It almost doesn’t seem possible to have been a year since I was preparing for state interviews. This revelation came to me last night as I was helping a friend prepare for them. A year ago, I was sitting in her shoes scared to death and asking myself so many questions. What if I had a bad day? What if I forgot all I had studied? What if I just wasn’t good enough? When I looked at her I knew she was asking herself those very same questions.

Going through those interviews impacted my life more than any other single experience I have ever been through, even if I had not gotten an office. Now I am president of the Alabama FFA, but I was almost too afraid to even run for an office. I had already printed my application with the “District Only” box marked when my best friend made me reconsider my decision. All she had to say was, “Why not go for state?” We flipped a coin and reprinted the application. I am so thankful that she questioned me that day. You will never know how far you can fly until you spread your wings and you should never let the fear of falling keep you from spreading them in the first place. To all those running for office this year, congratulations on being brave enough to try, and the best of luck during interviews. To anyone considering a run in the future, as Nike says, “Just do it!” Take the chance; win or lose, I guarantee that you will not regret it.

After I retire from office, I will have gone over 10,000 miles and have probably met nearly as many people. I know at least one person from every state in the entire nation. My life has changed for the better because I was willing to take a chance. I leave you with the following challenge: Alabama FFA, spread your wings!!!

TRAVIS MCGOWIN
State Vice President

At the Alabama State FFA Convention, FFA members will have the opportunity to view some of the greatest career programs that Auburn University has to offer. I remember when I made my first visit to Auburn University for the State FFA Convention. My FFA Chapter voted and made the choice to visit the veterinary section of the university. It was an awesome experience! I remember walking into the veterinary hospital and thinking about how it looked just like a real hospital for humans. My chapter also visited the large animal section of the hospital. It was the first time I had ever seen a walk-in X-Ray machine. I, at the
time, did not even know that kind of technology existed in the veterinary world. When your FFA chapter has a chance to select which visit they would like to attend, choose a tour that will leave you well informed about that specific field of study. Auburn University is at the top of the educational world, and I hope that you will keep your eyes and ears open while making the visits. You will learn something!

THE ALABAMA REPORTER
2006-2007 State Officers
President.............. Salora Wright
Clements Chapter
Vice President....... Travis McGowin
Billingsley Chapter
Secretary.......... W. Brandon Smith
Slocomb Chapter
Treasurer ............. Jerika Buttram
Geraldine Chapter
Reporter .............. Justin Posey
Montevallo Chapter
Sentinel .......... Caleb Colquitt
Marbury Chapter
State Advisor ........ Troy D. Newton
Alabama Department of Education
Exec. Secretary....... Jacob Davis
Alabama Department of Education
Staff
Ed. Specialist......... Bobby Thomas
Ed. Specialist........ Philip Paramore
Graphic Arts............ Kenny Boyd
Admin. Asst. .......... Pam Kilpatrick
Alabama Department of Education

W. BRANDON SMITH
State Secretary
It has been amazing to work for you throughout this past year. I have had the most wonderful experiences traveling and meeting so many different people; but, Elvis hasn’t left the building yet! You will all get to see my smiling face one last time at this year’s state convention at Auburn University in June.

Speaking of which, I would like to dedicate my last written correspondence to your future leaders, the state officer candidates. You are the cream of the crop, the very fruit of vine in our association. You may consider it a high honor to make it so far as to be one of the final 12 members that vie for those six coveted positions.

These candidates, though they may sit in an honored position, have a long row to hoe, so to speak. They will spend these next short weeks reading every piece of literature they ever thought may bear the letters F-F-A. You will know more about the avian influenza than the law allows and so much about BSE that you think you may have it. In the end, however, it will all pay off.

I have had the privilege over my FFA career to meet many of these officer candidates in person, and I must say they are quite impressive. They are well-rounded, intelligent, and all-around morally sound individuals. They are not, however, what I, as a freshman, imagined them to be: celebrities on a pedestal. These few individuals are common, everyday students who show an interest in the future of agriculture and agribusiness that is so strong it cannot be ignored. Don’t get me wrong: not just anyone can give up one year of their life to spend in service to this grand organization, but it doesn’t take Superman to do the job. I know this because if it did, they wouldn’t have picked me.

The young men and women who strive to this level of excellence are to be commended by the over 14,000 of you who stand behind them in pushing our name to the glory of the organization. I invite you to come and say farewell to a group whose time is ending and welcome a new set of officers whose time is just beginning. I hope to see each and every one of you at the Alabama FFA Convention in Auburn on June 6-8. May all your goals be achieved in due time.

JERIKA
BUTTRAM
State Treasurer
Throughout my year as the Alabama FFA State Treasurer, I have been asked the same question over and over again, “What is it like to be a state officer?” The only answer I have ever been able to give to that question is: It is one of the best opportunities you could ever have. I have been able to travel to a lot of different places and meet some pretty awesome people. I have made new friends from different states and have grown so much closer to my fellow state officers. I have been able to broaden my skills as a speaker and negotiator. I have met with many public officials and political figures. Most of all, I have grown as a person. The experiences I have gone through have changed my outlook on life. The most important things I have learned are to keep your mind open to new ideas and to never forget who you are or where you came from. Thank you Alabama FFA for a great year of service!!

JUSTIN POSEY
State Reporter
Throughout the past year I have had the awesome opportunity to meet hundreds of FFA members from across the state. Through chapter visits, I was able to meet many new people and make
**Wednesday, June 6**

2:00 p.m. OPENING SESSION

Opening Ceremony
Presiding Officer – Salora Wright, President
National Anthem - Randy Owen (Invited)
Invocation – Jordan Hamilton, Sand Rock
Greetings – Jennifer Himburg, National FFA Southern Region Vice President, Ariton, Alabama
Introduction of State & National Officer Candidates
Introduction of 06-07 District Officers
Wall of Honor Inductees—Paul Pinyan

**CDE Awards** –
Parliamentary Procedure
Prepared Public Speaking
1st Place Public Speaking Winner
Keynote Speaker – Gary Claxton, “The Mouth of the South”
Closing Ceremony
Adjourn

Delegate Business Session immediately following the opening session in the Greg Pratt Room.

7:30 p.m. SECOND SESSION

Opening Ceremony
Presiding Officer - Travis McGowin, Vice President
National Chapter Awards
Honor Parents of State Officers
Future Farmer/Agribusinessman of the Year Award
Retiring Address - Jerika Buttram, Treasurer
Mindy Stringer Memorial Scholarship Award
Honorary Advisors of State Officers Address - Jennifer Himburg
National FFA Southern Region Vice President, Ariton, Alabama
Retiring Address - Caleb Colquitt, Sentinel
Awards - String Band Contest
Entertainment - 1st Place String Band
Closing Ceremony
Adjourn

**Thursday, June 7**

8:30 a.m. THIRD SESSION

Opening Ceremony
Presiding Officers - Jerika Buttram, Treasurer
Justin Posey, Reporter
Crime Prevention Awards
100% Chapter Membership Awards
M. K. Heath Animal Health Award
Retiring Address - Brandon Smith, Secretary

**CDE Awards**—

**Proficiency Awards** -

Closing Ceremony
Adjourn

1:00 P.M. Quartet Contest
Tours—Auburn University

7:30 p.m. FOURTH SESSION

Presiding Officer – Brandon Smith, Secretary
Keynote Address - Dr. Larry Case, National FFA Advisor
Star Farmer Ceremony
Retiring Address - Justin Posey, Reporter
Honorary State FFA Degrees
Miss Alabama Agriculture – Elizabeth Grimes
Retiring Address - Travis McGowin, Vice President

Awards – Quartet Contest
Entertainment - 1st Place Quartet
Closing Ceremony
Adjourn

**Friday, June 8**

8:30 a.m. FIFTH SESSION

Opening Ceremony
Presiding Officer – Caleb Colquitt, Sentinel
State Officers’ Report
Retiring Address - Salora Wright, President
Election of Officers
Installation of State Officers
State FFA Degree Ceremony
Closing Ceremony
Adjourn
CALEB COLQUITT
State Sentinel

One of my favorite pastimes is eating. I love to eat all kinds of different foods. I, not unlike most teenage boys, would say one of my favorites is beef. FFA people love to eat, because we feed the rest of the world. We figure that since we provide it, we can indulge some too. But very little food is even edible much less tasty without proper preparation. Take a burger, for instance. A great burger needs the meat, lettuce, tomato, pickles, cheese, a bun, and has to be grilled to a preferred temperature for a specific time. But, do you know what’s even better than the perfect burger? The 78th Annual Alabama FFA State Convention.

Look at all of the events that go into those three days. We have awesome speakers, a career show, student recognition, sessions, retiring addresses, and installment of the new state officers. In many ways, state convention is like a burger. The speakers are like lettuce. Lots of people might think listening to a speaker is dull, but not FFA members. Many of them have done their share of speaking, so they respect other speakers. Nobody wants dry brown lettuce and nobody will listen to a dull speaker. That’s why FFA only gets the best for its members. To them, speakers aren’t boring. They are both fun and good for them at the same time, much like lettuce. The career show is a lot like tomatoes. The tomato adds a zingy flavor and makes the burger appealing and colorful. The career show does just that. It adds a twist and purpose to the convention. You can view both traditional and non-traditional agricultural opportunities out there for young people. Retiring addresses are like pickles. Although they are a little sour because the officer is leaving, it still leaves an aftertaste that sticks with you for a long time. They are sad, but there’s a treasure trove of good contained in them. The installment of the new state officers can be equated to cheese. Hot and melted off the grill, it gives the sense of freshness and the start of something good. Let’s face it, the cheese is what turns a hamburger into a cheeseburger. Its not that the old state officers weren’t good, but everything needs a fresh start eventually. The sessions are like the bun. They provide structure and contain a little bit of all the ingredients in it. In the sessions there are retiring addresses, speakers, student awards, and installment of the next generation of state officers. Just like a burger with no bun, the convention would be a big sloppy mess without the sessions. Finally, the burger itself is like the contests and awards. Contest and awards started the convention, because to start with that’s all the convention was. The contests and awards are the beef; the reason we’re there. Contests and awards are so varied and different. There’s everything from public speaking to our star farmers. It all works together to better the participants, the organization, and the field of agriculture. It takes a large amount of toil and skill to even reach the state level, much less win it. The contests and awards are the centerfold of the convention.

The ingredients of a burger can be the best money can buy, but without the proper grilling time, temperature, and someone to cook it, it’s nothing but a pile of raw ground beef, a bun, and some random toppings. For the correct temperature to be obtained to cook the burger, it needs to be in a good grill. Why not Auburn? It has all the facilities for the career development events (CDEs) to cook while the state officer candidates melt on top. As for the temperature, you need a good fire. FFA members have plenty of fire and excitement to pump up the convention. Only one question is left: who’s cooking this burger? It’s the advisors, of course. Advisors stay up late, rise early, and spend tireless hours working on CDE’s, state officer candidates, and presentations to make sure everything is just right. So this summer head to Auburn, get your advisor to cook up some involvement, throw on some state officer installments, some speakers, a career show, and wrap it all up in some awesome sessions. Have it all grilled to perfection by the passionate fire of enthusiasm burning inside all the FFA members attending; and what do you get? The answer is the best Alabama FFA State Convention ever. I’ll see you there!

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or age. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8444.