



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

Where I'll be this week: Wisconsin

After a few days of catching up on rest and hanging out with friends at home, I was once again boarding a plane to Indianapolis. I was very fortunate to get to do one of my favorite things in the whole wide world when I was home-go to a Husker football game! My friends and I enjoyed cheering on the Big Red and getting a little too much sun. That evening, on my flight, the entire crew from ABC sports was on my flight, and even a referee! As I thought back to the game and all of the excitement in the stadium I couldn't help but think about how close the 77th National FFA Convention is, and how Freedom Hall will soon be packed with thousands of FFA members from across the country. I love this time of year as college football is in full swing, and plans for the national FFA convention are starting to take shape.

My teammates and I just came from our second planning meeting this week at the National FFA Center in Indianapolis. I am so excited for this year's convention as we celebrate our year of success. From working on our retiring addresses, writing session scripts and starting to memorize ceremonies, the week was a productive one. I hope everyone is pumped up to hear our keynote speakers-Joe Theismann, Scott Greenberg, Linda Larsen and Dave Roeber during the sessions, as well as visit the career show that is going to be bigger and better than ever. I can't wait to see you there, FFA members for what is going to be one unforgettable week!

Where I'll be this week: Nebraska and Virginia

Sitting in the Green Bay, Wisconsin, airport this afternoon my mind keeps going over the incredible week I just spent in America's Dairyland! I arrived on Sunday afternoon and was picked up at the airport by Michelle, a current state officer and drove to meet up with the rest of her teammates.

Nicole, Kelsey, Michelle, Gena, Tyler, Josh, Kristi, Dani, Danielle, Brandon, Jackie and Jake-thanks for an awesome week, and showing your true hearts in the way you serve the FFA members of Wisconsin. I know I will never forget the fun times we had! Mrs. Zimmerman, thank you also for your passion and dedication to agriculture education and the FFA. You are an extraordinary leader who is making a difference in students' lives. All too soon it was time to say goodbye and I am waiting to board a plane for home. I will be at home for a few days getting ready for convention before I head out to Virginia for their state leadership conference.

Where I'll be this week: Business and Industry Visits in New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Georgia

This has been a great few weeks of preparing for National Convention this October in Louisville, Ky. I started out the week by being picked up at the Minot, North Dakota, airport by my two crazy friends Paige and Amber Haugland, and we soon were headed to the Bloomin' Prairie ranch! Even though I only spent a few short days at the Haugland's I know I will never forget the good times we had. Riding horses, roasting marshmallows, shopping in Canada, and exploring an old one-room schoolhouse were



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

the highlights of my time spent with this incredible family. Thank you for your kind generosity and for making me feel so at home!

Later that week I met up with my teammates at the National FFA Center to start planning for National Convention. I had so much fun hanging out with Javi, Casey, Christy, Anne, and Stacia and we are all pumped for convention! We started to write our session scripts and brainstorm ideas for our retiring addresses. It is always fun to be at our second home this year-the National FFA Center, and get to catch up with the great people who work there.

While several of my teammates went home after our week of preparations, Javier, Christy and I stayed the weekend in Indianapolis because we were headed to Toyota on Monday for a visit. This year I have had the amazing opportunity to meet several companies and thank them for their support of the FFA, but Toyota will forever stick out in my mind. We toured their manufacturing plant, met with their top managers, and visited Holly Hill School all in one day! I have never been more impressed with a company and their philosophy of "continued improvement." Thank you Franklin Davis and Ms. Helen Carol for making the day a success!

I am sitting in the Cincinnati airport right now waiting to catch a plane back home to Nebraska for a few days. Then I will meet up with Christy to visit more sponsors of the FFA in New York City!

Where I'll be this week: Convention planning at the National FFA Center

What a week it has been in our nation's capital! My teammates and I, as well as state officers from across the country, had a blast Leading the Tradition at SPC 2004. Since the twenty-eight Olympiads are this summer my crazy teammates and I decided to open up the conference with stories of those "unsung" heroes that no one ever knows about at the Olympics. When Flusher Windpants, Inga, Doofy, Enrique, Dorie Anne Meriweather and Pistol all came together they realized their special talents to make something as traditional as the Olympics come to life. That's what the state officers who came to SPC learned about throughout the week. The many traditions that we have in the FFA all are made possible by each and every one of our own unique talents and abilities. Traditions such as Integrity, Service and Perseverance are just a few that we focused on while visiting numerous memorials in Washington, D.C. Being proud to be an American has never meant more to me as we told the stories of numerous soldiers and battles that have made our country what it is today. You should feel very proud FFA members of the state officers who came to SPC and truly put time and effort into making the best decisions for our delegates to vote upon in October at National Convention.

It was great seeing Grace and Marcus again from California, Kevin and Bre from Washington, Paige and Brooks from North Dakota, Amy and Stephen from Montana, Jessica and Teresa from Alaska, Heidi and Jon from Idaho, Brendan and Donovan from Wyoming, Wade and Cole from Oregon, Justin and Laura from North Carolina, and Melissa and Tory from Florida as well as many other rockstar officers I met at NLCOs. It was also cool to meet so many other state officers from around the country that are not only leading their own state's traditions, but they are creating new ones for FFA members in the future.

The week is definitely one I will not forget and is filled with memories. It was also fun to have my parents as well as my teammates parents and family join us for this awesome



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

week! Next my teammates and I have some home time before we meet up to start planning the 77th National FFA Convention.

Where I'll be this week: Team Retreat and National FFA Alumni Conference

I can't believe that NLCSOs are finished! The summer is flying by. From North Carolina I met up with my teammates in Indianapolis for the National FFA Board meeting. It was great to catch up with my teammates, and hear all about their NLCSO experiences, as well as see our friends from the Board and National FFA Center. It was also a special board meeting because it was the last for our chief operating officer-Mr. Bernie Staller. It was neat to watch and hear from Mr. Staller during this time. I don't think I have ever met a more humble man who is a true servant. I am very excited for our new chief operating officer, Mr. Doug Loudenslager, to take over the reigns and my teammates and I look forward to meeting with him.

After the Board meeting I flew to Phoenix, Arizona, for FFA Camp '04. This year's theme was very patriotic as it was planned around the big presidential election coming up in November. I loved hanging out with Jeff from Peoria, Rita, Sam and Luke from Willcox, Nicholas and Alethea from Baboquivari and Tawnee from Westwood.

One afternoon we played a mean game of volleyball during rec, and I was taught the proper way of playing horseshoes. I laughed my guts out at the talent show when there was special guest appearances by Kenny Chesney and Uncle Cracker. Way to go Brian and Koby!

All too soon I had to leave camp. Thank you members of Arizona FFA make me feel so welcome, and for living up to the potential that you all have. I can't wait to see you guys in Louisville!

Now I am with my crazy teammates at our team retreat. It has been great catching up, hanging out, laughing, and getting ready for the 77th national FFA Convention! I am excited to be headed to Omaha, Neb., for the National FFA Alumni Conference this weekend.

Where I'll be this week: Kelso, Washington-NLCSO

What a wonderful week it has been at my first NLCSO of the year! Cody, Wyoming, was the beautiful setting of this first conference where state officers from Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota brought to life what being a state officer is all about. I flew into the tiny Cody airport to be greeted by my good friend and presenting partner, Casey. We took off on an adventure up the mountain in our little rental car to one of the most incredibly beautiful places I have been to in our great country. We stopped several times along the road to take pictures, as we were as high up as the clouds! We made it to the campsite and began to unpack for a "magical" week. The theme of NLCSO this year is "Create the Magic," and these state officers did just that as we discovered what the magic of serving this year is really all about. The Wyoming crew of Brendan, Donovan, Clayton, Whitney, Jessie, Kelsey, Kalyn, Chrissy and Joslyn taught me that true teamwork is when we become selfless servants. Thanks for showing your passion and enthusiasm for the FFA, and showing your true hearts in your desire to serve the members.



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

The officers from Montana-Stephen, Andy, Amy, Matt, Hailey, Josh and Jason impressed me by their ability to always have a positive outlook, and not be afraid to try new things this year. I am excited for the Montana FFA members who get to see you all in action!

Brooks, Wade, Paige, Aaron, Jon, Rebecca and Stephanie -the crazy kids from North Dakota who never failed to bring a smile to my face with their easygoing personalities, and quick-witted humor! Thanks for letting me tag along on the ropes course, I haven't laughed that hard in a long time! Sorry Aaron for making you hold the rope for forever! Thanks Paige and Wade for getting up with me at 5:00a.m. to ride horses, and see the most gorgeous sunrise! Even though you all have not been elected for that long, I was impressed by the way you came together and really bonded as a team. I know that FFA members across your state are going to love you all, and catch the enthusiasm that you all have for the FFA. They are blessed to have you serving them.

Thank you to these awesome state officers, state staff, and camp staff who made my first NLCSO such a blast, and a time that I will always remember. Have a great rest of the summer!

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." –
Hebrews 11:1



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

Where I'll be this week: Charlotte, North Carolina-NLCSO

"The greatest leader is a servant of all." –John Maxwell

The Pacific Northwest NLCSO got kicked off with a bang when five state officer teams gathered in beautiful Kelso, Washington. My partner Casey and I were both fortunate to fly in a few days early and get to take in some of the sites. On Saturday the wild and crazy crew from WA kindly took us up to see Mt. St. Helens. It was breathtaking-both from the fantastic view, and from being short of breath as we hiked up to the top! I had a blast road tripping with these hilarious officers and thanks for an awesome day!

The conference began Monday as we dove into what it truly means to be high performing teams and how chapter visits can be the most effective. I was again impressed by the officers that we had there. The stars from California showed me what coming together as team really looks like as they displayed their many talents and abilities throughout the week. The love that you all have for each other is obvious to anyone, and I know that you will do great things this year serving CA FFA members because each and every one of your hearts is definitely in the right place. Keep shining!

I had a blast laughing with the gang from Oregon-Wade, Braden, Cole, Brittany, Jared, and Lindsey thanks for keeping the conference upbeat and lively! Thanks for giving your best effort in being willing to learn to better serve your members. I know you will accomplish great things.

The spuds from Idaho were so much fun! I truly enjoyed getting to know Heidi, Tyler, Jessie, George, Becky, and Josh. I was impressed by your hard work ethic, and determination to see that this year is the best ever for the members. I have no doubt that you all will accomplish the goals that you set because of your willpower.

Rounding out the rowdy crowd were the Northerners from the great state of Alaska! Thank you for showing me the power of teamwork as you came together and really made a game plan for your year of service. The members of Alaska are so lucky to have you serving them, and I have confidence that you will go above and beyond all of the goals that you set this week!

I am pumped to see the growth that these state officers have already begun to experience, and how they so selflessly serve their associations. If you are a member in WA, OR, CA, ID, or AL get excited to meet and get to know these awesome people who are your state officers this year. They are simply the best!

Where I'll be this week: Board of Directors meeting in Indianapolis, IN

Charlotte, North Carolina was the site for my third and final NLCSO. Let me just tell you that I have never had as much fun as I did this week hanging out with the state officers from Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina. All week long I was super impressed by everyone's willingness to learn, and cheerful attitude.

I am still laughing over the many Saturday Night Live impersonations made by the crew from North Carolina, as well as recovering from the heart trauma that the pranksters from South Carolina pulled on me! You all got me good! I had a blast with the gang from Florida, and it was so cool to see how much you all have grown already



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

since I saw you get elected in June. Each of these teams have incredible talents that I have no doubt will be used to serve the members fantastically this year. Thank you for an awesome week, and for teaching me what true teamwork is all about. You are all rock stars in my book!

Casey and I headed out for the Board of Directors meeting in Indianapolis this weekend. I am looking forward to catching up with my teammates!

Where I'll be this week: Cody, Wyoming-NLCSO

My last state convention could not have been in more dynamic setting as I was in the Hoosier state of Indiana celebrating their 75th year! On the campus of Purdue University, FFA members from across Indiana gathered together to compete, and be recognized for their accomplishments this past year.

At the first general session, I met awesome members from the Rensselaer chapter. Sara, Lindsay, Jaime and Liz, I had so much fun getting to know you and hanging out with you several times during convention. You girls are the best! I also enjoyed getting to know the Carroll at Fort Wayne chapter, seeing my friends again from the Western Boone chapter-Heather, Sara and Roger, as well as my friends from Star Academy that I met in December.

That evening I had the privilege of attending the Stars of Indiana awards banquet and sat with Joe and Mark from the Tri Country FFA chapter. Sitting with your families and advisor was a highlight of convention. You both should feel very proud of the great accomplishment you both achieved. At the session that night I had fun meeting the Adams Central crew as well as the Liberty FFA chapters. That night Indiana FFA members boogied on down at the dance after the session. I had a good time with the girls from Bloomfield, and chatting with Gene from Hamilton Heights.

The next morning I had a blast meeting tons of pumped up FFA members at my leadership workshop. Thanks for your participation and respect, as we were all able to learn together! That afternoon I had a good laugh at the members, advisors, state staff and state officers who were brought on stage to go under hypnosis. From watching a live performance from country music star, Kenny Chesney, to hearing State President Shane Hageman talk like Bugs Bunny at the close of session it was a hilarious afternoon!

That evening FFA members were brought to their feet by the wise words of keynote speaker, and Indiana native, Mr. Scott McCain. Thank you for teaching us the importance of developing habits that build us up as leaders. Your example touched many lives, and I am honored to have heard your powerful message. I was very fortunate to meet the Mt. Vernon crew before the session for supper, as well as sit with these wonderful members during the session. Sara, Tara, Suzanne, Morgan, Justin and Kyle thank you for showing me true hospitality, and welcoming me so warmly. Thank you also for the bold example in the way you serve your friend Justin everyday, and friendships that you all have. I am so proud of your character and integrity, and the FFA is in good hands with you as our future leaders. Another outstanding Mt. Vernon member is Andrew who showed us his musical talent that evening as he played his dobro on stage.

All week I have been so impressed by the standard of excellence that Indiana FFA stands for. You all have a lot to be proud of with your 75th anniversary, and your continued dedication to success. The state officers did an outstanding job leading us in



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

this celebration-Shane, Jessica, Micah, Tim, Mikki, Michael and Amber, you all truly exemplify servant leaders. I feel so honored to have spent this incredible week with you at state convention, and I look forward to seeing your legacy live on in the lives of Indiana FFA members.

All too soon convention came to an end and I boarded a plane for Cody, Wyo., to start NLC SO for the newly elected state officers from Wyoming, North Dakota, and Montana. I am excited to head out west!

Where I'll be this week: Indiana State Convention

After arriving a little later than I had hoped because of flight delays, I finally made it to the Florida State FFA Convention in Orlando! What a fabulous week it was! Even though I was only at convention for two days, I had the time of my life hanging out with the wild and crazy members of Florida!

At the evening session I met the Southeast Manatee chapter, Cole and Ryan from the South Sumter chapter, as well as Lauren and Kayla from the Plant City chapter. Later that evening I hung out with the Lafayette and Pine Ridge chapters as I learned all about Florida agriculture. Thanks for enlightening me fellas on alligators and frog giggin', and other fun sport hunting that goes on in Florida.

That night FFA members showed me what having a good time is all about, when the ballroom was packed with FFA members showing their stuff and dancing it up! Thanks to Aaron and the Coral Reef chapter who taught me how to salsa! I had a blast dancing with my good friend Kenik and the girls who were attending their first ever FFA dance. Throughout the week Kenik and I were able to hang out some more during the sessions. I am so excited for you to be starting out in FFA, and the passion that you have already will make the next four years be some of the very best. Thanks for including me and making me feel so welcome while I was in Florida. I hope I get to see you and your chapter again at national convention. It was also great to meet Waurice, the past state president from Puerto Rico. We had fun getting to know each other and telling jokes about our good friend, Javier. It was also such a blessing to see many friends I have not seen in two years-Ellie, Sorrel, Melissa and Amanda, the Florida girls of ILSSO as I so fondly remember! It was fun to see how life has been treating you, and to catch up on the past two years.

Another cool aspect of convention was the first ever-state choir. These talented individuals did an amazing job of getting everyone pumped up before the sessions, keeping us entertained during the sessions, and raising the level of energy and enthusiasm by your smiling faces and beautiful voices! Way to set the standard of excellence for future state convention choirs!

Convention would not have been the huge success that it was without the eight phenomenal state officers who put in countless hours of preparation. Jordan, Erica, Amy, Laura, Kris, Aaron, Gina and Stephanie-you all "Created Your Legends" this week by displaying leadership, character and dedication to the success of Florida FFA members. I am so proud of each and every one of you, and I feel honored to be a part of your convention where lives were truly touched because of your example. You should feel very proud of the year of service you gave, and impact you had. I want to wish the new state officer team-Melissa, Tori, Erin, Hunter, Alonda, Hope, Evalea and Jenna the



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

best of luck for this amazing year! I look forward to seeing you all again at NLCSO soon. After convention I was blessed to spend some time with one of my favorite friends in the whole world-Miss Emily Hand. I first met Emily on a trip to Europe two years when we were state officers. Ever since then I have been impacted by her caring heart, genuine love for people, and deep faith. A simple thank you is not enough to express how much I enjoyed our time at the beach soaking in the sun, and just getting caught up on each other's lives. The Lord has truly blessed me with this great friend, and I can only hope to become half the woman of grace that she is.

Next I am off to the 75th Indiana State Convention at Purdue University!

Where I'll be this week: Florida State Convention

I arrived in Springfield, Illinois, home of our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln; to celebrate the 76th Illinois state FFA convention. I was greeted at the airport by five of the coolest cats I know-the state officer team! The week kicked off with tremendous excitement and enthusiasm as almost 3,500 FFA members from across Illinois came to be a part of convention. The theme of convention was "Shaping America's Future." Over the next few days I saw first hand that Illinois FFA members are positively shaping our future in more ways than one.

During the kickoff session I met the Putnam County chapter who proved to me that this convention was going to get a little rowdy. We cheered with the rest of the audience during awesome convention videos, spectacular talent on stage, and the atmosphere that made this convention one of a kind. Later that afternoon I met the Orion chapter as we waited for CDE results, as well as the crew from Hillsboro at their fantastic booth display of the success of their chapter. Mr. Neihaus, Jennifer and Jennifer, Rochelle, Robert, and Aaron keep up the good work. Congratulations on all of your success at state and I can't wait to see you in Louisville this fall!

The next day the excitement continued with another jammed packed day of convention. After a Starbucks run with Jessica, a district 9 officer, I had the privilege of meeting the Payton chapter at my afternoon workshop as well as Heather and Dorothy from Newton. You two are the sweetest! It was awesome to chat with Dane afterward about his goal of winning the public speaking contest, and his hopes for this new year of being the new Section 21 president. Thanks for showing me your true heart Dane, and for caring so much about the FFA. The Lord has blessed you with amazing talent that I know you will use to go far.

Later that evening I attended one of the craziest FFA dances I have been to yet! Thousands of FFA members met up at the state fairgrounds to shake our groove things and relax from the busy day of convention. I had a blast hanging out with the wild and crazy members of IL FFA, and also seeing Mr. Wildman getting down with his bad self on the dance floor! All too soon I had to leave convention early, but the memories I made will last a lifetime. To the state officers who put an enormous amount of time and energy into making this the best IL state convention ever, I am so proud of you for the impact you made on thousands of members this year.

Ryan-Your leadership talents will take you far in life, and I feel honored to have gotten to know you better this year. You have served your teammates and the members with tremendous poise, confidence, and selflessness. You should feel proud of the way you served as president, and the role model that you are for many members.



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

Bruce-Thanks for giving 110 percent to the members this year. Without a doubt I know that you have positively impacted the members because of your hard work ethic, caring personality, and determined spirit. Always go for the "Hole in One!"

Rachel-You are a person who knows what the true meaning of servant leadership is all about. This year you left your legacy as being a woman of strong character, professionalism, and sincerity. I admire your perseverance and determination to always give your time and energy to the members. Way to keep the guys in line!

Brian-Your easygoing attitude, and great sense of humor is what FFA members have been drawn to all year. Your heart of serving them each and every day this year speaks volumes about your integrity and character. Continue to share that message with those you meet. Thanks for making me feel so welcome, and for sharing your heart with the members.

Kenan-What a blessing it has been to get to know you this year. You are truly an individual who has made a profound impact on members all across IL because of your huge heart and willingness to serve. The Lord has given you many talents and abilities, and it will be fun to see where He leads you next!

I had a blast hanging out with the 25 district presidents throughout the week, and you guys will always go down as being the best! To the newly elected district presidents and major state officer team of Casey, Cliff, Shana, Becky and Rich- best of luck in this awesome year that awaits you. I feel honored to have met you all, and seen the impact that you are all making on the members. Remember that it is now your role to continue to shape America's future by your example of leading Illinois FFA this next year.

I am headed to the Sunshine state of Florida for what I am sure to experience another exciting convention!

Where I'll be this week: Illinois State Convention

The Connecticut state FFA convention was a fabulous event! I flew in to Hartford late Friday evening and was picked up by Jessica, a past state officer. The next morning started the day of celebration for hundreds of Connecticut FFA members. I had the privilege of meeting one of Connecticut's teachers of the year-Mr. Davenport from Woodbury. I enjoyed hearing about his exciting trip to the White House and meeting President Bush. Way to be an advocate for agriculture education and the FFA! I also met some of his lovely female students who put together a phenomenal yearbook for their chapter. I am always so amazed and impressed at the wide range of talents that FFA members possess!

It was great to meet the crew from the Killingly chapter at lunch-Shane, Sonya and Shanna. Thanks for making me feel so at home and welcome at convention. Throughout the day I continued to meet the wonderful members of Connecticut. Dillon thanks for your friendly personality, and caring heart. I don't think I have met a more enthusiastic FFA member yet! I wish you the best of luck as you try for American Idol-I know you can do it.

After the fun filled day of convention we headed to state officer Steven's grandmothers home for some supper and a mean game of Ultimate Frisbee. Now, I have to admit that it was my first time ever to play this way fun game, and I still apologize to my team-"Steven and the Ladies" for my lack of talent in this sport! It was fun playing with the



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

state officers-Fred, Mindy, Steven, Missy, Shannon and Gina; the visiting state officers-Tim from Massachusetts, and Sean from New Hampshire, as well as my fellow teammates Kelly, Michelle, Vicki, Jon and Sarah. Even though our team didn't end up winning, I had a blast playing with my new found friends, and hope to teach more members the fun game of Ultimate Frisbee!

Before my flight took off the next morning Fred, Tim, Sean, Steven, Jen (past state president from New Jersey), and myself all drove to Mystic, Conn., to see the fabulous Aquarium. I enjoyed hanging out with this fun group of people for the day, and I loved my first taste of the restaurant-Friendly's.

Thank you to Mr. Natusch and Mr. Kane; state advisors for the dedication to student success that you both have, to the talented state officer crew who put lots of hours into preparing this day of celebration, and to the wild and crazy FFA members in Connecticut who truly made this convention a memorable one! I am excited to be headed to the 76th Illinois state convention next!

Where I'll be this week: Nebraska

It has been great to be back at home this past week seeing family and friends, and catching up on some sleep! I flew home from Texas and spent a few days catching up on paper work, sleeping, playing with my new little nephew Cade, and sleeping some more. On Friday, my parents, my brother Mark, his girlfriend Michelle, my little brother Adam and I road tripped out to Colorado for my cousin, Rich's graduation from high school. It was so much fun seeing all of my cousins, aunts and uncles that I haven't seen in a long time.. It was especially fun to have my cousin Craig ride home with us, and hear about the race that he had just won. Craig has Williams Syndrome and has been mentally handicapped since birth. The race he won was the 100-meter dash at the Special Olympics as he competed for Team Nebraska. Craig has always had a special place in all of my family's hearts, and we have never been more proud of him!

On the way home I was dropped off at The Leadership Center in Aurora, Neb.. Here I was coming to what I knew would be a good time at COLT #2! COLT stands for Chapter Officer Leadership Training, and almost 200 chapter officers came to this session to gain leadership skills, and learn more about the office that they had recently been elected too. COLT is something that is truly special to me. Coming as a chapter officer in high school, leading groups when I was a state officer, and organizing the conference as an intern for two summers is why I have so many fond memories! It was great to see the three amigas-Donnie, Amber and Becky as they have been working hard to make sure that this year's COLT is the best ever. You three rock my world, and thanks for making new memories with me where we laughed our guts out!

The state officers did an outstanding job of presenting, leading, and making an impact on the members. Anita, Lauren, Shelly, Pam, Abbie, Philip and Jon-you are seven amazing individuals who have the potential to do great things this summer. Keep up the good work for the final sessions of COLT, and best of luck with both session of PEAK. I am so proud of you!

It was great to see many members whom I have met before, and to meet many for the first time. It was great to see Kelsey again from Franklin and hear what she has been up to since state convention. I hope you won your softball game girl! It was fun seeing Mike



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

again from St. Edward, and hearing about his dream to run for state office. Mike thanks for having a great attitude all week, and for not giving me too much grief! I had a blast getting to know Peter from Butte, and hearing that he competes in the Special Olympics too. I am excited for his year ahead as a chapter officer, as he helps to lead his chapter. I could write about so many more members who I saw again, and met for the first time, but it would be a never-ending process! I had fun eating at the banquet with the Southwest chapter, and eating meals with Creighton, Pender, North Bend, Stuart, and West Holt. Thank you to all the members at COLT #2 for making my time back home so much fun. I know you will do a fabulous job leading your chapters this year. I can't wait to see you all at national convention!

Where I'll be this week: Nebraska COLT conference

What a week I have had in Texas and Washington! My teammates and I flew into College Station, Texas, to begin preparing for four days of presenting the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) to the agricultural development class at Texas A&M University. The beginning of the week was filled with practicing with my partner, your very own western region vice-president; Casey Hogan, and setting up our room for when students arrived. I am so excited to present three NLCSO's this summer with Casey in Wyoming, Washington, and North Carolina.

On Wednesday I boarded a plane out of College Station to beautiful Spokane, Wash. Here I met up with Adam and Ryan, two visiting state officers from my home state of Nebraska, and we rented a really cool SUV to take us to the Washington State University campus in Pullman. This is where convention was being kicked off. Upon arrival I met the very talented state officer crew of Joe, Ben, Laura, Eric, Candice and Anne. It was great to see Anne again after meeting her the first time at the Oregon state convention. These six amazing individuals made me feel right at home. All of their hard work paid off in a very successful convention. Thanks guys for giving your best to the members of WA FFA!

Thursday I had the privilege of judging the Extemporaneous Speaking contest. This event brought back many memories of when I participated in this same contest, and the nervous feeling I always get when giving a speech. On the walk over to the contest I met Ashley and Mr. Mounts. They helped direct me where to go. I enjoyed hearing about their chapter, and the successful year that they have had. Thank you for helping me find the contest on time! Before the contest started I had fun meeting some of the speakers such as Miguel and Namina from Ferndale. I know that you both did wonderful because of your hard work in preparing.

After the contest it was time for lunch. I met up with hundreds of FFA members as we ate at the cafeteria. Thank you to the Willapa Valley FFA chapter for letting me join you, and for telling me more about the diverse state of Washington. That evening kicked off the first session of convention, and WA FFA members showed excitement and enthusiasm by making some noise! It was great to meet for the first time, and reconnect with the visiting state officers too; Jessica from Alaska, Katie and Trent from Idaho; Dan, Shannon, and Shannon from Oregon, and the boys from Nebraska. It was also fun to see Seth Heinert, past national officer, and catch up on what he has been doing since national convention. All too soon I had to catch a flight back to College Station. Thank you Ms. Hadaller, the state officer crew, and WA FFA members for making my short time



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

at your convention so much fun! I look forward to meeting the new state officers at NLCSO this summer!

I arrived back in College Station Friday evening, and on my flight was a past national officer from Texas-Fred McClure! I was so excited to meet him, visit with him about what he is doing now, and how the FFA shaped him as a leader. I met back up with my teammates, and we did some last minute preparations before meeting our students in the morning. The students that Casey and I had were the best I could have asked for, even if they did hiss at me for being a Nebraska Cornhusker! Thanks to my class for teaching me some of the Aggie traditions, and for showing the pride that you all have for the Maroon and White. The experience I had at A&M is one that I will never forget. It was great to have the opportunity to practice the conference, but more importantly the friendships that I made in Aggieland has truly made this a highlight of my year. Thank you Dr. Chris Townsend for inviting us to come, and for giving us this awesome experience. Gig 'Em Aggies!

Where I'll be this week: College Station, Texas and Pullman, Wash.

“There is a time for everything, and a season for everything.”-Ecclesiastes 3:1

Wow, a lot has happened over the past few weeks! I received some exciting news when I was out on the road. My brother, Matt, called to tell me that there was a new addition to our family, and that I was an aunt! Cade Matthew is the newest Rasmussen, and I may be a little biased, but he is super cute. I was able to be home for a few days to hold him and spoil him all that I could the week after he was born. It definitely will be an exciting change for our family.

On Wednesday I flew to Owensboro, Kentucky, to meet the Apollo and Daviess County FFA chapters. I cannot express how much fun I had over the next two days hanging out with these incredible chapters. Their banquets were Thursday evening. I was blown away by the size of the Apollo chapter, as they almost have more FFA members than there are people in my whole hometown. Mr. Matt Baker picked me up at the airport, and we were off to Apollo high school to help prepare the meat for the BBQ meal at the banquet. Now, I had heard of Owensboro being famous for their BBQ, but I didn't realize that I was in the BBQ capital of the world. Needless to say, I ate lots of yummy food while I was there, including some new things I have never had before such as BBQ mutton, and Burgoo. If you ever want to have some tasty BBQ, go to the Mecca in Owensboro-you won't be disappointed!

On Wednesday night, members from Apollo and Daviess County, as well as Owensboro Catholic, who is chartering their chapter this year, met up at the famous Moonlight restaurant. It was fun meeting members from these three dynamic chapters, as well as the ag teachers who are truly making an impact on their students. Mr. Story, Mr. Tucker and Mr. Morgan, the instructors at Apollo, do an amazing job of leading their 400+ member chapter. I also had the privilege of getting to know Mr. Story's wife, Linda, as she gave me the grand tour Owensboro, and took me to see another first in my life, tobacco being planted in a setter. This Nebraska girl was sure educated on the agriculture of tobacco while in Kentucky. Mrs. Story is a past national president of the Alumni Council, and the passion she has for the FFA shines through her. Thank you so



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

much for your kindness, and making my time in Owensboro so much fun. Mr. Askins, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Smith are doing a wonderful job at Daviess County, and it was fun to see your program firsthand.

The Apollo officers did a great job in decorating and organizing their banquet. Congrats to Andrew Osborne and his officer team for a job well done! I also had the privilege of going to the Daviess County banquet earlier in the evening. Keith Nash and his officer crew did a wonderful job in getting everything ready for their special night. I wish both of these fantastic chapters the best of luck at state convention next month. All too soon it was time to say goodbye to my new friends in Owensboro, but I want to thank them for the kindness in making me feel so at home, the outstanding BBQ, and the fun times at the bowling alley after the banquets. I can't wait to see you all again this fall at the FFA national convention.

After a short day and a half spent at home seeing baby Cade again, I boarded a plane bound for College Station, Texas. It has been such a blast seeing the whole team again, as we are getting ready for NLC SO! The Lord has blessed me with my teammates, and I don't think I have stopped laughing since we all got in yesterday. Tomorrow I am headed to the Washington State FFA Convention. I am so excited to go back to the Pacific Northwest, and meet the members of the Washington FFA.

Where I'll be this week: Kentucky

OH-IO! That's right. I have just spent the past few days in the buckeye state of Ohio at the 76th state FFA convention. I was excited to be a part of this week of celebration, as well as witness the pride and love that my good friend and teammate Miss Anne Knapke has for her beloved state! I flew into Columbus late Thursday evening and was picked up by past state officers Tracey Kitchel, Matt Smith and Sara Myers. We drove to the hotel and unloaded our luggage only to find out that we were at the wrong hotel for the week! After much laughter and some phone calls we loaded our stuff back up and drove to the right hotel where I met up with your wild and crazy Eastern Region Vice President, Anne Knapke. It was so great to catch up on each other's lives as we stayed up late laughing and talking.

The next morning I presented a workshop in the Ohio FFA Center. It was great meeting the crews from Wayne Trace, Hiland, Versailles and Miami East. We had a great time together, and thank you for making the morning so much fun with your participation! That afternoon kicked off the convention with the opening session where the talented Lindsay Calhoun, State FFA President, led us all in Living the Legacy. Throughout the afternoon I sat with Brian and Kensley during the session and we laughed at the keynote speaker, Mr. Sam Glenn. Later that evening I was with the Eastwood crew of Sarah, Cortney, Megan and Kelly as we were inspired by the keynote address of Ohio's own national officer.

I kicked off my Friday with another workshop where I met Josh and David who shared with the group some awesome ways to start living their lives as leaders. For lunch I had the privilege of eating pizza with the Talawanda-Butler Tech FFA chapter just before the last session started. Thank you Mr. Z and FFA members for the lunch and laughter. During the last session I gave a brief greetings where I saw just how much pride these Ohio fans have when I called out OH, and was blown away at the response of IO I received! After spending a few days with Ohio FFA members, I certainly was catching



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

the enthusiasm and excitement that these members showed throughout the week! For the rest of the session I sat with the Cory-Rawson FFA where I met Megan and her boys-Nathan, Craig, Brent and Charles. We had a blast cheering on Paul who was in the choir, as well as laugh at the stories of the drive down to convention. Thanks Cory-Rawson for making me feel so welcome in your chapter. I hope to see you all again at national convention! I also enjoyed meeting Eric during this last session where we discussed the last good book that he had read, and he told me about his SAE project. I can't wait to see you again this fall too Eric!

Soon, after the last session, I said goodbye to all the new friends I had met that week, as well as the ones I had the opportunity to catch up with. It was great seeing Meredith from Mississippi again, and hearing about her year as a state officer so far. Best of luck with state convention Meredith. Know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. It was great seeing so many past state officers that I had traveled to Europe with on ILSSO two years ago, and catching up on their lives as well. My time spent in the Buckeye state was one that I will not soon forget, and congratulations to the state officers, and Ohio FFA members who had a very successful week!

April 30, 2004

Where I'll be this week: Ohio state convention

Lights, Camera, Action! On Monday morning I flew into Nashville, Tenn., for a very unique opportunity. That evening my teammate, the crazy Puerto Rican, Javier, my mentor, Mr. Tony Small, and myself were going to be on the first ever FFA Live broadcast on RFD-TV! That afternoon I checked into the nicest hotel I have ever been to in my life. The Gaylord Opryland hotel and convention center is 52 acres under one roof, and it is spectacular! I wish I could have spent some more time exploring the fabulous city of Nashville, and have decided that I will just have to come back to take in all of the sites! After checking in and eating a quick lunch with Mr. Small I met up with our hosts for the evening Mr. Orion Samuelson and Mr. Patrick Gottsch. Mr. Samuelson is a legendary farm broadcaster my whole family has listened to on the radio while I was growing up. I feel very honored to have met Mr. Samuelson, and be a part of this event promoting the FFA.

We picked up Javier at the airport and made our way over the studio. After a brief tour, Miss Janie took each of us backstage for hair and makeup. It fun to see how the movie stars live. It was also fun to meet some Tennessee FFA members who drove down to watch the shoot live. Ashley, Josh, Casey, David and Grayson thanks for driving down, and for calling in to ask us questions. Grayson, I hope that your state convention went well this week!

The show was a lot of fun to be on, and it was a success because of the FFA members and supporters who called in from across the country. I want to thank Mr. Gottsch and RFD-TV for inviting the FFA to have this unique opportunity that is going to be repeated several times before the national FFA convention this fall. Also FFA members this year at National Convention RFD-TV is going to be broadcasting live each session! Mr. Max Armstrong, and Orion Samuelson will be the hosts that provide live feedback from the 77th National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY. This is exciting for those across the country who are unable to attend to still see the convention live. Tune in to RFD-TV for future FFA broadcasts!



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

Where I'll be this week: Washington, D.C., and Nashville, TN

The 76th Missouri State FFA Convention has truly been one of the highlights of my year thus far! After a whirlwind day of being photographed, modeling the new FFA apparel that will be coming out this fall (a hilarious event with my teammates), I boarded a plane headed to Columbia, Missouri. A very good friend, Miss Crystal Matthews, picked me up at the airport-. We loaded up my stuff and drove to the hotel and settled in for the week. We then headed to the Hearnes Center on the University of Missouri campus, where we were to meet the state officers. . Now, being a huge Cornhusker fan I knew going into Tiger country would be a dangerous place...especially since they beat us in football this year! Shortly after meeting with all of the officers, and introducing myself to Dr. Brown, the executive secretary, I was given a black and gold Mizzou T-shirt that was to be worn immediately. Sorry Husker fans, I was definitely not able to sport my red for the week!

Wednesday evening I was able to be a part of a very cool tradition. The entire officer team, as well as their state staff leaders, ate dinner on the main convention stage. It was so cool to look out over the empty seats, and know that in 24 hours they would all be filled with the great FFA members of Missouri! Thursday morning I presented two workshops in the Tigers practice gym, and it was great to meet the crew from the Oran and Grundy chapters. During my second workshop, Jeremy and the girls from Kansas City East livened up the crowd with their dance moves! I also enjoyed meeting all the members throughout the day in between sessions like the Potosai chapter, and talking with Seth, Tyler and DJ. I also hung out with Brandon Hayes of the McDonald County FFA chapter as we talked about what we want to do in the future. It was great meeting Andi Krummel from the Senaca chapter, as well as Tyler Jackson in my second workshop. Thanks guys for your participation and insight to the group.

Another cool part of the Missouri convention was the career show that was set up. It was amongst the crowd of blue jackets that I caught up with my good friend Joe Tvrdy from Cameron, and had the opportunity to meet his dad and brother in my workshop later that afternoon. I first met Joe when I was a state officer three years ago at a leadership camp in Nebraska. His uncle is an ag teacher in Nebraska, and every summer Joe comes to camp. It was great to catch up with him at his home convention, and see how much he has grown as a leader. It was great to see my good friends and past state officers, Erica Coble and Ben Marshall as well. That is one of the coolest parts about the FFA-meeting people at one conference or convention, staying in contact over phone or e-mail, and seeing them again down the road and catching up! The good Lord has truly blessed me in being a part of the FFA family.

All week long I was able to hang out with 14 amazing individuals. The state officers did a fantastic job. I was so impressed with their passion, enthusiasm and love for the FFA. Gina, Nicki, Brook, Heather, Chase, Brian, Ryun, Jesse, Blake, Casey, Allison, Rachel, Marin and Sara-congratulations on a very successful state convention. Thank you for your kindness that you showed me throughout the week. I know that you all left your legacy with the members through your year of service to them, and you will continue to Shine On! I wish the new state officer team nothing but the best as you begin this new and exciting journey.



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

Where I'll be this week: Indianapolis and Missouri state convention

It was great to be back in the “good life” this past week as I spent the week at the Nebraska State Convention! My good friend, Amber, picked me up at the airport and we went back to her apartment where I caught up with some of my state officer teammates-Andy, Jonie and Jon- at their Bible study. I drove home later that night, and spent the next few days at home with my family. It was such a blessing to hang out with all three men in my life-my brothers-as we kept a close watch on all of the new calves being born, as well as some NCAA basketball. I even played my little bro Adam in a game of hoops. and I am proud to say that he still can't take his big sister on the court! I am excited to be an aunt soon, as my brother Matt and his wife Cari, are in the hospital right now anxiously awaiting the arrival of their first baby. My mom calls to give me updates everyday while I am on the road! I am hoping they have the little champ by Easter, so I will get to see it for a day!

On Wednesday I drove down to Lincoln to get ready for the Nebraska state convention. This was such special time for me as I saw so many good friends, and met many new ones throughout the week. I started out the week getting caught up with the fabulous state officer crew-Jill, Becky, Megan, Miranda, Ryan, Beau and Adam. They were practicing hard for each session. Later that afternoon I picked up my good friends from California, Dane White and Jeff Alves, as they were coming to Nebraska to present our Leadership Academy. That night I laughed my guts out at the opening session and hypnotist show! Becky, truly showed her “rockstar” status with her big 80s hairdo, and Miranda kept the crowd laughing with her antics on stage as she was hypnotized. Before the show started I met two of the sweetest girls from the Medicine Valley FFA chapter. I sat next to Georgia, who was completely hypnotized for the whole show! Thank you Georgia and Medicine Valley for making my first night of convention such a blast! The next two days were jammed packed with sessions, workshops, retiring addresses and hanging out with some of my favorite people-Nebraska FFA members! I enjoyed eating supper with Tim, Kory and Nikki from Hampton on Thursday evening before the session. It was great catching up with Devin and Brett and hearing about their plans for college, as they were waiting on the stairs for their advisors. I enjoyed visiting with the Heartland FFA chapter pre-session, and getting to sit with the awesome crew from Waverly. Thank you to the Crete, St. Paul and Gothenburg chapters for your participation in my workshop Thursday afternoon-I really enjoyed hearing some of your goals for this year and how you are willing to step up and be the influencers to make a difference. I also had a blast with the visiting state officers from Colorado, Kansas and South Dakota. Thank you for helping out at our convention, and for spending time with the members of Nebraska FFA.

The show would not have gone on without the expertise of the convention coordinator my good friend Donnie, the backstage crew of Cody and Joe, and the lovely convention assistant, Amber. I have been so blessed to spend a week with such great people who have truly made a significant impact in my life. I know that the memories I made at home this week will always bring a smile to my face, and will hold a special place in my heart. I am looking forward to my next state convention in the great state of Missouri!



Amy Rasmussen

National Officer Journal

April 1, 2004

Where I'll be this week: Nebraska

After three days spent visiting supporters of the FFA in Washington, D.C., for Ag Week, I found myself flying across the country to the beautiful state of Oregon for their 76th State Convention! There I joined almost 2,000 FFA members to "Bring It Home" to the Oregon State University campus. Throughout the week Oregon FFA members brought home this like opportunity, initiative, passion, achievement, influence and commitment that made this convention such a huge success!

Former FFA members Mark and Cameron of AGR fraternity picked me up at the Eugene airport, and later that night we met up with past state officers Lauren and Elias as we ate some tasty Mexican food. The next evening convention kicked off with the opening session, and Oregon FFA members were going wild! After a rock star performance by the state officers-Dan, Tyler, Seth, Shannon, Anna and Shannon, and an inspiring message by my friend Barrett Keene, convention was kicked off with energy! I enjoyed meeting Peter and his group of friends. We hung out afterward and talked about the upcoming contests they were competing in until late in the evening. Thanks guys for including me in your group and making me feel so welcome!

The next morning was kicked off with an enthusiastic session where members were reminded to bring home the passion they have for the FFA. Throughout the day I met Kami and Tory from the Perrydale FFA chapter in my workshop, and later had the privilege of meeting more of their chapter and fearless leader, Mr. Hutchinson as we went out for ice cream. Thank you Hutch for the yummy treat! At the career show I met Katie, Rachel and Dane as we waited for the evening session. I was also blessed to have a roommate for my last two nights at convention when I met up the Washington State Secretary, Miss Anne Meyers. Anne is the sweetest girl you could ever meet, and I am so pumped to be coming to Washington's state convention next month. I also had the privilege of meeting and getting to know another visiting state officer from the great state of California-Tommy Bottoms. I had a blast laughing with Tommy, and seeing his passion for life. Thank you Anne and Tommy for making my time in Oregon so much fun with your humor, and thoughtfulness.

All too soon it was time to leave my first state convention of the year. I am beginning to realize that the hardest part of this year is meeting so many cool people, and then having to say goodbye. Thank you to Mrs. Roach and Mrs. Holveck for giving me the opportunity to come to your convention, as well as the fantastic state officers who should feel very proud of a job well done. Thank you to the wonderful members of Oregon FFA who helped to create so many memories that I will not soon forget!

I am currently at home getting ready for the Nebraska state convention next week. I am looking forward to catching up with old friends, and creating the legacy that the state officers have been working so hard at to make this the best convention ever for the members.

March 15, 2004

Where I'll be this week: Washington, D.C. and Oregon State Convention

What a great two weeks I have had in Pennsylvania and Texas! After spending an awesome FFA week in New Jersey, our coordinator Tiffany Sanderson picked me up in



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

Trenton and we drove to Lebanon, Pennsylvania. My teammates and I would be meeting up with our good friend Javier for a workweek to get ready for state conventions, NLCSO and SPC. It was so great to all be together as a team again, and catch up on what had been happening in each other's lives. We stayed at a bed and breakfast that was creatively decorated with tons of strawberries! The owners, Charlie and Bunny, were very gracious to us, and let us take over their home while we worked. One morning we had the awesome opportunity to go to Northern Lebanon High School and present workshops to two of Mrs. Oberst's ag classes. I had a blast presenting with Casey, and I was amazed at the participation and enthusiasm that these members had! It was great meeting this awesome chapter. Thank you so much for letting us come hang out with you for the morning. It was also great to be back with Javier and to catch up on things. His recovery is coming along, but I know he wishes it would hurry up so he could be out there with you FFA members! He is such a strong person dealing with this situation, and the Lord is pulling him through. I know he would appreciate all of your prayers during this recovery time!

At the end of the week, Christy and I left the "Strawberry Patch" and drove up to Baltimore to catch our flights to Texas. We met up with our regional director for the week, the wild and crazy Miss Jana Jaure. Then we were off to our first visit in Pittsburg, Texas. We visited with Bo Pilgrim himself, founder of Pilgrim's Pride, one of the largest chicken manufacturing companies in the country. I was so impressed by the way he has built his business, and relied on his faith to make him successful. Next we headed to Fort Worth and met with Mr. Prior of Williamson-Dickie, and Mr. Romero and Mr. Perkins of Justin Boots. Congratulations to Justin for 125 years of success! Finishing up our day we visited with Ms. Ruthie Stotler of the American Paint Horse Association. That evening we ate dinner with some of Texas FFA's greats-past national officers, Mr. Jim Prewitt, Mr. Marcus Hill and his fiancée Adriana, and Mr. E.L. Caraway. We were also joined by Stacey Gilbert who is a past state officer and huge supporter of the FFA. It was fun to hear about these gentlemen's national officer years, and to compare our experiences. Thank you for your kindness and hospitality when we were in Fort Worth!

The next day Christy caught a flight to go to Michigan's state convention, and Jana and I continued on to the U.S. Rice Federation, followed by Performance Awards Center. I will never forget how much fun these people have at work, as Jana and I got in on a practical joke they were playing on a co-worker! Mr. Palasota and Mr. Garcia are both past FFA members who have a love for life, and support the FFA in many ways. It was such a privilege to meet with them. We then drove to Arlington and met with Judy Burns of the Texas State Networks. We met her at the ballpark where the Texas Rangers play, and I got to do a radio interview. It was so cool to be in the stadium. Later that afternoon we toured Happy Hill Farms in Granbury, as we made our way up to Throckmorton for visits the next day. Happy Hill Farms is one of the coolest places I have visited yet this year. Students can come to Happy Hills from all over to go to school, and learn things that matter most in life. I was very impressed by their agriculture facilities and how they incorporate it into their classes.

From there Jana and I drove up to the big metropolis of Throckmorton to visit Mr. Ross McKnight, father of former National FFA President, Trent McKnight. We stayed the night on their beautiful ranch, and had a great visit the next morning. Mr. McKnight is a man of deep integrity who values his family very highly. It was so great to hear about what matters most to him, and what has causes him live his life with a purpose and a passion.



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

He deserves every success that he has accomplished, and he is an example to me of what truly being successful in this world should be. We also met with Mrs. Kelli Brown while we were in Throckmorton for lunch. Kelli is a fellow Nebraskan, who is a past National FFA President. It was wonderful to get caught up again on what is going on in her life, and to gain a new perspective on how the FFA truly prepares us for life. She is someone I look up to greatly, and has definitely left her legacy from her service to the FFA.

We drove back to Dallas and caught a flight into Houston where we would spend the remainder of the week. We had some great visits with Mr. Russack of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railways, past national FFA President-Mr. Ken Johnson, and Mr. Dan Gattis, the man in charge of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. It was so much fun walking around the stock show and seeing FFA members preparing their animals for the big show. It made me so proud to see these members put so much hard work and effort into their animals to get them ready. That night Jana and I went to the rodeo and got to see Clay Walker in concert! I had so much fun!

I absolutely loved my week in Texas, and I am missing the people and warm weather already! Casey, Stacia, Anne, and I are here in D.C., getting ready for some more visits to supporters of FFA here in our nations capital. Best of luck to everyone going to state conventions coming up these next couple of months, and I am looking forward to meeting the members in the beautiful state of Oregon later this week at their convention!

March 3, 2004

Where I'll be this week: Pennsylvania

Happy FFA week! I had a blast in the garden state of New Jersey with their awesome members, state officers and state staff. My week began with meeting Mr. Keith, a national FFA Local Program Success staff person who traveled with me throughout the week. Later that afternoon we were picked up by the state officer crew-Katie, Heather, Jenn, Bobby, and Ms. McLean, the New Jersey FFA specialist. We spent some time in Philadelphia seeing the Constitution Center and Liberty Bell. It was so cool to be in a place where the great leaders of our country made some pretty important decisions! That night we went to Mr. and Mrs. Trivette's home for dinner. Mrs. Trivette is the state FFA Executive Director. We enjoyed a great meal, and also shared Japan stories with the Trivettes because they had been there with the national officer team a few years back. We even watched the video of their trip, and I was able to share my pictures from this year. Thank you Mr. Trivette for figuring out my camera! Another state officer, Brian, who traveled with us for the week as well, also joined us.

The week kicked off with a distance-learning program at the Department of Education. We visited via satellite with Cumberland Regional, Monmouth County and Cape May Tech FFA chapters. I learned so much about the diversity of New Jersey agricultural throughout the week. It was cool to hear about the crabbing and lobster harvesting that Cape May Tech FFA members do for their SAEs! Later that afternoon we went to South Hunterdon FFA where I was part of a very special moment-the chartering of the first middle school chapter in New Jersey! It was awesome to be there, and I want to thank Brian and Samantha for putting so much hard work into making the celebration go



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

smoothly. I want to congratulate Corrine on her new task of leading the middle school chapter, and I have no doubt that you will all do a fabulous job. That afternoon we toured an EcoComplex and then headed up to Princeton University. Even though it was snowing, the tour of the college was so cool, and something that I will not soon forget. The next morning we went to the Allentown FFA chapter sponsor breakfast. I was amazed at the school and community support that Allentown FFA. Mr. and Mrs. Roszell need to be commended on the success you have achieved. Our next step was to Warren Hills. Here I met Megan and Rob from Belvedere before the session started. Now, I need to apologize to these two, because I kind of tricked them. You see, when I sat down and they asked me what chapter I was from I told them I was from Mead. When they said they had never heard of it, I just continued to say that it wasn't around the area. They asked me about my workshop handout that they received when they walked in, and I said I didn't get one of those. We talked about cool stuff they were doing for FFA week at their chapter, and how they chose to come to Warren Hills for this FFA week event because they thought it would be good to take back to their members. Then I got called to speak, and when I turned to go, their faces were shocked, but we laughed about it afterwards! Thanks for being good sports guys! The skit that the chapter officers did at the beginning of the session with Rebecca as the MC was awesome. I was very impressed by you all!

After Warren Hills we drove to Woodstown, where I saw a good friend whom I went to Europe with two years ago on ILSSO, and who happened to be a finalist for the American Star Farmer this year-Mike Brooks. It was so cool to see his farm and how he is always thinking of new innovative ideas to make it better. That night we went to the Woodstown FFA dinner and I met some very cool FFA members-Heather, Anthony, Ashley and Brian. Early the next morning we were off to the Penns Grove FFA breakfast. Mr. Rudderow and his chapter did a great job of bringing together school and community partners to help celebrate FFA week.

Next, we took a quick tour of Seabrook Farms with the Cumberland Regional chapter, and we saw how spinach and other vegetables are processed to go to stores. We were also joined by a fellow Husker fan at Seabrook when Mr. Thompson, the school guidance counselor from Cumberland Regional, who is originally from Nebraska, came over for the tour to chat about the pride and joy of our state-the football team! Later that day we went up to Rutgers University-Cook College and had a very nice lunch reception with their collegiate FFA who is in the process of re-chartering. Thank you to Kris and Jenn for setting up this exciting lunch meeting with the deans, professors, ambassadors and fellow students to discuss the future of agriculture. I don't think I have met a more passionate group of people yet this year!

That night at Rutgers was the Leadership Dinner, to highlight the events of the week and recognize the partnerships that New Jersey FFA has built with key people such as the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Charles Kuperas.

I spent my last day in New Jersey with the BCIT-Westhampton FFA. We were on the morning show of a huge radio station, and enjoyed a brunch to celebrate the day. I absolutely loved my time spent in New Jersey. Thank you Mrs. Trivette, Ms. McLean, Ms. Butch and the state officers for your hard work and dedication to make the week a success. Now I am off to Pennsylvania for a week to catch up with my crazy teammates!



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

Feb. 23, 2004

Where I'll be this week: FFA week-New Jersey

What a week my teammates and I have had on Business and Industry tours! We flew into Denver, Colo., to start out our week with our Sponsors Board Chairman, Mr. John Rakestraw. Over the weekend I had a blast going skiing on Valentine's Day, eating dinner at a really fancy restaurant with the St. Vrain FFA chapter, and getting ready for the week ahead. Skiing with my teammates was definitely a cool way to spend our Saturday, and we all have hilarious stories of going down the "wrong" ski hill, which was much too advanced for us. Ask Casey sometime about his Black Diamond experience on the backside of the mountain. After a fun day on the slopes, we headed to dinner at this really cool place where we met up with St. Vrain FFA. I had the privilege of eating with their vice-president, and president-Jeff and Kelli. Under the leadership of these two, I have no doubt that the chapter is headed toward bigger and better things. I would like to thank the entire chapter for the enormous gift basket that you gave our team that was filled with Colorado goodies...it was awesome! We all stuffed our suitcases full of the goodies to take with us. Sunday we went to church with the Rakestraw family and got our week started off on the right foot. Throughout the weekend I hung out with Mr. Rakestraw's youngest daughter, Alex. She is the coolest fourth grader I know. We bonded over the movie "Finding Nemo", so if you ever want a quote from the movie-she is your girl.

On Monday, Anne and I began our week of visits with Jason Givan, a foundation director for FFA. Our first visit was to Lextron animal health, where we met with Mr. Schneider, a strong supporter of the Colorado FFA. From there we toured Morning Fresh Farms with Mr. Wilkens. He educated me on the unique process of egg laying. That afternoon we traveled to Swift and Co. where I met a fellow Nebraskan and past national officer, Kevin Yost. Our last visit of the day was in Eaton, where we met with Mr. Brown of Harsh International. The next day we headed to downtown Denver where we met with U.S. Bank, and Mike Shaw Chevrolet. We ate lunch at a restaurant near the Shaw dealership and we were joined by two Colorado state officers-Brandon and Melanie. It was good to see Brandon again, and meet Melanie. They are both phenomenal leaders who are doing a great job in their elected positions. I hope the Hall of Fame dinner went well, and I have no doubt that all of your hard work paid off.

On Wednesday Anne and I said goodbye to beautiful Colorado and headed to Detroit. Here we met our Foundation director that would be with us for the rest of the week, Jan Ferris. You can guess which companies we visited while in the Motor City...that's right, the big 3-Ford, Chevy, and Dodge. All of these companies are huge supporters of FFA. Anne and I had a blast getting them up to date on what is happening in our organization, while learning a ton about their companies. It was neat to meet our sponsors who have been to our national convention in Louisville, Ky. They all had great things to say about our members, and were impressed by the magnitude of the whole event. Our last visit in Detroit was to Carhart. We saw merchandise that looked very familiar to what we wear on our farm. And we were also able to see their European line of clothing. It was very interesting. Each visit that we made this week to our partners, renewed my pride in our organization. We are teaching skills in the classroom that these companies are looking for in future employees and customers. FFA members we need to be thankful to all of



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

our sponsors, and realize that without their support we wouldn't have the opportunities that we have. After our visit to Carhart, Anne and I picked up our rental car and headed to Chicago for the weekend! During our time spent in Detroit Anne had some difficulties with all of the Michigan fans that we came across...the crazy girl takes the Ohio State-Michigan rival to a whole new level. I don't think she appreciated me stopping in Ann Arbor-home of the Wolverines, on our way to Chicago to eat either. When you see her this year, you will know in an instance where her loyalty lies. Being a big football fan myself, I am hoping that we will get the opportunity sometime to come to each other's schools and go to a game. I keep telling her that once she comes to a Husker game though, she will be hooked!

We also had the awesome opportunity to meet up with "Da boyz from Illinois" while we were in Chicago. Kenan and Ryan, two Illinois state officers took us to dinner and showed us around the city. They are two of the coolest guys I know, and we had a blast catching up with each other, and making fun of each other. While we were eating dinner we ran into our good friend Robin Neihaus, who just happened to be eating at the same restaurant. I was so shocked to see her; we made quite the ruckus in the restaurant and even got yelled at by a waitress to go back to our seats. Robin was in the city for her school choir that had a concert the next day. She is such a dear friend, and it was such a cool surprise to run into her!

After dinner we walked down Michigan Avenue to the Chicago river. I had so much fun, but I was so bummed that we only got to hang out for one night. Thank you Ryan and Kenan for making our last night in Chicago so much fun. Anne and I both agreed that we must come back to Chicago and stay longer! I am excited that I get to come back for their state convention in June.

I flew to Philadelphia today to begin my FFA week in New Jersey. I am excited to meet the New Jersey state officers and members that I will be spending my week with. I hope everyone has a fantastic week as we celebrate together!

Where I'll be this week: Indianapolis and Denver for Business and Industry visits

February 9, 2004

Konichewa! My teammates and I are back from Japan! What a trip it was! I made so many memories that I know I will never forget, and I am truly thankful for this awesome opportunity that we enjoyed this year.

After wrapping up the board meeting, we stayed another night in D.C. and then woke up super early to catch our flight to Tokyo! After a 14-hour plane ride we finally touched down at Tokyo-Narita International airport. Suddenly we were immersed in the Japanese culture, and the adventure began! We met our tour guide and interpreter for the trip, Hiro, after we retrieved our luggage, and he hustled us out to our waiting tour bus to take us to our hotel. On the way there he told us some really cool facts about Japan: From the northern island of Hokaido to the southern island near Okinawa the climate is as diverse as it is from Maine to Florida. One piece of land that is 3'x3' costs \$3,000 U.S.



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

dollars! Japan has 47 prefectures or “states”, where they are more traditional in the countryside, and more contemporary in the big cities.

Our first big city experience was among the 12 million people who call Tokyo home. Here we checked into our hotel and got to bed early because our bodies were still on western time! The next morning we woke up and ate an “American” breakfast at the hotel. Then it was on to experience the Tokyo subway system. Being from a small town, it was a little bit of a culture shock to be walking the streets of Tokyo, a city that has more people in it than New York City, and bumping into people as they rushed to work. Once we got to the subway station and our train arrived I thought there would be no way that we would fit on because it was jammed packed with people. There were probably more people in that one subway car than there is in my entire hometown!

Our group made it on, and then disaster struck. The train made its first stop, and we had to stay on for two more stops. The rush of people pushing to get out of the subway car was too strong for me, and a gentleman with a briefcase moved me out of the way, and off the subway train! Just as I was beginning to panic about being lost in Tokyo because my group was getting off at a different stop, my wonderful teammate Christy grabbed my arm and pulled me back on the train! Once I was back on the train with all of my teammates we laughed so hard tears were rolling down my face! My first day in Tokyo was definitely a wake up call, and all I can say is thank you Christy!

Our first stop of the day was the U.S. Embassy. We met with a few people who told us about Japanese agriculture, economics, politics and public affairs. It was very interesting to hear how Japan is different than the U.S., but very similar as well. After our morning meeting we rushed to get to Mitsui Inc., the sponsors of our trip for our afternoon meeting. After wolfing down McDonalds, (yes they are everywhere!), Hiro led us to the Mitsui building where we met with Mr. Sato, the director of the foods division in his personal office that overlooked a palace right in the middle of Tokyo. We watched a company video and learned more about the enormous company that is all over the world in more than 50 countries. They even have a customer in Kearney, Neb., which is ConAgra. It was interesting to learn that they don't just deal with agricultural products alone, but they also trade cars, oil, metals, and many other goods. I am so thankful for their generous support to bring us over to experience Japan.

From Mitsui we went back to the hotel and changed clothes to go sightseeing and shopping. The market streets were crazy busy with little shops everywhere. I found some neat souvenirs for my family here. At the end of the shopping street there was a Buddhist temple that was very beautiful architecturally and historically. Hiro explained the two major religions in Japan to us-Shintoism, and Buddhism, so we would have a better understanding of the culture.

Our third day in Japan was definitely a highlight for me. We woke up at 4:30 a.m. to walk down to the fish market. I have never seen anything like it before! It was very crowded with people, carts, trucks, crates and huge tuna fish! We witnessed a live auction where every single tuna is sold that is brought in from the bay. The auctioneer stood up on a platform and called out the prices while the bidders had license plates on their hats to identify themselves. It was wild! We then walked through the open-air markets and saw containers of every sort of live fish that swims in the ocean! It was a really cool way to start off our day.

From there we went to Nosan Agricultural high school. Here the FFJ chapter officer team that was lined up outside of the school waiting for our taxis to arrive welcomed us. It



Amy Rasmussen National Officer Journal

was so cool to meet them and see their school. Suzuki, their chapter president did a great job of leading us around the different classes. I don't think I ever quit smiling! After touring the school we went back to Mitsui to spend the afternoon with all of their divisions within the company. Later on they had a reception for us where we met many of their young employees. We went to a karaoke place as well, and I don't know when I have ever laughed so hard in my life! It was a blast to sing popular songs in English, and then to hear them sing popular songs in Japanese!

For the remainder of the trip we visited numerous farms, companies, temples, another high school, and stayed with our host families. We saw crops, such as lettuce, strawberries and green onions, being grown in greenhouses. Everywhere we went we would get asked about the recent BSE or mad cow incident that happened in the U.S. Because of this incident Japan has decided to not import our beef anymore. It was challenging to try to talk with people to help them realize that our food supply is safe. We, as agricultural students and FFA members, have a huge mission in front of us to try to convince not only Japan, but many other countries that we are doing all that we can, and that our scientists and government officials are doing all that they can to prove that we have one of the safest food supply's in the world. My eyes were definitely opened in Japan to the importance of global agriculture, and the critical role that international trade plays for the American farmer.

Another highlight of the trip for me was meeting my host family in Tajima, Japan. Christy and I were together as we met our host sister Korai, and her father at the high school. We drove to their house, which was a Japanese-style bed and breakfast. We met our host mom and grandma who were anxiously awaiting our arrival. Even though we couldn't understand what they were saying to us, we could understand the smiles on their faces, and the open arms that held out to us to welcome us into their home. That night at supper we ate a traditional meal of sushi and met the entire family. Korai has two little brothers Hakuku, and Shingo who were so cute! We also met some of the guests who were staying at the bed and breakfast because it was ski season. We even gave our gifts to one guest because we accidentally thought he was Korai's older brother! Once we found out that he wasn't, we just laughed and laughed with our host family at the dinner table. I know that I will never forget my Japanese host family and the way that they so graciously accepted us into their lives for two days. God has truly blessed me this year with many opportunities to meet so many special people, and I am so thankful that I got this once in a lifetime experience with my host family.

While we were in Tajima we toured their high school that had its own farm. We saw their pigs, cattle, and even got to sit in on a class that was learning about chickens. Everyone at Tajima High School was so friendly and made our visit the best that it could have been. I wish the FFJ chapter much future success and thank you for your kindness and hospitality.

We also met an American friend while we were in Tajima. Alex is from Texas and he is teaching English for a year at Tajima high school. It was so cool to talk to him and hear about all of his experiences living in Japan for six months! We owe him a huge thank you for the treats that he brought us at lunch, and for his translating abilities.

All too soon our time in Japan came to an end. We said goodbye to our humble, honest, and decent tour guide Hiro, which was sad for all of us. We are hoping that he will be able to come to national convention in the near future!



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

We got back on the train and headed to Osaka for our last night. Early the next morning we flew back to Tokyo, and then boarded a huge jet to fly back to D.C. The Japan trip was an amazing experience. I know that I grew as a person tremendously, and I will always hold a special place in my heart for the Japanese people that we met who made our trip so memorable.

Once we touched down in D.C. we drove to see our fearless leader, Javier, who is recuperating from a car accident in Pennsylvania. It was so good to see him-I have missed him like crazy!! Please continue to keep him in your prayers that he will be healed completely. This week we are headed back to Indy for Business and Industry training for a few days, and then we fly out to Denver for our first week of visits. I am looking forward to what the month of February has in store, especially FFA week in New Jersey!

Where I'll be next week: Japan

January 25, 2004

What a week it has been here in our nations capital! My teammates and I flew in to Washington, D.C., after a weekend at home this past Tuesday morning. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at home as I got to watch my little brother, Adam, play basketball against one of our rival teams. It was fun to see my old high school teammates and watch the girls' game together as we relived the glory days of when we played. There was some unexpected excitement as a fan from the opposing team was yelling just a little too much at the ref, and he got thrown out of the game. It was crazy. Small town basketball at its finest-I was so excited that I was back to witness it all. On Sunday morning I drove down to Lincoln and went to church with my dear friend Amber. After driving around in circles for a while, and getting frustrated because we were going to be late, we finally made it to church. We heard an awesome message that was worth getting lost for. We ate lunch with two of my other good friends Donnie and Sport at Chili's and were able to catch up with each other. That afternoon Amber and I shopped until we dropped, and then we drove back up to my house and had a family game night with the crazy Rasmussens. It was the perfect weekend spent with family and good friends. God has truly blessed me with these special people in my life!

While I was in the Omaha airport I got a call from our coordinator, Tiffany. She told me that Javier had been in a car accident. My heart dropped and I prayed that he would be o.k. My teammates I arrived in D.C., and met with Tiffany to get the details. Javier is doing much better and is recovering from broken ankles, and some cuts in his legs. I know that he will recover completely, and work hard to be back to 100 percent. Please keep him in your prayers throughout this recovery time.

Here in D.C., we have been preparing for our Japan trip and we are halfway through the board meeting. On Tuesday, we met with Tracey Mahoney, and learned all about the Japanese culture. I tried more fish than I have ever eaten in my life! We also discussed Japanese agriculture, and what our host family stays would be like. I am so pumped to meet my host family and learn more about them.

The board meeting is going well. There are many important issues that are being brought to the table, and the pride I have for our national organization and the way it is led has been proven to me time and time again. FFA members, your concerns and ideas are being taken very seriously, and I thank you for having the courage to voice them.



Amy Rasmussen

National Officer Journal

FFA truly is a student led organization that is making a difference in all of our lives. I will carry this pride with me as I travel over seas this upcoming week.

Where I'll be next week: Indianapolis

January 7, 2004

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great Christmas, and enjoyed the break from school. After leaving Indianapolis after our December training I flew home and enjoyed time at home with family and friends. On Christmas Eve we went to my brother's, Mark, church in Omaha, where he is a youth pastor. On Christmas morning all of my family was together at our farm including my oldest brother Matt, and his wife Cari, who is expecting their first baby! Next year will be so much fun with a little one at Christmas. That day we went over to my grandma's house and celebrated the day with my aunts, uncles and cousins. I also had time to drive down to Lincoln and visit good friends Vicki, Jill W. and Megan D. One of the highlights of my break was when my state advisor, and good friend, Donnie, came to my house for supper. There was much laughter, story telling and teasing each other as we finally got caught up with each other's lives! The Lord has truly blessed me with a loving family, and so many loving friends.

I flew back to Indianapolis on New Years Eve. My teammates and I welcomed in the new year at the house of our good friends-Tiffany and Nathan Sanderson. I have fond memories of playing a mean game of catch phase, watching the ball drop on TV, and picking up Javier at a shady hotel with Tiffany because his flight came in late! We spent five days at the National FFA Center preparing our workshops and speeches for our experience state-Georgia. We flew into Albany, Georgia, on January 5. First we met members from Monroe high school, and Ms. Peggy Nielson, who is a member of the state board of education, motivated us with her inspiring message. We then traveled to Tipton for the Southern Region Greenhand night. I met Shelby and Ashley, who are currently state officers, and I was impressed with their dedication and service to Georgia FFA members. Their bubbly personalities, and hilarious stories made me wish that we could have stayed longer.

Throughout the week we had the chance to meet the other state officers too. Cliff, Cathy, Dathan, Hope and Rodney are incredible people, who are serving the members of Georgia FFA with their whole hearts. I also met a past state officer, Rachel who is just a sweetheart! Thank you all so much for making my stay in Georgia so memorable. From Tipton we traveled to Ocilla where we met with the Irwin County FFA chapter. Christy and I had the opportunity to present a workshop in the morning to some awesome FFA members. It was especially fun to meet a Husker fan in Georgia-thanks Chris for sharing my love for Nebraska! We left Irwin County and then traveled to Hazelhurst, where we visited Jeff Davis Middle School. Here we saw firsthand the excitement and energy that these middle school FFA members possess!

We then made the drive up to Athens, Georgia, home of the University of Georgia Bulldogs. It was neat to be on a college campus again, and feel the pride of the many traditions that UGA has. Way to go Bulldog fans on your overtime bowl game win this year! We stayed in Athens one night, and then we were on to another middle school chapter in Stephens County. Javier presented his workshop to the sixth grade class, and I was very impressed with the dedication that their teacher Mr. Stribling has to making an



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

impact in each of his students lives. It was also very cool to see two dynamic middle school FFA chapters in one day!

We then arrived at the FFA/FCCLA camp. That evening we participated in a chapter officer activity where I gave a message, and presented a workshop with Anne. It was great to meet Jessica, Katie, Tim and Justin and be able to kick back and have some fun! We departed early in the morning for the capital city of Atlanta to attend the State Board of Education meeting. We also had the awesome opportunity to meet with Mr. Tommy Irvin, the Commissioner of Agriculture for lunch. We toured the state capital, and met many state legislators and senators who support the FFA. After departing Atlanta we traveled to Mary Persons High School where I saw my friends Matt and Josh from the night before at the FFA camp! We had a blast together learning about the roadblocks in life, and how we can overcome them by setting goals, thanks to Miss Stacia Berry. That night we were at the other FFA camp called John Hope for another fun filled evening! I met the coolest FFA members-Bo, Kyle, and Ryan during my workshop. Thanks for being such great participators! We drove back to the FFA/FCCLA center late that night, and caught a few quick hours of sleep!

Our last day in Georgia we spent at the Mid-winter teacher's conference. Here we had the opportunity to get to know the Georgia FFA teachers and have them get to know us better with a question and answer session. I am so impressed by the teachers and supporters of Georgia FFA. You are all truly making a difference. Keep up the good work! I also want to say a huge thank you to Mr. Ben Lastly, program manager; and Mr. John Wilkinson, FFA executive secretary for all of the hard work that you put into planning this wonderful experience for me and my teammates. Georgia FFA is lucky to have you both. Thanks for all of the laughs and fun stories that you shared with us throughout the week as well! When I think of my time in Georgia the experiences that I had will always bring a smile to my face.

Where I will be next week: Nebraska

December 22, 2003

Whew! Where do I begin to express all the emotions I have felt since the 2003 National FFA Convention?! Sitting in Freedom Hall the 10th general session, I was overcome with excitement, pride and nerves. Excitement for everything that would happen in this last and final session, pride over what our organization has accomplished this past year as we celebrated our 75th anniversary, and nervous about the announcement that the nominating committee chair, Mr. Stewart Joy, would be making to elect the new national officers.

As I sat in my chair during pre-session, waiting for the lights to go down, I couldn't help but think of how lucky I was, and how completely blessed I have been to be sitting in that arena. I thought back to my freshmen year of agriculture education classes, and the example of my teachers that made me want to join the FFA. I thought of the many friends I have made in the FFA, who have always supported me and have their own unique ways of being able to make me laugh! Amber, Donnie, Vicki, Andy, Jon, Jonie, Anneke, and the state officer crew-Jill, Megan, Beau, Becky, Adam, Ryan and Miranda,



Amy Rasmussen **National Officer Journal**

thank you for the support that you always give me, and for being the true definition of friendship. You are all rockstars. Finally, I thought about my family and the way they have supported me by being my biggest fans. God has truly blessed me with all of these people in my life.

As the nominating committee report was read, little did I know that I would continue to build more friendships with five other amazing people. Javier, Stacia, Christy, Casey and Anne are those friends that I am fortunate enough to spend a whole year of service with as national officers. Thank you Stewart, Kenan, Meredith, Brandon, Arne, Rachel, Erica, Chancey and Mindy for giving us this awesome opportunity to serve FFA members.

As I headed back home to Nebraska after convention my mind was spinning with everything I had to wrap up in three short weeks! I went back to Lincoln and began the challenge of finishing my classes early, and moving back home so I would be ready to go to training. I even went to the last home football game that the Huskers played at Memorial Stadium, and cheered on the Big Red!

For the past three weeks we have been training in Indianapolis at the National FFA Center. It has been a month of growth, challenges and laughter as we have been leaning about the different aspects of the National FFA Organization, meeting all of the wonderful people that work at national FFA, expanding our brains with techniques presented by Mr. Mark Reardon, and writing speeches and workshops to present in our experience state-Georgia. I am so pumped to meet the members in the peach state during January.

This past week we had the unique opportunity to practice our workshops at chapters here in Indiana. On Wednesday, I went with Christy to Fishers Junior High School, and Mr. Younts let us present to one of his classes. We had a blast getting to know each other better, and finding out who is the best tractor driver in the class. Thank you Mr. Younts, and Fishers Junior High for letting us come hang out with you for our first school visit!

Thursday, Casey and I traveled to the Star Academy FFA to present our workshops for the first time. Ms. Lord, Mr. Crover, Mrs. Scheske and Mr. Wooton, thank you for giving us the opportunity to present to your students, and try out our workshops. Thank you to Katie, Shawn and James who showed their leadership as chapter officers by participating and showing enthusiasm. Keep up the good work at Star.

As our training is almost over here in Indy, and we get ready to go home for Christmas, know that my teammates and I are so excited to meet you this year, and create memories that will last a lifetime. I pray that you will all have a very Merry Christmas and remember the reason for the season. God bless.