

## 2002-2003 National Officer Journals

### J.J. Jones

#### 2002-2003 National FFA Central Region Vice President

E-mail: [jjones@ffa.org](mailto:jjones@ffa.org)

#### Photo Albums

[Japan - Jan. 27 - Feb. 5, 2003](#)

[Smyrna - March 2003](#)

#### Where I'll be this week:

Indianapolis, Indiana

#### August 10, 2003

Whoops! Once again I lost track of time and here it is several weeks later from the last time I updated everyone on what I have been doing and where I have been. Tim and I had a great time with our last NLCSO in Georgia. We spent four great days in historic Savannah where we met with the officers from Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. But, as the old saying goes, all work and no play would make JJ a dull boy, well that's my version anyway. One night for dinner we took a dinner cruise down the river and of course spent many meals enjoying some great southern cooking.

Immediately after our Georgia NLCSO, we met back up with Seth, Dustin, Joel and Julie to attend the July board meeting. It is hard to believe that we are on our second board meeting when it seems like just yesterday when we had the first. Even scarier, is that the first one was in January, so the year is definitely winding down very quickly.

Traveling to our nations capital is always fun and exciting for me. So having the chance to spend two weeks in D.C. preparing and presenting State Presidents' Conference has some of the greatest memories I have made this year. A highlight of the conference was the time we spent as the state officers began the delegate process that will guide our organization into the next 75 years of success. We had many opportunities to tour and the best part was that my parents and the other officers' parents were able to attend to see what we have actually been doing this year. I always enjoy all of the different memorials and monuments, but the Jefferson Memorial is by far my favorite. It is the only monument that depicts education, the importance of faith and agriculture all in one monument. If you've been there or are going to D.C. make sure and visit. Now for the highlight of the trip and my year thus far-on July 23rd we had the incredible opportunity to meet Secretary Ann Veneman and President George W. Bush.

Directly after SPC I had 10 days at home to enjoy getting caught up on a few tasks as well as start some projects on the farm. Our entire team is now up here in Indy doing our part to begin preparing for the 2003 National FFA Convention. The convention is quickly approaching and now it is our turn to do our part to make this a great convention.

As always, if I can ever do anything to be of assistance, don't hesitate to let me know.

#### July 6, 2003

Well, summer is sure flying by. The 77th Virginia FFA convention was a great note to end on as I finished up my 2003 convention year. Tim and I have been having a great time presenting NLCSOs-our last was in New York. We were up in the mountains just two hours north of Syracuse. The scenery was beautiful and such a great environment as we prepared the officers from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island for a great year of serving members. While there, we were able to stay very busy whether it was presenting or just hanging out and swimming in the lake or mountain biking or kayaking.

From New York I headed to Oklahoma and attended the second session of Alumni camp. What a great four days I just had. I now have 290 new FFA friends in Oklahoma. Once again the camp setting was great. We enjoyed hearing speakers such as Sam Glenn, met in small groups to further develop our leadership skills, entertained by hypnotist Dr. Al Snyder, and simply had time relax and get to know each other while playing sand volleyball or swimming. The Oklahoma officers did a great job and are now finishing up two more sessions.

Well, for now I am in Georgia getting ready for the Georgia, Florida and South Carolina NLCSO. As always until next time, if there is ever anything I can do please let me know.

### **June 26, 2003**

Wow, it is hard to believe that June is almost over. The last time I left off I was just starting my home state convention in Kansas. From good ol' Manhattan, I headed for Las Cruces, New Mexico for their 75th convention. I had a great time hanging out with the officers and enjoying the warmth without the humidity. While I was there I was also introduced to some "real" Mexican food and the way to properly eat chile. Speaking of chile, I am now a new member of the International Green and Red Chile Coinsures. I don't know what it is about this year-I have joined more groups it seems like than I did when I was in high school.

Following the New Mexico FFA Convention I headed east for the North Carolina convention. I had a great time meeting up with some old friends and meeting hundreds of members who I can now call friends as well. Unfortunately I didn't get to stay very long as I headed to meet up with Tim and we presented our first NLCSO(National Leadership Conference for State Officers) in the great state of Wyoming. Tim and I met the new officers from Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming and had the week of a lifetime. We had a great time in the mountains of Wyoming, but we didn't get to see any bears-you can decide whether that is good or bad. One morning; however, I did wake up at 5 a.m. to go on a sunrise trail ride. From the back of a good old quarter horse I was reminded why I love America and agriculture. I can't imagine growing up any other way.

From Wyoming I headed home for a few days and am now just finishing up the Virginia Convention. How great it is to be in the home of the FFA. I can now say that I have sat at the table where it all started.

Well, until next time I wish each of you the best and if there is ever anything I can do to be of assistance, please let me know.

### **May 25, 2003**

Hello all. Once again time has gotten away from me and I haven't updated my journal as often as I would like. Well, since I left you last my schedule slowed down a bit, but now is getting ready to rage on. The rest of the team and I finished up our preparations for NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers) down in College Station, Texas, -on Dustin Clark's beloved Texas A&M. After our training ended on the 14th we all headed in several different directions.

Good ol' western Kansas was where I headed off to. I had an entire week to spend with family and friends as well as catch up on some emails, letters and relaxation. I spent the week helping my parents with both our yard and my grandmothers. We have finally been getting some rain in our neck of the woods-so there was plenty of mowing and trimming to do. I even spent a few days messing with one of my horses. I was surprised she was as calm and easy going-I hate to admit it, but it has been a year since I have ridden her.

Well, from home I flew to Salt Lake City, Utah, on the 22nd. Once there I spent a day attending the National Ducks Unlimited Convention. What a great partner FFA has in these wonderful individuals, or the flock as they call themselves; or, actually now I can say what we call ourselves. While there I became a member and am looking forward to the experience. To be really honest, I didn't know just how active this organization is in protecting the habitat for waterfowl as well as restoring many of our continent's (yes in Mexico and Canada too) wetlands. In the U.S. alone they have conserved and restored more than 10 million acres. What a great time I had; I was sad that I couldn't stay longer for the duration of the convention.

But, from there I headed back to Manhattan, Kansas, and the Kansas State University campus to attend my home state's FFA convention. The convention will be in full swing this next week, but it is great to be back to catch up with friends, family and professors. Seth will be joining me for our convention and I am looking forward to showing off the Kansas FFA Association.

Well, for now that is where I am and what I have been doing. I head to the New Mexico FFA State Convention next week, as well as begin NLCSO's as we finish up the convention season. As always, if there is anything I can ever do to help, just let me know.

**May 4, 2003**

Whew, the old saying of, "time flies when you're having fun," couldn't be truer than right now. It seems like just yesterday that I added to my journal, but here it is the first part of May and I haven't updated everyone on what has been going on.

After a brief trip in Kansas, I headed back to Indy to meet up with the rest of the team and work on National Leadership Conference for State Officers. We had a great time just catching up. I then headed for Jackson, Mississippi to enjoy the Easter celebration with my grandmother as well as my uncle and aunt. I had a great time and even learned how to put siding on a building.

Since then I have been in both Minnesota and Kentucky. I headed up to Minnesota after a brief stop in Indy after Easter for their state convention. I had a great time hanging out in the Twin Cities with Andy, Beth, Jillian, Suzanne, Kristie and Adam. The convention was tremendous. I kicked off my stay with a quick business and industry visit to Land O' Lakes and then it was off to the University of Minnesota campus. On Sunday, the 27th we heard from some great talent and were treated to a Reflections session by the state officers. I also enjoyed getting to know the all of the state officer candidates as they ran-and boy is Minnesota in good hands.

Over the next couple of days, we all had a great time as we celebrated the accomplishments of the members, heard from some great speakers-including one of my personal favorites-Dr. Guy Rice Doud. We also heard some great remarks from so many of the sponsors who make both what the Minnesota FFA and the National FFA work on a daily basis, and then the culminating event was the kick off of the 75th anniversary for the Minnesota FFA Association as past state officers gathered on stage and the team from 25 years ago shared a few brief remarks.

Immediately after convention I flew down to the Lincoln Trail Region of Kentucky on the 29th to begin a very exciting four days of visiting chapters and meeting hundreds of members across Kentucky. The Nelson County FFA graciously hosted me and I had a blast as I met all of the Greenhand members-especially Crick, who constantly kept me on my toes. Throughout the week I traveled around the region with Josh McCubbins, Mr. Vincent, Kyle, and Stephanie Dones, as we met chapters in Hardin, Grayson, Washington, Meade, LaRue, and Breckenridge Counties.

I will never forget getting to tour Sam's horse farm as he showed me around the farm he is building and the wisdom he shared with me about dreaming big-which he has definitely done and been successful at-I wish you the best Sam.

And then, one of the culminating events of my year thus far was attending the 129th Kentucky Derby with Mr. Vincent, Kyle and Josh. We had a great day at the Derby and then even toured around Lexington and actually saw the farm where Funny Cide-the Derby winner-was raised (not bred, but raised).

Oh-and I got to maintain my sanity by seeing some great cattle at Josh's farm-this NW Kansan has to see cattle every so often.

Well, this is getting pretty long, but I am in Texas now with the rest of the team, and as always, if there is ever anything I can do to help, please let me know.

**April 13, 2003**

Since I last added to my journal, things have been great. After the Delaware Convention I had the opportunity to head both to the Montana and Iowa Conventions. I was also able to spend a little bit of time at home and at KSU visiting friends and family.

The Montana Convention was held in Billings, Mont.,-and wow, what a time we all had. It was great to go back up to Billings, as I had a summer job there my freshman year in high school. It was fantastic to celebrate the members' accomplishments and I am sure that we will never forget their star keynote speaker. Rulon Gardner was able to join us for a session as well as hypnotist Al Snyder. It was an extremely fun-filled, and great time that I know we all benefited from. I was super impressed to hear the history of a scholarship that they give out in the name of a very supportive family. The mother, whom the scholarship is given in honor of, had ten children-eight received their State Degrees and six went on to become state officers-that has to be a record.

I then flew directly to Ames, Iowa. I can't tell you how great of a job the officers did. This was the first year the convention was held in Ames and the first year it was reduced to two days. They did a tremendous job in making the transition. It was great to go back to Iowa and visit with the Williamsburg Chapter. Dustin and I visited them in March. I will never forget the hospitality that I received when I first arrived and joined the Vinton-Shellsburg chapter for dinner, as Denise and Val

Search [ffa.org](http://ffa.org)

entertained us all with their glass playing ability.

I have just finished up a few days of home time in Kansas where I attended the wedding of a good friend and then met back up with my team in Indianapolis. I am headed off to Minnesota and Kentucky in just a few days and can't wait. As always, if there is anything I can ever do to be of assistance, please let me know.

### **March 30, 2003**

Wow! What a great week I have just had. I had the pleasure of visiting and participating in the 73rd Delaware FFA Association State Convention. I flew in on Wednesday afternoon to meet Meredith, Jonathan, Jimmy, Ryan, Krissy and Rachael, their state officer team as they put the final touches on for the first session that took place Thursday morning. It was great to see Andy and David from the Pennsylvania officer team, and to meet Abram from the Virginia officer team. We all had a great time simply visiting and I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Delaware and what the face of agriculture looks like. This was my first time ever to Delaware and now I can't wait to come back. Once convention began, boy did time fly. On Thursday, I had the opportunity to present workshops to more than 300 members who were in attendance. The greatest part, was that then we could all sit down and have a meal together, so I didn't only meet everyone in sessions or workshops but also was able to enjoy visiting over lunch and dinner.

During convention we had the opportunity to hear a keynote from past national officer Ronnie Simmons and then were mesmerized as the entertainment for the evening was a hypnotist. I am sure none of us will ever forget Jimmy and the rest of the volunteers-what a memorable time. I was so deeply moved as several talent performers sang "God Bless the USA", and then invited the crowd to join in. How fitting for the times we are facing. We ended convention on Friday afternoon. Congratulations to the new officer team.

Before I left I had the opportunity to tour the Smyrna FFA Chapter facilities. How blessed they are to have a brand new addition to their school for the ag. department and a terrific livestock facility right next to the school. There are some pictures in my photo album that you can look at if you would like.

Well, I am headed off for the Montana Convention and am extremely proud of all our associations that are celebrating a tremendous year of success. As always, if there is ever anything I can do to help any one, please don't hesitate to let me know.

### **March 23, 2003**

What a great time Dustin and I had on our second week of Business and Industry visits. We kicked off the week visiting our longest running sponsor, John Deere and then headed on north. Along the way we had the opportunity to visit with Hormel, and tour the Spam Museum, and then head on up to visit with such groups as the Associated Milk Producers, Land O' Lakes, CHS Cooperatives and the list goes on. It never ceases to amaze me just how many avenues there are in the agricultural industry. Whether you're into plants, animals, food science, communications, horticulture, research, or business the possibilities are endless.

Along the way Dustin and I were welcomed into the Williamsburg FFA Chapter in Iowa and had a great time meeting with members, learning about their chapter, and then sharing with them some of the great opportunities that are available in the FFA.

Our team just finished up a great week of meeting with the WLC and Blast Off presenters as we all prepared for a great summer of conferences all across the U.S. Our team is gearing up for NLCSO, National Leadership Conference for State Officers.

Currently we have all spread out across the country. I am heading home for a few days as I prepare to head for the Delaware FFA Convention next week; my first one, and I am

excited and can't wait. Well, I hope all is going well for each of you, and as always, if there is anything I can ever do to be of assistance please don't hesitate to let me know.

### **March 9, 2003**

Greetings all. Well, I hope that spring is coming in great for everyone. Our team is here in Michigan and March definitely came in like a lion, so come on warm weather. Dustin and I finished up our Business and Industry visits by heading up to Ohio. We met with a tremendous group of partners of the FFA and were excited to see just how deep our relationship is with so many of our partners. Without these amazing individuals we couldn't accomplish this year's "One Mission: Student Success."

Currently our team is finishing up a great week in Michigan. We have had the opportunity to visit the Cassopolis FFA Chapter-what a great time we all had. Whether it was L.J. showing is photography skills, Ray teaching the card game Mafia, or getting to see their teams practice as they headed for state convention, we had a great time. We are all gearing up for the conventions we are going to be heading for very shortly. So watch out Delaware, Montana and Iowa; you are the first three I attend and I am ready.

Dustin and I head for Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota next week for a second great week of Business and Industry visits. Well, as always if there is ever anything I can do to help, don't hesitate to let me know. I hope all is going well, and there will be more to come next week.

### **February 23, 2003**

After a brief time at home to spend with family and friends, our team all headed back to Indianapolis to celebrate Valentine's Day with a visit to Elanco Animal Health. What a tremendous opportunity to learn more about an industry that is so close to the world that I love - cattle. Well the following Monday I headed for South Carolina. I had a tremendous time traveling the state of South Carolina to help celebrate National FFA Week.

My week began with a brief tour of the Clemson University Campus as well as getting to meet some tremendous individuals who care about the future of agriculture. They are truly making a difference with their dedication to the College of Agriculture at Clemson. From there, the week flew by. Whether it was visiting the Indian Lake FFA Chapter, the McBee FFA Chapter, or the National Wild Turkey Federation World headquarters, I had a blast and had the chance to meet some great members and partners. I will never forget hearing Doug of the McBee FFA sing the song that we all loved at Convention-"I'm Proud to be in the FFA." Or visiting with the Turner sisters about their SAEs in Beef Production. The greatest memory from my trip to South Carolina was Legislative Appreciation Day. On Wednesday of FFA Week, more than 500 members flooded the steps of the capitol building in Columbia to show their appreciation for the legislatures' support of agricultural education and the FFA. I had a blast meeting with Representative Witherspoon and Commissioner of Agriculture Sharpe. What a tremendous showing for the FFA. Could you imagine what would happen if we would all show our support during one day of FFA week-what an impact that could have?

Now Dustin and I are traveling on a week of Business and Industry Tours. We have just finished up a great weekend in Nashville, Tenn.. As always, if there is ever anything that I can do to help or be of assistance please don't hesitate to e-mail or call. Good luck in all you are working on and check back for more to come.

### **Feb. 10, 2003**

Well, our team has made it back to the U.S. We all enjoyed our eight-day experience stay in Japan. I learned more than I could ever share in one sitting with everyone. Our trip started of great with a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. We visited with several individuals so that we had a better understanding of exactly what issues are facing the Japanese economy, government, agriculture industry and the Japanese people. We all knew that Japan is a major trading partner of the U.S., but this visit really brought that to light when we began looking at just how much we export to Japan every year. As our trip continued, we toured a host of business and industries in order to understand exactly what the Japanese ag industry entails, not only production but also in business and science. One thing I do know is that it will be hard to ever eat another strawberry that was as big, juicy, and sweet as the ones we tried over there. Another amazing bit of information is that the average farm size in Japan is 3.5 acres. Well, like I said I could go on for pages just about Japan and would be glad to share more with you either in person when I meet so many of you or via e-mail if you have any questions about our trip.

After returning to the states our team briefly attended a meeting of state staff in Indianapolis. This was great because it helped us prepare for our travels throughout this year to so many states and areas of the country. I am currently at home for a few days and enjoying visiting some friends and family before I head back out on the road. I will be in South Carolina next week and can't wait to visit with everyone. I have never been to South Carolina and am really looking forward to the experience.

I hope all is going well for everyone and you are gearing up for FFA Week. As always let me know if there is ever anything I can do to help and there will more to come of our adventures later.

### **Jan. 6, 2003**

Happy 2003. I hope everyone is enjoying the new year and had a great holiday season. Over the holiday season, I traveled down to Jackson, Miss., to spend time with family as well as catching a

little relaxation time.

Our team returned to Indianapolis on January 1 and began preparing to hit the road. We enjoyed catching up from the holidays and getting ready to head for our Greenhand Experience States. Tim and I will leave for Pennsylvania on January 6.

As I finish writing this Tim and I are sitting in the Cleveland airport waiting for the snow to clear. Our final destination is Pennsylvania. We will spend the next week touring the state, meeting various partners of the FFA, as well as getting to spend time with our fellow members.

Tim and I have been enjoying a great start to our visit to Pennsylvania. We have met some amazing individuals from both the South Central Region and the Eastern Region of the state.. We just had the tremendous opportunity and visit W.B. Saul High School. What an incredible program. They have a chapter with more than 600 members and participate in everything from the animal sciences to agribusiness and from floriculture to preparing to operate their own small store that will sell several of the products they raise on their school farm and design in their classes. Keep up the great work.

The snow may be a hassle, but this Kansas boy is used to a white Christmas, and I did miss it in Mississippi.

### **Dec. 15, 2002**

A long-term goal for me has just come true. In October of 1996 I set the goal of serving as a national FFA officer. I can tell you exactly where I was, and who was around me when I decided to write "National FFA Office," on the blank next to long-term goal.

Just like my Greenhand Conference is forever etched in my mind, so too, is November 2, 2002. The energy that I felt when they called Dustin, then Joel, then Julie, then myself was overwhelming. As Christy began to say the word "Kansas," the past week seemed like it had only begun a few seconds before. As they finished calling Seth and Tim's names it hit me that a 14-year-old's goal was now this 21-year-old's reality.

The month following convention has been one that I will never forget. After a brief three-day orientation in Louisville, preparing me for the year ahead, I was back on the airplane Manhattan, Kansas bound. Upon arriving back at good ol' KSU, I was greeted by all of my friends and fraternity brothers. Of course along with the fun, came the reality that I did have a few classes I needed to finish before my journey.

The few days prior to and following Thanksgiving were great. I had the opportunity to spend time back in northwest Kansas surrounded by my family and friends. So many of the people back home were those who helped me find my passion for agriculture and are still some of my greatest role models and mentors.

On December 1, our team rendezvoused again. We all flew to Indianapolis to begin a three-week training session. Now it is already December 16 and WOW, how much I have learned. We have had a wonderful time meeting all of the wonderful people who drive our organization and truly care for all 461,043 of us, here at the National FFA Organization Center.

[Home](#) | [Students](#) | [Educators](#) | [Supporters](#) | [News](#) | [Index](#) | [Contact FFA](#)

National FFA Organization 2003©

[Website problems?](#) Contact: [Webmaster@ffa.org](mailto:Webmaster@ffa.org)