



## Casey Hogan National Officer Journal

**September 24, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Wisconsin and Texas**

This past month has been one full of having a great time with FFA members and gearing up for the national FFA convention. Stacia Berry and I spent one week in Chicago, Illinois, Wisconsin and Ohio visiting with sponsors of the FFA and thanking them for all they do for us. One of the highlights of the business and industry visits was having our friends at Kraft join us at the Wayawagwae FFA chapter in Wisconsin. The FFA members there were awesome and it was neat to have so many friends of the FFA there as well. After the week was over I flew back to Texas to hang out with my family over the weekend. Then the next Monday I flew up to Nashville, Tennessee, to meet up with Amy Rasmussen to be on the FFA live TV show. It sure was an experience to be on TV and have so many of our friends call in, especially for a guy with a radio face. I know Amy and I both had a good time hanging out with the Dyersburg FFA chapter who did an excellent job being the FFA models for the show. On the way to the airport I saw President Bush's motorcade and then watched Air force One take off so that was cool. I left Nashville to go up to New York City and see my brother Chad who I hadn't seen in five years. It was my first time to the city so it was great to see that and Chad. After leaving New York I was off to Kansas City, Missouri, for a week of traveling in Area 5 and 6. Mrs. Lisa Evans, state staff in Missouri, picked me up at the airport to begin an exciting week. I loved getting to go to all of the chapters and meeting the pumped up FFA members in Central Missouri. I want to thank Susan Bernz, state FFA president, and her awesome family for their kindness and hospitality. One of the highlights of the week were the two area leadership conferences that were put on and also getting to meet the pumped up FFA members in Otterville, Missouri. I also want to thank the folks in Jefferson City for the fun and the pizza on Friday night. After leaving Missouri I was off to Indianapolis to meet up with the rest of the officer team for another week of convention planning. It was kind of sad, as it was our last time together at the FFA center. I am really blessed to have such awesome teammates this year that I am going to miss. It was awesome to get our retiring addresses finished and make last preparations for the convention.

I left Indianapolis to go to my grandma's house in Houston. It was great to see Grandma and to watch the Cowboys whoop up on the Browns. The next day I drove to Graham, Texas, to be at the Area IV Greenhand camp. There was 800 greenhands there and I had a blast speaking to them and hanging out. Alan, Brandon, Brandi, Kylee, Kyle and everyone else, thanks for having me out. It was great to see some fellow Texas FFA members! Then on Thursday my mother and I drove up to San Antonio to be with our friends from Toyota to kick off a new diversity initiative. It was great to see how that is going to change FFA member's life's in the San Antonio area and I want to thank all of the members who were there. I am leaving Houston tomorrow to fly to Wisconsin and travel around the state and meet the awesome FFA members there. This will be my last event of the year other than national convention. Thanks for allowing me to serve you and I can't wait until the national convention! If you ever need anything please let me know.



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**August 20, 2004**

**Where I will this week: Texas, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Ohio**

After SPC and our National Officer retreat it was great to get to go home to Texas and get some rest for the first time in a few months. Then on August 6 it was the moment of truth as I suddenly realized it was time to depart for the National FFA center to plan for the National FFA Convention. I can't believe that this awesome year is almost over. I am so excited to get to help plan an awesome show and be together as an officer team once again! We spent six days together in Indianapolis basically writing convention scripts, getting music together for the big show and beginning to plan our retiring addresses. It is scary to think about a retiring address, it kind of scared me at first but I figure all I can do is say what is in my heart and hope it connects with you! On the last day of convention planning the girls had tickets to a concert at the Indiana State fair but Javier and I still had a few deadlines to meet so we stayed at the FFA center to work. You know us last minute workers, but we rewarded ourselves with a good dinner at Applebee's afterwards. I had a great time in Indianapolis with the team and look forward to the 77th National FFA Convention in two months, you better be there!



Next I was off to the 100th Alpha Gamma Rho convention in Columbus, Ohio. Anyone that knows me hears plenty about my love and passion for being a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity at Tarleton State University. I was even more honored to be asked by my brothers to be a keynote speaker at the convention. It was so great to see and get to spend the week with Brandon Griggs and Richard Keefhaver, two of the brothers from my chapter. It was also nice to get to see so many of our alumni and people who have made our fraternity what it is today. The convention went great; Ohio State was a beautiful campus and place to be. I really enjoyed giving my speech and I hope everyone there enjoyed it as well. Thank you to everyone who made the convention the success it was and for having me be apart of the week. To all you gentleman out there, make sure you look into the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity when you get to college, it is a great thing to be a part of. After leaving Columbus I went back to Texas for a day off before I head to Michigan for the FFA day at the races and a week of Business and Industry visits. Until next time, have fun, be safe and thank for allowing me to serve you.



**July 25, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas and Indianapolis**



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Howdy! These past weeks and days have been very exciting. It started in Indianapolis for the second National FFA Board Meeting of the year. It was very humbling to represent FFA members on the National board and it was also great to see the officer team, since we haven't been together in a couple of months. Once the board meeting was over, I was so excited, because I was off to the 76th annual Texas FFA convention. I was honored to have Javier come along with me and when we arrived my mom picked us up. We then went and watched the 2003-2004 Texas FFA Officer team perform the Vespers ceremony. Tobin, Zach, Yancey, Kati, Scotty, Mr. Koch, Travis, Jarod, Nick and Samantha, thanks for your year of service and being there for me and for our friendships, I will never forget you.

The first full day of the convention was an exciting one. I it started off with an interview with the Texas FFA chronicle, Delanya, thanks for your hard work and the great article. I also had the chance to hang out on the delegate floor and



see all of my friends, especially the good people from Area V! At lunch I had the opportunity to speak at a leadership luncheon and that night I also gave brief remarks at the Stars over Texas and VIP banquets. Wednesday night was capped off when Jarrod Justice and Javier Moreno introduced me for my keynote speech at the third general session. I had the time of my life speaking to Texas FFA members and I hope that you enjoyed it and got something out of it. It was also great to see all of my family who made it. I love you all. After the session it was time to hear Cross Canadian Ragweed in



concert, it rocked and I had such a good time hanging out with Tate. Afterward, I had the opportunity to meet one of the guys that worked for Ragweed. He let Javier and I go back to the back and hang out with the band for a few minutes. For a huge Cross Canadian Ragweed fan like myself it was a dream come true and I just want to thank the band for being great people and taking time for your fans. (I have attached a picture of Javier and I with the band) Thursday was an awesome day as well; I pretty much hung out the entire day with FFA members. I couldn't have

asked for a better day. Thank you very much to the Gilliam's for taking me out to dinner that night. Fun night was a blast and I was still a rockin' even though I was very tired. I felt like I was a greenhand the entire week, It was just a dream come true to be a National FFA Officer and be at my home convention. Thanks to everyone there for an awesome week and allowing me to serve you. Javier and I had to head out early on



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Friday morning to go to the State Presidents' Conference in Washington, D.C., so I am sorry I didn't get a chance to say ADIOS Texas style.

After the flight from Dallas to Washington, D.C., Javier and I met up with officer team and for four days before the State Presidents' Conference began we practiced our parts for the conference. For those of you that don't know what the State Presidents' Conference is, it is a four day long conference where two state officers from each state come to Washington, D.C., to begin the delegate process for the National FFA Convention. It is also an exciting week for us because our families get to come and spend a week in Washington, D.C., with us. My mother and grandma made the trek from Texas to be there with me and I enjoyed it so much. I want to thank all of the state officers there that week for their hard work and always making it fun. We had the opportunity to visit the USDE, all of the memorials in D.C., go to the zoo and numerous other things. My favorite night was when we all dressed up and went out on a cruise boat on the Potomac River. It was a very special night to have all of you family there, the state officers and see the beautiful view of our nations capitol from the River. I hope you remember that freedom is not free and thank the young men and women who protect us in the United States military. Millions of people have died so that we can do the things we do everyday. I challenge you to do something to remember them and pay tribute to them. After we said our goodbyes, we went on an officer retreat together for five days, everyone was exhausted after traveling for several months and we needed some rest. Until next time, Dream big and never give up, see you down the road!

**Friday, July 09, 2004**

### **Where I will be this week: Indianapolis and Fort Worth, Texas**

I realize that I have not written to you in almost a month and for that I apologize. It has been very busy here lately with three National Leadership Conferences for State officers in the past three weeks. I will do my best to try to catch you up on the last month of my life. First off, I am sitting here on a late night plane and I suddenly realize how I am the luckiest guy in the world! Thank you for allowing me to live my dream and serve you, it is a blessing, even when my flight is delayed for four hours. I had the pleasure one month ago to be the keynote speaker at the 75th Kentucky FFA convention. I loved being with the members and the 2003-2004 state officer team. Even though it was a short trip, thanks for the hospitality! I left Louisville for Fargo, North Dakota for my first trip ever to the great state of North Dakota. Once I arrived, I was escorted to the convention where I greeted the convention and even sat next to the governor! I was at the convention the entire time, so I had the opportunity to make many friendships! Paige,





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congrats and thanks for drinking my water. The state FFA officer team was incredible; I don't know if I have ever heard some many awesome retiring addresses. I left North Dakota and headed to our nations capitol for a few days to attend the second Washington Leadership Conference of the summer. I had a blast with the FFA members there; I even got to go with them to their service project one-morning and glean peas.



I left the Washington Leadership Conference to head to home to Texas; however, home time would have to wait because I arrived just in time to attend the Area V FFA Leadership camp at Lake Texoma. It was very special for me to go up there, Lake Texoma and the Area V camp is a very special place to me where many of my FFA memories are held. It was good to get to see all of the Ag. Teachers who have helped me out so much in the past and to

see the Area V officer team, most of who I have known since they were greenhands. Austin, Lindsey, Jarret, Breanne, Rachel and Morgan, thanks for the friendship and for all of the work you did at the camp, good luck this year. To all of the district officers at camp, thanks for the difference you make and for the friendships. To my great grand pup Kyle Anderson; you are going to do an awesome job this year serving Area V and the Texas FFA. Scotty, Nick and Justin Yancey, it was good seeing you guys, thanks for the awesome job you have done this year. It was depressing to have to leave Texoma, but I had great time and it was one of the highlights of my year. I flew from Texas to meet up with my teammate and friend Amy Rasmussen to begin our first National Leadership Conference for State officers in Wyoming. This was my first visit to Wyoming and it was so beautiful at the camp up in the mountains. I enjoyed getting to know the Wyoming, North Dakota and Montana state officer teams. One of the highlights of the week was when Mr. Stratman, the camp director, Wade, myself and a few of the other state officers went on a sunrise trail ride and even saw a few bears. Our first NLCSO in Wyoming was definitely a success, but duty called me to leave a little early to head out east to the Virginia FFA convention. After the long flight from Cody to Roanoke, I drove to the beautiful campus of Virginia Tech for the convention. It would be a short trip because my schedule only allowed me to stay for one day. I enjoyed getting to meet the FFA members there and the state FFA officer team and I loved watching the FFA quiz bowl! I left Virginia to meet Amy in Washington State for our second NLCSO in Kelso, Washington. We got there a little early and had the chance to go see a Portland Beavers baseball game and hang out together. Once the conference started, we had the honor to work with the state officer teams from Washington, Alaska, California, Idaho and Oregon. I enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones. The last night we even had some time off and we enjoyed a hot tub/pool party, it was nice to relax after a busy



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week. Thanks to all who made the experience in Washington fun for all and a great learning experience!

After Washington, Amy and I were off to our final NLCSO across the country in North Carolina. I was very excited when I received our schedule for NLCSOs because I received three states that I have never been to before, which makes it fun. We had such a blast hanging out with the state officer teams from North Carolina, Florida and South Carolina. A big thanks goes out to Mr. Josh Bledsoe and the North Carolina FFA Association for their hard work and hospitality during the conference. It was a week of hanging out and learning about each other and also learning how to be better state officers and FFA members. Josh, thank for the fun prank calls and Jennifer, way to pull one on Amy! Going out together at Joe's Crab Shack was one of the highlights of the week, getting out of the room for a few hours and having some fun. It was sad for Amy and I when we left because it was our last NLCSO to do ever. After the months of training and preparation they were over, but I was blessed that God gave me a great partner in Amy. I hope that at all of our NLCSOs state officers had a fun time but also learned some valuable things in the process. I apologize for this journal being so long, Casey got busy and forgot to write. As I think about it I might have been busy but maybe my priorities were in the wrong place because I should always keep you, FFA members informed on what I am doing. I mean, you are the reason that I am writing in the first place and I can promise you that I will keep my journals updated from now on. FFA members, I challenge you to keep your priorities in line and remember the reason you are doing the things you are. God Bless and see you down the road!

**June 4, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Kentucky and North Dakota**



Geraldine FFA chapter. Thanks to Allyson, Mr. Johnson, Tyler, Bradley, Amanda, Hannah and the rest of the crew for dinner and our ice cream trip later in the week. The next day was the first day of the convention and I had the opportunity to meet the 2003-2004 Alabama FFA Officer team. Joanna, Ashleigh, Alex, Brittany, Hannah and Whitney, thanks for letting me hang out throughout the week and for doing a great job serving this

After a few days at home, I was off to Alabama for my fourth state convention this year. When I arrived at the airport, Alabama FFA's national officer candidate Allyson Johnson was kind enough to pick me up and take me to Auburn University. I was very impressed throughout the week at the beautiful campus and friendly people. Allyson also invited me to eat with her chapter the first night there. I had such a great time with the





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year. One of the other highlights of the week was watching the String band and quartet contests, the only one of its kind in the United States. Congratulations to all of the teams that competed and keep up the talent. I enjoyed giving a keynote speech on Tuesday night and I hope the members and guests got something out of it. It was neat to be able to be there the entire convention and getting to hang out with the members and meet some cool people. I also thought the live band dance was a lot of fun for everyone who was there. Alabama was one of the highlights of my year; I



thank everyone there for the southern hospitality and allowing me to be a part of something special. I challenge each and every one of you to introduce one new person to the FFA that needs their lives touched by something positive. There are a lot of young people out there who need to belong and have their lives touched. We have the perfect tool but we must spread the message. I am currently in Kentucky getting some work done while I wait for the 75th Kentucky FFA convention to begin. See you next week. God Bless!

**May 23, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas and Alabama**

After leaving the New York FFA convention, I was off to College Station, Texas, for 10 days of training as an officer team for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers. It was nice to be back in Aggie land and see my family, friends and old FFA pals. It was a very intense ten days of memorizing curriculum and presenting workshops to college age students. I would have to say that it was the most challenging thing I have ever done in my life and a draining few days. However, it was also one of the most rewarding things I have done as a person and I felt that I grew tremendously. It was great to make some new Aggie friends as we taught the class during the week. It was also cool to spend some time with the officer team because we will not be all together again until July. My Grandma, Evelyn, and mother even joined the team for dinner one night. That was a real treat! After leaving College Station, I was off for a quick trip over to Georgia to participate in the Georgia FFA Foundation's annual golf tournament. This was my second trip to Georgia this year and I can't say enough about the good people and things going on there. Not only has their membership increased, but their foundation is raising more money and opportunities are being extended to young people across the state. It was great to get to see some of the new state officers while I was there as well as Cathy and Dathan, two of last year's officers. A special thanks to Mr. James Woodard, the Georgia FFA Advisor, for taking care of me and allowing me to be a part of his great family and showing me what true southern food is all about. Keep up the good work Georgia FFA. Thanks for allowing me to be apart of something special. I am currently in Texas enjoying a few days off before I hit the road for one of the longest stints of the year. I am really excited about it because I will be going to three state conventions in a week. Looking forward to meeting the members in Alabama, Kentucky



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and North Dakota in a few weeks. Until next week, live life to the fullest and thank the man up above! God Bless you!

**May 9, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas and Georgia**

After a few days of rest at my Grandma's house, I was off to the opposite end of the country to attend the New York FFA Convention. It was very exciting to be with the awesome FFA members, especially since it was my first trip to the Empire state. Mrs. Moore, the New York FFA advisor, met me in Syracuse as we began our journey to Lowville High School, home of this year's state FFA convention. Once we arrived, I met the awesome New York FFA officer team who did an outstanding job during the convention. The



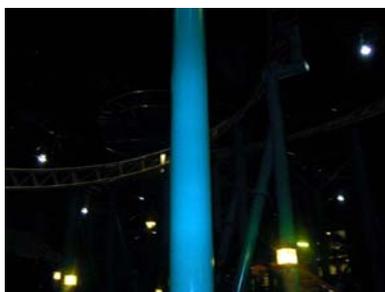
entire convention was a blast, whether it was playing laser tag with my boys, and getting beat, or hanging out with the awesome pumped up members of the Tri-Valley FFA chapter. I had the opportunity to present a workshop and give a speech and just hang out and meet the members and teachers in the Empire State. A special shout out to the John Bowne FFA chapter who rocked the

house. I had a great time talking to you during the week. Also, thank you to Dustin Bliss and his family for taking me out to eat after the convention and taking me to the airport. I really appreciated the hospitality and the banner that Lowville high school made for me to make me feel welcome (see picture). I have always wanted to go to New York and it was just a blessing to be there and met the awesome people. Until next time, keep it real!



**April 29, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas and New York**



I forgot to put this in my journal earlier, so to my best friend Tate Rosenbusch, happy late birthday! I left Texas to go to my second state convention in Minnesota on a rainy Saturday night. I was excited to be attending another state convention, which are awesome. My good friend, past Minnesota state officer, Ms. Beth Lauwagie and Ms. Katie Neigebauer, who works for the Minnesota FFA, picked me up at the airport to begin the week. I



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thought we were just going back to the hotel, but they had different plans as we were off to the Mall of America. We had a great time eating at Bubba Gump's and riding the new indoor roller coaster. Thanks for showing this old Texas boy a good old Minnesota time (see the picture attached of the Mall of America roller coaster). The next day the convention started and I had the honor of bringing greetings at the reflections service that night. The 2003-2004 Minnesota FFA Officer team did an awesome job at reflections and the talent show was filled with lots of awesome talent, watch out Nashville. Mr. Ertl and Mr. Larson, great job acting at reflections, Hollywood here they come. The second day of the convention started off great with Ken giving a motivational retiring address. I had the opportunity to present two workshops with pumped up Minnesota FFA members. That night was the awards program and there was a record 3,000 plus Minnesota FFA members present! Thanks to everyone there for allowing me to give a keynote speech, I enjoyed it and I hope you benefited as well. The last day of the convention included hearing keynote speakers, retiring addresses and seeing the 2004-2005 Minnesota FFA Officer team elected. Congratulations to the new team and to all who went to the convention and made it a success. Thank you so much for allowing me to be apart of it and if I can ever help you in the future please let me know.

It was sad to leave my good friends in Minnesota but it was off to Indianapolis and the National FFA center to attend the National FFA Foundation Sponsors board dinner. I had the honor of speaking to those who raise the money to allow use to do the things we do. It is a very outstanding group of people and if you get a chance send them a note and thank them for what they do for each one of us. It was also neat because it was a night to recognize Mr. Bernie Staller, the chief operating officer for the National FFA and has been a visionary for FFA and Ag. Ed. for 37 years. Mr. Staller will be retiring in a few months and a scholarship has been set up in his name. Congratulations to you and thank you for all that you have done for the FFA. I left Indianapolis to go visit my grandma in Houston for a few days and prepare for the New York FFA convention. Grandma, thanks for the food and the love, you're the best. Until next time, remember all of those who make it possible to do what we do and say, "Thank you"! God Bless!



**April 20, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas and Minnesota**

Let's go back in time eight days ago, when the officer team got together in Indianapolis to shoot the photos for the blue FFA apparel catalog. We were only together for a day and a half but we took plenty of pictures and had a lot of fun. I hope that all of you will like the catalog because I know our merchandising staff does a great job on it every year.



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When I left Indianapolis last Tuesday I was off to the Central Oregon District Leadership Conference. I arrived late that night and the camp would start the next day. Mr. Jeff



Papke, the advisor at the Crook County FFA chapter and Brannah, the chapter president, picked me up at the hotel to ride to the camp. I had so much fun hanging out with Crook County and eating at Subway. Willie, Shannon, Grace, Katie and the rest of the gang, thanks for the ride and the fun! Once we arrived at the camp, I had the opportunity to meet the other awesome advisors and the newly elected Oregon FFA officer team! Wade, Brittany, Lindsey, Cole, Jared and Braden, thanks for letting me hang out during the camp. I know you will do a great job this

year. Once the camp began it was pretty intense. They know how to train officers in central Oregon. The first night I had the opportunity to present a workshop to the entire camp. I had a great time doing it and I hope the chapter officers will bring those ideas back to their chapters. The next day I had the privilege to present two workshops, spend recreation time with the members and judge their annual rituals contest. That night I joined the state officer team and we did some cool skits. I even did an imitation of one of the coolest advisors I have ever met, Mr. Hill! I still



love you Mr. Hill! Now, the last morning scared me to death because it was time for the annual polar bear swim club meeting. For those of you who don't know what I am talking about, the camp meets at the dock of Lake Suttle the last morning of camp every year



and dives into the lake. Keep in mind we are in the mountains of Oregon. It was 38 degrees outside with snow on the ground and I am from Texas. Take a look at the cool snowy pictures I have attached to get an idea of how cold it was. Needless to say I took the plunge and am now a member of the Polar Bear Swim Club! I was very scared to do this and I had to go outside of my comfort zone. You know in life a lot of times we have to leave our comfort zones to reach our maximum potential. I wish I could mention everyone at the camp because I love you all. I had one of the best times of my life and almost cried when I had to leave. Thanks for having me in Oregon. Keep up the good work!

I flew from Oregon back to Dallas, Texas, so I could spend a few days at home working on stuff and hanging



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out with my uncle Bob. Last night I had the awesome opportunity to speak at the Mansfield FFA Banquet. Mansfield is right next to my hometown of Arlington. It is like my second home and FFA chapter. They have invited me to their meetings, banquets and officer camps for five years and have made me a part of their chapter. You all will never know the difference you have made in me, I wouldn't be here without you. Thanks to Mr. Whitson, Stephanie, Meagan, Mr. Stewart, Megan Shorter, (who almost broke her leg for me at national convention) and to everyone else there last night. I am proud to call myself a member of the Mansfield FFA Chapter! Over the next few weeks I challenge each of you to go outside of your comfort zone so that you can reach your maximum potential. You don't have to jump in a lake when it's freezing, but do something that challenges you to do reach your maximum potential. If I hadn't have jumped into that lake I would regret it for the rest of my life and not made the most out of my experience! STEP OUTSIDE OF YOUR ZONE! See you down the road.

**April 9, 2004**

**Where I will be next week: Indiana and Oregon**



Wow! This past week has been a fun and intense. After spending a week at home, I was headed off to Decatur, Illinois, for the Illinois Farm Bureau and Affiliates youth conference. The theme of the conference was, "Shape up: Leadership for the future" and it was one of the best conferences I have ever been apart of. The first day of the conference, Ryan, the Illinois FFA president and myself had the opportunity to take a picture with every person attending the conference. Shortly after the conference

began I had the opportunity to give the kick off speech. It was an awesome honor and I hope that the FFA members at the conference enjoyed it. The rest of the day was spent presenting workshops; there were fifteen workshops that FFA members could choose from. After some Ag. Olympics and dinner it was time for the big dance. I met an FFA Advisor named Mr. Wildman that I will never forget. He pumped up the students and really encouraged me to have fun as well. A big thanks you to Mr. Wildman for the entertainment and for teaching this Texas boy how you do it in Illinois. After the dance the Illinois FFA officer team: Ryan, Kenan, Bruce, Brian and Rachel, presented one of the best reflections that I have ever seen in my life. Thanks for motivating me and bringing a tear to my face. The next day we heard from awesome guest speakers and finished up with the workshops. One of the coolest things about this conference was not only its unique structure and intense leadership training, but also the awesome FFA members that I had the opportunity to meet. People like Tim, Laura, Chris, Shana and many others, thanks for a great time and unique experience. A big thanks to the Illinois





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Farm Bureau and Affiliates for giving FFA members these opportunities to become better FFA members and young people.

After a few airplane rides from Decatur, I arrived in Indianapolis for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers test pilot. It was awesome to get to spend a few days memorizing curriculum for the conference and sharpening my presenting skills. Spending a few days as a team was fun as well. It seems like every one of the officers is having a great

time right now going to state conventions and camps and meeting awesome young people from across the country. One night we even went on a scavenger hunt on the streets of downtown Indianapolis. After the intense days in Indianapolis, I was ready to head back to Texas to spend Easter with my family. I hope the end of the school years is going well for you and that you enjoy Easter with your family. Until next time, enjoy life and be thankful for everyday that we have to make a difference on this earth. If I can ever help, please let me know. See you down the road!

**March 23, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Texas**

Howdy! Man the past week has been awesome. I do not have enough words to describe how awesome my first state convention in Utah was. Honestly I was a little nervous on the long plane ride to Cedar City, Utah. As soon as I arrived my fears were erased when I saw the state officers waiting for me with a sign with my name on it stapled to Tiffany's shirt. From their on it was an awesome experience. That night all of the state officers, state staff and even some of the Arizona officers, went out to eat at Applebee's and we had a great night anticipating the convention. The first day of the convention was awesome. FFA members in Utah are just pumped up and excited to be in the blue and gold. I gave three workshops that day on the power of believing. The participation was great and I could not have done it without Weston, a member of the South Sevier FFA chapter who and helped all day. Later that night was the first annual Utah FFA talent night. Angela Browning and myself had the awesome opportunity to be the emcees for the night. The talent show went great and then it was followed by the first general session. I am in awe of the awesome group of officers that served the Utah FFA Association. Tiffany, Bill, Meagan, Cash, Sonyrisa and Todd; thanks for being good leaders and for an awesome year of service. Another cool thing that I had the opportunity to participate in was the "adopt a national officer" program. Every day a chapter would take me out and let me hang out with them and eat, which to a big guy like me is important. Thanks to the Dixie, South Sevier, Spanish Fork and Cedar FFA chapters. It meant a lot to hang out and learn from you and build friendships. The second day of the convention was another success. I had the honor of giving a keynote speech that night. I hope that the members got something out of it and enjoyed it. The last day was sad of course because it would all come to an end. It ended well, with a new group of state officers to lead the Utah FFA. Good luck and thank you so much for having me be a part of your convention. Also big thanks to the Cedar FFA chapter who took me on a tour of Zion national park and cooked me dinner before my plane left.



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Kacie thanks for you and your families hospitality. I left that night to go to Indianapolis for the spring training academy. This is where the BLAST Off, NLCSO and WLC presenters get together for training. Please know that you have an awesome group of presenters that are going to change a lot of lives this year. After two days in Indianapolis I went home, which I was quite excited about after a month and a half on the road. Remember to cherish your family and friends and be happy for all that we have in life! "Make an Impact, not Just an Impression"!

**March 1, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Pennsylvania**

Howdy! The past week I have been in the great state of Michigan celebrating FFA Week. When I arrived in Lansing to begin my exciting week, the Michigan FFA president Ryan Peterson and Mr. Hawes, the executive secretary, picked me up. I was fortunate to get to travel with Mr. Jim Armbruster, Local Program Success specialist for the National FFA. When we hit the ground, Mr. Armbruster, Ryan, Mr. Hawes and I went to Lowell High School to eat lunch and present a workshop. The teacher and students in Lowell were great and it was an awesome way to start the week. The first night I presented a workshop on agriculture to the Agricultural Education Club at Michigan State University. I was so impressed by the future ag. teachers I met that night. It was also great to see old and new friends like Scott, Kendra, Kara and all who attended. Over the next few days I saw some great FFA chapters, excited members and even went to a few places where the opportunity to grow is exceptional. One morning I visited the Mason FFA Sugar bush. It was cold outside but I was so impressed with how the students there knew how to collect and process maple syrup. Another highlight of the week was a workshop I put on at Alma High School. We were only expecting about 30 FFA members and over 100 FFA members showed up! One night I will never forget was the Corunna FFA chapter meeting. What an awesome chapter, great teacher (Mr. Forbush) and a pumped up group of FFA members. More than 75 percent of the chapter showed up for the meeting. They allowed me to give a speech and I chose to tell them about how I became involved in the FFA. The people attending that night pumped me up. Thanks for the awesome time. I also facilitated a round table meeting on strong urban agriculture programs at the Golightly FFA chapter. Thanks for your discussion and thoughts as we continue to build FFA programs all around the country. I also want to thank the Michigan FFA Officer team. You guys and girls helped me out so much during the week and I know you will do an awesome job at the state convention.

I wish that I had to time to talk about every experience that I had in Michigan. I was impressed by the hospitality and kindness of people over the week. Whether it was being on a farm radio show, meeting with legislators or being around pumped up FFA members, it was awesome to see first hand how the FFA is changing so many young peoples lives at the local level. I hope you had a great FFA week and realized how truly blessed we are. Keep up the great work at the local level and continue to spread the powerful message of the FFA! God Bless!

"To make an Impact, not just an Impression"



## **Casey Hogan**

# **National Officer Journal**

**Sunday February 22, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Michigan and Pennsylvania**

After our trip to Japan, I went back to Texas and spent a few days with my family and friends. Then it was time to embark on our first business and industry visits of the year! We flew in to Indianapolis to begin our training. We spent a couple of days at the FFA center and at Elanco Animal Health doing some business and industry visit preparations. Then it was off to Denver, Colorado, for our annual B and I kickoff celebration. When we arrived, the chairman of the National FFA Foundation Sponsors Board, Mr. John Rakestraw was our host for the weekend. It was a great weekend in the mountains. Mr. Rakestraw was very good to us. He took us out to nice restaurants and we toured the Rocky Mountain National Park. I have to say the highlight of the weekend was when we went skiing. Yes, this old Texas boy went skiing. It is like riding a bike, I remembered how to ski even though it had been many years. The biggest mistake was made when I thought I was cool enough to go on a black slope. BIG MISTAKE! It took fifteen minutes to get up Mount Everest and I was scared. I prayed the whole way to the bottom. But you have to take chances in life. It was fun.

The next week was spent in three different states doing B and I visits. Stacia Berry and I started in Memphis then went to Nashville for the Tractor Supply Company managers meeting. On Thursday night I flew to Moline, Illinois, for a Friday meeting with John Deere, our longest sponsor of the FFA. Christy and I had a great meeting with the executive team. We drove back to Indianapolis and I spent the weekend preparing for National FFA Week! How exciting, I will spend the entire week with the members of the Michigan FFA Association. Doing our B and I visits are really a unique experience because while it may seem we are not working with FFA members, we really are. Your national officers are speaking for you and thanking these sponsors for their dedication to the FFA. We could not do what we do without them. They make it possible. So I challenge you over the next week to find someone who helps out your FFA chapter and send them a card and thank them personally. They make the difference so that it's made in us. Take care and see you down the road!

“To make an Impact, not just an Impression”

**February 12, 2004**

**Where I'll be this week: Denver, Colo., Memphis, Tenn., Nashville, Tenn., and Moline, Ill.**

Howdy! I am still a little jetlagged as I write this. I just got back from an awesome trip to Japan! The National FFA Officer International Experience program was a once in a lifetime trip, which taught me so much and was a blast. We left Washington, D.C., on January 26 and had a 14-hour flight to Tokyo Narita airport. There our tour guide Hiro, who has been guiding the national officers for almost ten years, met us! The first five days of the trip we spent in Japan's largest city, Tokyo. Tokyo was a great place to begin our trip and learn about Japan's culture and people. One of the neat things we did was visit the Tokyo Fish and Vegetable Market. It was like nothing I had ever seen before; we even saw a live tuna auction. After the market we ate a wonderful sushi breakfast. It



## Casey Hogan National Officer Journal

sounds weird but I love sushi and even talked Stacia into going with me on another night. In Tokyo we also went to the headquarters of Mitsui, which is a trading company worldwide who sponsors our trip. Learning about their company was interesting and the opportunity to thank them for their support was one we all enjoyed. They taught us so much about Japanese agriculture and showed true hospitality. We spent two days doing farm tours, which provided a chance to hear straight from the producer on the relationship between the United States and Japan. Also while in Tokyo we visited the Nosan Agriculture High School. It was neat to see the differences between our high schools and theirs. The reaction that the students had to the officers was also an awesome feeling.

The next stop on our tour was to Kyoto. It is a really neat town. Back in the old days it was the capital of Japan and now is still the culture capital of Japan. We spent the whole day sightseeing at places such as Fijii Castle and the local religious temples. It was great to get a taste of their culture and lifestyle. While there we also visited a few Agriculture trading corporations. We even climbed onto a large ship that had just arrived from New Orleans full of imported corn. After a few days in Kyoto, we headed to one of the coolest parts of our trip, our host family visits. We took the local train all afternoon until we entered the Tajima region of Japan. Hiro told us that we would go to Tajima Agricultural High School as soon as we got there to be united with our host family. My family was the Narita's and they were great. My host mom and brother picked me up from school and even gave me a hug when we met. The hardest part about meeting them was that they knew very little English; it is so different when you cannot communicate verbally with someone. You have to learn how to us great non- verbal communication. When we got the house mom cooked me a huge beef and vegetable meal. She knew that this big Texan loves food and treated me right. The next day Yuuki and I went to school in the snow. It was very beautiful seeing the snowfall on the mountains, something we don't see too often in the south. Spending the day at the school was an experience. They had a reception for us and showed us the awesome agricultural facilities. That night Yuuki had some friends over and mom cooked a traditional Japanese dinner. We played Play Station, exchanged gifts, and I showed them pictures of Texas and my family. The host family visit was definitely an eye opening experience that proved to be the high light of the trip.

The last few days in Japan were spent in Japans second largest city, Osaka! There we go to do some shopping and look around this large city. It was definitely a sight to see, Japan has so many people in such a small place. The National Officer International Experience program was the greatest experience of my life. If you had told me four years ago I would be traveling around the world on behalf of this great organization I would have said you were crazy. That is the great thing about this organization: no dream is too small. These are the kind of experiences that the FFA offers, so take advantage of them. You can do anything you set your mind to, just never give up. If you would like more information about the trip to Japan please send me an e-mail or voicemail. I would love to tell you more about it or send you a Japanese postcard. This next week I will be in many places around this great country getting ready for Business and Industry visits. Remember, never give up and live it up, I believe in you.

"Make an Impact, not just an Impression"!



## Casey Hogan National Officer Journal

**Where I'll be this week: Japan**  
**January 26, 2004**

Howdy,

This past week has been a different one. On Jan. 16, I went home to Texas for a few days. It was great to get to rest for a few days and see my family. I left Texas for Washington, D.C., on January 20. It was a sad day because I heard about my friend, teammate and roommate, Javier's, accident. Javier is doing better, I really miss him, but I know he will be back soon. Please keep Javier in your thoughts and prayers. When we arrived in Washington, D.C., we began training for our upcoming trip to Japan and working on our state convention speeches. We also began preparing for the National FFA Board of Directors meeting. Last Thursday the members of the board and National FFA staff joined us in Washington to begin the board meeting. We had the awesome opportunity to eat lunch at the USDA with the Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jim Moseley. I had the awesome opportunity to introduce the Deputy secretary and eat lunch with him; he is a great man and a former FFA member. During the remainder of the board meeting, some big decisions were made for the National FFA Organization. It was an awesome honor to sit on the Board of Directors and make decisions for FFA members. You should feel proud to know that the adult members of the board care so much about this organization and what the members want and need. I am honored to serve with such an awesome group. Right now I am packing up for Japan. It is so exciting to know that I will be going there on behalf of FFA members and teaching them about the FFA and learning about the FFJ (Future Farmers of Japan) and Japanese Agriculture. This trip is about you, so if you would like a postcard from Japan please e-mail or call my voicemail; I would love to hear from you. See you down the road!

"Make an impact, not just an Impression"

**January 4, 2004**

**Where I will be this week: Georgia**

Howdy,

I hope your holiday season has been filled with family, fun and lots of good home cooking. Since I talked to you last I have been at home in the state of Texas. Seeing my family and friends was great. The holiday season always reminds me of how blessed we are to live in the greatest country in the world and be apart of the greatest organization on earth. I spent Christmas Eve with my mother, sister, uncle and the rest of the family and went to an awesome church service. Christmas day was spent with my other family, my girlfriend Kindra and her parents. Although officer training for three weeks was great, I must admit it was nice to be home for ten days.

Tomorrow we will begin our preparation for our upcoming trip to Georgia. There we will be going out as an officer team and giving speeches and workshops for the first time. It will be awesome to go out and meet the FFA members in Georgia. I challenge you over the next week to tell your family how much they mean to you. Cherish this time over the holidays. For it is because of our family and supporters that we can do the things we do. Have a very happy new year. Remember; **make an impact, not just an impression!**



## Casey Hogan National Officer Journal

**Where I'll be next week: Texas**  
**December 22, 2003**

Howdy,

How exciting it is to write my first journal entry! How exciting it is to be able to serve more than 464,000 FFA members over the next year. I want to take you back five years ago. At the beginning of my sophomore year in high school, I wasn't involved in anything and had no direction in my life. In a few short months, this magical ride we call the FFA, took that lost kid and gave him lifelong skills and confidence in himself. It changed my life and I owe everything I am today and everything I will be in the future to the FFA. I would have never believed in my wildest dreams I would be a National FFA Officer. I wasn't even supposed to be a chapter officer. But this is an organization for young people who believe. FFA members, never lose the belief. You can do anything you set your mind to. You may not win or accomplish your goal every time but you will be a better person for it.

I still remember the feeling when my name was called on November 1. I can promise you as I go through the year I will never forget that and give it everything I have.

Currently I am in Indianapolis at the National FFA Center for officer training. You should be blessed to know that you have an awesome National FFA officer team. Getting to know Anne, Stacia, Javier, Christy and Amy has been a true blessing. After convention we spent a few days together but over the past three weeks we have grown very close. After Christmas, we will be coming back here for a few days and then off to Georgia for experience training. I cannot wait to meet the awesome FFA members there.

A few days ago I heard someone say, "The FFA is the greatest secret in the United States." My friends, we cannot let the FFA be the greatest secret in the United States. There is too many young people like myself who need to hear the powerful message of the FFA. There are too many lives to touch. My challenge to you over the next few weeks is to find one young person and take a sincere interest in their life. Maybe it is the kid in the halls that no one notices, or it's the kid in the cafeteria that no one talks to. Find that one person and make a difference in their life. You can make the difference. God Bless.