Texas FFA President, as I was running around the convention. She and Brandon Strey, Texas first Vice President, were there to present a communication workshop as well! I attended the state officer candidate breakfast, then the state officer finalist orientation. I spoke at the sponsors luncheon and VIP dinner. At 1:30 I delivered my keynote address and shook hands with honorary degree recipients.



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

As you can tell, Tuesday was a busy day! I met a ton of members, many from the Bethel chapter. Mr. Ben Lastly, a native Oklahoman, but we'd like to claim him in Georgia, was in attendance to present a workshop and judge a CDE. His brother Mr. John Lastly is the teacher at Bethel. I met Bailey, Casey, Megan, Christy, and Amber. A lot of my acquaintances occurred on the escalators. Hillary and Kaycee immediately knew who I was and asked for a picture. I was not doing as good of a job being incognito in Oklahoma as I did in Georgia. Michael, Sage, Brianna, Adam, and Johnna were nice enough to take pictures with me as I meandered through the career show. Tuesday night was the night of the dance. It seemed like convention was just flying by! In Oklahoma, the dance theme this year was 'Team Spirit'. I truly had a good time because Mason, an awesome swing dancer, led me around the dance floor. Then Brandon and I got down with the YMCA! The first night I arrived, the officers took me to see the convention arena. As I walked in I was in awe as I saw what resemble the national convention arena. It was HUGE! The best part is that they fill the arena on Wednesday night. The Cox center is packed. Oklahoma members are without a question, very enthusiastic. Wednesday I presented my communication workshop to about a hundred members. Brandon was my assistant and helped me set up. Evan was my star performer of the workshop, and I would have to say Ben was pretty helpful as well. That evening I attended the State Degree banquet and the shook hands with the recipients on stage. After the degree ceremony, the new officers were named. Dayla, Kelli, Hannah, Jarrod, Dexter, Travis, and Austin, were elected as the 2005-2006 state officer team. Whitney Danker was elected as state FFA president and is the third female to serve as president! The officers were all kind of busy after the session so I went to dinner with some Texans. Trent McKnight and Brandon



took me out for the evening. When we came back, I was able to see Bethany, Whitney, and Travis again before everyone left. We were going to play Clue but after talking and shooting the breeze everyone was pretty tired. I left Oklahoma City on Thursday afternoon and headed for Waterloo, Iowa. For the first time after leaving some place other than home, I was actually sad. I really had a wonderful time in Oklahoma, and I love all my Okies! The people there are so nice and remind me of home. I was so lucky to get to go to Oklahoma! It was such a good time; I bought an OSU Cowboys t-shirt. The state officers hooked me up pretty good though with a ton of Eskimo Joe's memorabilia. I LOVE IT! Plus I LOVE OKLAHOMA!

I felt so bad for Mr. Feldman, advisor at Oelwien FFA, because he had to pick up me at 11:30 p.m. and drive me to my hotel, then go to school in the morning. On Friday, John Doese drove me to Wapsie Valley High School. I presented 7 workshops for the students and had a good





## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

time learning more about their chapter and Iowa. Mrs. Does, the FFA advisor, does a great job with her students, and she is also the advisor of the Denver chapter as well. It was my first time in Iowa, and it was beautiful. All of the old barns were gorgeous. I helped Troy, Jennifer, Courtney, Brett, Lee, Cory, and Holly set up for the chapter banquet to be held on Sunday evening. The members of Wapsie Valley were very busy because Saturday morning was scheduled as Community Service day. We all went out to eat in downtown Oelwein at an Italian restaurant called Leo's. Apparently Troy likes his lemonade salty with a little jalapeño sauce in it. He just kept drinking it! Saturday morning I met the chapter officers from Oelwein. I helped them to set up for their banquet at Sportsman's. Michael, Nick, and I spent at least an hour putting up the HUGE 'Learn, Lead, Succeed' sign. I also met Nicole, the incoming president; Brooke, a soon to be Georgian-yeah; Ashley, and Adam. After set up was complete, I had few hours to relax. The banquet began at 5:30. I met Mr. Gilson, the principle, who was so cool and Mr. Skaala both of which I sat next to at the banquet. Andy seemed to get plenty of exercise walking back and forth to the stage. I also met Jeremy another very successful member. I addressed the audience and hopefully inspired members to continue to raise the bar and believe in themselves. The banquet went very, very well. The officers did a great job presenting and running the program. After I went back to the hotel, some of the members invited me to go bowling! For those of you who know me, I love games and I love bowling!!! I could not turn that offer down. Derek, Michael, Nick, Jared, and I went bowling at Sunny Lanes Bowling Alley. My game just was not on that night! I did win one game though. Winning isn't everything though. We had a good ole time picking on each other, 'coaching', doing tricks, and cheering! Thank you Wapsie and Oelwein for showing me a great time in Iowa. Thank you Mrs. Doese for taking me to the airport at the crack of dawn! Another note I would like to add is for the Stewart boys, Jared and Michael, THEY ARE NOT BARN RATS!!!



### **April 18-April 24**



I flew out at 6:00 a.m. and arrived in Nashville, TN at 7:30 a.m. Brian Hogue and I were scheduled to become movie stars! Yeah right! We were on RFD-TV with Mr. Orion for about two hours. Both of us had our very own dressing rooms with our names on the doors and our make-up professionally done. Mr. Stagg, Amber, Kristy, and Ms. Adams joined us for our day of stardom. Dr. Wakefield was on the show during the later part of the segment. He spoke about his research and the book he is writing about the history of the New Farmers of America (NFA). Brian and I were



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

scheduled to fly out at 8:30 a.m. on the same flight, but it was canceled and we had to go our separate ways. I was disappointed because I haven't had a chance to see my teammates in the past two weeks. I arrived in Atlanta and was shuttled by a friend to Athens where I spent some quality time with my sister before going to the convention center for the 77th Georgia FFA convention. On Wednesday I had dinner with Mr. Wilkinson, our state executive secretary, and then I went over to the Classic Center where the officers were practicing their retiring addresses and sessions. I was very fortunate that Jackie Mundt was able to attend our state convention. We stayed at what I think is one of the best hotels anywhere, the Foundry Park Inn. We had a late morning Thursday morning so I went for a jog around downtown, then Jackie and I joined the state officers for lunch at the Varsity. While at the Varsity I decided to mingle with some students who were FFA members. I was amused to hear as I left one of the students say, "I bet ya ten bucks she's running for state office." In fact I heard that statement several times throughout the convention. I guess I did a good job being incognito. I delivered remarks at the EMC and Electrification awards banquet while Jackie delivered greetings at the



first general session of the convention. Almost all of our state officer team from 2002-2003 was there to help out. I was so happy to see Nathan, Katie, Brian, Bo, Alex, and Julie after not seeing each other for so long. Friday I mingled with members like Derek and Haley and relaxed before the big speech. I also met a girl Christy who will possibly be moving to our great metropolis of Rochelle. Jackie gave remarks at the Sponsors banquet, and I delivered my keynote address at the fourth general session. Some of my college friends

were so kind and came to listen to my speech. It really meant a lot to me that Austin, Chris, Josh, Haley, and my parents came over and supported me. As always the last night of convention the dance is held. I cut a rug with some of the members (Paul and Mark) and officer candidates (Adrienne, Brittany, and Heather). April 22nd was Bo's birthday, so my teammates were having a surprise party for him. Jackie and I went over and spent some time with them for a little while. Saturday was the final day of convention; Jackie had to leave early that morning. Mr. Wilburn had come down to Georgia to evaluate my performance, so he took Jackie to the airport. Saturday was a sad day for me because as I was preparing for national office, the state officers took me in as the ninth officer. Renee, Rand, Paula, Ashley, Davis, Alex, Gretchen, and Amanda (my roommate) were like my second team. They did an awesome job at state convention. I was so proud of them. Although there was one great highlight, I had my picture taken with the center of the Georgia Bulldogs, number 50 Russ Tanner. Christy Windham and Anne Knapke joined us at convention this year. Anne made us Buckeyes or as Christy called them Yum Yum Balls. Anne and Christy helped out so much with convention. It was great to see them again and speak with people who have recently been in our position and understand what we go through. During the last session the new officers were installed. Ward, Brittany, Adrienne, Billy, Valerie, Regina, Meredith, and Heather will serve this next year as the 2005-





## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**



2006 officer team! Good luck to them, I am so excited for each of them because I know most of them, and I know they will do a great job. One person that I was so very proud of was Colton Farrow. He is an FFA member from Wilcox County and was selected as one of the talent participants. He did an awesome job and was one of the best ones there! To top of the week and convention, Mr. Wilkinson took Anne, Christy, Cathy, Mr. Lastly, Trisha, and I to the 'official restaurant' of the Georgia FFA officer team-Longhorns. Going home was so much fun, speaking in front of your home crowd can be nerve racking, but in honor of my teammate Justine, I have to say that "there's no place like home."

### **April 10<sup>th</sup>-April 17**

I finally have an entire week at home! However, instead of staying home and getting back into a routine, I spent my time visiting family and friends across the state. On Monday and Tuesday I finished up a lot of tasks and work that I had to do for National Leadership Conference for State Officers. I went to my Grandparents' house in Tifton, Georgia because I knew if I went there I would actually get some work done. I returned to Rochelle, Georgia (my home) on Wednesday. I have to tell you one thing I love about coming home is having the opportunity to drive my car! Black Beauty is a 2003 black Pontiac Grand Am. I know this week I put about 500 miles on her! Any way I stayed at home on Wednesday and most of the day Thursday, stopping by my old alma mater. At the beginning of the week I made a deal with myself. If I did a good job getting my tasks done, then I would allow myself to go to Athens for the weekend. For those of you who are not familiar with Athens, it is home of the one and only, the great Georgia Bulldogs! Instead of leaving home on Friday, as intended, I decided to leave a day earlier. A funny story about Thursday and my travel to Athens involve a little time discrepancy. I was working on my laptop and when I looked at the time it read six o'clock. I thought to myself I need to leave now, and I'll make great time, arriving in Athens at nine. Well, Rachael forgot that her laptop was still set to Indiana time, which is central time. The fact that I left an hour late, and I could not find a road to Athens without a detour, put me in Athens later than expected. College towns never sleep, so when I arrived at 10:30 some of my friends still wanted me to come by. I spent the evening hanging out with my Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) boys! Chris and Trey were some of my classmates last semester that I love hanging around with. The reason I came up early was because Trey was not going to be in town that weekend, and Chris was going to be busy with Relay for Life. I loved their theme for relay for life. They joined with Kappa Delta and developed a Twister theme. Their shirts read "bending over backwards for a cure"! I helped Chris and Jay with a project they had to do for their horticulture class. The projects involved bringing a specific food dish. Chris had to bring something with pears; Jay walnuts. The next day I had a lunch date with my roommates. I took Ashley and Beth to Ryan's and Sara Ellen joined us as well. We had such a good time together that we decided to go back to Eaglewood (my old apartment) and lay out for awhile. We basked in the sun for two hours. One of my favorite people, Michelle, came by to see us while we were



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

tanning. Friday was a pretty busy day because after I left my roommates, I had to pick up my bracelet for Relay for Life from the AGR house. I had dinner with Josh, one of my friends from Agricultural Policy. I miss him so, he was my crossword puzzle partner and hot wing eating competitor! After dinner I went bowling with the Wilcox County FFA dairy evaluation team. I am sorry but I have to brag that I actually bowled a 147! After bowling I went dancing with some really close friends of mine, Austin and Prathima. Saturday morning



I headed to the FFA camp in Covington for the State Officer candidate interviews. It was awesome getting to hangout with the candidates and try to predict who would be the next state officer team! Sunday I was able to see my church family and attend Sunday morning service. Later that afternoon, Brittanie, my best friend, came by to visit and then I went with her to hunt for a prom dress. I really enjoyed having a chance to catch up with my old friend; it was a great way to end my time at home!

### April 14

I flew out of Indianapolis at 6 a.m. after the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) test pilot with the entire officer team. My flight landed in Manchester, New Hampshire at 11 a.m. Mr. Plumer picked me up and drove me up to Attitash, which is where the convention was held. Before we arrived we made a detour to Seacoast School of Technology where I ate lunch at Julia's. Julia's is the restaurant run by the students in the catering program at the school. I was able to visit Ms. DeMarco's Plant and Animal science classroom. Amy, Corey, Mike, and Jackie were a few of the students I was able to meet while I was there. When I finally arrived at the Grande Summit Hotel I met Mrs. VanderWoode and the state officers. I also saw Bill Lee who was at the Massachusetts state convention. I met all of the state officers Ammy, Teresa, Jen, Jessica, Erin and Jackie...that's right, female domination! The first session was that evening; I was very impressed with the enthusiasm and excitement of all of the members at the convention. They were definitely excited about FFA! One thing I learned was that I was not in the state of New Hampshire, I was in the Granite state. On Monday evening the talent show was conducted. Something got into me that evening because "Tex" (Jennie) was able to talk me into entering the talent show. We sure did get everybody up and moving when we danced to the Cotton Eyed Joe! Even though we didn't win, we did a pretty good job. The next day I was very impressed with the willingness of members to participate. They came to the "just for fun" quiz bowl and filled my workshop! Throughout the week I had heard stories about this drink called "Moxie". I ate lunch with Cory, Larry, Mike and Mr.







## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

Anderson. They all decided that before I left I would have to try Moxie. Mr. McKay and the boys brought me a bottle of Moxie before the next session began! Now I heard stories about



this stuff; how at one time it had been used as medication, it can take rust off anything, and how it could be used to clean a bathroom. I was a bit hesitant to try it before I went to speak, but I did. It did not taste too bad, sort of like watered down root beer with a peppermint spin to it. However, I do not like root beer and even though the initial taste was not bad, the after taste was horrible! YUCK! I do appreciate the gesture though. I decided to experience another first at a state convention; I went swimming outside and although the pool was heated, it was cold! Soon I decided I needed to go warm up. I got gussied up and went to the dance. Mike gave me

one of his FFA tattoos to wear that night. In return I allowed him take a picture of him kissing my other cheek since I wore the tattoo on my face. Jennie, Brian, Andrea and Mike were some of my best dance partners! I also had a very good slow dance partner Shayne, who won fourth in the Talent show. We had a great time at the dance that evening after which SST presented reflections. Chris, Nick, Tom and Jessie were some Alumni members that I met that evening whom I played popcorn poker with. The last day of convention is always a life changing day especially for six individuals. On Saturday, Nicole, Francis, Caitlin, Katie, Meg, and Chelsea were elected to serve as the 2005-2006 Granite State officer team. Good luck and congratulations to these individuals! One more fun event at convention was the silent auction. I had my eye on this lovely Alaska Black Diamond necklace. Well I made the mistake of showing it to Alumni Marcus who decided he would bid against me! Things just got worse after our bidding war. Two members, L.J. and Colton, decided they would join in as well! Then Colton pulled out the "I am buying this for my mother's birthday" and we could not bid against him any more. Colton, all I have to say is "smooth move"! It was all in fun and for a good cause. I had one day left before my flight home. Then Ammy Rice and her family were nice enough to take me in for the night. Thanks to Mrs. Susan, Mr. Lindsey, Ammy, and Chris for taking such good care of me. Saturday night, Ammy, Jim, and Shawn (who I also met in Massachusetts) took me to Maine! I was so excited to go to Maine. We went to see the Nubble and Short Sands beach. Then we went on the hunt for postcards because I have an obsession with sending postcards everywhere I go. The next day Ammy and Jim escorted me to Manchester airport where I headed home for a little R&R.

### **March 28- April 2**

After a short trip home for Easter, I returned to Indianapolis for an exciting photo shoot! The first day we each modeled T-shirts that are totally awesome...trust me, y'all are going to love them! I cannot wait for them to come out! Modeling is such hard work! (joking) We finished up and headed to Mr. Wilburn's house for dinner and relaxation. I was very surprised that evening because we each finally received our National Officer rings. They are so cool! The next day we



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

got all dolled up and went to Zionsville to finish up the rest of the photo shoot for the Blue Catalog. We spent some time at Mrs. Shiller's house and the park. On our way back to the hotel/home, Mama Jackie and Papa Brian decided that since we did not have to watch our figure for the photo shoot any more and we did such a good job modeling they would treat us all to a dessert at Dairy Queen! Everyone flew out by the next day except Jackie and me. We stayed behind to do some work on a few Business and Industry visits. The highlight of my week came on Thursday when students from Clinton Central were in the FFA center for interviews. Carrie, Tyler, Bethany and Ashley were each interviewing for the Travis Stowers Memorial scholarship to attend the Washington Leadership Conference (WLC). I worked out that morning so I came in a little bit later but was able to eat lunch with them. During the course of lunch one of them asked "What are you all doing this Saturday?" We naively answered, "Nothing." "Well how would you like to come to our banquet?" Jackie and I were ecstatic. We both attended on Saturday evening and thoroughly enjoyed the best meal in town. We had great dinner company with Troy, Clayton, Jared, Tyler and Blake. Clinton Central was very successful this year. I was very impressed with their members, accomplishments and how well their banquet went. Mr. Carr awed me with his ability to simultaneously run a banquet and stay up on the Illinois basketball game! Speaking of school pride, Jackie and I were introduced to Clinton Central's bulldog statue and received some Clinton Bulldog paraphernalia. I am very excited about the standing invitation I have received to come and cheer on their very successful volleyball team and wrestling team...y'all better remember to call me!!!



### March 11-17

I left the business and industry visits in Washington, D.C., to attend my very first state FFA convention. This is the first convention I have ever been to besides Georgia. I flew into Providence, Rhode Island, and spent two days just roaming around before the Massachusetts state convention started. I took a road trip by myself around Providence and even though it is small, I still managed to get lost. Under the recommendation of my neighbor on the flight in, I ate dinner at Legal Seafood. Let me tell you it was DELICIOUS! I had the best Clam Chowder I have ever had and I love Clam Chowder. On Sunday Robin Wager picked me up and we drove to Massachusetts. I met the entire state officer team: Bri, Beth, Kim, Stephanie, Ashley, Megan and the lone boy David. Sunday we became acquainted and prepared for the first day of convention on Monday. On Monday I delivered two workshops to two very enthusiastic groups of Massachusetts's members. Thanks to my Vanna (Steve) the workshop ran smoothly. I soon discovered that "y'all" is not a common word and that all my life I have said "Massachusetts" wrong! I loved the theme of the convention "Their Past, Our Present, Your Future"; the officers did a great job with the opening session and members were fired up to get it started. As I was walking around the hotel scouting out members to talk to, everyone was studying for the Quiz



## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal



bowl the highlight of the evening. This is a very serious, competitive event! I loved having the opportunity to watch and then act as timekeeper. On Tuesday morning, I again presented my two workshops to a smaller crowd. That morning is when CDEs take place. I had some great participants who went out and recruited more members to attend. They did a good job because the room was packed. I wandered around meeting new people and learning more and more about Massachusetts. Two members Tiffany and JoyceLynn, taught me how to play Spit. It is a great game; we had a good 'ol time. I acted as timekeeper again for the Division I Quiz bowl and had another great competition. It was snowy there in Big Mass; I forgot to mention that there was a minor blizzard in Rhode Island while I was there. Anyway, the lake beside the hotel was frozen so Shawn took me out on the lake and we walked on it. I have never seen a frozen lake before, nevertheless walked on one. I was in awe! Tuesday night was the dinner for the entire convention body. We were entertained with the 75 years convention slide show, state officer parent appreciation, and guest speaker, Scott Greenburg. After the dinner, we kicked off the dance! I had an AWESOME time at the dance. Some pretty good dancers were breakin' it down that night in Massachusetts. J Lo might have some backup dancers hiding out in Massachusetts! The dance shut down around midnight and lights were out at 12:30. The next morning was the awards breakfast where all of the awards were announced, and I delivered my keynote address. Members were pretty alert after dancing the night away! I was also surprised to see Chris a.k.a. "Wheels" with no hair the next day. I suspect "Little Butterfield" had something to do with that. I sat with the Smith chapter during the final convention session where Bri delivered her retiring address. The state president is the only officer who gives her speech live. I felt bad for the others because they were unable to record theirs and share it with the members. Everyone did an awesome job. I have to give Bri credit for doing an amazing job. It had a great impact and was a message members needed to hear. I am still debating on who my favorite "Has Been" is 'Tiny Tim' (Tim Roy) or newly installed "Has Been" Bri? Each state president becomes a member of the "Has Been" club after they retire. They even receive a "Has Been" hat! The election of officers took place at the very end. Thirteen candidates anxiously awaited the results of the nominating committee. On Wednesday afternoon Megan, Calyn, Peter, Stephanie, Kerry, Beth, Charles, and Wylie were elected to serve as the 2005-2006 Massachusetts Officer team. Congratulations to them and good luck! One final thing I would like to mention is how impressed I was with the alumni in Massachusetts. They really make convention happen and are a big help to Mrs. LaFleur. The state officers have a great deal of responsibility at convention and the alumni help to make sure they can do their job. The support and dedication of the alumni took me aback and I was very touched by their commitment to Massachusetts FFA. I appreciate everything they did that week and I would like to tell them Thank You! I had the most TERRIFIC, AWESOME, AMAZING, FUNFILLED BLAST at Massachusetts.





## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

Thank y'all for showing me a good time. I headed back to Providence to fly to Indianapolis for three days where I would get some work done.

### **February 21-25**

National FFA Week After some travel difficulties I discovered that there are not many flights that go to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Unfortunately, I missed the activities of the first day of FFA Week in South Dakota. I apologize to the Harrisburg Chapter whom I was to meet and who had prepared a dinner for our evening. I am also disappointed I was unable to present the leadership workshop I had prepared for members at McCook Central from Districts 3, 4, and 5. Even though I had a rocky start and unfortunately let down some members, I was still very excited about my first visit to South Dakota, having never seen prairie dogs or Jackalopes (which consequently do not exist). Mrs. Gerri Eide prepared an awesome schedule to celebrate FFA Week across South Dakota. Tuesday morning I met Alex, Crissa and Nick at our hotel before we travel to Sioux Nation Ag Center, a vet supplier in the area. The three presented me at the beginning of the trip with my very own map of South Dakota so I would know where we were going. I thought this to be a very thoughtful gesture on their part and they each signed it for me. The map also made me a little leery that they might throw me out and see how well I could navigate my way across South Dakota...just kidding! Flandreu High School was the first workshop I presented that week, and was also my very first school wide assembled workshop. I have to admit that these students were attentive and energetic for 9 in the morning. Imagine telling about 250 students in a gym to crumple paper and throw it to the front of the bleachers preferably not hitting anyone! It was awesome! I felt like it was snowing again, which brings me to the weather. It was not that cold in South Dakota, but don't get me wrong it was still PLENTY cold for me. I was teased for my cold nature, but hey I'm from the south. After my "Road Trip" through the FFA workshop, I was interviewed for the television show "Today's Ag". The three state officers, Mrs. Eide, Mr. Gill (my chaperone), and I headed to the Elkton chapter where we ate lunch with the faculty and junior and senior officers. The Elkton chapter blew me away with the projects and businesses that were running. Their chapter operated six separate businesses: building a house, the greenhouse, fruit sales, the garden, lawn care and a catering business. They provide SAE opportunities for students in their area and have created a successful, strong, and financially independent chapter. Hats off to you Elkton...you rock! I experienced another first on this day when I had my first radio interview with Tom Rider of WNAX



Radio News. Tuesday was jam packed because I also was on South Dakota State University campus and discovered their great ice cream. Jerod informed me that SDSU was the birthplace of my favorite ice cream- cookies 'n crème. This is also where our discussion of whether sherbet is really ice cream or not. We are still clueless. That evening SDSU Collegiate FFA hosted a pizza dinner where I felt right at home mixing and mingling with fellow ag majors. We could only stay for a little while though because that evening I presented a workshop at Sioux Valley. The students that came to Sioux Valley





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal

were some sharp cookies, and they were a lot of fun to work with which I appreciate so much. Etta, Jason and Becky (whom I have met someplace before) joined us in Sioux Valley. We drove what seemed to be days to Miller so that we would be closer to the capital. We woke up early on Wednesday morning to finish our journey to Pierre. The correct pronunciation being 'pier'. On the way I participated in a live radio interview with Del Fisher of KGFX Radio. When we arrived in Pierre, I was shocked. It was nothing like what I pictured a capital looking like, although it had a very nice capitol building and aesthetic scenery. Pierre was nothing like my Atlanta: there were no skyscrapers, not too many buildings, and not too many people. It was



different from what I was accustomed to but was a beautiful place nonetheless. It is also the least populated capital in the country. I was really pleased and excited with our schedule at the Capitol. We met Governor Rounds, Lt. Governor Daugaard and Secretary of State Nelson. We were also recognized on both the House and Senate floors while at the Capitol. After our series of prestigious visits; Etta, Mr. Gill and I departed for Sturgis, Etta's hometown and the host of the largest Motorcycle Rally in the country. Wednesday evening we had dinner with Etta's family where I met her parents, brother, and grandfather. We had a wonderful meal, and I learned about western tradition and Etta's childhood. I had a blast being in a home after being on the road so long. Thursday morning I went to Etta's home chapter, Sturgis, and presented two workshops for their agricultural education classes. I really appreciated the willingness to participate and the interaction I received from this group. We then moved on to the Belle Fourche chapter where we had lunch with chapter members and faculty, then presented a leadership workshop to the members. After Belle Fourche, our next destination was Newell, the largest chapter in South Dakota, where I presented a school wide assemble workshop on character. I loved this workshop. I had an awesome time and the members were phenomenal at showing enthusiasm. After the workshop I hung out with chapter officers until dinner. At dinner I discovered the strong support network that Newell had from its community, school and parents. My tablemates at dinner that evening (Charlee, Dannie, and Megan) told me of Sturgis tradition and what they do for fun. I have never laughed so hard in my life! We had a great time that evening, but I had to leave early so that Mr. Gill and I could make it to Rapid City at a decent hour. On Friday, my last day in South Dakota, I reunited with Becky, Etta and Jason at Stevens High School where I presented a leadership workshop to the Rapid City FFA Chapter. The FFA members had an awesome opportunity to get as loud as they wanted in the library during school, now I don't know about the rest of you but I would definitely take advantage of that! Afterward, I became better acquainted with their chapter officers. Two of them, Josh and Kortney, joined the state officers and myself on a visit to Jolly Lane Greenhouse, which was so neat! I worked in a florist shop for four years so I love flowers and retail and all the goods in the store. We spent an hour learning about the business and looking at all of their merchandise like the awesome fishponds





## Rachael McCall National Officer Journal



they sell. The very last thing we did in South Dakota was pretty awesome. How can you go to South Dakota without seeing Mount Rushmore? We all went out there and man, it was amazing! I loved it and enjoyed the history, pride, and tradition of the monument. I had the best time in South Dakota and would definitely go

back. It's a beautiful part of our country! I departed Rapid City on the other side of the state from where I began to return to Indianapolis for a work week with five of my closest friends.



January 25, 2005

Read all about our trip to Japan! [http://www.ffa.org/students/documents/no\\_japan.pdf](http://www.ffa.org/students/documents/no_japan.pdf)

**January 12, 2005**

Where I'll be next week: Washington, D.C.

This past week our whole officer team spent the week in my home State, Georgia. Also known as the Peach State. The state staff, Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Lastly, showed us all a great time! Our first night was spent at the FFA campsite in Covington, Georgia. I was being slightly devious and told Brian that we had very traditional cabins. Brian was convinced before we arrived at the camp that we would be staying in cabins with no heating or air-conditioning and no indoor restroom facilities. Much to his relief, the Georgia FFA camp is nothing like that. Just to set the record straight, every cabin has heating and air conditioning along with indoor plumbing. After a pleasant overnight stay at the camp, we traveled to Atlanta and met up with Georgia's state FFA president Rand Merchant. Governor Sonny Perdue was kind enough to spend some of his day off with us. I personally have never been to the Governor's Mansion, and it was so cool! Governor Purdue received his Honorary American degree this year, but was unable to attend national convention. Since the governor could not come to convention, we came to him! At the Governor's Mansion I was also surprised to see that one of my long time friends, Ben Fry, had become the governor's special assistant! I was so shocked and excited when around the corner came Ben. After an awesome visit with the governor, we then proceeded to Plains Georgia, home of President Jimmy Carter. Our team toured historic Plains, then later in the evening Emily presented her workshop and Brian delivered his keynote speech. Students from different chapters Tift County, Perry, Bainbridge, Tri County, Schley to name a few, took part in these presentations. The area officers did an excellent job running the program and were very excited to be with us in Plains. While in Plains we stayed in a very unique hotel that houses only seven rooms. We rented them all! They were decorated according to the decade, which also served as the room number. Jackie and I stayed in 1920. It was very cool with a petal foot bathtub, kerosene lanterns, and a 20" TV! (I don't think the television was authentic..Ha..ha..) The next day was rather nerve-racking while being very exciting. On Tuesday, we



## **Rachael McCall**

### **National Officer Journal**

visited my home chapter of Wilcox County. I was to deliver my keynote address to the ENTIRE student body! Even though the student body consists of 350 to 400 students, I was still pretty nervous. The chapter officers conducted opening ceremonies, and I am so proud of all of them. I am pleased to say my speech went reasonably well, I didn't embarrass my hometown. One of the best parts was the beginning, where my best friend, Brittanie Faircloth, chapter secretary, introduced me. Afterward, the alumni, chapter officers and the school board held a reception for our national officer team. My fellow officers were able to meet Renee Smith, state southern region vice president. Going home was great because I was able to see some of my family. My father is my FFA advisor and my mother is the gifted art teacher at Wilcox County High. My oldest brother Mark, his wife Brandi, and my niece Riley were all down from North Carolina visiting. It was great getting to see them all and just what I needed before I would be gone for six weeks straight. Later that day we went to Wheeler County High where Jackie did a terrific job presenting her workshop, and Justine delivered her speech to a group of very receptive eighth graders. The Wheeler County Officers reminded me of how great it is to be from the south! They also gave our team some pretty nifty shirts. The John Deere emblem was on the back with the caption "Real Farmers Use Real Tractors". That shirt made Emily's day. For those of you who don't know, Emily is the biggest John Deere fan on the planet. Tuesday afternoon, we departed Wheeler County for Toombs County. Toombs had a very organized gram program planned. Each chapter officer was assigned to a national officer. I was very fortunate to have the very enthusiastic Amber Toole, or as I like to call her call her D.J. Toole, as my assistant. Amber and I had a great time working together, and I was glad to get to know her. We had a very good southern meal and officially had Justine hooked on sweet tea. The officers had the chance to meet the infamous Paula Rogers, state central region vice president. Jay gave his speech to all of the chapters in attendance and then we broke out into six groups for workshops. Luther did a great job presiding over the program and Michael did a great job returning thanks and giving reflections. Jessica, Jennifer, Robert, and good ole Major also did a great job directing us and helping us out. Wednesday morning we had breakfast with Effingham County board of education, alumni, and chapter officers. Renee was an officer that I was very happy to see. I remember meeting her during my state officer year when she was a greendhand. I was very impressed with the entire Effingham officer team. They all were very polite, prepared, and helpful. Amanda Zittrouer, state central region vice president, was also in attendance, and I was able to have breakfast with her father that morning. It was there that Emily delivered her speech to the entire FFA chapter. Jay and Justine presented their workshops, while Brian and I had the awesome opportunity to visit Effingham County Middle school. We spoke to sixth graders, and I have to admit they were a pretty sharp group. They were so excited about FFA, and we really did have a blast with them. After we finished, we went to South Effingham where the other officers had their first experience with a low country boil, and it was so good! I also gave Mr. Sellers a hard time for being an Auburn fan...it was great. Brian did a great job presenting his workshop and everyone had a great time with it. Although, the best part of the day was when the entire class sang "Happy Birthday" to Emily! Emily turned 21 on the fifth. We left Effingham for Savannah. It was beautiful. We stayed in a hotel overlooking the river and ate by the river that night.



## **Rachael McCall** **National Officer Journal**

. It was pitch black and you could hear the waves crashing on the shore, very relaxing. On our return to the hotel Mr. Lastly took us on the scenic route, in other words we were sort of lost for a while. Savannah was definitely one of the highlights of our trip. We had a great time! Thursday we headed to Macon to meet with Mr. Wayne Dollar, president of Georgia Farm Bureau. Meeting and having lunch with Mr. Dollar was an experience. He is a very cool, unique man. While in Macon we brushed up on our media skills with television interviews. We also went to the Sports Hall of Fame where Mr. Wilburn and Brian discovered their talents in announcing, it was quite funny! Past National FFA President Hillary Smith joined us for dinner that night since she lives in Macon. We drove back to the camp in Covington and spent some quality time with each other watching the movie Dodgeball. Friday morning we went to Luella High in Locust Grove where I presented my workshop. I have to commend Luella because I believe I had the best group of students ever!

Everyone was so great and participated in all of the activities. They really made my job easy. It is always cool to see familiar faces and Brandon was one of those. Everyone really did impress me, but one who always offered great ideas was Ben. Another thing all of them did well was the poem masterpiece. There were some really good ones. We then went over to Atlanta and met with Commissioner Tommy Irvin; it's always good to get to see him. For lunch Mr. Gary Black took us to the Commerce Club in Atlanta, which is a pretty snazzy place. Since we were in Atlanta, we decided to go to the underground and explore for a little while. Later that night we were back in Covington at the camp for the Hall of Fame dinner. We were very honored to be in attendance where five very deserving individuals were inducted. We were also flattered when students from Jackson County FFA volunteered for the clean up crew so they could meet our officer team. My fellow officers also had the chance to meet Davis Whitten, state FFA secretary; Gretchen Fortner, state FFA northern region vice president; and Alex Hicks, state FFA northern region vice president. After the ceremony, we mingled with Jackson County members, then returned to the cabin for an encore presentation of Dodgeball with the state officers. Saturday morning we attended the regional meetings, introduced ourselves to Georgia agriculture educators and completed the obstacle course. We were very excited about the challenge course and wanted to give it a whirl. We completed all of the challenges, maybe not in record time, but we had a great time. We climbed over the wall, tossed the tire over the 12-foot pole without touching the pole, and filled the barrel with water using buckets with holes in it. Loads of fun! The fun really began that afternoon when we went to my current school...the University of Georgia...GO DAWGS! We toured the campus, went by my old apartment, and then ate dinner with Mr. Woodard at Rafferty's. Then we had dessert at The Varsity and my roommate Ashley and neighbor Justin came by to visit. We all went back to the state FFA office where we debriefed with Mr. Wilkinson. Mr. Wilkinson also presented each of us with a hooded UGA sweatshirt, which we all appreciate very much! We left early Sunday morning for Atlanta to return to Indianapolis. I really had a great time back in Georgia. It was great working with Mr. Lastly and Mr. Wilkinson again. Being in Georgia made me so happy because it is my home and that is where your heart is. Georgia really is always on my mind.