



# THE ALABAMA FFA REPORTER

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# STEP UP STAND OUT



**Zachary Jones**  
State President

Wow! It does not seem possible that time has passed as fast as it has this year. The old saying, "time flies when you are having fun" definitely applies to my experience as a State FFA Officer. Since my first day as State President, I have had more fun than ever before. I will never forget the workshops, training, meeting lots of important people (like President George W. Bush and Governor Bob Riley), meeting with members from every state and Puerto Rico, and making new friends with you—the amazing members and advisors of Alabama FFA. During my year of service, I have traveled over 20,000 miles and have had the opportunity to visit 20+ chapters all around our great state. I have often driven from one side of the state to the other, before sunrise or in the pouring rain, but with a smile on my face, to meet with you. I have learned that

I truly love what I do and have learned that I love FFA more than even I thought was possible.

My year of service as state president is quickly coming to a close with the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Alabama State FFA Convention in June. As I begin to reflect on this year, I realize that it has been a year of change and hopefully many new things will come out of what we have done this year. One such change is that, for the first time in over 30 years, Alabama FFA has an active Alumni affiliate. This is an accomplishment I am quite proud of our state for achieving. Yes, this year Alabama FFA has been stepping up and standing out in this, its 80<sup>th</sup> year.

Thank you so much for giving me this wonderful opportunity to serve the Alabama Association. It has truly been the experience of a lifetime. If I can ever be of any service to you, please remember that I am just a phone call or a few clicks of the mouse away.



**Brandy Feltman**  
State Vice President

Who would have ever known that a girl that wasn't even signed up for an Ag class, and had no interest being in one at one time, would be a state officer? Most of you do not know but I never signed up for an Ag class; I was placed in there because of a schedule mishap in the seventh grade. It was a time that I thought was possibly the worst thing that could have ever happened to me, but I look back and it was by far the best.

I looked up to chapter officers and thought in my mind I would give anything to be just like all of them, but thought I never



**2008-2009 STATE FFA OFFICER TEAM**

L to R, Sentinel - Anna Leigh Peek, Secretary - Michelle Vashbinder, Vice President - Brandy Feltman, Treasurer - Raven Buchanan, and President - Zachary Jones

# THE ALABAMA REPORTER

## STATE OFFICERS 2008-2009

President..... **Zachary Jones**  
Spring Garden Chapter  
Vice President..... **Brandy Feltman**  
Oakman Chapter  
Secretary ..... **Michelle Vasbinder**  
Enterprise Chapter  
Treasurer ..... **Raven Buchanan**  
Wilcox Central Chapter  
Sentinel ..... **Anna Leigh Peek**  
Daphne Chapter

### Alabama Department of Education

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

### Agriscience State Staff

State Advisor ..... **Mickey Humphries**  
Exec. Secretary..... **Jacob Davis**  
Ed. Specialist ..... **Philip Paramore**  
Ed. Specialist ..... **Petro Johnson**  
Graphic Arts..... **Kenny Boyd**  
Secretary..... **Pam Kilpatrick**

could. I met district officers who gave the most inspiring speeches I have ever heard, but thought in my mind I was too shy. I met state officers who not only believed in themselves, but in the dreams of others. When I would meet district and state officers it would put butterflies in my stomach, because I always wanted to make sure I said the right thing. These were kids that I looked up to that I now call some of my best friends.

My chance of being in an Ag class, being a chapter much less a district and state officer, was slim to none. If you had asked me six years ago if I thought I would be the person I am today, I would have to say no. The FFA taught me to never doubt myself and to dream big. It taught me to live the life of my dreams. As my year as state officer is almost over, I would have to say that this has truly been the time of my life. Alabama FFA has taught me about agriculture and leadership, but more so about myself and believing in my dreams. I want to let everyone know that anything is possible and that it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from everyone has the potential to make their dreams come true.

This year as a state officer I have traveled many miles, given many speeches, and met many people who I will never forget. I

truly realize the importance of agriculture in each of our lives. It seems like just yesterday I received my first jacket, ran for district interviews, and ran across that stage as a state officer. June 6, 2008, has impacted my life for the better, and let me know that anything is possible. I challenge you to "Step Up and Stand Out" because in life you have to be different and stand up for what you believe in, even if it means standing alone. I want to wish you all good luck; whether it be in interviews, tests, or even in life. Never forget to dream big!



**Michelle Vasbinder**  
State Secretary

Hello Alabama FFA! We are amidst such an exciting time of year. I'm so happy I shared this special journey with you. I was so honored this year to serve the great state of Alabama and the FFA as your state secretary. There is no way I can summarize my entire year in one short article. From the moment I heard, "From the Enterprise FFA chapter!" I have had so many special moments. I have learned so many lessons about agriculture, about responsibility, and about friendship. Mr. Davis was always there with a wise word of advice. Students, listen to those around you that are wise. You will never regret it.

Next, to my fellow officers, WOW! I knew we would become friends, but I never expected to gain family members. Each of you have changed my life in a special way. I encourage each member to get involved with teams. Reach out to those around you. They may become your best friends. Also, being involved will take you places. One of the highlights of my year was traveling with Zach to the State Presidents' Conference in Washington, D.C., where we met President Bush. FFA members, get out there and get involved. Reach out to your goals and achieve them. If you don't, someone else will. Finally, I am proud to say I am Michelle Vasbinder, your 2008-2009 Alabama FFA Association State Secretary.



**Raven Buchanan**  
State Treasurer

"And your 2008-2009 State Treasurer, from the Wilcox Central Chapter, Raven Buchanan!" Those words were the start of an amazing journey. Throughout the year, I've had so many different experiences and have met so many great people, especially the people I've served with: Zach, Brandy, Michelle and Anna Leigh. I feel they are not only my best friends, but my family.

Zachary, is the big brother I never got to hang out with. Brandy, Michelle, and Anna Leigh are my sisters. Put all of us together and you'll have a room full of laughter, fun, and love. They're my partners in crime. From Pearl Harbor (inside joke from Michelle and Brandy), to the Krispy Kreme maid (Zach's donuts), the times we've shared have been unforgettable.

My year as a state officer has been an intense, as well as fun, learning experience. I got to travel to many different places and to learn many things about myself that I didn't know. I found my strengths and weaknesses and how to apply them to everyday life. I discovered many great eateries (thanks to Mr. Davis), and the importance of every FFA member in the nation. Without every member and their involvement, there wouldn't be an organization! If it wasn't for me pursuing my dreams and becoming a state officer, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in today; urging members to "Step Up & Stand Out!"



**PROGRAM**  
**80th ANNUAL ALABAMA STATE FFA CONVENTION**  
**Auburn University Student Activities Center**  
**June 3 - 5, 2009**

**Wednesday, June 3**

1:30 p.m.  
2:00 p.m.

**PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES**  
**OPENING SESSION**  
**Opening Ceremony**  
**Presiding Officer**-Zachary Jones, President  
**National Anthem**  
**Invocation**-James Paul Bailey, Sand Rock  
**State Advisor's Challenge**-Mickey Humphries  
**Greetings**-Laila Hajji, National FFA Central Region Vice President, Guthrie, Oklahoma  
**Greetings**-Gary Kendrick, Alabama FFA Alumni  
**Introduction of 09-10 State & National Officer Candidates**  
**Introduction of 08-09 District Officers**  
**Wall of Honor Inductees**-Past State Officers' Alumni  
**Keynote Speaker**-Josh Sundquist  
**Closing Ceremony**  
**Adjourn**



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

7:00 p.m.  
7:30 p.m.

**PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES**  
**SECOND SESSION**  
**Opening Ceremony**  
**Presiding Officer** - Anna Leigh Peek, Sentinel  
**National Chapter Awards**  
**Star Farmer Ceremony**  
**Honorary State FFA Degrees**  
**Honor Parents of State Officers**  
**Retiring Address** - Raven Buchanan, Treasurer  
**Future Farmer/Agribusinessman of the Year Award**  
**Mindy Stringer Memorial Scholarship Award**  
**Honor Advisors of State Officers**  
**Closing Ceremony**  
**Adjourn**

**Thursday, June 4**

8:00 a.m.  
8:30 a.m.

**PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES**  
**THIRD SESSION**  
**Opening Ceremony**  
**Presiding Officers** - Michelle Vasbinder, Sec. Brandy Feltman, Vice Pres.  
**Crime Prevention Awards**  
**100% Chapter Membership Awards**  
**M. K. Heath Animal Health Award**  
**Retiring Address** - Anna Leigh Peek, Sentinel

**CDE Awards-**

Ag Construction & Maintenance, Agricultural Mechanics, Creed Speaking, Dairy Cattle Evaluation, Extemporaneous Speaking, Floriculture, Forestry, Horse Evaluation, Land Evaluation, Livestock Evaluation, Nursery & Landscape, Parliamentary Procedure, Poultry Evaluation, Prepared Public Speaking, Quiz Bowl, Safe Tractor Driving, and Small Engines

**Proficiency Awards-**

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

**Specialty Proficiency Areas-**

Agricultural Communications, Agricultural Education, and Forage Production.

**Quartet Contest**

**Closing Ceremony**

**Adjourn**

12:30 p.m.  
1:45 p.m.  
3:30 p.m.

**FFA SOCIAL**-Alfa Pavilion  
**ALABAMA FFA ALUMNI MEETING**-Alfa Pavilion  
**DELEGATE BUSINESS SESSION 2 (If Needed)**

6:30 p.m.  
7:00 p.m.

**PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES**  
**FOURTH SESSION**  
**Retiring Address**-Brandy Feltman, Vice President  
**Awards**-String Band  
**Entertainment**-1st Place String Band  
**Retiring Address**-Michelle Vasbinder, Secretary  
**Address** - Laila Hajji, National FFA Central Region Vice President, Guthrie, Oklahoma  
**Awards**-Quartet Contest  
**Entertainment**-1<sup>st</sup> Place Quartet  
**Closing Ceremony**  
**Adjourn**



**Friday, June 5**

8:00 a.m.  
8:30 a.m.

**PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES**  
**FIFTH SESSION**  
**Opening Ceremony**  
**Presiding Officer**-Raven Buchanan, Treasurer  
**Retiring Address**-Zachary Jones, President  
**State Officers' Year in Review**  
**Election of 09-10 Officers**  
**Broadcaster of the Year Award**  
**State FFA Degree Ceremony**  
**Installation of 09-10 State Officers**  
**Closing Ceremony**  
**Adjourn**



**The Federal Land Bank Associations of Alabama are proud corporate sponsors of the Alabama FFA Convention**



**Anna Leigh Peek  
State Sentinel**

It does not seem possible that it has been a year ago since my name was announced as the State Sentinel for the 2008-2009 school year. At the time I thought it was a fluke and I did not deserve to be a state officer, but after some time I realized that it was in God's plan all along. This year flew by and has been a truly amazing experience. I have enjoyed getting to meet many of Alabama's 15,000 FFA members.

A few weeks ago, I was reminiscing on some of my memories as a younger FFA member. I thought back to when I received my first FFA jacket; it came two days before homecoming, and I was so excited. I

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



**Teach Agriscience!**

wore it in the homecoming parade two days later. I remember the first time I zipped it up that sweltering September afternoon as I climbed into the back of a pickup truck serving as our float. Little did I realize that jacket would go through a lot. I wore it while competing in my first public speaking contest where I competed against then state president, Salora Wright, and future vice-president, McKenzie Crabtree. I wore it through last year's state officer interviews and also when I ran across the stage as your 2008-2009 State Sentinel. Since June, I have not worn my chapter jacket. This was not because I was not involved or because I did not want to wear it, but that in an instant I went from representing the 120 members of the West Limestone High School FFA to serving the 15,000 members of the Alabama FFA Association. Even though I now have a state officer position, the words stitched across the back of my jacket should not make a difference in who I am or how I act. It should not matter if we are a state, district, or chapter officer or a chapter member; we should all remain the same. It should not matter if we are in official dress or even a t-shirt and blue jeans, we are FFA members and we should show those qualities that FFA members are taught to possess!

Let's think for a moment. We are members of the world's largest youth leadership organization and we should act like it. We should stand out. Your friends, teachers, family members, and other acquaintances should know and be able to tell you are an FFA member. This year's theme is Step Up – Stand Out. Think about how lucky the town of Auburn is going to be June 3-5. They will have about 1,000 of the best students in the state of Alabama sitting in their town. I realize that to some being a leader may not be the "cool" thing



to do, but when we step up as leaders we are helping our chapter, school, and community. In the eyes of your peers (even though they may not admit it), parents, and administrators becoming a leader is a very important thing to do. You should stand out, in a good way whether you are in the jacket or not. So this year as we gather in Auburn for State Convention Step Up and Stand Out in whatever you are best at. Whether it is CDEs, proficiency awards, talent, or anything else you might be involved in, put your best effort into it.

Thank you for believing in our team. I know there have been some not so popular changes this year, but I believe in the long run they will help Alabama get back to what it once was. I appreciate all of the encouraging words and other ways that you have helped us this year. Many of you have helped in ways that you didn't even realize. My life has been completely changed because of this year and because of many of you that I have met. Continue to help Alabama stand out by stepping up!