

# Pennsylvania FFA 2009 – 2010

## "Beyond the Blue"

May 2010

April showers bring May flowers. That's what I thought at the beginning of the month anyway. Looking back on it I would have to say that mostly, it brought more banquets and excitement.

To start the month, Billy and I went to Harrisburg to work on our parent presentations for State Convention. It really hit home for us that our year is truly coming to an end. A couple days later the two of us headed to the capitol for the ground breaking of the capitol garden. After that we headed to the governor's garden to meet with the rest of our team and finish some planting in the vegetable and herb garden. We hung out for lunch and a tour and then headed our separate directions. The next day we all headed to Philadelphia to volunteer some of our time at Philabundance. We had the opportunity to meet some really neat people and learn more about Pennsylvania's charitable food system. **(Travel Tip # 23 – Always be willing to listen to advice but know that you must decide for yourself what advice to follow.)** Afterwards we went to the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture where we learned about some of the city's rich history. On the 7<sup>th</sup> I had fun at the Lebanon County FFA Volleyball Tournament and headed to the Tri-Valley FFA banquet where we learned about FFA's impact on the community.



Congrats to Mr. Lauffer for correctly being able to answer my sports trivia question!! The next night I headed to the Tulpehocken FFA banquet where I was reminded that "the greatest goals are met between sunrise and sunset". Goldfish goldfish goldfish. I was pumped to see goldfish in the centerpieces and room decorations at the Conococheage FFA banquet.

The next week I was lucky enough to be in my home county for a Leadership Lebanon Valley discussion panel. I had the opportunity to share the FFA story and learn more about local agriculture and the issues in the industry. On the 13<sup>th</sup> I attended the Grassland FFA banquet and had a blast reuniting with friends I met during FFA week.

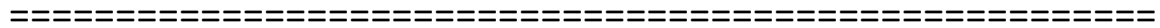




The following Monday I met up with my teammates for a team meeting to go over assignments for Summer Convention and to go over our calendars for the last time. The next day Brit and I headed to the Lancaster County FFA banquet where I learned a bit more about the history of the red rose. I even gotten a few roses myself to help me remember the night! Later that week I headed to the Elizabethtown FFA banquet where I was lucky enough to receive a signed t-shirt for my next t-shirt blanket. We had a blast relaxing and enjoying the night.

**(Travel Tip #24: Always remember the two most important words of the FFA Creed... I believe.)**

On the 24-25 my teammates and I headed to Harrisburg to hang out with the folks from the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association (PLNA). We bagged and tagged approximately 500 Sweetbay Magnolias which we then delivered to the capitol in honor of the Arbor Day/Earth Day Resolutions. After spending time at the capital, I headed to PDA for an FFA Foundation meeting where I learned a bit more about all that happens behind the scenes of the Pennsylvania FFA. To end my banquet season I had the opportunity to attend the ELCO FFA banquet with Billy. I had a blast seeing chapter-mates and friends for a great celebration. To round out May, I hung out with my teammates for a team photo shoot. **(Travel Tip # 25: Take a couple minutes to relax and embrace your inner child at the park).**



April 2010

I never thought I could attend so many banquets in one month! (Nom nom nom ☺) It was a great month full of good food, friends, and lots of celebrations!

Although my month had a late start on the 7<sup>th</sup>, it never slowed down. I began my month of eating at the Westmoreland County Farm Bureau banquet where I made a lot of great connections for the future and had fun learning about current agriculture issues with my teammate Billy Boring. **(Travel Tip #19 – Always be willing to step a bit out of your comfort zone – like Bo Jackson.)** The following night I headed to the Cumberland Valley FFA banquet where I ran into Britney Marsh and met some great FFA members with great stories and bright futures. I even



got a CV teddy bear! To end the week, Billy Saylor and I ventured over the mountain to the Pine Grove FFA Banquet where we ate some delicious grub and talked about the local fishing holes.

To start the next week, Billy Saylor, Caleb, and I attended a garden planning meeting at the Governor's residence. Later that evening Caleb and I headed to Bethlehem AVTS for their parent member banquet. We had a great time tag-teaming a speech and handing out awards to the very deserving FFA members. (Travel Tip # 20 – Never burn bridges when you don't know where they may lead.) The next night I went to visit lots of old friends at the Northern Lebanon FFA banquet. I ran into Christine Oellig and I had a great night with my chapter members in attendance. It was a fun time celebrating the accomplishments of friends. The next night, putting a great end to my week, was the Battlefield FFA banquet. I had a great time



with the Pennsylvania Young Farm State President, Denise Sanner. I was also able to catch up with Lance Waybright and his grandfather, and well as Secretary Redding and his brother. (Travel Tip #21 - Always have a back-up plan for bad weather... or a great friend that you can follow home.) It was a great night of celebration and excitement in one of the most historical towns in our state. Thanks for a great evening!

The following week I had the opportunity to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Earth Day with my teammates in Chester County. We were able to hear from speakers like Secretary Redding and Undersecretary Mills. After hearing about the new initiatives in water quality and cleanup, I had the opportunity to plant a tree.

(Travel Tip # 22 – No matter where you are, be willing to get your heels a bit dirty for a good cause.)

Of course the two Billys had to help me out a bit. After our celebration at the Mason's farm, we all headed to John C. Leo & Son- a mushroom farm. We all put on our hair nets and learned a lot about mushroom production and the measures taken to ensure food safety. It was a fun and educational celebration! The next night Billy Saylor and I headed to



Solanco for their FFA banquet. Billy spoke about the opportunities we all have to lead out loud and then we were able to help hand out Keystone Degrees. We had a great time mingling and celebrating the accomplishments of the Solanco FFA chapter.



Diplomats. It was a fun evening with friends and family.

To end the month, my teammates gathered back in my home county for one last event in April. We spent the morning setting up for the Wenger Foundation Praise Dinner. We spent the afternoon relaxing and working on some assignments for State Convention and our evening was jam-packed with fun and entertainment. Through the annual Praise Dinner over \$1 million was given to charity so there was a big celebration. Congratulations mom and dad! ☺ We heard music from the Allen Family and the

March 2010

It is officially spring and it's a busy one already!



Billy, Brit, and I started the month off on a great note when we attended the Delaware Valley Leadership Conference. We met with members not only from Pennsylvania but from Maryland and New Jersey as well. We also got to meet up with state officers from other states that we met earlier in our year. While there we led workshops and heard from Mr. Bixler about the importance of our actions and words. On Thursday that week, Billy and I ventured back to Twin Valley to celebrate the accomplishments of the first year members during the Greenhand Degree Ceremony. **(Travel Tip #16 - Be flexible with your plans.)** To end the week my ten teammates and I met up at Penn State for a board meeting where we talked about the challenges and excitement of the Pennsylvania FFA.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> Billy and I led a chapter visit workshop at Swift Middle School where we talked about teamwork and communication. On the 11<sup>th</sup> the entire team met at Farm Show for an International Conference with a group of Nuffield Scholars. **(Travel Tip #17 - Always be willing to share your story.)** We met people from over five different countries. I had the chance to learn about oysters in the Pacific and raising sheep in Ireland. It was a great opportunity to learn about Pennsylvania agriculture and international agriculture. From the conference most of us headed to Lancaster for a dinner. The next day we all met up again at PDA for a team meeting to put together all of the notebooks for SLLC which started on the 13<sup>th</sup>.



SLLC was a BLAST! We had workshops and committee work on Sunday followed by a costume party. We had all sorts of hilarious groups in attendance including a circus, the Flintstones, a slumber party, and of course... Brammer's Army. That night after all of our



meetings were through we heard reflections from the six Second Year Scholars. On Monday we continued work on our bills until lunch. After lunch we all left the hotel for three agriculture industry tours. We went to Middle Creek Wildlife Preserve, Wengers of Myerstown, and The Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority. We learned about the importance of conserving and reusing our resources. After our tours we all met at Hoss's for a great dinner before heading back to the hotel for the graffiti party and dance. After the dance, some of my teammates and I performed reflections. On Tuesday we left the hotel bright and early for breakfast with our legislators in our state's capitol. Following breakfast we had a huge group picture on the capitol steps to conclude the conference. We had an awesome time at SLLC this year and we hope everyone else did as well.



On the 18<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Cedar Crest FFA Banquet where I met up with old friends, made new ones, and saw just how many great things FFA members are doing. From the 25-27, my teammates and I helped at the Keystone National Indoor Truck and Tractor Pulls at the Farm Show Complex. We sold tickets and programs. We collected tickets and sold even more for raffles and 50/50 drawings. Amongst all the work though we did have the chance to watch the pulls and wander through the pick checking everything out. We had a great time hanging out with the members that were there and just enjoying a night at the pulls. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, my

teammates and I attended the funeral for Mr. Andy Rill. Mr. Andy Rill sponsored the Keystone Charms and attended the Mid-Winter Convention. He was a great friend of the Association and did a lot for us. We joined nearly 400 others in celebrating his life and accomplishments. It was our last chance to say thank you for all that he has done. **(Travel Tip #18 - Be the change you wish to see in the world.)**

To end the busy month of March, we had a team meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> to go over schedules and start planning State Convention and on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the Eastern Region had SOCS where we got to meet an awesome group of individuals who are considering running for State Office in the coming months and years.

It sure was a busy month and a quick month but I am excited for an even busier April! Good luck to all of those members participating in CDEs next month and those who are busy planning chapter banquets!

## February 2010

February, the month of love. Let me be the first to tell you how much I love FFA! This month was full of fun activities that made me love FFA even more!

The month started off with a visit to the Young Farmer Convention with Caleb. While there we sat in on the delegate sessions and attended a banquet. We learned more about this great organization and made a lot of great friendships. The following week I joined my teammates in Harrisburg to visit with Senator Brubaker and attend a session of the Senate. I never realized that there are so many intricacies to all that goes on in our state capitol. **(Travel Tip #13 – Always be willing to listen.)** We saw the Senate library and the Senate caucus room. The next day we headed back to the capital for the opening of Career and Technical Student Organization Week. We had the chance to explore the mission of other student organizations and hear from some dignitaries passionate about those organizations.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> we all met at PDA for a



team meeting where we put together all of the ACES notebooks. We had a blast telling jokes and visiting with the PDA staff. And then... the weekend we'd all been waiting for... ACES Weekend I! It went off without a hitch! We had a team meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> to finishing making plans for SLLC. Then we set up our rooms and caught an hour or two of shut eye. On Saturday, we collected food, registered for the conference, and heard from Denise Sanner of the Young Farmers. Following that, we had WORKSHOPS! We went aboard the USS PA FFA and looked through our Captain's Handbook for Lookin' Good. We learned how to Build a Stronger Harbor and that it's Not Just Fish. We Sailed the Seven Seas and Cruised with the Cooperatives. We had a super yummy meal and heard from Dr. Foster and Miss Lonie. Whoo-pow! **(Travel Tip #14 – Always be prepared to feel some excitement, no matter where you are or what you're doing.)** Then.... Time for the All Hands on Deck Dance! We had such a blast! Reflections went perfectly and we all headed back to our rooms to crash for the night. Sunday morning we had an awesome time of inspiration where we watched the Praisin' Puppets do dance and a black light show. We had breakfast and broke into regional meetings to discuss membership growth. And then... it all ended. ☺ ACES Weekend I was **AWESOME!!**

On Wednesday Brit and I headed to ELCO for a chapter visit where we talked about ways we can communicate better and work in groups. We also attended the FFA meeting and learned about all of the cool things going on in the ELCO FFA.

Then... the next weekend we'd all been waiting for... ACES Weekend II! Friday we had a team meeting to go over more items for SLLC and we then had a meeting with the Second Year Scholars. We all went out to dinner and then hung out back at the hotel. Saturday it all started again. Although the agenda was the same, the people were different, but it was just as much fun as the first weekend! During weekend two we collected even more food, crowd surfed Dr. Foster, and had some awesome ideas during regional breakouts. After the conference we greeted Chase Rose, the national officer in town for National FFA Week. A group of us went out



to lunch and then we headed home to recover from two exhausting weekends. Without doubt, ACES Weekend II was **PHENOMENAL!!**

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, the entire team, Chase, Secretary Redding, and members from West Perry and Big Spring met at the Central Pennsylvania

Food Bank to donate the food from the ACES food drive and volunteer a couple hours of our time. To get started we learned a bit more about the food bank and its mission and had the opportunity to share a bit about our organization. Then we had the chance to tour the facility and learn about the sheer logistics of operating something of that nature. After our tour we split into a few different work crews and did things like sort food into smaller boxes. We reorganized pallets of food and drinks and sorted things on to shelves. Upon completing our tasks, we all went out to lunch and hung out for a little while.

After lunch, I headed to Elizabethtown for Meet Your State Officer Night at Hoss's. I had an awesome turnout with members from Northern Lebanon, Milton Hershey, Manheim,

and Elizabethtown. We had a blast talking about public speaking, state office, and the many opportunities we have in FFA. **(Travel Tip #15 – Always be prepared to eat some good food!)**



On the 25<sup>th</sup>, Billy and I had the chance to spend the day traveling the eastern region with Chase. We visited the Hans Herr FFA chapter for chapel and to hear Chase give an address. Then we met with the folks at New Holland and learn more about their day to day operations and goals. Afterwards we headed to the Grassland FFA chapter where we caught the

end of their teacher pig roast. We heard a few words from Chase and then participated in a workshop where we learned the importance of discovering our life's passions. After leaving Grassland we headed to Lancaster Farming where we had the chance to see the process involved in printing the paper. We had the opportunity to ask lots of questions and learn about the aspirations of the paper. To top it all off, we went for dinner and had the chance to relax after a long and exciting day. It was the perfect way to end February and National FFA Week!



## January 2010

Farm Show, fun, and friends are four simple words that summarize my month of January.

January started off with a great new year spent with state officers from across the country in Pasadena, California. We woke up bright and early to head to the float staging area. We waited around for a while and then... for the moment we had all been waiting for... the Rose Parade began! After a six mile walk through Pasadena, we received one of the biggest surprises we could have imagined. RFD-TV treated us by taking us to the Rose Bowl! It was an amazing opportunity for us to hang out with each other and share the excitement with 94,000 other people. After an exhausting day at the parade and game we headed back to the hotel to pack our bags and rest up. The following morning we all headed to the airport and made our journeys home. Although I didn't spend my New Year with my parents and siblings, spending it with my FFA family was made for a better New Year than I ever could have dreamed of. Thank you RFD-TV!!



The following week we had a lot of team meetings and practices for Mid-Winter Convention. Then Farm Show began. Thursday we attended the unveiling of the butter sculpture which highlighted the importance of consumer relations and education. Friday we

managed the coat check at the opening reception and had a chance to meet and mingle with those people that have a stake in the agriculture industry. I also had the chance to meet representatives from various commodity groups such as the state Fair Queen and Beef Ambassadors. On Saturday we joined a huge crowd of people in the large arena for the opening ceremony for the 2010 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Sunday we spent the day practicing for Monday's convention.

Monday morning several of us had an interview for Fox 43. We talked about the various events on Monday and the significance of the day's food drive. After that we ran across



the complex to hang out with the star candidates before their interviews. All of the candidates did a great job – Congratulations! Later we headed to the Large Arena to begin setting up for the convention. Coty and I were fortunate enough to spend some time sitting at the top of the arena watching the setup take place. It was like watching a setup for a huge concert on television except it was even better because it was our concert. It was such an AMAZING feeling! **(Travel Tip**

**#11 – When you have amazing experiences in your travels, never forget how they made you feel.)**

Before we knew it the time had come for the convention to start. We were more excited than words can describe and we had a blast running the conference that we had spent weeks planning for. We heard from speakers such as the Attorney General and the Secretary of Agriculture. We recognized our parents and named our State Stars. We watched as 165 freshman members put on their very own FFA jackets and as 247 members received the Keystone Degree. Afterwards our entire team went to dinner with our families to celebrate a job well done. Thanks to everyone who helped make the event such a huge success!

The rest of the week PMW (Post Mid-Winter) flew! I watched FFA members participate in demonstrations and quiz bowl competitions. I saw FFA members earn scholarships for their hard work and met with the public officials who work so hard making tough decisions today in hopes of a better tomorrow. The week ended on a great note when I participated in the celebrity milking contest on Friday. Even though my team came in second it was a blast! **(Travel Tip #12 – Always be prepared to do the unexpected!)** Saturday my teammates and I watched as some of Pennsylvania's FFA members earned awards for their hard work in the large landscape displays. Congratulations ELCO! Overall, Farm Show 2010 went way too quickly and was a fun whirlwind of fun and festivities!

After Farm Show I had a couple weeks to recover and joined my teammates again on the 29<sup>th</sup> for a day of job shadowing at AgChoice Farm Credit. Not only did we celebrate Caleb's birthday but we learned a great deal about the world of finance and all that is involved in the business of loans.

The following day Billy, Brit and I headed to Twin Valley for the South Eastern Leadership Conference. We had a great time getting into the pirate spirit and learning about leadership, communication, and so much more! To top it off we let loose and relaxed playing wink and dancing and seeing just how smart we all were. We met members from Twin Valley, W.B. Saul, Garden Spot, and Headwaters. Best of all, we had a blast doing it! It was the perfect way to end the perfect month!



To all of you FFA members out there, thanks for making this a month to remember! ☺

Until we meet again,

Molly Walmer

December 2009

“We wish you a Merry Christmas! We wish you a Merry Christmas!” Have I ever mentioned how much I love the holiday season? Well, I do and this one has certainly been a holiday season to remember!

December started out with a board meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup>. It was great to see my teammates and our board of directors again. While in Pen State we had the opportunity to spend time as a team learning about diversity and embracing our many differences.

The next week was filled with chapter visits. Billy and I had the chance to visit Bethlehem AVTS where we not only learned about teamwork and communication, but more importantly, we learned how to make a bow! The next day we traveled to Warwick where we talked about teamwork and leadership and we even had a fire drill in between. On Wednesday we traveled to Pequea Valley. We had a blast building towers and talking about FFA. We wish we could have joined you on your field trip to the University of Delaware! Hopefully everyone enjoyed it!

Later that afternoon we met up with Brit at the train station and Billy and I parted ways. Thursday Brit and I headed to Reading Muhlenburg where we had fun doing an intense human knot and learning about the endless opportunities we



have as FFA members. That afternoon we began a road trip to Huntingdon for Friday's visit. Friday morning we had the chance to hang out with the Raystown Area FFA members. We made towers and islands and thought webs. Later we saw chinchillas and a Sensitive Plant. It actually moves!!

The following Monday I met up with Tyler and Mr. B in Harrisburg for a think tank meeting at the USDA. We discussed available grants and awesome internship opportunities. The next day I found myself at the Bradford County Leadership Day. I had an awesome day re-visiting friends from Athens, Canton, and Northeast Bradford as well as meeting the super cool kids from Troy. We had fun wafting and creeping and learning about the FFA essentials.

The next day Sam and I ventured up to Luzerne County to hang out with the members of the Northwest FFA Chapter. It was the first time I'd seen eggs being incubated and I was amazed. The following day we had a chapter visit at Benton. We had fun getting in to the Christmas spirit!! **(Travel Tip #9: Never go somewhere without having some Christmas trivia! I'll help you out... Rudolph's girlfriend is Clarice.)** After a fun day at Benton, we headed to Wilkes Barre where we visited with the CTC FFA members. We had an absolute blast getting to know everyone and having fun drawing pictures and eating cake! Sadly enough, that visit ended my visits with Sam for the week and we parted ways.

Monday morning I met up with Billy and we hopped, skipped, and jumped our way to Oley Valley for a visit and Alumni luncheon. We loved getting to tour the facilities and hang out with everyone. It was really cool to hear about all of the Oley Valley Alumni who have gone into careers in the agriculture industry! That night, Billy and I headed to Mercersburg to get ready for the next day's team visit at Chambersburg. Billy, Coty, Tyler and I spent the day at Foust learning about all of the competition areas FFA members can compete in and the many different projects FFA members have. On Wednesday we all headed to Harrisburg for a team meeting where we practiced for Mid-Winter Convention. Following our meeting, we all headed home to finish Christmas shopping and spend time with our families.



On the 29<sup>th</sup> we had another team meeting to prepare for Mid-Winter Convention. We practiced our lines and movements and had a blast doing it! That night I headed to Maryland en route to Pasadena, California. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, the state presidents from Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware as well as me, all met up at Baltimore International Airport for an early morning flight to California. Upon arrival at LAX we did a lot of singing Party in the USA and getting hyped for the next few days. After we got back to the hotel we had an orientation and then headed out to the float pavilions. We had the opportunity to see ten different floats being constructed and we were able to help put flowers and other materials on our float. We had a blast singing and dancing with the Cowgirl Chicks afterward.

The next day we did a lot of 'hurry up and wait' at the pavilions. It was the day for float judging and a practice round for the parade the following day. We were able to see what our float looked like when it was all finished! We also had the chance to hang out with the Eagle Scouts from the float in front of us. We had a dance off, lots of cheering, and juice to drink. It was great getting to mingle with them and learn more about their organization. **(Travel Tip #10:**



**Always be prepared meet new people and make connections!)** While waiting that day I met a family that lives two streets away from me... we met a couple thousand miles away from home! That night, back at the hotel, we had a New Year's celebration – Eastern Time so we could catch Zzzzz's before the big day.

Oops! I suppose this is where we part ways until next month when you'll have to check in again to see how my time in Pasadena ends and what other surprises my month of January includes! 😊

November 2009

The month of November was one filled with celebrations and fun activities for everyone!

For me, this exciting month started with a week of chapter visits in the Western Region with my teammate Billy. We visited Conneaut Valley, Mohawk, Linesville, and Crawford CTC. We had a blast working together and hanging out with members! We spent time talking about teamwork, leadership and ways we could become involved in our communities. We attended the Linesville FFA meeting and played an intense game of Shop Ball. **(Travel Tip #6: Always be prepared to kick your shoes off and have a little bit of FUN after a day of hard work!)**

The following week I traveled to Bradford County with Alli to visit Northeast Bradford, Athens, and Canton. We had dinner with some members of the Canton FFA and talked about the diversity of agriculture with the members from Northeast Bradford. We had a blast seeing the various projects that everyone had, from raising fish and chickens at Canton to learning about



electrical wiring at Northeast Bradford. At Athens we had fun talking about leadership, playing Ninja, and seeing how much the middle schoolers' knew about FFA!

The 12<sup>th</sup> Brit and I had a visit at Annville Cleona where we saw members working on Keystone Degrees and record books. That night we attended the Lebanon County Farm City Dinner where I had the opportunity to be the keynote speaker. I was able to talk about my experiences in FFA and about how truly bright the future of agriculture is! **(Travel Tip #7: FFA members, be prepared to move mountains!)**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> my teammates and I spent time in Hershey at the 59<sup>th</sup> Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. We learned about the various types of agriculture in Pennsylvania and the issues facing agriculturalists. We had the chance to help with delegate sessions and attend Discussion Competition rounds. While there we also had the chance to learn more about the Young Farmers and Ranchers and meet the people working in our local Farm Bureaus. It was a really neat learning opportunity for all of us and it gave us the chance to spend some time together again.

The next day we all traveled to Harrisburg for a team meeting where we updated each other on our responsibilities for Mid Winter Convention, ACES, and SLLC. We were also able to compare schedules and see where we would all be for the next couple months. It was a long meeting but we got A LOT done!

On Thursday, Brit, Billy and myself attended the Lebanon Schuylkill Leadership Conference where we got to see the Lebanon County Officer Team at work! Tri-Valley provided us all with fun icebreakers and workshops were led by Northern Lebanon, Little Dutchmen, ELCO, and Cedar Crest. As the state officers in attendance we led a workshop as well. We saw the Greenhand Quiz Contest and had dinner with all of the members in attendance. It was a fun night to hang out with members from my hometown.

The next day our entire team met in Philadelphia for Farm City Day. The Farm Show cows were moved to City Hall and agriculture displays filled the courtyard. We heard remarks from local officials, Brit, and others who have a stake in agriculture. We had the opportunity to talk with representatives from different organizations and learn about different facets of agriculture. We learned about nutrition, soy beans, and beef. We also had ice cream from W.B. Saul and Turkey Hill. Afterward we had a small celebration for the Secretary's birthday. We all had a blast hanging out in Philadelphia and learning about current efforts to bridge the gap between agriculture and the city.



The following week I had just two chapter visits. The first was at Northern Lebanon where I had the chance to catch up with old friends and work with Brit. We led workshops about FFA and teamwork and had lunch with the officers. The next day we went to Tri-Valley and had a blast with a bunch of members talking about the importance of working with others and communicating.

Our visits were highly successful and a fun way to get ready for Thanksgiving break.

To end the month of November, I joined my teammates on a trip to Philadelphia for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Billy and I were picked up at 5:30 and, along with the rest of my team, prepared for a fun day in the city. We were lucky enough to join the Campbells' Crew with a float celebrating the bountiful harvest. We were joined by Miss Lonie from the Department of Agriculture and some members from W.B. Saul. As we walked the parade route, we handed out packets of seeds that could be grown and coupons for Campbells' products. **(Travel Tip #8: Always be willing to make someone else smile!)** We had a lot of fun despite the cold and were happy to spend the holiday as a team. The day's timing worked out perfectly and we all headed back home to finish the holiday relaxing with our families.

November has certainly been busy but, as always, we have had a lot of fun. I've seen a lot of different places this month and been amazed each time. I hope everyone enjoyed their month as much as I have! Now, it's time to prepare for December and the Christmas Season!!

Happy Holidays Pennsylvania FFA!!

Until we meet again

Molly Walmer

October 2009

The month of October was packed full of excitement and fun. I can't believe another month has come and gone already

To start off this whirlwind of activity was a chapter visit at Big spring with Billy, Sam, and Alex. After school we participated in Ag. Olympics where we drove nails, carried greasy pumpkins, and had wheelbarrow races. To end the night there was a cookout with tons of new friends and great food!



Just a few days later I had the chance to spend a fun night with my teammates, past state officers, and the alumni at the Blue and Gold Ball. We all had a blast dancing the night away and raising funds for the FFA Alumni. Directly after the ball I went to Alli's house to gear up for a week of chapter visits in the northern region. We visited Headwaters, Grand Canyon, Bradford, and Cowanesque.

While in the north, we visited New York, saw the rich history of Coudersport and the Headwaters region. We held a snake and a bearded dragon, and visited the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. We took a hike in the Allegheny Forest and learned about the importance of the Marcellus Shale Project. More importantly than all of our sightseeing was the fact that we met

some awesome FFA members! Alli and I had a blast hanging out during workshops and after-school adventures. It was also fun spending time with the Grand Canyon FFA chapter at Hoss's for Alumni night. Thanks go out to everyone who ate at Hoss's that night and supported the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni's jacket campaign.

After spending time with Alli in the north, I joined Billy in the west. The two of us traveled across town to visit the United FFA. At United we visited with officers and talked about ways we could be involved in our communities. I also got to hold a tarantula. That night I drove home for ELCO's visit the next day. I had oodles of fun coming back to my home chapter and hanging out with FFA members.

The next day I met up with the rest of my teammates at Penn National Racetrack where we spent the day learning all about the equine industry. We had the opportunity to tour the offices and barns as well as the vet/lab facilities. Throughout the day we asked a lot of questions and learned a ton about horses. Later that night Brit, Billy, and I attended the Lebanon County FFA Get Acquainted Night hosted by Katie Donmoyer. We spent the night having fun with FFA members and making new friends... and even playing train wreck! On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Brit and I visited Cedar Crest and had fun with all of the members we met the night before. After the visit, we headed to my house to finish packing for National Convention.

We left the next morning for Indy! National Convention was a busy week full of FFA, friends, and fun. Throughout the week we attended sessions and the career show, participated as delegates and in the National Days of Service, and had lots of fun in between. I attended various banquets and even competed in public speaking where I made it to the semi-finals. It was awesome to see so many FFA members from Pennsylvania. Congratulations to all participants and contest winners!! I hope everyone had just as much fun at National Convention as the State Officers did!



To finish the month of October, I had chapter visits at Conrad Weiser, Berks CTC, and W.B. Saul. Not only did we meet some super cool FFA members, but we also saw a cow stomach hanging from the ceiling and held a cockroach. We saw boutonnières being made at Berks CTC and toured a meat lab at W.B. Saul. After our visit at Saul, Brit and I drove to Sanatoga for the SEPAGBA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Agriculture Business Association) Harvest Party. We met a bunch of great FFA supporters and even won some door prizes.

It has certainly been a crazy month! From the east to the west, the north to the south, PA FFA has been busy! Hopefully November will be equally exciting!

Until we meet again,  
Molly Walmer

September 2009

The month of September has gone as quickly as it came and fall is in full swing!

Although the month had a slow start, it certainly did not stay that way. We kicked off the month with a lengthy team meeting to plan for chapter visits and upcoming events. The following week, Brittany and I visited my alma mater for a school board meeting and Billy joined us the next day for some presentations.



On the 16<sup>th</sup> I boarded a flight to Massachusetts for the BIG E! **(Travel Tip #4: Always pack lightly.)** It was an awesome couple of days spent with FFA members from all over the eastern region. I spent my time serving as a BIG E intern with Brittany Sederback of Rhode Island and Morgan Slaven of Virginia. The three of us spent our time organizing the awards banquet and the folders for each

CDE as well as several other tasks. Congratulations to all competitors! I arrived home on Sunday and Monday had to report to Harrisburg for the All -American Dairy Show.

Wow! I learned more about dairy cattle this week than I ever dreamed of. Some of us volunteered at the information booth and others helped in various foods stands throughout the week. We helped with ultrasound cards and handing out ribbons. We also had the opportunity to lead cattle for the judging contest. We worked with gentlemen like Mr. Miller and Mr. Heilman who answered all of our many questions (no matter how crazy they were). Tuesday and Wednesday nights, Billy and I traveled home to his local fair. We spent time with members and even



joined the Cloister FFA members on their float in the parade.

When we left the All-American Dairy Show we headed to Gettysburg for the Adams Franklin York Leadership Conference. We met tons of members who had the opportunity to learn about the various officer positions, teamwork, and going beyond the blue. To finish off the night we had some pizza! The next day, Brittany Billy and I headed to Twin Valley for our first official chapter visit together. We had a great day learning about all of the Greenhand Rush Week activities and meeting everyone. It was especially fun just hanging out after school playing ultimate frisbee and rock band! **(Travel Tip #5: Always be prepared to sing a couple songs – even if you don't know the lyrics!)**

I can't believe the month of September is already passed. Now we're getting ready for National Convention next month. Good luck to everyone who is participating and competing! We'll see you there!

Until we meet again,  
Molly Walmer

August 2009

Another month has come and gone for the PA FFA.

The state officer team started the month out with our first board meeting at Penn State. This was the first time we did opening ceremonies in front of the board and I think we were all a bit nervous. The meeting was long but was broken up by the ice cream social we had with the foundation board members. That day we learned a lot more about the function of the board of directors and all they do to help us out each day.

After the board meeting we had a day to pack for NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers). Held in Gettysburg, NLCSO was our chance to meet up with state officers from Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Delaware. We spent a lot of time in training sessions, even more time planning chapter visits, but more than anything, we spent time making new friends and building relationships. During our free time, we toured the battle field, played games, had a banquet, and even a dance. On the last day, most of the conference participants, traveled to Mason Dixon Farms for a brief tour of their facilities. And then, sadly enough, we said goodbye and parted ways.

The end of NLCSO brought a break for the team before we all ventured to State College for Ag Progress Days. At Ag Progress Days we helped in the FFA Foundation food booth, and worked in our youth booth. Both were a hit and the event was hugely successful. Despite the rain, the crowds were big. At the youth booth, we made masks and learned that everything relates to agriculture. At the food booth, we sold hotdogs, drinks, slushies, and so much more.



While at Ag Progress Days, I had the chance to meet with Secretary Wolff and Senator Brubaker. One morning we met with the Feed and Grain Taskforce to learn all about issues affecting the feed and grain industry. Wow. I never realized that so many people were affected by the grain industry. We also met the state officers for 4-H and took a bunch of photos. Later that same day, we attended a legislative luncheon.

On the last day of Ag Progress Days, Billy Saylor, Brittany, and I drove to Altoona to help the Mellnick family at a golf tournament.

**(Travel Tip #3: Always make sure you have the directions and proper address before leaving for an event.)** The tournament benefited the Blair County Blind Association and was quite an eye-opening experience for me. We helped watch different holes and delivered snacks and drinks. After the tournament we had dinner with the golfers and headed home. The day was a blast!

Then we had a bit of a break before the whole team met up again at PDA for a job shadow experience. We were each paired up with different PDA employees for the morning and we were given the opportunity to see their day to day operations. I spent my morning with Executive Deputy Secretary Redding. Our morning passed quickly, with only enough time for one phone call and the beginning of another meeting. After my morning with the Deputy, we went across the street to the Farm Show board room for lunch and a round table discussion with the rest of the pairs. We learned all about current issues in agriculture and enjoyed a slice of pizza.

Upon our departure from PDA, we visited the USDA with Director Wehry of the Farm Service Agency. We learned all about the presence of the federal government in PA agriculture. We also spent time with the Department of Rural Development where we learned about the ways that the federal government helps better rural areas in PA. Lastly, we heard from the National Resource Conservation Service. We learned about the many ways that the federal government encourages conservation on small farms and properties in Pennsylvania. Overall we had a busy day full of meeting people and learning about the diversity of agriculture in Pennsylvania.

Until we meet again,  
Molly Walmer

## July 2009

I can't believe that July is already over. It has certainly flown by.

We started out the month with a team meeting and tours at PDA. It was really neat to meet the people we'd be working with this year and to see the lab facilities that we often forget about. A couple days later we all headed to Conneaut Lake for WPLC (Western PA Leadership Conference) and PAAE (PA Association of Agriculture Educators). We had a blast getting to meet members from the western region and getting to meet some of the teachers. While there we also had the chance to spend time as a team and get to know each other even better.

When we came home, we toured Lancaster Farming and Wengers of Myerstown. We also started setting up for the second golf tournament. As we did last month, we learned how to make omelets and met with the golfers for a little while. After that Tyler and I headed to Washington D.C. for the State Presidents Conference while the rest of the team enjoyed the golf tournament and auction. Tyler and I met some awesome state officers, like Freddie and Jason from Puerto Rico. While in D.C. we were also able to ride the metro and visit our capitol. The day after we got home, we headed to Philadelphia for PANTS (Penn Atlantic Nursery Trade Show). Wow. It's amazing to realize that there is so much agriculture that we never knew existed. We helped register exhibitors and guests, move plants, and help Miss Peggy at the information desk. **(Travel tip #2: Always pack a Tide To Go pen.)**



After PANTS Caleb and I came home to the Lebanon County fair just in time to catch some of the dairy show and sell my animals. Prior to the sale we had the chance to meet and greet with

buyers and fellow 4-Hers. Then, the auctioneer gave me the microphone and asked me to address everyone on behalf of the PA FFA. The sale had a great turnout and I successfully spoke in front of my peers and friends for the first time as a state officer.

As July ends, I see that this year is much more the cows, plows, and sows.

Until we meet again,  
Molly Walmer

## June 2009

Wow. The month of June has already come to an end. It seems like just yesterday that all of the candidates were at Mrs. Nailor's house meeting each other and training for the interview process that was to come. It seems like just five minutes ago that we were all standing in front of the stage waiting for our names to be called to let us know that we would have the honor of serving as 2009-2010 Pennsylvania FFA State Officers. It seems like just seconds ago that we were standing back stage for our "first" team meeting. Congratulations to each and every one of my teammates for this outstanding accomplishment. For those who didn't get called this time around, don't give up. Hold your heads high and keep trying.

This month has been a flurry of activity and excitement. We all traveled to THE cabin for BLAST OFF. We had an amazing week and I wouldn't trade it for anything. We had the chance to get to know each other and have fun. We spent three and a half days training in Grantville. But most importantly we just had time to be together as a team. There were lots of late-night chats and entirely too-early, early mornings. While at the cabin we spent time with the past state officers and with our families.



After our family picnic we packed up our things and journeyed to Huntingdon for our first foundation golf tournament. We set up and made a trip to Wal\*Mart. **(Travel tip # 1: Always find the nearest Wal\*Mart)** The day of our golf tournament, we learned how to make omelets, had the chance to drive golf carts, and best of all, we successfully completed our first official event!

As June comes to an end, I am able to see just how quickly this next year will go.

Until we meet again,  
Molly Walmer

P.S. I leave you with this as my final quote a very wise woman once told me, "there are no problems in life, only opportunities to build a stronger character".