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SALORA WRIGHT
State President

A trip to our nation's capital, meeting with the President of the United States, and making new friends from across the country. These are just a few things that made the State Presidents' Conference (SPC) so great. Imagine being able to spend a week working with state officers from fifty different associations and the national officer team. I was blessed with the opportunity to do just that.

SPC was the most rewarding experience of my life. The other state officers and I helped to prepare issues that will go to the delegate assembly at our national convention and may one day change our organization. We were also given several opportunities to tour Washington, D.C. and visit several monuments and memorials. The



President George W. Bush meets with the state officers attending the State Presidents' Conference in Washington D.C. Salora Wright and Brandon Smith, from Alabama, were fortunate enough to be included in the proceedings.

crowning moment of the trip for me was when the state officers met President George W. Bush! It was awesome! He spoke with us for about forty-five minutes and answered several of our questions.

Another experience that was very unique was being able to room with and meet state officers from across the nation. My roommates were from North Carolina, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. It was a blast! It was simply great to see the differences in cultures and personalities from the many different regions of the United States. I will never forget the wonderful people I met there.

I am now completely excited about our national convention. It's just around the

corner! We've prepared several important delegate issues that have the potential to positively impact our association. SPC was a huge success and an experience that will stay with me forever.



TRAVIS MCGOWIN
State Vice President

The National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO) marked a milestone in my

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W. BRANDON SMITH State Secretary

My fellow FFA members, I have seen the promised land. It is the future of agriculture. I had the wonderful opportunity of attending the State Presidents' Conference (SPC) in Washington, D.C. at the end of July. This has to be the one experience that I will remember in detail for the rest of my life.

At S P C , t w o representatives of each state meet in Bethesda, Maryland to discuss the matters which will come before the delegate body at National Convention. While there, these representatives learned the roles that they will play within the investigative committees leading up to National Convention.

We didn't just sit around and talk, though. The entire city of Washington was graced by the presence of 100 inquisitive FFA members. The Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the FDR Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial, the Capitol, and many more were all graced with the presence of blue corduroy. The face of Chevrolet and GMAC will never be the same. Throughout the conference, the executives of these corporations learned about the up and coming leaders of this great country. We were even privileged to meet with Congressmen Terry Everett, the Asst. Secretary of Agriculture,



and the Asst. Secretary of Education.

However, as great as all of this sounds, it does not even touch one event that I was so privileged to participate in. On one of the days that we were in the city, we were able to actually enter the White House. Yes, that's right, my friends... THE White House. The portraits and architecture were stained and worn by the years of presidential history. But the crème de la crème of even that experience was meeting President George W. Bush. Just being in the same room as that man will send tingles down your spine.

This is, as I have said, an experience of a lifetime. I encourage each and every one of you to run for state office for, if nothing else, the very chance at making this trek.

life. It was the farthest I had been away from home for the FFA. It was also special because I shared the experience with five other officers that I barely knew. It was exciting and terrifying at the same time! Upon arriving in Raymond, Mississippi, we were introduced to the other state officers from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. We also met two national officers that we would be learning from that week, Erica Der from Florida and Ryan Peterson from Michigan. They taught us valuable lessons about team performance and motivating others. We also were able to meet with representatives from companies that sponsor NLCSO, Monsanto and Wayne Farms. These sponsors are very valuable to the success of state officer teams across the United States. It was a very fun week that definitely will impact our State Association! They encouraged us to be the best representatives of our state that we can possibly be.





JERIKA BUTTRAM
State Treasurer



JUSTIN POSEY
State Reporter



CALEB COLQUITT
State Sentinel

This has been the busiest summer I've ever had. First, we attended Blast Off in Montgomery. Next, it was off to Mississippi for the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO). NLCSO was a blast, by the way. Who would have known that you could make so many different friends in such a short time. We were able to meet the state officers from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas while we were there. We became good friends and made memories that will last a lifetime. By the end of the week, there was a mixture of emotions. We were sad to be leaving, but also happy to be going home to Alabama. During NLCSO, we were trained in developing our personal as well as our team leadership skills. We learned to work as a group to accomplish our goals. Most of all, we learned how to better serve our chapters, districts, and state.

Recently FFA members from the North, Central, and South Districts of the Alabama FFA Association attended Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops (COLWs). During these workshops FFA chapter officers from across the state were equipped with the tools necessary to develop and lead a successful FFA chapter. During the workshops district officers from Alabama's three districts presented workshops such as: essentials of a good chapter, SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) and CDE (Career Development Event) involvement, parliamentary procedure basics, and many more. The program of events also included time for the chapter officers to compete in numerous games to assess and develop their teamwork and leadership abilities. Our state officers also gave our chapter officers some pointers on how they and their local chapters are responsible for living up this year's theme of "Blue Jackets/Gold Standards".

I'm firmly convinced that one of the reasons that the FFA is the greatest youth organization in the world is: the more experienced members teach the younger generation. Don't misunderstand me, I love the National, State, and District levels, but the local level is by far the most important and valuable. Why is this? The answer is simple. Without a district organization, it would be hard, but we would survive. Even if we lost the national organization, we could still struggle and be a good organization. If we lost all our local chapters the other levels would soon dissolve.

There is no question whatsoever that the local level plays the most important role in the hierarchy of this massive organization. Chapter Officers' Leadership Workshops (COLWs) are programs that put this idea into practice. If we don't have knowledgeable, well-educated, and

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enthusiastic members, the FFA wouldn't have the impact that it's had on hundreds of thousands of young people. Central District's COLW was a huge success. The District Officers handled themselves with the utmost efficiency and poise. They represented the FFA well. I'm sure the case was the same at the North and South District's chapter officer training program. COLWs are fun and that's why they work. You learn more when you're enjoying yourself. It's true, you know more about the subjects you enjoy. Why, because you are having fun in class and when you study. This is what the FFA has been doing for years. That's another reason why this program is so successful.

Another reason these programs work are because of who your teachers are. I've gone to similar classes in other organizations. They are slow, dull, and few people learn anything. What's the difference? The teacher is someone that hasn't been well educated on how to teach the subject. Why are the district officers as impressive as teachers? We, the state officers, taught them how to be that way at the District Officers Leadership Conference (DOLC). How did we learn how to teach them? The national officers taught us. The national officers were taught by the former national officer team. Of course, you can't leave out our advisors or alumni either. They have a wealth of knowledge to share as well. This pattern continues; being taught by people who have done what you've done, know what you're going through as an officer, and genuinely want you to succeed in life. Now it's your turn. You, the chapter

officers reading this, need to pass on the information shared with you at COLW with the members of your chapter. We're counting on you. Remember, you are the most important level. Without you, the other levels can't exist.



The Alabama FFA District and State Officers pose for a photograph at the District Officers' Leadership Conference in Columbiana on June 30 and July 1, 2006.



The Alabama FFA State Officers pose for a photograph with Erica Der, National FFA Southern Region Vice President, and Ryan Peterson, National FFA Eastern Region Vice President, at the National Leadership Conference for State Officers in Raymond, Mississippi on June 16-20, 2006.

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