



THE ALABAMA FFA REPORTER

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A Word From Our President

By Elizabeth Wilson

The moment was surreal as I walked out onto the stage at State Convention after hearing my name called. I thought wow! What an amazing opportunity I have been given to serve the outstanding members of the Alabama FFA Association. As children we are advised to surround ourselves with good people, and there are no better people to surround yourself with than FFA members! That is exactly what I got to do during my journey as a state officer. From conferences in Montgomery, Alabama to Daytona Beach, Florida to Washington, D.C., I have been surrounded by the corduroy and have loved it. Since the State Officer team and I tapped the big gavel to close state convention, we have had our foot on the gas pedal as we made a commitment to utilize our time to make a positive difference in the lives of FFA members across Alabama.

Throughout high school, students search to find that place in school where they feel comfortable, where they fit in. This tireless search lands thousands of students in the Agriscience classroom and they blossom into outstanding FFA members. Students are drawn to the multiple outlets FFA has to offer. From supervised agricultural experience projects to the opportunity to take advantage of leadership roles, FFA helps thousands of students and I have been no exception. I now have the opportunity to give back what FFA has given to me through my year of service to the Alabama FFA Association.

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For over 80 years, FFA has touched the hearts and minds of many. The FFA has made a positive impact on millions of people, and I am no exception. Throughout this year, I am looking forward to traveling the state of Alabama and meeting as many different FFA members and advisors as possible. Being awarded this office gives me a sense of unbreakable pride for the FFA organization, and I will always hold the FFA dear to my heart. This year the National FFA is promoting the theme of “Infinite Potential”. I hope this will not remain a one-year goal for FFA members, but it will become a lifetime commitment to continuously work to reach their “Infinite Potential”.



Uncle Carl

By Jackson Harris

Just the other day, I was looking through FFA Reporter issues from 1946. You see, my great uncle is Carl Watson, the Alabama FFA Vice President from 1946-1947. I looked over his submission to the publication with joy and excitement. Now it is my turn.

My year of service, so far, has been absolutely amazing and I have learned a lot. I have met friends from across America: South Carolina, Michigan, Montana, and Puerto Rico. I thought after a few years of being an FFA member I had developed a pretty good handle on what FFA is all about. I had seen the tens of thousands of blue jackets on the streets of Indianapolis in the fall and I had gotten grease up to my elbows restoring sixty-year-old tractors. I joined for the jacket and fell in love with it. It was not until this past month though that I truly learned what the jacket meant. Sure I knew the parts of the emblem, how many pins can be worn, and when the jacket design was adopted as official dress. What I did not know was just how much that corduroy means to the millions of people who have worn it.

A month ago, Uncle Carl suffered a major stroke. He was unable to communicate very well and things looked pretty bad. I went to see him with his brother, my grandfather, in the rehabilitation facility he had been admitted to. I wore my new State Association FFA jacket to show him and to help bring back the great memories I knew he had of his year of service. He was certainly glad to see it. I showed him the picture of our state officer team that includes four girls; he was impressed. As I told him how much our organization had grown and changed since 1946, I saw something special in his eye. When he looked at his name on the list of past state officers, his mind went back to being healthy and being eighteen at state convention in Birmingham. He grabbed the cuff of my jacket and managed to tell me that the FFA corduroy has, over the years, meant a lot to a lot of people. When the tears began to roll down his cheeks, I knew he was being completely sincere. He had strived for his infinite potential in FFA so many years ago and had truly developed an inborn fondness for that association which, even in his hour of discouragement, he could not deny. I would ask each of you FFA members to do the same. FFA holds opportunities that will last a lifetime, take advantage of them. Make Memories.



Above: Image from FFA Reporter Archives of 1946-1947 Alabama FFA State Officer Team

Right: 2010-2011 Alabama FFA State Officer Team working at NLCSO in Daytona, Florida



The Experience of a Lifetime

By Carley McWilliams

Nothing is more terrifying than standing backstage, listening for the words that will create a huge impact on your life. The days before had been filled with stress and anxiety as I had gone through tests and interviews. Then, after a day of waiting, it was finally time to hear the verdict. The announcer was halfway through the team and I was beginning to panic. The only thing that kept me from completely freaking out was the comedic relief of one of my best friends and teammate, Will Wright. Finally I heard my name. I had been named State Secretary. I couldn't stop grinning as I stood onstage while the remaining members of my team were called. Afterwards, we were given a short amount of time to celebrate with our family and chapters before being rushed upstairs to make plans for the upcoming year.

The summer was jam-packed with leadership workshops and opportunities. We started with SOLTS (State Officer Leadership Training Seminar) and BLAST-OFF (Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers) then continued on to larger workshops like NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers). Our summer activities came to an end with DOLC (District Officer Leadership Conference) and assisting the district officers with their COLWs (Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops). I hope many of you had the opportunity to attend this workshop. If not, I hope you will consider attending in the future since the district officers try to tailor the workshops to fit a chapter's needs. These workshops can help you to increase participation in your chapter and to make it the best it can be.

This year has already influenced me in ways I never could have imagined and it is only halfway over. Throughout the year, I have met some truly incredible individuals that have made an impact on not only their state associations, but me as well. I am happy to be

able to call many of these people my good friends. These friendships will last me a lifetime, long after my service to the Alabama FFA Association ends. The same can be said about the things I have learned from numerous workshops, from new friends, and from you. As members, you have the ability to influence me just as much, if not more, than I can influence you.

I hope all of you have a successful year and I look forward to meeting you!

That is why I hope to visit as many chapters as possible this year. My contact information, as well as the information for the rest of the officers, can be found on the site. I highly encourage you to have at least one of us visit your chapter this year. We are all more than happy to speak for any occasion and will choose a topic specific to your chapter. Also, we are trying to start a database containing chapter officer's contact information in an attempt to increase communication between state and chapter officers. Advisors, if you could e-mail this information to a state officer, that would be greatly appreciated. I hope all of you have a successful year and I look forward to meeting you!



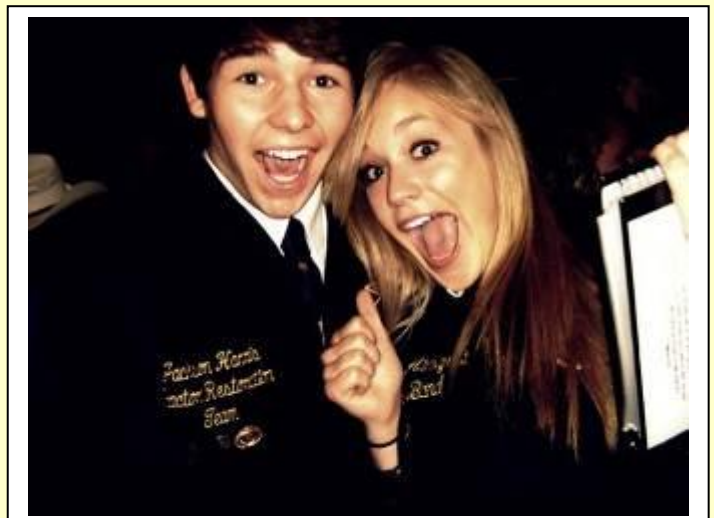
Wild

By Becky Almquist

This year has been absolutely WILD so far...that is an acronym to describe my year so far. W, is for weird. Whenever you are faced with a new experience, you may feel unsure. Now let me explain, this isn't unsure in a bad way, definitely a good way! I am not a native "Alabamian". My dad is a Lieutenant Colonel in the military, and needless to say, I lived in more places than my toes can count. I got into the FFA the second semester of my sophomore year in high school. Unsurprisingly, it was quite a culture shock. To cut a long story short, I started in string band and got hooked. My advisor said I should interview for state office, so I took the next step and interviewed at the district level. This decision led me to State Reporter. Right after I was elected I was thrown into all kinds of conferences and responsibilities I had never experienced before. At first, it caught me off guard. But I quickly adapted (with the help of some patient teammates) and I am loving where I am now. I stands for intelligence. When I got to BLAST Off and then NLCSO, I realized I was surrounded by five officers who really knew their stuff. Throughout our training I learned how to be a true advocate for agriculture and the FFA. Third in line we have, L stands for love. But really, I mean it. Will, Elizabeth, Carley, Allison, and Jackson have been the best teammates I could ever ask for. I can tell

them anything and they are always there to give advice and support. Allison is always there to give much needed advice. Carley is always there for a great discussion around the business table. Will never fails at not laughing at my wonderful jokes. And I've got Jackson, my fellow musician who never fails to make me aware of my terrible taste in music. And then there is Elizabeth, who loves to fall asleep early with me and steal my breakfast. Through thick and then, I know these kids have my back, and I will never forget them. Last but not least we arrive at the letter D. D stands for discovery. Through my time as a state officer, I've discovered myself. I've discovered how much I enjoy meeting people, going to and conducting conferences. Helping people discover how to "Be a light" in their lives. Being a state officer is WILD, and I LOVE IT!

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and honor your father in heaven." - Matthew 5:16



THE ALABAMA REPORTER**STATE OFFICERS 2010-2011**

President	Elizabeth Wilson Jacksonville Chapter
Vice President.....	Jackson Harris Eufaula Chapter
Secretary	Carley McWilliams McAdory Chapter
Treasurer	Allison Meeks Geraldine Chapter
Reporter	Becky Almquist Enterprise Chapter
Sentinel	Will Wright Rogersville Chapter

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State Advisor	Collie Wells
Exec. Secretary.....	Jacob Davis
Ed. Specialist.....	Petro Johnson
Ed. Specialist.....	Philip Paramore
Graphic Arts.....	Kenny Boyd
Secretary	Pam Kilpatrick

Alabama Department of Education

State Superintendent	Joseph B. Morton
Deputy Superintendent	Eddie R. Johnson
Career/Tech Director.....	Sherry A. Key

Full Speed Ahead

By Will Wright

I was standing in a dimly lit area backstage at the previous state FFA convention when Joey Stabler, the 2009-2010 Alabama FFA Association State Sentinel, called out my name to fulfill his duties for the upcoming year. I remember standing there on stage in front of all the members and guests present and thinking to myself, "Wow! It's all over, I've made it!" Now looking back on that memorable experience I realize it definitely wasn't over; it had merely just begun. From that moment on it was full speed ahead. I think since the state convention there have been two main factors that have helped to make me the state officer I am today. First is within the first month of being a state officer I had to go to three different conferences which required me to travel almost 2,000 miles. These conferences helped to bring our state officer team closer together and further

An Amazing Journey

By Allison Meeks

I can remember the terrifying music being played right before the Alabama FFA State officer team was announced. That was the beginning of an amazing journey. Being apart of this awesome team has brought me to places I'd never been able to go, met people I would have never met, and has taught me things I would have never learned. Sleepless nights and early mornings are some of my fondest memories from this summer and year as State Treasurer. I have had the privilege of meeting FFA members from around this state and country. The passion that these FFA members have is truly inspiring.

Workshops to meetings, every moment has been unforgettable. The officer team and I have been so fortunate to attend The National FFA Convention, Disney World, and several other workshops during the summer and this year's first semester of school through the FFA. To lead others is to influence. The FFA members I've been able to meet have been leaders. They make a positive impact on everyone that surrounds them. I am so blessed to be considered an FFA member. Thank you Alabama FFA for allowing me the opportunity to serve you this year. You have made this unfinished journey worthwhile.

teach us the individual skills needed to become a successful state officer. Throughout this year I have taken full advantage of all of the knowledge I have gained from these conferences.

The second very important resource for me, throughout my term so far, has been one that no other Alabama State FFA Officer has ever been able to truly take advantage of before. This very valuable resource is the Auburn University Collegiate FFA. Being a student at Auburn University and a member of their collegiate FFA has

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definitely aided me the most during my year as a state officer. As a state officer I have had a part in teaching twenty-five individual leadership workshops, with almost half of those coming directly from my affiliation with the collegiate FFA. Since I am the first state officer from Alabama that is a college student, I feel it is necessary to do all I can to prove we made the right decision, as an association, to allow collegiate state FFA officers. I plan to continue my involvement with the collegiate FFA so I can help open doors and lay down a foundation for future collegiate state FFA officers to build on and become more successful.

