



The Alabama FFA REPORTER

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James Paul Bailey
State President

WOW! What a year this has been. June 8th, 2007, I was sitting in the convention center full of emotions and scared to death. It was on that day that I was elected to serve as an Alabama state FFA officer! Since that day I have traveled countless miles throughout the country and met some of the coolest people in the world. From meeting the President of the United States to hanging out with a national FFA officer in Helen, Georgia, at a time when I should have been in bed. As I look back on my year, there are so many stories to tell. Like the time I acted like I didn't have any form of identification when entering the U. S. Department of Education. Thankfully, I didn't get into a lot of trouble. I just received a warning from a national FFA staff member that you don't joke around in a place like that. There was also the time that Scottie and I took basically everything out of Brendon's VERY organized suitcase. We don't suggest that to any of you. Through all of the fun times, I have had various learning experiences. These trips have all prepared me for the 79th Annual State FFA Convention! I hope that you are making plans to attend this year's convention. The State Officers and I are extremely excited about this year's convention and hope that you will have a great time at beautiful Auburn University!



McKenzie Crabtree
State Vice President

"Do you ever think about how lucky we are?" I asked. "Depends on what you mean." "Well, I was thinking today about how truly lucky we are to be alive, how truly lucky we are that we were raised to be good and decent people, and most important how truly lucky we are that we get an opportunity to do things other people dream about." "I think about that all the time," was the reply I received.

The great thing about this conversation between my friend, Sam, and I is that I honestly realized that I have power. It is not because of an office I have held or which district I came from or even who my parents are, it is because I realized that each one of us has found the courage to start heading down the path toward our futures.

And with that courage comes great power, the power it takes to do anything imaginable. Go jump off an airplane, we can! Go swim with the sharks, we can! Be President of the United States of America, WE CAN!

Each of us has a purpose. We were sent here for a reason, and we are members of this great organization to help us achieve something.

I have come to the realization that it is important to do what is important to you. For example, as I was sitting in my chemistry class I started to think about all the homework that we had been given the night before and thought to myself, "teachers just don't understand." But what do the majority of teachers not understand? I ask my friends this often and the usual reply is "because they don't have a life and don't want us to have one either." But what we sometimes forget is that maybe our teachers are looking past books, maybe they are looking to develop our special qualities that help us to shine our own unique brilliant light among our fellow classmates. I firmly believe that school is meant to give us important life experiences, not so much as to teach us subjects (although they are important, too). My history teacher always makes comments like "it's all part of the high school experience."



2007-2008 STATE FFA OFFICER TEAM

L to R, Vice President - McKenzie Crabtree, Reporter - Melody Murrell, Secretary - Brendon Boyd, President - James Paul Bailey, Sentinel - Leah Blalock, and Treasurer - Scottie Hunter

THE ALABAMA REPORTER

STATE OFFICERS 2007-2008

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Vice President **McKenzie Crabtree**
East Limestone Chapter
Secretary **Brendon Boyd**
Marbury Chapter
Treasurer **Scottie Hunter**
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State Advisor *Troy D. Newton*
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When you look back on high school at your 20-year reunion, will you remember how to balance chemical equations or will you remember the friends you made and the mistakes that you learned from?

As members of the greatest youth leadership organization in the world, what is it that we are called to accomplish? Nothing at all. FFA, like high school, is meant to give you valuable experience needed to fulfill the your personal goals.

The convention theme makes me think even more, Blue Jackets/Bright Futures. Blue Jackets unite individuals to one organization that has the same goal but is reached in different ways. You have to search within yourself to discover what is important to you and go after it with all of your might. Use the experiences you were given through the FFA and through the thirteen years of schooling to make your dreams a reality.

This year at the Alabama FFA State Convention you will make new friends; learn from your mistakes; and, most importantly, experience it. Experience the way your heart jumps when you hear the songs blaring through the speakers. Let yourself not just hear the words spoken but listen to the words that are spoken. Take the time to take things slow and relax. Do not walk away from this convention wishing that you should have taken more time to experience the convention; after all, life is too short not to enjoy yourself.

One day my principal started talking to me in the hallway about his high school days. He said one thing that has stuck with me

throughout this year. He told me that his favorite t-shirt said, "Sleep when I'm dead." My mind immediately went to the song by Bon Jovi but then he went on to say, "McKenzie, when you look back on your years you're not going to wish you took more time to sleep." So I leave you with his words of wisdom. I hope that you use them to make the most of your convention and the most of your life as well. "Like sand through an hour glass, these are the days of our lives."



Brendon Boyd
State Secretary

Few words can come close to describing the roller-coaster ride I've experienced this year serving as the 2007-2008 Alabama State FFA Secretary. From the elation of being called out on stage for the first time to the long nights in hotel rooms planning various events, this year of service to the Alabama FFA Association and its members has been an incredible experience. Along the journey, I spoke to numerous chapters and conducted countless workshops, but most importantly I met five of my best friends in the entire world. Over the past year, my fellow state officers and I have grown from almost complete strangers to practically family. There isn't one of my teammates that I can't count on to do anything for me. Whether it's calling James Paul or McKenzie for advice, counting on Scottie or Melody to get a good laugh, or Leah always sticking up for me when the others decide it's national Bash-on-Brendon Day, these guys always come through. It's amazing how close you can get to someone in such a short time.

To all you members out there, especially young ones, I encourage you to become active in your local FFA chapters. Find your niche in the chapter; find what you are good at. If nothing else, I can promise you that you will gain memories and friendships that will last you a lifetime.

I would like to thank the Alabama FFA Association for giving me this indescribable opportunity to give back to the organization that has given me so much. Without FFA I would be a shy, meek little person that would be scared to express my opinion. FFA has given me a voice and has truly shifted my life in a positive direction. Nothing can be truer about the FFA than its mission statement: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. The

National FFA Organization has definitely made a positive difference in my life, and will continue to have the same impact in the lives of countless others.



Scottie Hunter
State Treasurer

Wow! It doesn't seem like a year has gone by since the 78th State FFA Convention. It seems like just yesterday that my name was called out at the 5th Session of that convention, and I embarked on an amazing adventure that was my year as the 07-08 State Treasurer. I have had the time of my life serving you, and as I look back on this year, I can remember nothing but constant laughs, inside jokes, late nights, and early mornings.

The State FFA Convention is always the highlight of the year for me. There are GREAT SPEAKERS, TALENTED PERFORMERS, CDEs, newly elected state officers, and not to mention all the LOUD MUSIC that you can handle. This year's convention will be bittersweet for me because at the close of the 5th session, I will embark on another adventure that will be my life as a PSO. This adventure will not be a lonely one, because I will embark on it with five of the most influential individuals that I have ever met, the 07-08 Alabama State Officer Team.

Leah Blalock. She is so much fun to be around. She always has a funny story to tell and a ring tone to share. The party doesn't start until Leah arrives.

Melody Murrell. Some may know her as Pocahontas, but I know I speak for Brendon and James Paul when I say that she will always be known as towel girl. Melody is always kind and is the best awkward turtle maker that I know.

McKenzie Crabtree. She is very inquisitive and is always up for learning something new. You can always get McKenzie to make you a flip chart when no one else wants to do it. She always has waitressing tips to share with anyone who will listen, and you can always find her in her matching, pink "jammers" as she calls them.

Brendon Boyd. What can I say? Brendon is THE COMPETITOR. Whether it is battling out a football game on the PS2 or having an Orange Juice drinking race, you can always find Brendon competing. He is also known as MR. STRUCTURE or THE ORGANIZER. I would have to say that he is THE neatest person on the team. He's the kind of person that believes that everything has its place, which means that there's a lot

PROGRAM
79th ANNUAL ALABAMA STATE FFA CONVENTION
Auburn University Student Activities Center
June 3 - 6, 2008

Wednesday, June 4

2:00 p.m.

OPENING SESSION

Opening Ceremony

Presiding Officer – James Paul Bailey, President

National Anthem - Auburn Pep Band

Invocation – Salora Wright, Clements

Greetings – Becky Sullivan,
 National FFA Secretary,
 Spring Hill, Kansas

**Introduction of 07-08 State & National
 Officer Candidates**

Introduction of 07-08 District Officers

Wall of Honor Inductees—

Roger Waller

CDE Awards –

Parliamentary Procedure

Prepared Public Speaking

1st Place Public Speaking Winner

Keynote Speaker –

Patrick Grady

Awards - String Band Contest

Entertainment - 1st Place String Band

Closing Ceremony

Adjourn



Delegate Business Session immediately following the opening session on the convention floor.

7:30 p.m.

SECOND SESSION

Opening Ceremony

Presiding Officer - McKenzie Crabtree, Vice President

National Chapter Awards

Honor Parents of State Officers

**Future Farmer/Agribusinessman
 of the Year Award**

Retiring Address - Scottie Hunter, Treasurer

Mindy Stringer Memorial Scholarship Award

Honor Advisors of State Officers

Retiring Address - Brendon Boyd, Secretary

Hypnotist Show - Patrick Grady

Closing Ceremony

Adjourn



Thursday, June 5

8:30 a.m.

THIRD SESSION

Opening Ceremony

Presiding Officers - Scottie Hunter, Treasurer
 Leah Blalock, Sentinel

Crime Prevention Awards

100% Chapter Membership Awards

M. K. Heath Animal Health Award

Retiring Address - Leah Blalock, Sentinel

CDE Awards—

Ag Construction & Maintenance, Agricultural Mechanics, Creed Speaking, Dairy Cattle Evaluation, Extemporaneous Speaking, Floriculture, Forestry, Horse Judging, Land Evaluation, Livestock Evaluation, Nursery & Landscape, Poultry Evaluation, Safe Tractor Driving, and Small Engines

Proficiency Awards -

Agricultural Mechanics, Agricultural Sales/Service, Beef Production, Diversified Crop Production, Environmental Science & Natural Resources Management, Equine Science, Floriculture, Forest Management, Fruit/Vegetable Production, Landscape Management, Nursery Operations, Poultry Production, Sheep Production, Specialty Animal Production, Swine Production, Turf Grass Management, Wildlife Management, and Specialty Proficiency Areas.

Quartet Contest

Closing Ceremony

Adjourn

12:30 p.m.

FFA Social - Stanley Wilson Beef Teaching Unit

7:30 p.m.

FOURTH SESSION

Presiding Officer – Brendon Boyd, Secretary

Address - Troy Newton, State FFA Advisor

Star Farmer Ceremony

Retiring Address - Melody Murrell, Reporter

Address - Becky Sullivan

National FFA Secretary,

Spring Hill, Kansas

Honorary State FFA Degrees

Retiring Address - McKenzie Crabtree, Vice President

Awards – Quartet Contest

Entertainment - 1st Place Quartet

Closing Ceremony

Adjourn



Friday, June 6

8:30 a.m.

FIFTH SESSION

Opening Ceremony

Presiding Officer – Melody Murrell, Reporter

State Officers' Report

Retiring Address - James Paul Bailey, President

Election of Officers

State FFA Degree Ceremony

Installation of State Officers



of fun to be had by giving his things a new place.

James Paul Bailey. James Paul and I are practical joke partners in crime. Wherever there is a practical joke to be played, there's a James Paul Bailey. From messing with Brendon's things to pretending that we ate all of the marshmallows before our workshop at JLDC, James Paul and I are always eager to play a practical joke and get a good laugh.

So as you can see, I have truly enjoyed my year as an Alabama State Officer. I sincerely appreciate the opportunities that have been afforded me as an officer in this organization. I will never forget all of the wonderful memories that make up Alabama FFA's 79th year.



Melody Murrell State Reporter

From the moment I heard the words "Your 2007-2008 State Reporter is Melody Murrell," I've been on a non-stop, life-changing journey. Being in this position of leadership is an amazing opportunity that I never dreamed could happen. From the BLAST Off Leadership Conference, to the National Convention, every moment has been unforgettable. I've been able to experience so many incredible moments and opportunities, and it's truly an honor to be able to offer my service to each and every member.

When you spend as much time with a group of people as I have with the five other state officers, you become more than a team, more than friends. You become a family in a way. There are great moments, and then of course there are always those moments when you just want to hit someone. But we're always able to overlook the bad times and remember the great times, the unforgettable times. I feel privileged to be able to serve with this group of people, and they all mean more to me than I could ever put into words.

This year I've worked harder and been under more stress than I ever thought possible. I've been challenged in many different ways and pushed almost to the limit more than once. But it's all been worth it. I will never be able to express enough how grateful I am for the opportunities that I've been given and the experiences I've been a



part of. The passion I feel for this organization, what it stands for, and the difference that it makes in the lives of students across the state and nation is something that I hope more and more students become aware of. I look forward to seeing you all at state convention!



Leah Blalock State Sentinel

As my year as a state officer comes to an end, I can't help but to reminisce on everything that has happened this year. While every single thing that I have done has made an extreme influence in my life, the one day that sticks out in my mind the most is the day that I met my fellow officers, or as I consider them now, my second family.

On June 8, 2007, I was the first to walk across that stage as a part of the 2007-2008 Alabama State FFA Officer Team. I will admit that I was extremely nervous when I learned who my fellow team members seeing as how James Paul Bailey, our state president, hugged everyone else... except me. But, no hard feelings. Also, I was the only officer from the South District. So, of course I was curious as to how things would work out with me and my other team mates.

The first time we all got together, I was extremely nervous. I didn't know how things would work out, but we all acted like we had been lifelong friends. I knew at this instance that we would be closer than family, even though of the distance between each of our homes.

James Paul Bailey is the practical joker. He is always working to make someone laugh and to meet new people. He is also an avid procrastinator as well as the most disorganized person I've ever met. He loves to get everything done at the last minute and make completely random phone calls to his fellow officers at 3 a.m.

McKenzie Crabtree, the outspoken one. When she gets an idea, she's not afraid to run with it. She loves structure and making flip charts. Everyone also gets a kick when hearing her version of the word "VietNAAAAAMMM." She is also oh so proud of her southern heritage and her matching belt, cell phone holder, and purse.

Brendon Boyd, the organizer. He was the one all of the officers depended on



to read over any speech and to get all our data organized. He was also the one I leaned on the most because he was my mumble and I took up for him every time there were opposing sides on an issue.

Scottie Hunter, the friend. Scottie was the one guy that I could always depend on to follow with my jokes and be there to listen to my problems. It was also great to hear Scottie's phone inform all of us the night before National Convention that "Larry Case, Mother Theresa, and Leslie Applegate" were calling his phone.

Melody Murrell, the only one in the group that drives a car, but we love her regardless. She was the one that had the same interest in music, clothes, and shoes as I did. She always listened when I had a problem and was always there to help me out when I needed something. I also had the honor to introduce her to POM, a pomegranate juice in the coolest bottle ever, which she spilled in her purse on the first day.

Last but not least. Me, Leah Blalock, the loud one. I loved to make my team members laugh and keep them guessing with my hair color changing every time we got together for a meeting. I also loved to entertain with my funny stories, and it seems I was always the one bringing the hairbrush, gum, or pen to a meeting.

At the start of this year, I was so nervous to meet these new people and be on a team with them, and now as my year with them comes to an end, I am so sad that we will not meet up randomly anymore and have state officer quartet, and there will be no more times to joke about our many leather-bound books. But, to everyone that is a member this year, thanks for all of your support, and I couldn't imagine representing another state. I love you all and look forward to meeting many more of you throughout convention. God Bless.

**Touch the world
one student at a time.**



Teach Agriscience!