



## Stacia Berry National Officer Journal

**October 8, 2004**

*Don't give me no pop, no pop just give me that milk moo, moo, moo, Wisconsin milk!*

I have spent the past week in America's Dairy land, enjoying their many dairy delicacies, including cheese curds and Culver's Custard. I had a blast traveling with the Wisconsin state officer team around their great state. We started in Cadott with Gena's home chapter and I got to see how cheese is made and ethanol is processed! The next morning we enjoyed some horseshoes, which are actually donuts. We headed to Fountain City to Kelsey's school and stopped to see some pretty cool cars and horses. I met members from the Sparta FFA chapter in Section 3 and they rocked! Later than evening we took a ride on wagons drawn by horses and ate a cream can dinner. It was a blast! Next was off to Sauk Prairie to visit Brandon's home territory and enjoy Culver's Custard, which I must say was delicious. I am excited because we'll be getting one in Wyoming soon!

Last was our visit to Shullsburg with Danielle. I was able to see cheese distribution facilities and a cool seed company. Our final sectional leadership workshop was great and I even met my new buddy Tommy Cramer who will soon be a rock star in the FFA! Wisconsin was a ton of fun and beautiful in the fall. Thank you to the Wisconsin state officers for a great week!

**October 1, 2004**

Howdy! I just have a few days home, two to be exact and then I'm on the road again! Since I last updated I have basically become a resident of the state of Missouri and even spent some time in Las Vegas! I arrived in Missouri and started out at the Smithville FFA where we had a good ole time. I spent the next day in Cameron with Joe and his fellow chapter members, and then I headed of to St. Joe. I did stop to meet with Mr. Fisher from the American Angus Association; we had to make a peaceful agreement because of my Hereford background. As long as they're crossed, we're both happy. From St. Joe I headed to Tarkio to stay with Mr. Hicks and his family. We had a fun time! The whirlwind tour continued as I headed off to Maryville for the afternoon. Dr. Larson and Mr. Barr were great! I even ran into my old WLC roommate how cool is that?! Then it was off to area two where I started my day with the Grundy R-5 chapter and their advisor Mr. Fox. They ROCKED. They were so kind that they called my dad and found out my favorite things and made a basket for me!! THANKS GUYS! That evening I went to Trenton after some time in Jamesport and got to meet Charley who will shake my hand at national convention. We went to the area conference where Stephanie and her team did a stellar job!

I had a sleepover at Erin Croy's house and spent the morning at the Gallatin FFA chapter. They too are some pretty cool cats. Thanks for a great barbecue guys!! After my time in Missouri I stopped in Mead, Nebraska, to visit my good buddy Amy AKA Pistol Rasmuffin! I was able to hang out at her farm and eat with her family. It was a blast. Then off to Las Vegas- lights and more lights. I had never been before and it was a ton of fun. I spent a couple of days at the Croplife America Conference and was lucky enough to stay at the Ritz Carlton! Living the good life these days I tell ya!

Now I'm home for 48 hours and then off to the great state of Wisconsin for a week.



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Catch ya later!

### September 19, 2004

One might think that I am a magician, because my journal keeping habits would make you think that I had disappeared! However, I have not. I just haven't been very busy, with FFA stuff. Since convention planning, I have been home for our county and state fairs. While I was there I got to finish my responsibilities as Laramie County Fairest of the Fair. It was a ton of fun. I got to see my sisters show and hang out with my state officer teammates! After state fair it was off to another week of business and industry visits with Casey. We headed to Columbus, Cleveland and Chicago. We were lucky enough to visit the Oscar Mayer plant and see how hotdogs are made!! Talk about an experience! I even got a little bit of Easy Mac from the kind folks at Kraft Foods. We had a ton of fun and even met up with Anne Knapke and she showed me the famous Ohio state campus. From Business and Industry, visits I headed home for a week or so, where I caught up with my family, friends, sorority sisters and sleep!! I had a blast. Then I headed back to Indianapolis for another week of national convention preparation. I had no idea how much work went into making our convention as successful and cool as it is!! Now I'm getting ready to head to Missouri for a week of chapter visits and workshops. It should be a blast!! So now we're back up to speed and I'll keep you all posted a little better on the home stretch to national convention.

Keep it real!!

### August 5, 2004

No, I did not fall off the face of the earth even though it may seem as if I haven't been around for quite some time. This past month has been busy as can be! After leaving Arizona I headed to Indianapolis for the National Board meeting. I was able to go to our first National Convention planning meeting. It gave me chills to think that something that seemed to begin so recently was coming to a close. During the board meeting we were able to look at issues like middle school membership privileges and the future of the FFA. We honored Bernie Staller the retiring COO and ate at St. Elmo's ( a famous steakhouse) From there I headed to a rotary luncheon in Indianapolis to speak to them about FFA, they seemed pretty jazzed that we'd be here in 2006. Then was two days of home time so I could take care of Fairest of the Fair business by going to the Cheyenne Rotary and doing some radio spots to advertise our county fair. Then it was time for one of my favorite conferences, SPC!

I arrived in D.C., braved the metro and found my way over to the Omni Hotel. It was BEAUTIFUL! Before SPC began Amy and I were able to go over to the final night of WLC and let me tell you it was a treat. I even got to see Marty Tatman! As SPC began it was fun to see all of the state officers I had met at NLCSO and make new friends with others. It was also exciting because my family was able to come! Jay, Janice, Jessie, Amy and Ben braved Washington, D.C., and I sure was proud.

SPC started with some fun Olympic Characters that set the theme of Leading the Tradition. I was Inga- my role was to want to be a MAN!! It was tons of fun.

I was excited to see my buddies Lucas and Traey who kept the week interesting. We were able to have reflections at the Capitol, Iwo Jima, The Omni, on our dinner cruise



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and at the zoo! I can't help but feel inspired when I'm in our capital. Some highlights of SPC were the privilege of laying the wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, seeing the WWII memorial for the first time and taking a dinner cruise on the Potomac river! It was great to spend time with Becky and Jason from South Dakota, Ginger and Levi from New Mexico, Cliff told me some fabulous jokes and I learned a lot about Charlee! Our parents closed SPC with skits and sharing some funny moments from our past with the attending state officers. It was quite the time!

As a team, we were able to take a retreat for a little rest, relaxation, and reflection. Sometimes I get to going so fast that I don't take time to smell the roses where I am! I left the retreat early to head home for Cheyenne Frontier Days, the largest outdoor rodeo in the world. I was able to ride on my new saddle attend pancake breakfasts, parades and rodeos and I even got to see Kenny Chesney and Uncle Kracker in concert, it was sweet!

Now I'm back to Indianapolis for National Convention planning. It is time to write session scripts, retiring addresses and memorize ceremonies! Hope all is well where you are.

Joke for the day:

Why did the cowboy buy a wiener dog?

They told him to get a long little doggy!! HAHA

### July 8, 2004

HOT! HOT! HOT! That is the only way to describe the experience I had in Arizona. Javier and I arrived from New York into Phoenix, Ariz. It was incredibly hot, 109 degrees out during the day! WHEW! We spent Saturday preparing for our third and final NLC SO conference. Sunday it was time to create the magic for the final time. State officers from Utah, Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona arrived in Tempe. It was the fourth of July so we took a break to go watch the fireworks in downtown. During the BBQ, Caleb and George wowed me with card tricks I may never understand. They were stellar; it was a refreshing reminder of the pride we as Americans take in our great nation.

Monday began the meat and potatoes of the conference as we spent the next few days in sessions learning about laws of choice, purpose and price tag. Later we developed workshops and delivered them. I was able to meet Ginger from N.M.- who knew people from my family- it was AWESOME!

One night I went out to dinner with the Utah state officer team and we ate at My Big Fat Greek Restaurant. Everything was going well until the server brought our drinks and they were HUGE. Just as Dusty was commenting on how big the drinks were, I spilled mine all over Addison. He was a good sport though and thankfully was wearing water resistant pants!

With the state of Nevada I rode to a restaurant called the Rustler's Rooste. It was very western. They had a long horn steer outside and you have to go down a slide to get into the restaurant. There was a live band and sawdust on the floor. We had a good old time and I got to spend time with my buddy Rose. Reflections all week were awesome. They really made me think about our purpose and mission in the FFA.

On the last night there was a great banquet complete with a quartet! We were taking pictures after the dinner and Mr. O, from Colorado, did the splits to make us smile for



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pictures. IT WAS HILARIOUS! It was followed by dance so everyone could get their groove on! The last day was great, we all realized not only how much we had learned but also what great fun and friends we had to take home!

Now I'm off to Indianapolis, Indiana for the board meeting and soon State President's Conference! YAY!

Thought for the day: Are you a person that lets obstacles stop you or do you find a way around, under or through them?

### July 4, 2004

Whew! The past week has been a whirlwind adventure! It started off with a flight from Lincoln Nebraska to Syracuse New York. Our flight was delayed and we arrived in Syracuse at midnight, we decided to make the drive to camp "O" and things went down hill from there! We drove for three and a half hours only to realize that we were hopelessly lost when we had to call my parents back in Wyoming to look up where we were on Mapquest. We decided to stay in Watertown and drive during the daylight. Our hotel was a little shady but better than spending the night in the car.

After an hour of driving in the morning we finally found the famous camp Oswegatchie. The staff welcomed us and helped set up for our second NLCSO conference. Javier and I were treated to Vinnie's pizza and Good Ole Wishy's ice cream. The very next day the conference was underway and we started to "Create the Magic" with state officer teams from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and of course New York. Our days were full of fun NLCSO. We took a one-day break to do high and low ropes courses. THAT WAS AWESOME! I got to do the zip line and flying squirrel. They are an adrenaline rush if I've ever had one. This camp was complete with s'mores and campfires. I had a blast visiting with Amy from Conn., and seeing my buddy Mindy again. It is always fun to chill with my buddies Juice Box, Mandy, Traey and Tyler from Vermont as they tease me about maple syrup, "the real stuff." NLCSO would not have been complete without Brandon and Lucas completely soaking me with squirt guns- I shouldn't have even taken a bath that morning! All in all the New York NLCSO is one that I will NEVER forget!

Next Javier and I were off to Arizona for our final NLCSO- lets just say it started out a little rough with a parking ticket at the Airport- WHOOPS! Things could only go up from there. We start today YIPEE!

**Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself. - William Faulkner**

### June 25, 2004

WHAT UP? Long time no write!!! I have been out in the boonies! First of all I got to spend last week up in the Mountains of Lander at the Fremont County Youth Camp for Session 1 of WY FFA camp. Our theme was Lead Your Ship. We had a fabulous time from day one when we stowed our gear and embarked on a trip to success. It was so fun to be home, my sister Amy was even at camp with me. I was in cabin five with state officer Chrissy Calvin and my buddy Meghan. We were the SHARKS, which stands for



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Super Human And Really Kool Sistas! Some of my cabin mates were Filly, Beth, Brittany and Lisa. We had a good time. I was also thankful that my state officer team came to support me. Em, Andra, Trevor, Toby and Alicia took great care of me! Campfires were the best! Songs and of course huge flames! The state officer team had a stellar vespers program, the showed the WY FFA how to step up to stand out!

Next I was off to Nebraska for NLCSO with Javier or Hop-ier as I like to call him these days. My planes were canceled on the way there so it took me 10 extra hours to get there! Once we arrived at The Leadership Center (or TLC as it is fondly referenced) we settled in and got ready to create the magic! After long hours of set up and decorating the state officer teams from Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri started arriving. Leroy and Lawanda Copperfield (that is Javier and me) were ready for fun! We spent the next three days having a blast with State Officers and Staff.

Anita, Lauren, Abbie, Phillip, Pam, Jon and Shelly were great helps as hosts and support for us. I was really excited to get to hang out with my pals from South Dakota again- they are the bomb... dot com! The crazy Kansans were a blast, especially Big John with his great sense of enthusiasm and charisma. We had so much fun. The finale was the "Bone" contest, which is a talent contest of sorts. Javier and I had lots of fun as judges ;) All in all I must say that NLCSO was AMAZING- I can't wait to see all of my new friends again at SPC and in the fall at national convention!

Next Javier and I head to New York for our second NLCSO!

### June 5, 2004

Howdy! I'm in Fruita, Colorado, and it is a warm 90 degrees out! The Colorado FFA Convention has just ended and in the words of my friend Chris it was "SO FLOSS!" That is a good thing, by the way. Convention started off with a bang. Complete with volleyball tournaments and a convention wide tug of war contest. I was lucky enough to get to have lunch with the Hotchkiss FFA Chapter. My friend Hannah and I had a fine time. Workshops were fun with my pals William, Tony, Amber and J.J. There were 28 state officer candidates in Colorado this year, WOW! Snaps to the state officer candidates for hanging tough through three days of intense interviews. Also congratulations to the new state officer team.

We were all lucky enough to be led through a FABULOUS convention by state officers Brandon, Ben, Jackie, Linsey, Scooby, Anthony, Melanie, Angela, BJ and Stephanie. Job Well Done to the Colorado FFA! Next I'm off to Mississippi!

Thought for the day: By improving yourself the world is made better.

### May 28, 2004

Howdy pals! I am writing from the Green Mountain State of Vermont. I arrived on Tuesday, but my luggage did not. As a result, I had to buy a new outfit because I was responsible for giving a speech that night. My luggage finally arrived late that night. I was lucky to hang out with Hugh and James. Wednesday was filled with fun and workshops. I chilled with some cool state officers: Renee, George, Pat, Ashley, Tyler and the state intern, Eric, plus a bonus-Connecticut state President Fred. We had some good times at



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Eaton Sugar House. I had some 100 percent pure maple syrup- Vermont style on some hearty buckwheat pancakes. That night we heard from Chris Vitelli, past national president, who was awesome. Thursday, the final day of the convention was the most intense experience I've had at a state convention. There were some scary moments, but I am proud to say the decisions made by the Vermont delegation and the commitment of the new state officers speaks volumes about the character of the members of the Vermont FFA. Convention ended well, with some really talented winners and a new state officer team. Congrats to my buddies Traey, Amanda, Tyler and Eric. You guys will do awesome. Next I'm off to Colorado, Mississippi and Louisiana!

### May 22, 2004

HOLY COW!!! I have had an awesome two weeks. The first week was spent in College Station, Texas, with my teamies. We worked on learning and teaching curriculum for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers to college students. It was a rippin' good time! A very intense few days spent with some cool Aggies. I learned some neat traditions, all about "WHOOPING," "HISsing" and toured campus. I even stood on Kyle field.... what an honor. HISSS from the WY Cowboys. Dominique, Jason, Allison and Johna all made my experience awesome!

Next it was off to the wild Nebraska COLT conference. Chapter officers from around Nebraska had the opportunity to Unlock, Explore and Discover their leadership traits, not only as an individual, but also as a team. I spent some time with my pals from Newman Grove. They are awesome!

I also spent a lot of time with the cool cats from Centennial. Jacque, Kiley, Chelsea, Aimee, Bryant and Jess made my time at COLT the most fun I've had yet this year! We competed in the opening ceremony contest and came in second in our room- WAY TO GO! Whether it was meals, adventure groups or just hanging out- they're just the BOMB DOT COM!

The State Officers, Anita, Shelly, Abbie, Jon, Phillip, Pam and Lauren were ROCKSTARS and did a great job.

Next, I am off to Vermont for a state convention!

Joke of the day: What did the dad buffalo say to the baby when he left for school?

BISON!!! (Bye son!) HAHAHA!!

### May 5, 2004

Howdy pals! I am writing from Rocky Top country. I've just spent the past few days in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and it was awesome! Things started a little rough with the loss of my luggage from Chicago to Knoxville but luckily it was found- better late than never. Saturday was spent in preparation for convention with Pam, Will and the crew from UT Martin, as well as help from Kim and Shannon. Convention officially started on Sunday with a bang. Chris, Leann, Allie, Tyler, Ashley, Rachel, Adam and Daniel all did a fantastic job on this fast paced and fun convention. I spent time getting to know state officer candidates, Michael, Emily and Mark plus many others. They were fabulous. I



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also randomly met Leanne, a talented competitor in the Job Interview contest. I learned quite a few lessons in Tennessee: I am glad that there was not a flood like last year, East, West and Middle Tennessee are very different places, sweet tea is the ONLY way to drink tea and you can never go wrong with a Pancake House in Gatlinburg. Congrats to the more than 400 state degree recipients and new state officer team. A good year is in store for you. Next is off to my home chapter banquet with the Cheyenne FFA! YEE – HAW!

### April 29, 2004

Howdy from Oklahoma! Over the past week I've been everywhere from Washington, D.C., to Athens, Georgia, and finally to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I spent time with my pal Amy, her parents and my parents in Washington, D.C., for a banquet. From there I headed off to Athens, Georgia, for the state convention. There were more than 2,000 members there. I had a fabulous time with state officers Cliff, Cathy, Hope, Dathan, Ashley, Michael, Rodney and Shelby. They are a fun bunch! I was able to see some AMAZING talent! I was also able to see my buddy Ward Black. Congratulations to the new officers, you are in for a great year with Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Lastly.

Next I headed to Oklahoma City, where I met up with Chancey and Shanelle. We headed to the hotel and met up with the other state officer girls and headed out for a treat at Zio's. It was great fun. Oklahoma's convention was kicked off by a chorus banquet, there are 100 members in the chorus and they are fantastic! The next two days were a whirlwind of recognition banquets, sessions, great speakers and leadership workshops. There were more than 700 state degree recipients in Oklahoma- WAY TO GO! Not to mention that there were more than 350 chapters- roughly 10,000 members in attendance! I was awestruck! I was also blessed to hear the inspirational words of retiring State President- Kelly Barnes. He is a man with a message! Congratulations to Travis Jett and the new state officer team, I have no doubt that Mr. Boggs has a great year organized for you all!

Next I head to the south for Tennessee's State Convention. YEE HAW!

Thought for the day: Yesterday is History, Tomorrow is a Mystery – Today is a gift, that's why they call it the present.

### April 17, 2004

Time flies when you're having fun. The past two weeks have been a whirlwind! A week was spent in Indianapolis for work on NLCSSO, the test pilot. I left on Saturday to the homeland to celebrate Easter with my family. Easter was wonderful. Luckily the Easter Bunny stopped by my house! Monday I flew to Indianapolis for the Blue Catalogue Photo shoot! It was a ton of fun. It is every girl's secret dream to be a model for a day. I had a blast. Tuesday I was off to Wyoming for the state convention. The festivities began officially on Wednesday. I watched the Parliamentary Procedure contest and spent time with the state officers in preparation for the sessions. I also attended the public speaking contests, where I heard an abundance of talent showcased in prepared, extemporaneous and creed speaking events.

Thursday was the official beginning of the Convention. The state officers Brytni, Josh, Ryan, Laramie, Tara, Amanda, Katie, Jeff and Zach did a phenomenal job! I also was able to spend some time with my home chapter, the Cheyenne FFA, and this year's number one chapter in Wyoming the Lyman FFA. In fact, I was lucky enough to have dinner with the Lyman FFA! Convention sessions were filled with talent, speakers and



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fun. The dances were also a great time. Convention culminated Saturday morning with the announcement of the new officers. I am excited for the new team and look forward to a great year for the Wyoming FFA, way to Push your Limits FFA members. Next I'm off to the South Dakota State Convention.

### April 3, 2004

What a week!!! I like to call it my "I" week because I began in Fairfield, Iowa, on Monday attending their chapter banquet. It was wonderful! , I congratulate the new chapter officers and wish Nicole the very best on her quest for a state office. There was also a door prize drawing at the banquet and, although I was not lucky enough to win, Ryan Smalley made me a winner by sharing his prizes. Tuesday was spent visiting with the phenomenal students at Fairfield High School.

Then I was off to the great state of Idaho for their state convention. Let me tell you- this was the bomb—dot com! I had a great time with John, Matt, Katie, Jason, Trent and Michelle. We started out by having a special kind of pizza, it had an Idaho twist...there were potatoes on it. It was definitely a new experience for me. We spent convention with some of our friends from Alaska, Coltan Bohman- past state vice president and current Washington State President Joe Patterson. Needless to say we had a fabulous time. From receiving my own official spuddy buddy to birthday songs at dairy queen, the folks from Idaho know how to have a great time. I also learned a new magic trick from my friend Luke.... If you want to learn some magic contact me, it really works. All in all my time spent in Idaho helped me reaffirm that FFA truly is a passport to success and the Idaho FFA definitely embodies that ideal!

Now I'm off to Indiana to spend some quality time with my teammates preparing for National Leadership Conference for State Officers. Peace of Cake out.

### March 26, 2004

Howdy! Life has been hectic lately, but I am finally home for a few days! Over the past week and a half I have been in Washington, D.C., for National Ag week and in Indianapolis for Spring Training Academy. Time spent in D.C. was busy and fast paced. I was lucky enough to job shadow Dr. Chuck Lambert at the USDA. It was an awesome experience. Casey, Amy, Anne and I also met with officials from the National Grange, EPA, Syngenta and many others. Luckily on our last day there we even got to dine with the famous Dr. Larry Case!

I spent St. Patrick's day in the Chicago O'Hare airport, quite the experience. Then began Spring Training Academy. It was a change of pace for this Wyoming girl who hasn't been to class since November. WLC, BLAST- Off and the National Officers came together for an intense few days of training. I was leery at first but then I ended up having a grand time. During my time at home I was able to see some of our calves and catch up with some of my state officer team members.

Quote of the day, "Keep on Keepin' on."



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**March 14, 2004**

Greetings from the sunny state of California! I have been lucky to spend almost two weeks in fabulous weather, first Hawaii and then Cali! Casey and I were able to work with Business and Industry leaders this past week and thank them for their support of the FFA. We visited with companies like Toyota, Ariat, Kubota, Robobank and many others. We started our week in Los Angeles and ended our week in San Francisco. Around the middle of the week we were able to take a small detour to New Port Beach and then travel to the Kraft plant in Tulare California. There we spent time learning about how cheese is made and meeting the great members of the Tulare area FFA chapters. In San Francisco I saw the Golden Gate Bridge (which is actually red), drove down one of the most crooked streets and visited Fisherman's Wharf. It was a busy week. I am now off to Washington, D.C., for national Agriculture week!

**March 8, 2004**

**Where I'll be next week: California**

Aloha!

My days since National FFA week have been flying by! I spent some time in Pennsylvania with my teammates preparing for the months to come and even stopped by Chocolate world in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Then it was off to the Hawaii State FFA Convention. My time spent there was short, but AMAZING! The Hawaii FFA members, state officers and staff were fantastic. I had the opportunity to work with the state officers: Godfrey, Denna, Albert, Jackie, Brenda and Danielle. They all did phenomenal work to make a successful convention. Highlights for me were judging the talent show, and getting to take part in it. I even got to hula with my very own grass skirt. Talent was exhibited in all Career Development Events and in some great breakout sessions! I also had the added bonus of walking on the beach in Waikiki! Mahalo or Thank you, Hawaii FFA for a wonderful first state convention. This next week I will spend in California doing business and industry tour number two with my partner in crime Casey the "Hoagmeister" Hogan.

**February 28, 2004**

National FFA Week was a great celebration of our organization. I was lucky enough to spend my time in two places. I started my week in Indianapolis, and spent time at the National FFA Center. I visited STAR Academy to recognize teachers as well as visit with students. My time was also spent meeting with the department of agriculture and the visitors bureau. The culminating event was a pancake breakfast at the FFA Center with the Eastern Hancock FFA. They even did a mock meeting presentation. From there I traveled to Washington, D.C. I spent Thursday with the two senators from Wyoming, Senator Mike Enzi and Senator Craig Thomas. I even heard Colin Powell testify in a senate hearing! Friday was spent meeting with various groups and speaking to the American Counselors Association. Lastly, was a reception with the ACTE. All in all, it was a great week to celebrate the FFA and to make its name known across the nation.

**February 23, 2004**



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

Business and Industry visit kick off has been a blast. To start work with Business and Industry visits, our team traveled to Longmont Colorado to visit Mr. John Rakestraw and his family. During our time there we went skiing at El Dora Ski Resort, viewed Rocky Mountain National Park and went to Estes Park, Colorado. In addition, we were treated to some good Colorado cooking.

Casey and I then headed to Tennessee for Business and Industry visits. We started in Memphis and moved to Jackson and then the honky tonk capital: Nashville! We were able to visit many sponsors of the FFA and thank them for their contributions. I was able to spend a majority of my time at the Tractor Supply Company convention. I had a wonderful time. I even met country star Darryl Worley and was able to get his autograph. Next, I'm off to Indiana and Washington D.C. for National FFA week. Thought of the week: Whatever it takes is EXACTLY what it takes!

**February 13, 2004**

HOWDY! It has been quite a long while since my last update! I was fortunate enough to spend the past two weeks in Japan. This was an AMAZING experience. It all started with a twelve-hour plane ride next to my favorite Texan, Casey Hogan. We arrived in Narita Japan to meet our translator, otherwise known as a humble, honest, decent tour guide—the famous Hiro. We spent the first five days of our adventure in Tokyo. Our first meal was tempura, or deep-fried seafood.

We were able to visit Mitsui, the kind sponsor of our experience and Nosan Agricultural High school. Nosan high school was a phenomenal agricultural school, where students grew their own crops and flowers for canning and floral arrangements. They even have a smoke house for their fabulous ham. They were so kind as to give us a sample of their apple jam, which was delicious. While in Tokyo we also were able to visit the fish market. It was an enormous market filled with any kind of edible ocean creature that you could imagine, everything from octopus to tuna! We even went out to breakfast and had sushi, which I like! Later that day we spent time at Mitsui and finished our day by going out with the junior executives of Mitsui to do karaoke. This was a wild and crazy time; I found that my teammates have quite the singing talent!

After Tokyo we headed to Kyoto. While there we were able to view many historic sites and enjoy the culture. We witnessed Shinto and Buddhist shrines, palaces other historical sites. Though we always made a little bit of time for shopping. With four girls on the team what do you expect? 100-yen shops were our favorite, these stores are the equivalent of an American dollar store, and we found four of these stores during our adventures! Thanks to our honest, humble decent tour guide we also visited Victor's Pearls, which houses some of the best pearls that few yen can buy!

In the agricultural sector we were able to view operations that produced lettuce, green onions, rice, cucumbers, orchids and the sweetest strawberries that I have ever tasted! Our last big endeavor was to visit Tajima High School, which was an agriculturally based school. While we were there I got to stay with my friend Miki and her family. I had a very traditional experience and learned a lot about Japanese culture from Miki and her family. Tajima High School has an extensive livestock program where chickens, hogs and beef are all produced. In fact their school has their own special breed of cattle. They also



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grow pears and various other vegetable crops. Classes consist of any skill from carving a chicken to sewing or cooking. All vocational skills are taught in a hands-on learning scenario, just like FFA, learning by doing!

Our last night in Japan was spent in Osaka, where we regrouped and prepared for a twelve-hour flight home. I was excited to return to the United States to share all of my experiences with my friends and family. I was able to spend about three days at home with my family and friends before heading back out to Indiana for business and industry tour kick off. We will spend the next few days in Denver before heading off to Tennessee with Casey and Jana Jaure, a regional director for the FFA Foundation.

See ya later!

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

**January 22, 2004**

Time flies when you are having fun! Here is a brief update on my travels. I left Indianapolis on Friday to spend a couple of days at home with my family in Wyoming. It was wonderful, I was able to bake with my mom and work on the ranch with my dad! Then began another adventure, to Washington, D.C., for the January Board of Directors meeting. This is an important time for our team to represent all members of the National FFA Organization. Some landmark decisions could be made at this meeting. Upon arrival in Washington, D.C., I was met with unfortunate news of my good friend Javier's accident. Our team is trying very hard to be strong for him through this difficult time. We just hope for a speedy and healthy recovery for him. Please keep him in your thoughts as he journeys through the recovery process. Next week we will head to Japan! This is an exciting learning opportunity for us; hopefully I will be able to try many new things, including sushi. It will definitely be a very cultural experience; I can't wait to share what we learn!

Cultural lesson of the day: Yoroshiku onegai shimasu = Nice to meet you.

Try this phrase on a new friend!

### **Where I'll be next week: Indianapolis**

**January 11, 2004**

Howdy y'all!

Yes, I may have adopted a southern accent after my week spent in Georgia. I had many firsts during my time spent in the south such as seeing a peach orchard, pecan orchard and cotton field. As well as enjoying some great southern hospitality and sweet tea, a new personal favorite of mine!!

This week started off early with a 3:30 a.m. wakeup to catch a plane to the great state of Georgia. Our team's journey started at Monroe Comprehensive High School where I had the privilege of meeting Crystal Peters and Chris Driscoll. Next we were off to the Southern Region Greenhand night. There, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Ben Scott from the Coffee FFA Chapter. I also met state officers Shelby and Ashley. The next day



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included visits to Ocilla at the Irwin County High School. That afternoon, we visited Jeff Davis Middle school, which has an impressive record of being named Outstanding Middle School, TWICE! That evening I had the opportunity to experience my first "frosted orange" which was delicious!

The next morning there was a wonderful breakfast reception with the students that attend Franklin County High School. I was able to spend some time with Leann, the chapter secretary. Then I was off to Stephens County Middle School. This was also a first experience for me, because I have never worked with the middle school program, it was wonderful! I also toured their cannery!

Our travels in the van with Mr. Lastly and Mr. Wilkinson next took us to the FFA-FCCLA, which is an AMAZING facility, there I had the pleasure of visiting with Dathan, Cliff and Cathy.

The next morning was an early one as we left to Atlanta to meet with the members of the school board and Commissioner of Agriculture Mr. Tommy Irvin. That afternoon I stopped by the Mary Persons High School to present a workshop.

In the evening I went to Camp John Hope, which actually used to be an NFA Camp. There I met Tammy and Crystal as well as state officers Hope and Rodney. It was a great experience.

On Friday, the team met with the Agriculture Educators of Georgia. The members of the Georgia FFA are very lucky because they have some wonderful Ag advisors.

My week spent in Georgia was full of learning experiences that I will treasure along with my many firsts and new friends.

Quote of the week "Your world is as big as you make it." Georgia Douglas Johnson

### Where I will be next week: Georgia January 4, 2003

Happy New Year! I hope that your winter holiday season was wonderful. I spent the majority of my time with family and friends back in Wyoming. Luckily I was good enough to have Santa make a stop at my home. New Year's Eve I made the trip back to Indianapolis to continue preparation for Experience State. My fellow teammates and I rang in the New Year in style! We are now preparing to head to Georgia on Monday. Georgia is an exciting opportunity for all of us to practice speaking and teaching and of course the coolest part: Hang out with FFA Members! I am very excited to meet members of the Georgia FFA Association. Luckily, last night my teammates and I had a great time at a Barn Dance held as a fundraiser for the State Officers with the Western Boone FFA Chapter. I had a great time playing cards with Elizabeth, Amber, Rachel and Taylor. State President Shane taught me a few new dance moves and it was great to meet and spend time with members! I can't wait to share all of my exciting experiences from time spent in Georgia.

Quote of the week:

**"There are two conditions in life: Accept things as they exist, or accept responsibility for changing them."**

--- Dr. Denis Waitley



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Where I will be next week: Wyoming  
December 22, 2003

Season's Greetings!

Hello! I am your newly elected National Secretary. It seems like just yesterday that my fellow officers and I were tapping the gavel to close the final session of convention. Since then, time has flown by! I spent the month of November finishing up on my classes. Then I traveled to Indianapolis for training during the month of December. I may have learned more this month, than I did during my entire semester of college! This month has been fast paced and chock full of learning opportunities, from classroom experience to actual teaching. I have come to understand the meaning of personal growth. This will be a year full of exciting opportunities for members across the nation and I look forward to sharing it with all of you.

A little history to share with you about me: I hail from the Cowboy state of Wyoming. There I live on a ranch and raise registered Hereford cattle. I have a true love for the agricultural way of life! In fact, one of my favorite parts of ranch life is calving season. During High School I was very active in extra-curricular activities including DECA, speech, volleyball and National Honor Society.

I am very excited to spend a year growing and learning with FFA members from across the nation. I hope your holiday season is filled with joy and blessed with peace. Merry Christmas!