

# Class X newsletter

## Seminar VII In This Issue:

Director's Dialogue. - p.1-2  
Welcome to the Capital, Class XI! - p. 3-6  
From D.C. to Denver, CO - p.7-12  
Western States and Water Wars - p. 13-16  
"A Cup of Joe" with Dr. Joe - p. 17  
Coordinator's Corner - p. 18-19

# Let's Reflect.

## Director's Dialogue -Dr. Hannah Carter, Program Director

"We are looking at our feet,  
not the horizon of where we need to go." -Nick Tindall



### I feel like this quote sums up this program well

—we, as leaders, need to look forward and work together to figure out the solutions to the problems of today. It was an interesting time to be in

Washington, D.C. and I think we were all thankful to leave the seemingly dysfunction of politics and head West.

Being a part of this program has allowed me to have some of the most wonderful memories—and our national trip added to this most amazing collective of

experiences. You'll read about each day from the superb accounts of our newsletter writers—but I put together a Top Ten List of my own:

10. Connecting with two other ag leadership programs and having our class interact with alumni of other classes. It's always interesting to be able to learn about other programs and compare them to ours.
9. Walking into the "Cowgirls of the West" Luncheon and watching the group practice their etiquette as they were separated and seated at a table full of amazing ladies!
8. Seeing America out the



windows of a bus—from the monuments of Washington, D.C. at night, to the Rockies, to the fields of sunflowers—this country is extraordinary and we tend to lose sight of that with all that is wrong with the world.

7. Watching the class as lightbulbs begin to go off and connections are made. Also finding a great deal of satisfaction when a presenter or stop is not what they thought it would be—but much better! It's fun to watch these trips as they are experienced from a multitude of viewpoints.

6. Spending time were a very few get too—the National War College—being there for an afternoon and learning that the world military leaders are going through a program much like this one in addition to building their own networks.

5. Watching three members of the group put their media skills to the test as they were interviewed for RFD-TV. They were wonderful ambassadors for Florida agriculture and all did an incredible job! I'm also thankful for the tenacity of the Bureau Chief for RFD-TV to track this group of Florida ag leaders down to get her stories.

4. Having the responsibility of being the first Florida agricultural group in Washington, D.C. since Hurricane Irma. I could not be more proud of Class X members as they made additional appointments and share their stories of impacts of the storm. Timing is everything and we were in DC at a pretty incredible time.

3. Being on Chris and Lauren Trad's (Class VI and XI)

medicinal hemp operation and listening to the passion for what they are doing. It's not often you can watch someone live out their dream and the Trad's are doing it! Lesson of the day—follow your passion and take risks!

2. Sitting in a Senate Hearing Room watching my home state Senator Susan Collins discuss what leadership means to her and asking our group about the hurricane and ag losses. It was an incredible time to be meeting her and I am grateful that she made this a priority.

1. Watching the pure and utter joy that a perfect snow fall can bring as a group of adults suddenly turns into a group of delighted children experiencing their first snowball fight. And that traffic stopped in Cheyenne to watch this group frolic in the snow.

There are a lot of people to extend my appreciation to for making this trip be such a great success—but there is one group in particular—the 29 members of Class X! On our last day, I looked at them and thought to myself that I could keep going another week. They are a joy to be around, they are grateful to be a part of this class and the program and they understand that they will be expected to step up and utilize their leadership now and after they graduate. I am thankful to be on this leadership adventure with them.

This may be our last “Let’s Reflect” until the new year! With that, I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season!!



# Meet Class X Member Cathy Atchley

Cathy Atchley lives in LaBelle and has called southwest Florida home for 10 years now. A Georgia native, she grew up with beef cattle, a few horses, and labradors. Cathy founded On Point Ag Inc, a service business providing agronomic information to growers or industry personnel. Cathy and husband Rob enjoy spending time with their daughter Kate, who will be 1 year old in December, a chocolate lab, and 2 German Shorthaired Pointers.



## Welcome to the Capital, Class X! -Cathy Atchley



### The preparation for Class X's national trip

began months ago. Every session we've had so far, and in greater depth our time in Gainesville this summer, has prepped us for a 9-day trip of learning, leading, and letting our lights shine. Our October 2nd-11th trip came on the footsteps of a FAST month of September. A Labor Day holiday actually became a day of Labor when we realized that Hurricane Irma would grace us with her presence in some form or fashion. The middle and latter half of the month then became consumed with clean-up, helping others, and making sure our homes and businesses were sound. One of our teammates wasn't able to attend because of Irma. Aside from physical damage, the storm left us with time lost at work and working double time. Ironically, the

timing of our national trip so soon after the storm gave us timely facts and figures for discussing the needs in our home districts. During our July session in Gainesville, we practiced our "ask" in front of a mock legislator. This trip was our time to get in front of a legislator or staff person and spread our wings.

We arrived to D.C. with a chill in the air. What a welcomed change! Then our group of 31 split into smaller groups in order to fit into the Uber cars that magically appeared for us. (This was my first official Uber experience.) Our home for the week was the Holiday Inn Capitol. It's close enough to walk to the Capitol, the American Farm Bureau Building, a metro station, and there was a CVS practically next door. If you're reading this



newsletter, you probably already know how full our schedules are. We had a slice of time on the agenda between landing at 11:20am and kicking off our official business at 2:45pm on Monday afternoon. This left just enough time for a quick museum stop, lunch, and/or a few minutes of getting settled and tying up any loose ends from work.

We walked as a group to the Capitol. We spent a few minutes stimulating the economy at the gift shop, and then were treated to a Capitol tour by Congressman Tom Rooney's staff. (Thanks Andrew and Caroline!) We walked where the nation's leaders walk. We stood in the crypt literally at the starting point of D.C.'s roads/lines. We visited Statuary Hall and yes - we heard the whispers of someone's conversation from across the room.

In the Old Supreme Court chamber, we saw a clock that has been keeping time since 1837 (let that sink in a minute). It is wound once a week and makes me think: Am I winding my clock enough? What maintenance do we need to ensure that we'll stand the test of time?

The capitol set the tone for the session. Most, if not all, of the industry challenges we face are politically involved. Items like: funding, government land ownership/management, taxes, tariffs, trade, labeling, even consumer perception are influenced by government policy or rhetoric. Walking the halls of the Capitol made me reflect on our nation's history. Looking up at the grand fresco painting in the rotunda - the Apotheosis of Washington, circa 1865, shows George Washington, flanked by Liberty and Victory. Our thirteen original colonies are depicted with maidens, and the circumference shows groups of national concepts of the time period: "War," "Science," "Marine," "Commerce," "Mechanics," and "Agriculture". Would agriculture still make the list for the national concepts of today?

Following our Capitol tour, Congressman Tom Rooney made us feel right at home in D.C. We sat on the steps of the Capitol and watched him park his vehicle proudly displaying an orange and blue "BEEF" tag on the front bumper. He gave us an overview of D.C., his experience, talked briefly about Russia, social media and the polarizing ends of the spectrum.

Our first day in D.C. ended at one of the city's reliable landmarks on the Hill... Bullfeathers. We had a nice meal, but missed getting to visit with a couple of WLI alumni. (Hopefully another time, Ray Gilmer and Stephanie Grunenfelder!) We certainly appreciate their willingness to be a part of this session. Ending our first day in D.C., I was reminded of the opportunity we have to make a difference. Our role is important. "Agriculture is the

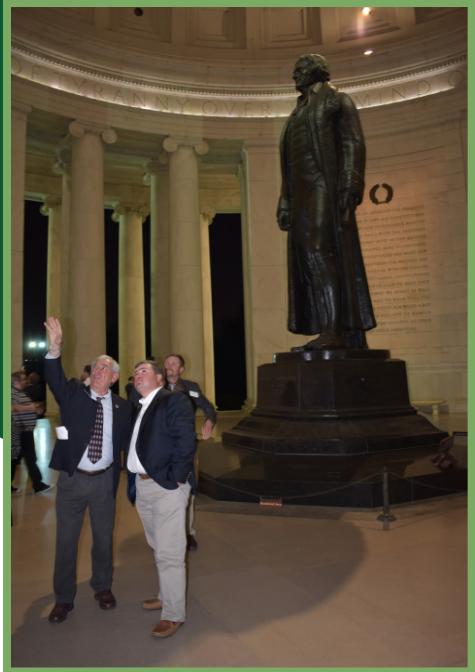
most healthful, most useful, and most noble employment of man." - George Washington

Tuesday brought us to the National Press Club for an Infrastructure Forum

hosted by the Farm Foundation. Moderator Constance Cullman and the panel were excellent speakers. At ease with the cameras rolling, and quite knowledgeable, they talked through infrastructure issues then took questions. The take home message for me centered around rural connectivity. Let's imagine that one wireless cell service provider may claim 97% coverage. But what about that 3% that is peppered in the 'fly over states'? This gap leaves opportunity for the growth of ag technology, education, healthcare, job opportunities (and in turn, rural economics). In a rural town, if the kids have moved away, the family doctor has retired, and the town is thinning, how far do you have to drive for services? What if you could Skype with a Doctor, thus shortening your wait time from three weeks to only three 3 hours before an initial consultation?

I learned that the US has more navigable waterways than the rest of the world. With Waters of the U.S. and the Herbert Hoover dike of importance to many in our class - we only scratched the surface of our country's infrastructure. Nick Tindall, from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, encouraged the audience to be forward thinking when he told us to look at "more





than just the potholes...Look at the horizon."

Next, we walked to King & Spaulding and national and international trade issues impacting Florida agriculture. Luckily we had someone hold our hand through the complexities of AD and CVD (Antidumping and Countervailing Duty) laws. Steve Jones answered questions we had and the topic as the topic is especially relevant to Florida's specialty crops. Daniella Taveau briefly discussed some of her regulatory work (tolerances and EU parliament rules). Tom Spulak and Kendrick Meek gave us time for plenty of questions. We discussed trade challenges, specialty crops versus "the rest of the US", and touched on US rules and regulations that are more stringent than those in other countries (related to pesticide product usage, MRLs, etc.). We were reminded that aside from the laws and policies on the books, we also have to face the 'court of public opinion' (which is a news clip driven process). When discussing our upcoming legislative meetings, Kendrick Meek's advice was 'don't let congress off the hook'. Reminds me of 'the normalization of deviance' (from sociologist Diane Vaughan). If we continue to allow certain behavior, then that behavior moves from being unacceptable, and becomes adequate, acceptable, and standard. Our WLI Class X is lucky to have the staff and alumni support to constantly hold us to a high degree of performance.

Another late afternoon timeslot was meeting with Senator Susan Collins. I admired her confidence as she explained how she can look herself in the mirror, and her constituents are happy with her. I also wondered, how far should we push the status quo? We elect our government officials to represent us. At what point does their role shift from doing what we want to doing what is best on our behalf. Senator Collins was quite generous with her time and discussed her experience as a "Moderate" in the polarized political D.C. landscape.

The night ended at the Dubliner restaurant with

Ryan Weston of Florida Sugar Cane League and Parks Shackelford of Florida Crystals Corporation. We talked all things sugar. We enjoyed the Dubliner specialties (Fish & Chips, Guinness ), then hopped on a bus for an evening tour of the monuments. Our driver would drop us near monuments for a visit, making it easy to hit the highlights even when low on time. We walked the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; I visited the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial for the first time; the beauty and history of the city helped us adjourn for the evening.

On Wednesday morning in the National Union Building. Dr. James Thurber from American University discussed the ins and outs of D.C. with us. He discussed the Radical Centrist, the Gridlock, the Polarization, his book: Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional





#### Relations (6th Edition).

He announced that 'Moderates are an endangered species.' There have only been four times since 1976 that Congress has passed all twelve regular appropriations bills on time (only 4 out of 40+??). He lamented that nothing is accomplished, except for in the case of a clear emergency. When there is a clear problem/threat – action ensues.

From there, we scattered. Our WLI agenda staff had arranged for legislative meetings per district. We were strongly encouraged to schedule additional meetings during this window. I ended up in four meetings (in four different buildings), some classmates busily attended five meetings. We learned from each other. We practiced our "ask." We established (or continued nurturing) a relationship with our district's office. It must be exhausting to listen to constituents all day. Luckily, it seems, most of our meetings were positive--certainly an excellent experience for us to build on.

Our afternoon agenda item was a visit to the National War College. Dr. Bob Watts gave us a tour to show us the beautiful campus, and we were able to feel great pride for our service members. We were also able to hear more about the Lincoln Assassination Conspiracy Trial. Much like the Wedgeworth Leadership Institute, the National War College (NWC) is educating future leaders—different curriculum and student body, though! NWC is comprised of students from the Armed Forces, Department of State, and other civilian agencies, plus international fellows from foreign countries. The high-level elite are here becoming better leaders and studying national security strategy.

We ended Wednesday with a night



on our own. I metro'ed to Arlington to visit a college girlfriend. We walked nearby with her baby in a stroller for tacos. A handful of our classmates also met friends or family for dinner this night. Others explored the city (#Cupcakes) (#TrumpHotel). And I wonder if some of our group took advantage of an earlier bedtime.



# Meet Class X Member Austin Spivey

Austin is a 3rd generation Floridian and graduate of the University of Central Florida with a degree in Political Science. Austin has been production manager for Cherrylake, Inc. for the last 4 years and has a little over 17 years in the horticultural industry. When not working Austin can be found hunting, fishing, and volunteering his time with local non-profit organizations.



## From D.C. to Denver, CO

-Austin Spivey



On Thursday morning, I was relieved to have gotten the congressional visits out of the way. Admittedly, I was nervous and felt like I was making a sales call of sorts. I am no salesman. Now feeling like the pressure was off, the day started off with a pretty quiet breakfast in the hotel lobby following our first night free from programming. Needless to say, some of us were a little sluggish. I must say I was still full having ate at Filomena Ristorante in Georgetown with some of my classmates the night before. They have wonderful traditional Italian food to check out if you are in town capped off by a world famous Georgetown cupcake (I had two...). Thankfully, we only had a brief walk from our hotel to the American Farm Bureau Federation. We settled into the penthouse suite for

an all-day marathon of speakers and a tidal wave of information to soak up. We were warmly greeted with coffee and donuts by Mr. Andrew Walmsley; Director of Congressional Relations for AFBF. One of the things Andrew related as a primary function of his job was to communicate factual information to Congressional Leadership. "Keyboard Activists and Conflict Entrepreneurs", as Andrew so eloquently put it, are often spreading a constant barrage of misinformation of which keeps him very busy.

Don Parrish, the Senior Director of Regulatory Relations for AFBF, was our first speaker of the day. Almost immediately Mr. Parrish launched into a talk about his theory



as to what was broken with our congressional system. Don hypothesized that the real issue with an unproductive congress is because of the high turnover of elected legislators who are ill prepared to do the job. Don went on further to suggest that most of these “rookie” legislators are not even keen to how the legislative process works. Mr. Parrish made it very evident that the climate of frustration continues to grow in D.C. Moving on from the general atmosphere in D.C., Don highlighted the ongoing legislative battle regarding the definition of Waters of The U.S. (WOTUS) and the introduction of the Clean Water Rule (2015) for further definition in the Clean Water Act. This Final Rule was opposed in the supreme court as it was perceived to be an overreach granting even more jurisdictional authority to the Army Core of Engineers and the EPA. A Stay has been granted and an executive order was issued by President Trump to the Army Core and EPA to rescind or revise this 2015 rule. This is still a widely debated issue and Farm Bureau is dedicating a lot of resource to ensure the wording is beneficial for agriculture and their access to water.

Our next speaker on the agenda was Ms. Patricia Wolff, Senior Director of Congressional Relations AFBF, who gave us a talk regarding Tax Reform and current Tax Policy focus. This country has

not had any tax reform since 1986! A lot has changed since then, and it is not hard to believe this antiquated system does not fit today's socio-economic demographic structure. Ms. Wolff began by laying out exactly what it is going to take to pass a new tax policy. The timeline and agenda seemed a bit ambitious considering the recent history of expedient resolution across the aisles (heavy sarcasm). Maybe we will have a new tax policy by Thanksgiving.... Or maybe not. Of the 3 parts of the tax code, the individual tax code is what AFBF is most concerned with. They are fighting hard to ensure that the estate tax is eliminated in this bill. They do want to keep the “step-up” portion of the estate tax as well as further benefits to agriculture like cash accounting, interest deduction, and lower capital gains tax. With four primary Senate hold outs (McCain, Collins, Corker, and Paul) it may be difficult to reach Paul Ryan's proposed deadlines for a new tax bill.

Our third speaker of the day was Ms. Karen Williams of the law firm McDermott Will & Emery LLP. Karen is the Senior Legislative Advisor for the firm and has an extensive knowledge of trade law. Karen discussed with us the current state of NAFTA and some of the statistical impacts on Florida agriculture. Florida agriculture, in various sectors combined, has lost somewhere between 1-3 billion dollars in revenue to import goods. Another eye opener was that in a little over 20 years of NAFTA's existence Mexico has completely replaced Florida tomato growers production supplying around 66% of all U.S. consumption. The Mexican government is subsidizing approximately 50% of all their agricultural production and its labor rate is about \$0.89 an hour for agricultural workers (2015). Without trade remedies to combat some of these



unfair trade practices the specialty crop industry in Florida is in big trouble. Worth mentioning too is the food safety and chemical regulations that are practically non-existent in these areas of the world. Sonny Perdue, U.S. Ag Commissioner, has publicly acknowledged the negative effects of NAFTA on Florida growers and this admission may be a precursor to proper trade sanctions. However, with large corporate U.S. growers owning stake in foreign operations and the Midwest commodity crops benefiting greatly, it makes for a complicated issue. One other thing Ms. Williams discussed is the ever increasing labor Mexican agriculture is demanding. Mexican officials estimate a labor shortage within the next 20 years. Will they finally raise their wages to compete with U.S. growers to keep their workers home? Will they completely refuse to participate in H2 labor programs to keep their workers home? Without vast innovation and automation it sounds like there may be even greater labor shortages and struggles on the horizon..

We finished the afternoon off with a “Let’s Reflect” session led by Dr. Joe Joyce. There was much talk of D.C., politics, and the general atmosphere on the hill. All of us are very passionate and it comes through during some of our reflections. Rarely do we always all agree, but we always manage to have very engaged and productive conversation. Before

we departed the AFBF offices we went to the roof for some awesome panoramic D.C. skyline pictures. They have an amazing view of the Capitol building.

Ah, leg-stretching time! I am quite sure all the alumni reading this can relate to those 6-8 hour speaker-thons Hannah always squeezes into our programming. We were finally cut loose for a few hours to catch-up on emails, sight see, and catch dinner before our evening visit to the JFK Center for the Performing Arts. The playbill was for “Shear Madness” which I am sure a lot of you are familiar with as this has been a Wedgworth D.C. tradition for several classes I am told. First off, the Kennedy Center.... Wow! Just an amazing bit of architecture and perfectly situated right on the Potomac! Very impressive. Secondly, I am not a stranger to the performing arts, but I found this play unique because of its audience participation. There were a few genuinely funny scenes and some humorous characters. In fact, one of the characters in particular made some of our most conservative classmates very uncomfortable. It was almost as entertaining watching them squirm in their seats as watching the actual play. We also had an entire class of what appeared to be middle school age kids sitting across the theater from us. They were absolutely erupting with laughter at any and all suggestive content and adult humor. I am not sure



their chaperones knew what they were getting into. The kids excitement and enthusiasm was hilarious and made the whole play that much better.. I think all in all the group had a pretty good time and it was a memorable experience. This would cap off our programming for the D.C. portion of the trip. The next morning we were off to Denver, CO....

Friday was pretty much a travel day. Our flight left D.C. around 10:30 and we arrived in Denver at about 2:30. The rest of the day and evening were ours to spend how we wanted. I caught up with an old high school friend who lived nearby in Golden. The majority of the group made their way to our very nice hotel via shuttle bus from the airport. A good bit of the group proceeded to take in everything Denver has to offer that evening. I know there are some pretty funny stories floating around out there.

On Saturday morning, the group seemed to have a new energy. I'm guessing it's because we were finally out of our suits, out of D.C., and into some cool weather and open spaces. Could have just been the thin air in Denver and our brains lacking oxygen too. Nevertheless, we all piled onto the tour bus after breakfast with our Sunday driver... (Really.... That was his name..... Sunday.) He was great. He was no Marvin (our D.C. driver) but not a bad second. Our first stop was a CSA, or community-supported agriculture, just outside Denver. The place was called Delaney Urban Garden: Delaney Community Farm. It was a an interesting little 5 acre farm that utilized an entirely volunteer and a paid refugee workforce to work the land. They were growing all kinds of produce in about 3 acres of the space. The



remaining portion was small individual garden plots. Each stakeholder, about 30-35 total, was in for about \$600-700 a season. All harvests were distributed to stakeholders and a food bank first. The food bank produce is sold in a farmers market type environment. Additional benefits, like 2 for 1 dollar value, were offered for WIC and SNAP recipients to help them attain a healthier diet. There are roughly over 100 different CSA's operating in the Colorado area. Most of the funding is from federal grants and is not subsidized by the state. A very interesting approach to get local communities more involved in agriculture, to help provide healthy food options for lower income families, and to see how challenging farming really can be. I think we were running slightly behind so we got Hannah's best goat herding impersonation as she funneled us to the tour bus.

Once we were all on the bus we were off to visit a former WLI alum Chris Trad at Strasburg Pharms. Strasburg Pharms is a 200 acre farm located in what appeared to be a couple miles outside of middleofnowhereville, CO. Chris has about 100 acres of Hemp planted and was a few weeks away from harvest. Chris explained what a precarious position he was in with a freeze forecasted for the following morning. Early harvest was not an option as the crops have no value until they are of a certain maturity. Thankfully, we got word that he fared well and his crop was OK. Mr. Trad and his wife Lauren explained how Cannabis has over 123 cannabinoids used in over 50,000 different products! Only the THC cannabinoid gets you "high" and is federally illegal. The strain of Cannabis they grow is hemp and the THC level is below .03% making it federally legal for commercial production. We were also told that the crop itself was worth roughly \$150,000.00





per acre. If true.... Wow. I would definitely be building a fence around those golden geese. The Trad's are also vertically integrated with ownership of their own extractor company to breakdown the plant material after harvest. Chris and Lauren were both very friendly and very knowledgeable about their industry. I think we all had a really good time taking pics in this huge field of "grass." I can't wait to put that in our Christmas card this year! This was definitely something you just don't see every day. The Trad's and their girls catered a really nice lunch for us at a local banquet hall while we got to meet and have a short Q & A with Matt Lopez who manages pesticide enforcement for the Colorado Dept. Of Ag. They sure have their hands full trying to regulate marijuana when very few pesticides are labeled for use and probably won't be due to federal EPA regulation.



After lunch we boarded the bus and headed for the Stacked Lazy Three Ranch owned by Mr. Kevin Turecek. This is a 27,000 acre cattle operation with 500 head of cattle. To be honest I was blown away at how they owned a piece of land almost  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's the size of Washington, D.C. and could only put 500 cows on it. They simply have no water making the land virtually worthless for revenue generation. The grass the cows graze on is extremely delicate, hence the low head count, and they treat it like gold. Despite the fact that it is so sparse it is more than twice as nutritious as our field grass here in Florida (14% protein vs. our 6%). The Tureceks took us to a beautiful summit with an amazing view of dry grassland hills as far as the eye could see. It's such BIG country out there! Another reason we visited the Lazy 3 Ranch was because they had just finalized a large conservation easement through their land to preserve the ranch and farmland for future generations. Succession planning seems to have been a subtle



theme on this trip. Interesting tidbit: apparently 100% of the lottery proceeds (25 billion to date) goes towards conservation in Colorado; 100%! Additionally, it is estimated that every dollar invested in conservation generates approximately \$4-12 in returns. I am not exactly sure if these figures given were true, but they sure sound impressive.

Our next stop was Lewton Farms a short drive up the road. Justin Lewton met us in one of his Sunflower fields on the side of the road. Justin's family has grown Wheat, Sorghum, Sugar Beets, and Sunflowers for multiple generations and now is controlled and managed by he and his sister. It is through their crop diversity and mechanization of production that they are able to still maintain, albeit thin, profit margins he stated. The field we were in was of a particular long shell variety of Sunflower seeds that Europeans insist upon. The irony is that the seed is the same size as our domestically consumed Sunflowers though. Justin also is in the tractor sales business and had quite a spray machine on display for us to look over. Justin is also in the current class of the Colorado Ag Leadership group. He told us about a project that he and a classmate are working on. One of the big issues in agriculture is succession planning. With more and more generations moving away from farming this is getting harder and harder. Their idea was to create a mentor program to couple aspiring farmers and ranchers with retiring farmers and ranchers. This matchmaking is mutually beneficial by continuing multi-generational farms as well as overcoming the greatest barrier to entry for aspiring farmers and ranchers; land ownership.

After leaving Lewton Farms, we headed back to Denver to have dinner at the famous Buckhorn Exchange. We were joined by a wonderful group of ag leaders from the current and alumni classes of the Colorado Agricultural leadership program. The food was fantastic. I had no problem indulging in a plate full of Rocky Mountain Oysters. The bison steak I had was cooked to perfection. The atmosphere was great and the conversation even better! I would highly recommend this place. It was a great end to a jam packed day!



# Meet Class X Member JC Deriso

Native to Arcadia, JC is a first generation farmer with a passion for finding the highest and best Ag use for a piece of land. He and his wife, Kayla, grew up attending the same little country church in Pine Level, Florida. They are blessed with two daughters, Kadence (7) and Reagan (3). JC and Kayla are in the process of adopting their new son, Lonya (15) from the Ukraine. 4-H and FFA played a big role in the direction of JC's life path and taught him the fundamentals of business. After graduation, JC started a turf farm as his first full time Ag endeavor, and he has been blessed to do what he loves every day since.



## Western states and Water Wars

-JC Deriso

### The national trip loomed on our horizon

for the last year. Ten days away to soak up all things AG in D.C., Colorado, and Wyoming. We knew it would be action packed with Dr. Carter at the wheel. As the time drew near for departure, the reality of leaving family and business commitments set in. As soon as the entire group arrived at Orlando International airport we began to break into the familiar rhythm of camaraderie, catching up and playful jokes. It is amazing to me how well a group this big can get along and become friends. Even more amazing is staying friends after ten days on the road. So, my part of the trip to report on is the last three days in Colorado and Wyoming. Before I get to that, I would like to mention a couple of points that stood out to me earlier in the trip.

"Be on time for the bus;" when Hannah gives a departure time it is firm. I was "that guy." You know, the one who missed the bus on the way to the War college of all places. Just to be clear, the War College is a secure, military campus in D.C. Gaining gate access in an Uber, armed only with a story about missing the bus, was interesting to say the least. I am very thankful that the Guard let me in. Dr. Bob Watts gave us a great talk on leadership and strategy training in the military. The talk was very interesting as we gained insight into how we in the united states train some of our military leaders. It was humbling to sit in the actual seats and room where some of our war plans are made. We can be proud that the United States leads the world in producing men and women who can fight wars effectively while observing



the Geneva conventions and preserving human rights. Dr. Bob shared some of the ways social media is being manipulated by foreign governments to create divisions and discontent here at home. It is a scary world out there, we are very fortunate to have the best and brightest thinkers working on these problems before we know they exist.

Valerie posed the question "do you see a change in leadership styles in today's Military as opposed to leadership styles in the past?" I liked Dr. Bob's response, "Successful leaders are fundamentally still doing all the same things." My take away from that is this program is teaching us timeless skills and we need to make the most of them. Our charge is to share the principals and ideas of leadership through mentoring and teaching the next generation.

Now we pick up in Berthoud, Colorado at the home and farm of the Markham's. Sugar beets were first planted at the Markham farm in 1906. In subsequent years the growers in the area formed a Co-Op and bought the processing plants so they could have more control over the pricing and quality of their commodity. The Markham's diversified into barley in the 1960's and are known for providing the key ingredient for Coors beer. They now grow silage corn for a local dairy as well. Mr. Markham is a good natured, plain speaking man who you can't help but like. His type are the men and women who



have built and sustained agriculture in America. As soon as he started speaking to us on Sunday morning at his farm we all knew we could identify with him. Their crops have seen challenges over the years such as low-price imports, water shortages, development pressures, labor shortages and many more. The farm has persisted and survived through the leadership of the Markham family. Mr. Markham was chosen to represent Barley growers for Coors and did a national news interview on farmers and water. He represented agriculture well and became the first man to wear a cowboy hat on the NYSE floor. My take away from this visit was that as farmers, we do what we do every day to the best of our ability. But we always need to be ready to step up when the opportunity rises to represent our values and way of life to the masses who may have a misperception of Ag. It was way out of Mr. Markham's comfort zone to travel across the country to be interviewed, but he stepped up to the plate and hit it out of the park!

Next, we traveled to a limited irrigation research farm in Greeley Colorado. we were hosted by Dr. Jon Altenhofen and Mr. Kendall DeJonge. They have the responsibility to run trials on corn varieties to determine highest yields on the least water. State of the art precision irrigation and monitoring techniques are used to study how different varieties respond to drought stress. When in the crop's life cycle a given amount of water is most effective on yield is also recorded. At this stop I finally





began to grasp the western water rights concept a little bit better. The earliest historical user of the given water supply has first rights to the water. This is established in dedicated water courts. So, if your neighbor downstream has senior water rights, you have to let the water run through your property and fulfill his needs before you can draw water. The eastern plains of the Rockies have an aquifer that was largely created by agriculture over the last 150 years. The farms closest to the mountains get the first snow melt water then irrigate with it. the water moves through the soil profile then into the aquifer. Then the next farm downstream has well water that was recharged by the farmer upstream. So, one has to be careful to utilize the full quantity they are allotted. if they conserve by say using a low volume pivot, they still need to run out their allowed quantity on the ground in seepage to recharge the aquifer for the farm who depends on it down stream. So, basically, if you save water it is not necessarily yours to sell or bank. They explained to us the “buy and dry” concept that many municipalities are doing in the area. So, if a town needs more water, the growing trend is for that town to buy a farm with senior water rights. Then they begin to divert the bulk of that water to the municipal system and “dry up” the farm. In this case they only let the minimum water seep back into the aquifer for the next farm who is still in production agriculture and needs the water dearly. This is one of the biggest conflicts between development and agriculture and seems like it will only grow larger. The work that the limited irrigation researchers are doing is a vital piece of the puzzle for sustainable food production in the US.

The Slusky Dairy in Wellington, Colorado was a great picture of maximizing production on a small piece of land. They have been able to achieve an impressive 800 head milking operation on just 80 acres. Developments have moved closer each year and are now right across the road from the dairy. As some pressure began to develop with the public, they realized they would need to change



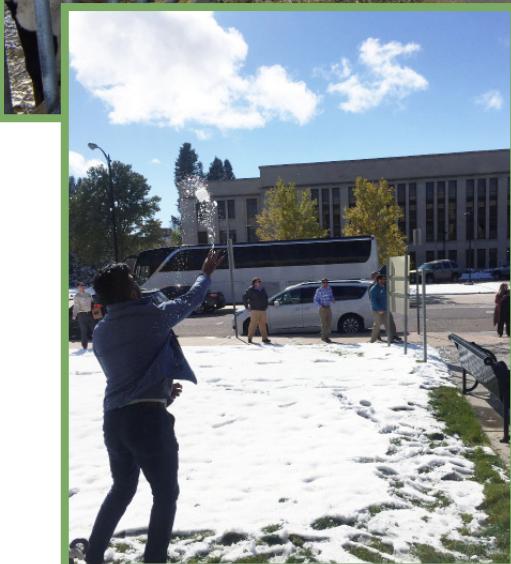
their approach to dealing with the public. Instead of pulling back and trying to keep the public out of the farm's affairs, they began to reach out to the community. Hosting field days and giving back integrated the dairy into the lives of the community in a way that successfully diffused the friction that was occurring. Hats off to the Slusky family for a job well done.

Harvest farms in Wellington is a not for profit outreach that is dedicated to providing a faith based recovery program for people with addictions. The program participants live on farm, grow crops, work the farm and do the support work to host thousands of corn maze visitors every year. They provide the tools and training for recovery for those who are ready and committed to make a change for the better. Financial responsibility training and good hard work have proven to be great factors in turning lives around at the farm. Program participants grow most of their own food under the supervision of volunteer leaders. This productivity gives the men a feeling self-worth that allows them to begin the healing process and become a productive member of society. Harvest farm is a great example of what can be done in the rural setting to re-focus one's life and get back on track.

On Monday morning we travelled to Cheyenne, Wyoming to visit the Wyoming Stock Growers association. It was snowing and made for a beautiful Cheyenne day. We learned about the stock growers deep rooted connection to the land and some of the challenges they face. I was interested to learn they have the largest sheep county in the US, Carbon county. Roughly 50 percent of the land in Wyoming is publicly owned and situated in a checkerboard pattern with private land. Most grazing operations are a mix of private ranch land and public land leases. With a stocking rate of one pair per 40 acres the ranch hands have to cover a lot of territory to manage their herds. Visiting the west makes us Florida folks appreciate our abundant water and high stocking rates even more, not to mention year around growing season!

Next, we attended the Cowgirls of the west luncheon. This was a cool opportunity to meet some of the western ranching Matriarchs from a generation before. They told us stories of developing and operating beef ranches while balancing family duties on the western range. There is a rich culture out west and it does not take long to know that these are good people.

Tuesday brought us to the Fornstrom Feedlot and Alfalfa pellet operation. They feed up to 50,000 head of sheep and 2,000 head of cattle. They were using so much feed that they decided to invest in an alfalfa pellet mill to augment their feed supply as well as supply other operations. This third-generation feed lot is focused on efficiency and maximizing conversion. Their vertical integration shows leadership in creating synergy in their operations. Over all the national trip was a big success, and our group was blessed to have so many talented speakers. The ten days flew by and I can't wait to see what the next seminar brings!





# “A Cup of Joe” with Dr. Joe

Inspirational  
Reading Reviews  
from Dr. Joe  
Joyce, Program  
Faculty Advisor



“Never have we had a politician who, with such an appearance of effortless ease, drew after him great masses and molded them *to his will.*”

## As promised in the last Cup of

**Joe**, I'll finish my fascination with the life of President Teddy Roosevelt by collectively reviewing the last two books in Edmund Morris' series – *Theodore Rex* which chronicles TR's presidential years and *Colonel Roosevelt* which chronicles his post Presidential years to his death.

*Theodore Rex* begins with the assassination of President William McKinley shortly after he began his presidency thus making TR the youngest American President at age 42. The book tells the story of his two dynamic terms as President. His leadership was marked by his charm, political astuteness and unmatched energy. He secured the agreements to make the Panama Canal a reality, took on the problems of race and labor relations, took on the most powerful economic forces in the world in combating trust control of American industry, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts with the Russo-Japanese War, sent the “Great White Fleet” on an around-the-world naval exercise to demonstrate American naval power and reach, and established the National War College at Ft. McNair.

Many consider this greatest achievement was the conservation of millions of acres of protected parks and forest that make up our national forest and parks of today. In fact, TR was the founder-president of the Boone & Crocket Club, the nation's first conservation organization.

Colonel Roosevelt is so titled because the title of “Colonel” is how TR wished to be known rather than President. The book describes his post presidential years as “one of the most interesting Americans who ever lived.” He was guaranteed a third term as a Republican, if he had so desired, but his desire to form a progressive

third party, known as the Bull Moose Party, consumed his political attention, splitting the Republican vote and assuring the election of Woodrow Wilson.

During his life he authored more than 40 books, countless short stories and periodical articles. He perhaps became more famous and popular in his post presidential years than as an active politician. Ironically in spite of his popularity, he survived a bullet from a crazed assassin. He undertook extended safaris of African and was hailed and treated as a “king” during an extended European tour. A Brazilian journey of uncharted rivers nearly killed him and some thought he never recovered from the ordeal or the bullet still lodged in his chest. TR passed away on January 6, 1919 at his life-long home at Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, NY. He was honored one of the four greatest presidents (to that point) to be enshrined on Mount Rushmore which was completed in 1941.

Both books are lengthy and detailed based on writings of Roosevelt, his family and his acquaintances (both friendly and unfriendly). These two biographies not only describe the life of a complex, popular, and profoundly intellectual man, but also the development of a nation as it expanded and secured its place as a global power due to the will of a leader with a vision and the strength to carry out his vision. The New York Evening Post summed up his leadership and life in this manner – “Never have we had a politician who, with such an appearance of effortless ease, drew after him great masses and molded them to his will.”





# Coordinator's Corner

## *Bandwidth: limitations and opportunities*

-Valerie McKee, Program Coordinator

**Dr. Hannah Carter warned me** that she might lack emotional “bandwidth” by the end of the national trip - Seminar VII. Certainly, 11 days traveling with 30 other individuals could test anyone’s emotional capacities for social interaction or empathy. I kept this initial warning in mind for the duration of the trip, knowing that the days would be long and there would only be so many opportunities to recharge the emotional (and cellular) batteries. What I did not realize then was how much the concept of *bandwidth*, in terms of both limitations and capacities, would come up throughout the rest of the seminar.

The first time we heard “bandwidth” used during Seminar VII was on the first morning of leadership programming. We had the grand fortune of attending the Rural America Infrastructure Forum sponsored by the Farm Foundation. As the panelists discussed their views on infrastructure development and limitations for growth across rural America, the very real need was communicated for broadband expansions in rural areas to increase high speed internet capabilities for farmers.

The second time that bandwidth was used in front of us was at our very next programming stop at King & Spalding. It was here that we heard from multiple speakers and topics around national and international trade. As our group questioned Ms. Daniella Taveau, Global Regulatory and Trade Strategist for King & Spalding, about how to best communicate Florida agriculture’s trade concerns to our representatives, she said, “These guys only have so much *bandwidth*. It’s not just coming to them and saying you have a problem; it’s bringing them a solution.”

Mr. Parks Shackleford, Vice President of Florida Crystals, echoed a similar sentiment about politicians’ focus at our dinner that very evening at the Dubliner. Both Parks and Mr. Ryan Weston, Executive Vice President for the Florida Sugar Cane League, spoke to us at dinner about what it’s like to

**“Leadership in ANR takes place in the field, in barns, in the greenhouse, in tractor cabs, in the lab, in the office, in rural, middle-of-nowhere areas, in urban sprawl, in sunshine, in rain, in snowfall, in drought, in hurricane aftermath, and in spite of every other natural element that we face.”**

represent Florida sugar cane production in Washington, D.C. Parks made us laugh as he compared meeting with congressmen to turkey hunting; just as in turkey hunting you must position yourself where you know turkeys will travel as you call them in, “you’ve got to be where [your congressmen] want to go.”

During our time at our nation’s Capital, I thought a lot about D.C.’s true *bandwidth* for issues and attention to actions around them. We were told that our group, Class X of the Wedworth Leadership institute, was the first group to travel to Capitol Hill and represent Florida agriculture and natural resources after Hurricane Irma.

And yet, just as we had our set priorities to communicate during the scheduled congressional visits, so I am sure so many others traveled to the Hill that very day to communicate their priorities—natural disaster related or not. For the first time, I felt sincere sympathy for our nation’s leaders. So many conversations, so many facts and figures come across their desks every day. How in the world can we expect our stories to stick when their bandwidth for issues is only so limited? Even if we share our heartfelt and sincere stories with the perfect blend of persuasion and emotional appeals,

who is to say that our politicians always have the natural, emotional *bandwidth* to carry our stories and requests forward into action (the same emotional bandwidth that Dr. Carter warned me would wane with the long traveling days ahead)?

The ‘limited capacity’ theme carried on in Seminar VII as we traveled out west to the states of Colorado and Wyoming. We traveled to Lazy Three Ranch on our first official programming day in Colorado. With well over 20,000 acres, Lazy Three Ranch manages only 500 head of cattle! The land itself with the extremely limited water resources available could only support so many animals. The urban versus rural fight for water quantity is a reality that severely challenges agricultural production in the Midwest, especially for those water-intensive commodities like cattle, corn, and dairy production. The same can be said for the reality that is the shrinking number of farms and farmers due lowered commodity

costs and limited financial resources to make profits. As Mr. Bill Markham, a longtime sugar beet and barley grower in Colorado, put it, "People now wonder where their food comes from. If the price of our commodities doesn't go up soon, you're going to continue to lose farmers and then people will be really wondering where their food comes from."

At this point, this "Coordinator's Corner" might sound like the most depressing piece I've written yet. And I would agree with you! Seminar VII was an incredible adventure that included so many heartwarming and hilarious moments. From encountering Representative Tom Rooney dressed down in boots and jeans to drinking bottles of Coors at 9 am on a Sunday morning in Bill Markham's barn, from humbly touring the National War College with Dr. Bob Watts in D.C. to experiencing an epic Class X snowball fight in Wyoming, from (for the first time ever in Wedgworth Leadership Institute history) wearing jeans on a programming day to feeling the sliminess of bison tongues as we fed them with our bare hands, Seminar VII provided plenty of memorable moments to be forever cherished.

That said, this seminar reminded me that the leadership process, especially in our agriculture and natural resources (ANR) context, involves more than the typical elements. Yes, leadership involves a leader. Leadership involves followers. Leadership involves goals, a context, and cultural values and norms. And, in our ANR context, it involves a firm understanding of what we are up against in the natural world. It is often said that leadership does not take place in a vacuum. Leadership in ANR takes place in the field, in barns, in the greenhouse, in tractor cabs, in the lab, in the office, in rural, middle-of-nowhere areas, in urban sprawl, in sunshine, in rain, in snowfall, in drought, in hurricane aftermath, and in spite of every other natural element that we face. From Florida to D.C. to Colorado and Wyoming, regardless of the location, leadership in our context works with the "bandwidth" we are given by nature. The amazing part of this leadership phenomenon is that we don't let these natural limitations hold us back; instead, we find and create new opportunities to succeed while working with nature! What other industry faces as much adversity from Mother Nature and yet uses both nature and innovation to overcome these challenges? On our national trip, we did not always hear of the possible solutions to some of these limiting challenges. What we did hear were opportunities for ANR leaders like ourselves to face nature head on.



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