

NARRATIVES

Day 1 - Tuesday, July 13th:

Welcome and Orientation by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz ("Dr. Jim")

I have great respect and admiration for Dr. Jim, and for his quality contributions to the TALL program. Many alumni and supporters whom I have visited with over the years share my belief that the TALL program has quickly become one of the premier agricultural leadership programs in the nation ---- due in large part to Dr. Jim and his outstanding staff.

I appreciate Dr. Jim's insistence for timeliness, organization, and giving 100% when taking on a task. I admire his realistic expectations of each class member. Dr. Jim made it clear that attendance at all functions is a must, and that tardiness would not be tolerated. He also stressed the need to be patient and show respect to other classmates.

I enjoyed receiving more insight and historical information about the TALL program, and how the program has evolved over time.

Although I remain surprised for being selected (all the other classmates are extremely accomplished!), I am honored to be a member of Class XII. I look forward to the future sessions, and hope I can provide quality contributions as a classmate and as a future alumnus.

Greetings from Mr. Kyle Smith, Executive Associate Director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

I have had the honor of knowing Mr. Kyle Smith for several years. He is such a fine man, and someone who truly loves his job and strives each day to advance AgriLife Extension. His brief welcoming remarks were refreshing, and a reminder of the rich history of the TALL program. We appreciated Kyle taking time from his VERY busy schedule to share his thoughts about the TALL program.

Presentation by Dr. Dave McIntyre, Vice President for Homeland Security, National Graduate School

WOW!!!! Dr. McIntyre's presentation was amazing! He is the type of professional you would enjoy interviewing him to learn more about his personal and professional experiences. Moreover, Dr. McIntyre possesses a unique, dynamic speaking ability.

His presentation was filled with examples of military preparedness, and the effects of politics on the war against terror. He provided amazing insights about national disasters, and how our nation could (or should) respond.

Dr. McIntyre's presentation was based on the acronym "DIME", which stands for Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economics. He provided examples for each word, and applied each to the concept of national homeland security.

Dr. McIntyre concluded his presentation by emphasizing the need for all Americans to vote, and to strive to maintain our democratic society.

Presentations at the Texas Forest Service – Leading During a National Disaster

Outstanding presentation! I did not quite understand how the Texas Forest Service was a player in the area of national disaster. However, it's very clear to me now. It's amazing how many tasks this one agency addresses on a daily basis. They provided examples of their support during recent disasters (i.e., Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita, recovery of the U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia, and wild fires in the Texas panhandle).

Our state is truly blessed to have such a highly technical, professionally competent agency to assist with weather warnings, preparedness, and disaster protection.

I was impressed by the manner in which they take responsibility for a situation, and work closely with local leaders for a successful project. Their "self-less", "team" approach was quite evident throughout the entire presentation.

I am hopeful the legislature will continue to provide the necessary funding to support the agency's outstanding programs.

Tour and Dinner at Producers Cooperative

What a fabulous tour and dinner! It was a treat to be exposed to a cooperative that has been successful at bridging the needs of urban and rural customers. The store's commitment to quality and customer service was evident throughout the facility. Moreover, I was impressed by the cleanliness, organization and shelving of products, and the technology utilized in processing their livestock feeds.

We enjoyed hearing about the experiences of TALL alumni. Mr. James Deathridge provided a great overview and history about the coop, and about the educational programs provided to its customers and membership. Mr. Deathridge is truly passionate about agriculture, and about what the TALL program provides to its participants.

Several alumni spoke about their TALL experiences. Their comments were inspirational. All are very passionate about TALL, and stressed the importance for the current class to "maximize" the experience.

Oil Spill Update by Mr. Logan Respass

Mr. Respass provided an outstanding presentation about the current oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and supportive photos (via Power Point presentation) about the vast aquatic life and environmental factors within the Gulf region.

Day 2 - Wednesday, July 14th:

Leadership Behavior Profiles by Dr. Dick Cummins

Studying leadership behavior profiles, combined with addressing the reason(s) individuals take certain actions and how "leaders" influence others around them has always been an interesting topic to me. During my graduate MBA program, I was afforded several opportunities to study this topic and truly enjoyed it. I have taken the Myers-Briggs test several times, and received identical scores ("ESTJ") each time.

Dr. Cummins did an outstanding job of providing an overview of the importance of knowing the differing personalities among those we work and socialize with each day. He provided us with insight as to the importance of observing others, garnering their trust as a leader, and the need to quickly, critically evaluate others in order to enhance the success of the individual and collectively as a team. Dr. Cummins challenged the group to read books and information that are outside our "typical" choice of topics, and to broaden our scope of interests.

Dr. Cummins' presentation summarized the critical foundation for true, effective leadership. Very worthwhile lecture!

Texas Prison System & Agriculture by Mr. Todd Swick

My immediate thought following this presentation: Everyone involved in production agriculture should be given an opportunity to witness the impressive farming and ranching operations of the Texas Prison System!

Mr. Swick provided an outstanding overview of the vast operations under the control and management of the prison system. The system now farms over 139,000 acres. Mr. Swick provided us with impressive production statistics generated by the system's operations.

I was impressed by the system's goal to provide each inmate a job — many of which have never had a job prior to entering prison.

I was left with a renewed sense of appreciation for the prison system. It appears to be a very self-sufficient program that meets the needs of both the prisoners ("trustees") and the system as a whole.

Lunch and Tour at ABC Equipment

Mr. John Giesenschlag provided us with a very warm welcome and his rationale for supporting the TALL program. His passion about and belief in agriculture was very apparent throughout his presentation. I admire his loyalty and patriotism to our country, and his heartfelt devotion to production agriculture. It was very obvious that John and his lovely wife, Connie, are staunch supporters of the TALL program. Outstanding folks! Mr. Giesenschlag also introduced his family members, along with several staff members who had joined us for lunch. A great meal was provided, which was co-sponsored by the Citizens State Bank. Mr. John Smith, a TALL alumnus and officer of the bank was gracious to join us for lunch.

The ABC Equipment shops were immaculate and appeared to have any piece of equipment or tool necessary to work on farm machinery. I now know who to contact should I ever need a "unique" farm tool

Overview of Watermelon Production Presented by the Wiggins Family

During our luncheon, Mr. Wiggins provided the group a brief history of their company, Wiggins, LLP, which is a family owned and operated watermelon company based in Snook. He shared his thoughts about working within a family-owned business and how the business had evolved over time. I was impressed by the volume of melons they produce and distribute annually. Mr. Wiggins stated they produced melons during 8 months of the year, and shipped their product throughout the southern United States. Impressive!

Tour of the Wiggins Watermelon Processing and Shipping Facility

The group was provided with a brief tour of the Wiggins' watermelon processing and distribution warehouse. It was amazing! Very organized and clean. It allowed us to actually witness part of the logistics of distributing a very large volume of melons in a relatively short time period.

Overview of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center by Dr. Joe Outlaw

During our bus trip to Blue Bell, Dr. Outlaw provided us with a brief overview of the numerous research-oriented projects performed by The Agricultural and Food Policy Center at TAMU. Dr. Outlaw is the co-director of the Center. He has a wealth of experience of working with USDA officials and Members of Congress. I have had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Outlaw over the years. He is truly one of the nation's few agricultural professionals who combines agricultural production "common

sense", strong academics, and accurate policy analysis in each and every task he takes on.

During the bus ride, he provided us with his unique perspective on how Congressional Members and their staff solicit the Center's input and guidance on major legislative initiatives. We are blessed to have someone of his caliber located within this state. I'm hopeful that my classmates will be afforded future opportunities to visit with Dr. Outlaw. He is a brilliant agricultural policy analyst and faculty member!

Tour of Blue Bell Creameries Factory by Mr. Paul Kruse and Staff

MAGNIFICENT!!! Being an avid Blue Bell ice cream fan, taking the plant tour was almost like walking through the pearly gates of heaven!

Paul and his staff were very gracious for taking time from their busy schedules to provide us with a personalized tour of the facility, and to provide a brief presentation of their respective roles and responsibilities as senior staff members. The advanced technology which undergirds the operation is amazing!

Despite having a large number of employees, I was astonished by each employee on the production lines knowing Paul and acknowledging him by a friendly wave or nodding of their head. Based on quick verbal exchanges with many of the employees, Paul appeared to know the children and relatives of many of the employees. You could sense that the employees have tremendous respect and admiration for Paul.

Paul was gracious to offer each of us a sampling of their ice cream, and a very nice book containing the historical advancement of the Blue Bell Creameries Factory.

As I openly mentioned to the group at the close of the tour, Paul is very passionate about the TALL program, as well as the Texas 4-H program and other volunteer programs to which he graciously expends time and financial support. It has been an honor getting to know Paul and learning more about his personal and professional accomplishments — which are numerous.

Tour of Ellison's Greenhouses, Inc., by Ms. P.J. Ellison-Kalil

The tour of Ellison's Greenhouses was provided by a TALL alumnus, Ms. P.J. Ellison-Kalil. She is VERY passionate and supportive of the TALL program.

Ms. Ellison-Kalil provided us her historical perspective on overcoming both personal and professional challenges, and how she and her family have been successful at redefining their business model to fit the current economic times. Her common theme throughout the tour was being able to cope with change, and being able to take a negative situation and convert it into a positive gain.

Tour of Brazos Valley Recycling Company

This tour was outstanding! I have always wanted to learn more about recycling, and the processes required to convert a "waste item" into a useable product. Mr. Charlie Mancuso and his staff provided an overview of their relatively new business, and how they have been successful with their business model.

I was intrigued by the production of composting material, and by the "unique" raw products that comprise the composting material. Also, being a livestock person, I was impressed by their ability to take wooden scraps and commercial wooden waste, and convert it to wooden shavings which is suitable for horse and livestock bedding. Impressive!

I will be interested to know how successful the company becomes in the future. Our state certainly needs this type of creative company to address the massive waste management issues confronted by many city and urban areas.

Dinner at Mancuso Home

Mr. and Mrs. Mancuso were very gracious to host us for dinner. The social hour, meal, and hospitality was magnificent! They have a gorgeous home and seem to really enjoy hosting guests. It was a delight meeting the Mancuso family!

Day 3 - Thursday, July 15th:

TAMU ChallengeWorks by Mr. Bob Gantt and Staff

I was truly dreading this part of the session. First, I knew it would be very HOT and HUMID. Second, I am not a big fan of heights. The initial thought of having to possibly catch someone as they were falling was not appealing to me, and more importantly, I did not want to be the person who was falling!

HOWEVER, I enjoyed every second of the session. Mr. Gantt and his staff were very prepared, informative, and experienced at making sure we all maximized the experience.

After doing several group exercises and games, we divided into two groups. My group came up with the team name of "Chaos", which was quite appropriate based on our tasks throughout the morning. Through a series of games and tasks, it became increasingly obvious that the advice given by Dr. Cummins the day before would come into play.

I was very impressed by the differing types of leadership styles within my group, and the individual tasking that seemed to naturally take place with each new exercise. We all worked as a team, and supported each other despite the challenge at hand.

Upon the day's conclusion, I discovered I felt closer to my classmates with a genuine sense of trust for each of them. We all had experienced the challenge of overcoming both individual and team struggles that morning, and we seemed to have begun the process of bonding as a group. Very worthwhile exercise!

TALL Reception at The Jon L. Hagler Center, TAMU

The reception was fabulous! The Center is a magnificent venue for such an event.

Dr. Jim did a superb job of presiding over the event. He introduced the special guests and supporters of the TALL program. I was very impressed by the large number and diversity of the individuals present at the reception.

Mr. Jim Schwertner, member of TAMU Board of Regents, provided a brief welcome and his thoughts about the TALL program and the future of Texas agriculture.

Dr. Mark Hussey, Vice Chancellor and Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences provided an official welcome on behalf of the university and the AgriLife Extension Service. He offered brief remarks about his support and vision for the TALL program, and commended the current class on being selected.

Dr. Jim had the class members come forward and introduce themselves. Being the last class member to approach the podium, I was able to observe and listen to each introduction. Again, I am so amazed by the accomplishments achieved by my classmates! And, I am intrigued by the diversity of backgrounds represented in the class.

Upon conclusion of the reception, each classmate was provided an opportunity to have dinner with a special host. I was fortunate to have dinner with Mr. Paul Kruse, Mr. Pablo Mardin, and my classmate, Jose Garza. We had a delightful time visiting about a wide array of topics, and enjoyed an outstanding steak! The dinner was truly a highlight of the day.

Day 4 - Friday, July 16th:

Presentation on Bio-Terrorism by Dr. Roger Parker, Deputy Director, TX Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Laboratory

The final morning of Session 1 was held at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine.

To begin the morning, we received a brief overview of the current surveillance program, and the direct involvement of the veterinary school and the Texas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Dr. Parker provided an excellent overview of the first-line of defense with regard to bio-terrorism. I was amazed by the amount of human capital and

infrastructure that goes into the overall homeland security plan. Dr. Parker's emphasis on terrorists using animal diseases to afflict economic and social unrest in our nation is certainly cause for constant alarm. We are fortunate to have qualified individuals like Dr. Parker and his trained team of veterinarians addressing these potential acts of terrorism on a daily basis.

Animal Cloning Presentation by Dr. Duane C. Kraemer, Professor, Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology

I enjoyed Dr. Kraemer's presentation on animal cloning. I am amazed by the technological and biological advancements in this area of animal reproduction. I appreciated receiving a written handout from Dr. Kraemer which summarized 17 key points about the cloning of animals.

With such a large amount of "negative" information about animal cloning being broadcast by the liberal press, it's important that agricultural leaders do their part to make sure the consuming public receive factual information about the cloning process.

I will remain keenly interested in the amount of wide-spread use of animal cloning in the future, and the positive impact it may — or may not — have on the livestock sector.

Bio Energy Presentation by Mr. Adam Helms, Project Manager, TX AgriLife Research Corporate Relations & Bio Energy Program

Although Mr. Helms did not have a lot of time remaining for his presentation, I thought he did a good job of providing an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with the production of bio energy.

Based on his comments, Mr. Helms seems very dedicated to the bio energy program, and is a positive spokesperson for the bio-energy industry.

Homeland Security Responsibilities by the Vet School Presented by Dr. Jeffery Musser, Clinical Assistant Professor, Vet Med Pathobiology

Wow! This gentleman is passionate and energetic about what he does each day! Dr. Musser did a marvelous job of providing an overview of the varied homeland security responsibilities at the vet school. Pursuant to his presentation, it became very obvious that the vet school and the Texas Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory play an integral role in maintaining our homeland security in Texas, and throughout the nation.

Overview of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Experiences of Former CIA Agent, Dr. Jim Olson

Dr. Olson's presentation was certainly one of the highlights of the session. What an amazing story he shares about his past experiences with the CIA. He is another

individual that I would enjoy interviewing to learn more about his intriguing experiences as an operative with the CIA. It's due to dedicated individuals like Dr. Olson that we enjoy the many freedoms and the luxury of being safe within in our respective communities each and every day.

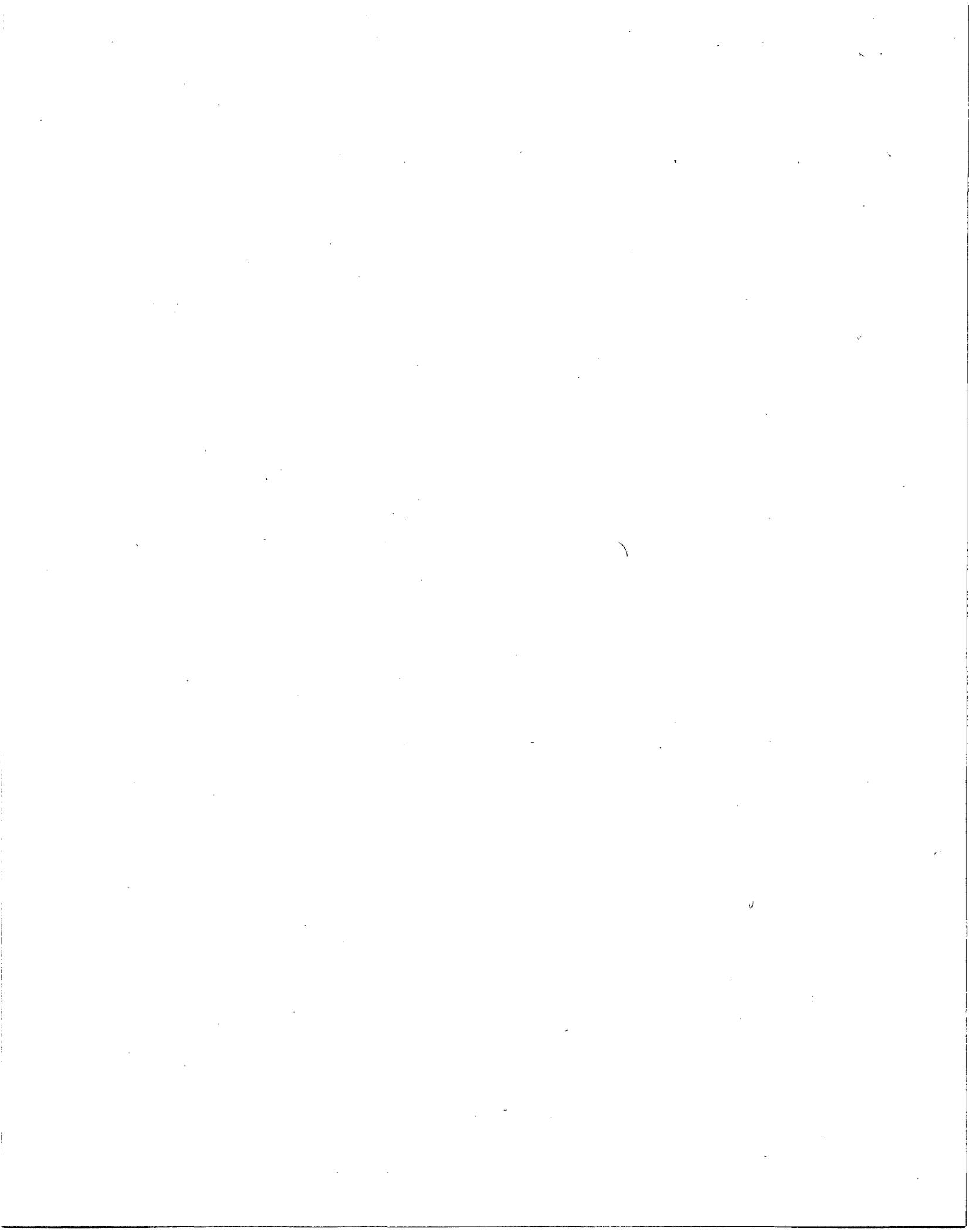
Behind the Scenes Tour of The George Bush Presidential Museum and Library by Dr. Bob Holzweiss

At the Bush Presidential Library, we divided into several groups and received personalized tours of the "behind the scenes" areas of the museum. I was fascinated by the volumes of information and files from the Bush Administration. Dr. Holzweiss provided an interesting overview of how someone requests information from the library, and the types of information that may not be available for public viewing.

After lunch, several classmates and I were provided a personalized tour of the museum. I enjoyed seeing all of the photos and relics on display. Outstanding tour!

Summary Statement for Session 1

My introduction to the TALL program was amazing. I commend Dr. Jim and his staff for an outstanding Session 1. In a very short period of time, 26 strangers became good friends and colleagues, and were able to begin the path of unique experiences which will assist all of us to become better leaders and strong advocates of agriculture. I truly look forward to Session 2 being held in Lubbock and Amarillo. I feel blessed to be a member of such an elite group of professionals.



Tanya Bishop, #2
TALL XII
Session 1- College Station, Texas
July 13-16, 2010

Tuesday, July 13, 2010

My morning began at 4:30 a.m. so I could catch the 6:00 a.m. plane. On a normal day, this would be extremely early for me to get out of bed, but this was no normal day. This was the first day of the most anticipated leadership program I had ever been part of. You see, I have looked forward to being in TALL for at least eight years. Through my career I have met many TALL alumni and my desire to apply peaked in the fall of 2009. So, after making it through the most intense interview I have ever had in my life, I received my "Congratulations" letter! I was never so excited! From the moment I stood at the mailbox, reading my acceptance letter and skipping into my house, I knew I was in for the ride of my life!

Finally, it was 1:00 p.m. and we made our way into the meeting room. It was such a personal achievement to find my spot with a TALL briefcase sitting there with my name embroidered on the front. Wow, I made it and I could not be happier! After mingling with the other classmates and finding out I actually knew a few of whose names I had not previously recognized, I knew I was going to make some great contacts and friends in my life and my career.

Welcome/Opening Remarks/Orientation:

It was apparent from the first moment Dr. Jim stood before the class that he had an extremely deep passion for TALL and its' mission. As he spoke about the program and shared the statistics on the number of nominees, interviewees and the 26 remaining participants making up TALL XII, I could not help but feel a huge sense of pride and honor.

Mr. Kyle Smith addressed the class and reiterated the quality of participants and how proud he was that we were representing Texas Agrilife Extension and Texas Agriculture. By the time he finished, I felt as if someone needed to pinch me.

Dr. Dave McIntyre:

Nothing like jumping in with both feet! Classmate, Ernest Bailes and I, were given the duty of presiding over the first part of our meeting. So, I did a quick interview with Dr. McIntyre and introduced him to the class. I can't help but admit I was relieved when I spoke clearly and didn't trip on something while walking up to the podium!

Dr. McIntyre spoke on the trajectory of the U.S. in reference to homeland security and our general future as a nation. He taught us of DIME which stands for Diplomacy, Intelligence/Information, Military and Economy. I am not naïve enough to think that the problems with our country will soon end and everyone will get along and, Dr. McIntyre definitely didn't sugarcoat his presentation. We tend to get tunnel vision within our own careers and industries and only think challenges are within those. However, there are many areas of concern in our government that will ultimately affect agriculture and the world.

We are facing more challenges and obstacles than ever before and while technology is great, it is also a major threat to society. Bio terrorism is a huge element that is directly related to agriculture. I loved the quote from Yogi Berra, "If you don't change where you are going you will get there." That is such a great example in the fact that if we don't accept change or be part of the solution we are just a continuation of the problem.

Texas Forest Service:

I have to admit I was feeling a little down after Dr. McIntyre's doom and gloom presentation but, I was reenergized after hearing from the team at the Texas Forest Service. I was somewhat familiar with the Forest Service but the first thing that comes to mind is Smokey the Bear and not necessarily an understanding of their purpose! I was blown away by the precision and expertise the team conveyed and the technological advancements made to make the Texas Forest Service one of the most high-tech agencies in the nation.

Besides being instrumental in fire management, I was surprised to learn that the Texas Forest Service assists the National Guard and others in hurricane clean up and management, too. In fact, they are called upon during and

following many different disasters across Texas and the nation. They have embraced technology and have a very impressive website that tracks data and provides up to date information to assist the firefighters 24 hours a day until the fire or disaster is contained and conquered. The Texas Forest Service is definitely a diamond in the rough and is viewed as a true leader all across our nation.

Social Tour & Dinner- Producers Cooperative:

By the time we arrived at Producers Cooperative, my early lunch had run out! So, when we walked in and found brisket, sausage and all the trimmings, my stomach growled with excitement.

I was in awe at the sheer size of the Producers Cooperative building which didn't even include the feed mill. The retail store was neatly organized, clean and inviting. I was sad that the cash register was closed for the day or I think I would have had a nice little shopping spree. However, I am sure my credit card was not up for the workout it almost had!

It was great to meet some of the board of directors of Producers Cooperative and their wives. I have a special place in my heart for cooperatives since Capital Farm Credit is also one and I appreciate the cooperative way of thinking.

Mr. Logan Respass:

When Dr. Jim told us that Mr. Respass was going to brief us on the truths with the current oil spill in the Gulf, I was eager to listen. I know the media has a tendency to blow things out of proportion and Mr. Respass had the class' full attention as he began his presentation.

Mr. Respass works as the Associate Director and Extension Program Leader for the Texas Sea Grant College Program. He has been a part of many research projects in the Gulf and other water bodies around the world. The most interesting part of his presentation was the fact that even though the current oil spill was large, it was not the largest in our history. The Ixtoc spill wasn't capped for nine months and spilled 113-300 million gallons of oil throughout the waters and over 150 miles of Texas shoreline.

He educated our class about oil spills and their effect on marine life and vegetation. And, while it is a horrible thing, an oil spill is actually not quite as horrific as the media makes it out to be. In most cases, natural clean ups are more beneficial to the environment and marine life.

The Extension Service has worked diligently on fact sheets and links, providing consumers a better understanding of oil spills along with other advances to improve our shrimping efficiencies.

Mr. James Deatherage- Producers Cooperative:

I have heard many people talk about their TALL experiences but not as eloquently as Mr. Deatherage. He shared some insight to TALL and what he took away from the program. He also told us that we all had a common thread in our interest and love of agriculture and how unique that was. He encouraged us to be champions for agriculture and to embrace our TALL experience. "You get out of it what you put into it," Mr. Deatherage stated.

Mr. Deatherage's staff showed us the feed mill and explained how they operate that side of the co-op. I was simply amazed at how many loading bays there were and how during the winter season, there is a waiting line to buy and load feed.

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

The morning began bright and early with fellow classmate, Klint Forbes, convincing us to stand up and do a quirky little exercise. However, we all followed his lead and had a good laugh when we figured out it was only a tool used to get our attention!

Dr. Dick Cummins:

I took a similar personality profile about two months prior and was excited to see if my results were the same. And, it was kind of creepy when indeed it turned out the same. It was very entertaining to see what "DISC" category each classmate's personality fell.

Dr. Cummins recommended numerous books for us to read and was also the person who recommended the "Strengths Based Leadership" book we received in our briefcases. I look forward to reading it soon. He also encouraged us to keep a journal to reflect on our lives and careers over time.

Mr. Todd Swick:

I was very unfamiliar with the inner workings of the agricultural branch of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice before Mr. Swick's presentation. I was pleasantly surprised to know that inmates are expected to work the land and with the animals in which the TDCJ owns.

Mr. Swick gave us a lesson on the history of the TDCJ's agriculture division and ended with the current totals of crop land, ranch land and head of livestock. These include everything from cotton, grain, hay, vegetables, cattle, horses, chickens, a farrow to finish operation and dogs. The TDCJ even owns a textile mill which produces prison uniforms. I was very impressed with the innovations they have embraced such as bio diesel and black diesel.

The TDCJ employs three veterinarians from Texas A&M to oversee their animals, and the unit also donates swine bi-products to medical research.

Lunch & Tour- John & Connie Giesenschlag:

Following Mr. Swick's presentation, we loaded the bus and headed toward Snook where we had lunch at ABC Equipment Company. Dr. Jim told us that John would have every tool in the proper place and there would be freshly picked decorations. Well, he was right! At the entrance, there were two antique tractors, along with freshly picked cotton stalks, milo, soybeans and watermelons as decoration. Then, as we walked into the shop we were greeted by a large number of attendees who support TALL, including lunch sponsors, TALL alumni and others who welcomed us with warm smiles and handshakes.

John Smith, with Citizens State Bank, hosted the lunch and also spoke on his TALL experience. Jay Wilder, TALL alumnus, also shared his story and credited his TALL experience to opening many more doors for him. John Giesenschlag spoke on the TALL program and told us to embrace our experiences and opportunities to view many other elements of agriculture through someone else's eyes. He expressed two important factors of life he believes in which are, 1. Be known as having fair and honest judgment and 2. Know that God is the one responsible. I thought John's advice was right on target.

Wiggins Watermelons:

James Wiggins chauffeured us around his family's watermelon packing shed where we saw busy workers sorting and boxing watermelons. The season was winding down but there were still many things to do. The Wiggins family is a large Texas producer with watermelon sheds in Seminole and Snook. We were lucky enough to sample their watermelon following our pork chop lunch, and I don't know when I have ever tasted sweeter watermelon!

Dr. Joe Outlaw:

Back on the bus we went to listen to Dr. Joe Outlaw discuss Agricultural and Food Policy. He explained how he and his staff provide research to many groups covering multiple facets of agricultural policy. Dr. Outlaw is extremely knowledgeable on wind energy among other topics and I was so encouraged by how down to earth he was. He was very supportive of TALL and offered his contact information very freely and sincerely for any future needs we may have.

Dr. Outlaw's sense of humor was very enjoyable and I gave him two thumbs up for being able to speak while standing up and riding on a bus that was winding down the Washington County highway.

Blue Bell Creameries- Mr. Paul Kruse:

Pulling up to the Blue Bell Creameries, Mr. Kruse was looking at his watch because we are eight minutes late! Therefore, we hurried off the bus and proceeded to the entrance to receive our hairnets and instructions for our upcoming tour.

We dispersed in about four groups and toured Blue Bell Creameries, behind the scenes. Blue Bell, in my opinion, is not only the greatest ice cream in the world but the inner-workings of the factory are incredible. We witnessed

everything from mini ice cream cones to 3-gallon tubs being made. We even got to eat fresh buttered pecans that were being added into some ice cream.

After being in every nook and cranny of the Blue Bell factory, we chose our favorite flavor and headed up to the boardroom where Mr. Kruse addressed the class. There is no wonder why Blue Bell is so lucrative because Mr. Kruse is a very impressive businessman. His attitude for success is contagious.

Ellison's Greenhouse- Mrs. PJ Ellison-Kalil

After we were all refreshed from our ice cream snack, we headed to Ellison's Greenhouse. My grandmother had a small greenhouse so I have spent some time in one helping water plants and checking on things. However, this is no ordinary greenhouse. It is the only greenhouse in the nation with a post office in the front! I thought that was bit odd until PJ explained that she did it to increase foot traffic in her greenhouse. What a brilliant idea!

We learned that greenhouses in Texas have a \$9.76 billion economic impact to our state and a \$459 billion impact in the United States. Texas is the third largest producer of greenhouse products, as well. We also learned that just like most agricultural industries in the country, greenhouses have also been negatively affected by the economic downturn.

Coming from Lubbock, I knew I needed to prepare myself for the heat and humidity in College Station, but nothing could have prepared me for Ellison's Greenhouse! PJ took us into two greenhouses to show off her plants. There was a sea of yellow where the Crocus' were. I thought that house was uncomfortable until we went to the second house! There, we saw cuttings of Poinsettias and also Texas-sized Poinsettias which can grow up to 5-6 feet tall! It was very apparent that PJ has a desire to stay ahead of the curve in her industry and has been rewarded for that drive.

I now know that the greenhouse industry is indeed an agricultural player and if I ever need a cheap spa treatment I can go mosey around at Ellison's Greenhouse!

Brazos Valley Recycling- Mr. Charlie Mancuso:

I was really glad our drive to the next stop was not too far since we all were a little sweaty to say the least! We pulled up to Brazos Valley Recycling and toured an indoor recycling facility which is one of only two in Texas. They accept about 200 tons of debris a day and currently recycle 12 different items. The whole set up was first class and very well organized. Mr. Mancuso's staff was very knowledgeable and answered all of our questions.

They are continually thinking of new ways to recycle and be more efficient. Mr. Mancuso's daughter recently launched a website for the company and they were very excited about the potential business that could bring.

Dinner- Mancuso Home:

At this point, I began to realize we were going to eat really well! The Mancuso family graciously hosted a dinner for our class at their beautiful home and Mr. Mancuso cooked fajitas and Mrs. Mancuso served us delectable dessert.

We were also entertained by Dr. Jim and Mr. Hopcus with Polish music and lots of laughs. What a great ending to a busy but very enjoyable day.

Thursday, July 15, 2010

This was the most anticipated day for many of my classmates... it was "Challenge Ropes Course" day. I have to admit I was pretty excited about being allowed to wear shorts in the 100 degree heat!

Challenge Works- Mr. Bob Gantt:

Mr. Gantt made us stand in a big circle and the fun began. After several "get to know you" exercises, we broke up into two groups. Jennifer was my team leader and we did about four or five challenges where we had to work as a team to figure out the best completion method and rely on each other to be successful. It was a lot of fun to get to know some of my classmates better and I can honestly say, most of us let our hair down and unveiled our insecurities. Of course, it is hard not to at 30 feet up in the air standing on a cable wire! The teamwork experience was most beneficial and will no doubt help us mesh more effectively as we move forward in our TALL experience.

Social/Reception/Dinner Hosts:

The reception provided an opportunity for our TALL class to visit with many other TALL alumni and sponsors. It was a very humbling experience and I enjoyed seeing so many people with a vested interest in TALL. I was extremely honored by all the speeches and walked a little taller when I was called upon to introduce myself.

I was teamed up with Kyle Smith and Bonnie McGee for dinner. I thoroughly enjoyed my evening visiting with them and found out that Kyle and I had many of the same acquaintances. The saying, "it is a small world", rang true once again.

Friday, July 16, 2010

It was hard to believe it was already the last day of session one. Again, we ate! Kim picked up some really great kolaches and donuts and we made our way to the TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine.

Even though we didn't get to see any actual cloned animals, we heard from several very talented and informative speakers such as, Dr. Roger Parker, Dr. Duane Kraemer, Mr. Adam Helms and Dr. Jeffrey Musser. Their topics covered everything from bio terrorism and homeland security to cloning and infectious diseases. We also made fast friends with the TAMU students replacing us in the classroom... we left them our extra donuts. Needless to say, college students will eat anything free!

Dr. Jim Olson:

Admittedly, I was beginning to run on fumes but was totally engaged once Dr. Olson began telling his story of being an undercover spy for the CIA for 31 years. Not only was he, but his wife also shared that career with him and they were responsible for helping the United States Government bring down many terrorists over the years. I was totally fascinated by his openness and could not and still can't, fathom his way of life.

Dr. Olson does expect that the U.S. will be attacked again within our own borders and we will win or lose the war on terrorism depending on the quality of our intelligence.

Dr. Olson grew up on a farm in Iowa, received his B.A. from the University of Iowa, J.D. also from the University of Iowa, is a member of the Iowa Bar and is a Lieutenant Commander with the U.S. Navy.

The most discouraging part of Dr. Olson's presentation was that we didn't have all afternoon to listen to his stories.

George Bush Presidential Library Tour:

I am intrigued by history so the George Bush Presidential Library Tour was particularly interesting to me. Getting a behind the scenes look at some of the gifts President Bush received while in the White House, was a treat. We also toured the building and saw the archival room. It was hard to grasp the fact that we witnessed the room where major documents are stored from President Bush's time in office. Too bad it wasn't the time of year when President and Mrs. Bush are in College Station because it would have been a highlight to get to meet them. However, the whole tour was very interesting and even though I did not have time to tour the museum, I enjoyed the opportunity.

It was a whirlwind week and I can't express how honored and delighted I am to be in TALL XII. It is such a great opportunity and I will not let my fellow alumni, sponsors, family and friends down. I plan to embrace Mr. Deatherage's statement of, "You get out of TALL what you put in it". Here's to Lubbock and Amarillo in October!



Ernest Bailes, IV #1
TALL XII –Session 1
College Station, TX

Day 1: (Tuesday, July 13, 2010)

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz and Mr. Kyle Smith gave their welcome on behalf of the Texas Agrilife Extension Service. Dr. Jim took a brief time to outline the program and his expectations for the class.

“Strategy Trajectory of American Security”

Dr. Dave McIntyre, VP for Homeland Security with the National Graduate School, gave a very interesting talk regarding American Security. He outlined key points for the Acronym DIME and its transition over time to now stand as DIIMED. The original DIME stood for Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military and Economics, though has evolved to include Information and Domestic.

- **Diplomacy** - 1942 brought an end to the 150 year trend of consolidation of nations with many large nations breaking into smaller ones.
- **Information** – Technology drove consolidation, with the Telegraph, the radio, and then wire services. Local media going out of business, only staying alive by selling advertisements online. Informational truths were considered those which were peer reviewed and then published. Now with blogs and cell phones, the difficulty is in sorting through the information to verify as fact.
- **Intelligence** – Today’s penetration of intelligence is by infiltrating university systems as graduate students for tenured professors who are developing the technology before it is a weapon or a weapon system.
- **Military** - Drug cartels are the best armed forces in the world. Their ability to obtain the latest in weapons technologies without the need for a purchase order or permission. Military equipment was once only available to military; though is now readily available to the general public. This new technology has brought about electronic triggering devices for IED’s and the ability to defend surfaces by electrical jamming. The war in Iraq was the first of its kind; being a war between electrical engineers which were all trained here in the U.S. The weapons that we have built and outfitted our military with do not fit today’s enemy.
- **Domestic (Homeland Security)** – Technological advances now allow small people access to big weapons. *“Small men equal to big men.”*
 - o **Anthrax** – Milled spores which are usually too large and lumpy to affect a person. Federal Building incidence dealt with spores which had been reduced in size for effect. Same principal as an asthma inhaler rather than an injection, air sacs able to be absorbed into the lungs.
 - o **Business of Defense** – Was easier to protect a city than attack one with a nuclear weapon. It is more difficult to secure your house’s interior than its exterior. Our nation was not constructed to secure against internal threats. *“Consolidation of Power, Leads to Abuse of Power.”* The main question concerning Homeland Security is, “Do you want to protect America or Americans?” In order to solely focus on American rather than American’s you will have to sacrifice personal rights.
- **Economy** – Every dollar collected on taxes this year will on cover Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Every other expense is paid for by borrowed money from other countries.

- **Passengers of Flight 9093** - *** Took a VOTE before taking the cabin ***
- **General McIntire** – Islamic populations’ desire is the implementation of Sharia Law. Do we already have this in the US???? Already on American Indian Reservations where tribal law supersedes state and federal laws.
- **Yogi Bera** – “... if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”

“Leading During a National Disaster”

Presentation at the Texas Forest Service Headquarters given by Mr. Tom Boggus (Director), Mr. Tom Spencer (Predictive Services Department Head), Mr. Don Hannemann (Emergency Operations Center Coordinator), Mr. Bob Koenig (State Incident Management Team Coordinator) and Ms. Cynthia Foster (Planning and Preparedness Department Head).

- **All Hazard Incident Management** – Tiered infrastructure of command and task delegation utilized in both fires and natural disaster settings. Texas Forest Service program and personnel heavily utilized during hurricanes, flooding, etc. Recommendation that every household should have resources on hand at all times for a 72-hour sustainability.
- **Fire Response** – TFS only responds to 15% of fires in the state of Texas though these account for 70% of all the land affected by fire.
- **Keech Brynam Drought Index** – resource available on-line
- **Microburst Weather Pattern Identified** – Pattern which affects the northern part of Texas and bordering states. 10 occurrences have been identified and these account for 22 of the 24 fatalities during this time.
- **Utilization of Out-of-State Resources to fight Texas Fires** – Other states would then invoice and be paid by the National Forest Service. At the end, one lump bill would be sent to the state. National Forest Service waits on the state legislature to meet to approve the funding and then be reimbursed.

“Oil Spill Update”

Given by Logan Respass with the Texas Sea Grant College Program. I found his 15 minute talk to be more informative than any number of hours of media reports about the oil spill. It was nice to get the straight forward “meat and potatoes” facts about the spill. He outlined in great detail the significant differences between the current spill and the Exxon Valdez which it is most commonly compared to. He also briefly covered the 6 other significant oil spills in recent history and their impact. The Valdez spill in Alaska has very few similarities with the spill in the gulf. Alaska had a heavy tar grade of crude and the gulf has a light sweet grade of crude. 40% by volume of the oil which is shown coming out of the faulty BOP is actually methane gas which will evaporate at the surface (one reason why accurate spill estimations are so difficult). The gulf has always had crude oil which leaks into the ocean and thus has naturally occurring bacteria strains which break down and naturally consume the oil. The breaking down of the oil is exponentially expedited by the warm water of the gulf in comparison with the frigid temperatures of the Alaska’s small confined bay where the Valdez spilled. To date there have been no any cases of contaminated Texas seafood.

Tour of Producers Cooperative

We had dinner at Producers Cooperative where Mr. James Deatherage gave a really good talk concerning his personal experiences from the TALL Program. Highlighted: new opportunities through involvement in the program, the people you will get to meet, places you will get to see and different aspects of agriculture and legislature that you will be exposed to. He spoke about giving back and being a strong voice for

agriculture. We also toured the feed mill side of Producers and were able to watch the stacking robot which stacks 2 different types of feed onto pallets at the same time as they come out of the mill.

Day 2: (Wednesday, July 14, 2010)

“Leadership Behavior Profile”

Was given by Dr. Dick Cummins who is the current director for the Corps Leadership Excellence Program. Dr. Cummings spoke for the morning session about the different types of leaders and how to understand your own personality profile as well as how to identify other personality profiles. The most important quote and concept which he outlined was that *“Not everyone gets a trophy!”* Other key points which he discussed were:

- Buy yourself some time before you have to decide.
- Never do something wrong on purpose.

Understanding your own personality profile and the profiles of others which are on your team truly came to light the next day at the Challenge Works course. He closed with seven points:

- Control your environment.
- Master the basics.
- Build your own set of Life’s Principals.
- Set a good example.
- New roles require new ways of thinking.
- Take a hard look at yourself everyday.
- Find out who you are and how to work with those who are not like you.
- Do what is right all of the time.
 - o *“Go Home with Your Honor.”*

“Texas Prison System & Agriculture”

Todd Swick, program specialist for livestock and beef & pork processing, spoke about the agricultural side of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The presentation shed a lot more light on the logistical and managerial dilemmas associated with an operation of such scale with the bureaucratic side of government involvement and a prisoner labor force. Very few people are aware or would understand the complexity of the operation.

- TDCJ owns 140,000 acres
- TDCJ operates 130,000 acres
- 40,000 acres are cultivated
- 70,000 acres are in pasture
- 12,000 acres are under contract grazing
- Operated and managed by 296 Ag Employees

TDCJ Prisoner Requirements:

- 7,000 bales of cotton
- 60,000,000 pounds of grain
- 26,000,000 pounds of hay
- Fresh and Canned Vegetables
- Pastures for 17,000 hd of cattle and 1,600 hd of horses

- \$48 million operating budget with \approx \$75 million returned in product back to system
- Lease for Minerals was \$1.4 million in 2009
- Heavy implementation of Black and Bio Diesel programs for equipment
- No whole muscle beef cuts are fed to inmates; calves are sold at weaning and primal cuts are purchased and either ground or processed

Lunch at ABC Equipment

The Giesenschlag Family and Citizens State Bank treated us to wonderful lunch of fresh raised vegetables and watermelons picked on either the day or the day before. The "spit-shined" shop of ABC equipment was set with tables and chairs and the best meal of the program!

Wiggins Watermelon Warehouse

I had never associated the Brazos Valley with large scale Watermelon production. The Wiggins family runs three different locations where they grow, sort and package their watermelons for shipping. The facility where we toured was just down the road from College Station. Most of the year you would simply see a massive open ended metal building on a raised concrete slab. The family has one such building at each of their locations which is designed and wired to hold their handling equipment and load out trucks. The two independent sets of unloading conveyor belts, weighing/imaging machines, sticker machines, and air sorting tables are designed to be moved to the different locations as they harvest. The facility has countless forklifts running all over the place carrying watermelon filled pallets being staged for loading into numerous trucks which carry them to market places across the nation.

"Responsibilities of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center"

Dr. Joe Outlaw, Co-Director of The Agricultural and Food Policy Center, spoke about the behind the scenes work and people that go into drafting, decision making and changing of Ag Policy on Capital Hill. TAMU has one of four such centers in the US. These centers are responsible with drafting and validating projections, financial analysis, and being able to act as or identify valid informational sources for congressman and senators with questions regarding agriculture and food policy. One recommendation which he gave was that when working with the staffer for an elected official, pose the problem as if it were there own. (Nothing like taking advantage of time on the bus between stops.)

Tour of Blue Bell Creameries

Not the typical tour on the observation floor behind the plate glass, though walking through the entire production facility, from raw product intake to truck ready ice cream, with the CEO and president himself. Mr. Paul Kruse was very generous with his time to give us the entire tour and bring in the various department heads to help with the tour and give us a brief recap of their responsibilities within the company. Whether or not the ice cream is good was never in question, though you will really think twice about buying anything else after seeing the care and dedication which they put into their product.

Tour of Ellison's Greenhouses, Inc.

The class was formerly introduced to the "Green Industry" and large production greenhouses by Mrs. PJ Ellison. The green houses were all retrofitted to climate controlled with drip irrigation systems. The staff was currently working to root massive amounts of Poinsettia clippings.

Tour of Brazos Valley Recycling

Toured the new sorting facility and the compost operation. Roll off dumpsters bring in construction debris from local sites and are dumped inside the enclosed sorting location. The stockpiled debris is broken into manageable sizes by the cutting head on an excavator and loaded onto a conveyor belt which feeds onto the sorting line. The elevated sorting line is manned by two people per station which pull their stations product off the line and drop it below them into holding stalls. They are currently sorting off 4 classifications of recyclable matter, with a smaller fraction of the total debris being dropped into another bin at the end of the sorting line and being hauled to the land fill. Plastic is sorted and ground. Metal is placed in bins for recycling, Wood is chipped and ground to either be used for composting, landscape material or animal bedding. Cardboard is baled and sent off for recycling. The facility is also in the testing phases of controlled composting to be marketed as topsoil. Negotiations are currently under way to secure food waste contracts to be utilized in the composting operation.

Dinner at Mr. Charlie Mancuso's

We finished the day with a great evening of food and refreshment hosted by the Mancuso's at their home. (Really great people and very nice place!)

Day 3: (Thursday, July 15, 2010)

Challenge Works

We spent the day at the Challenge Works course. I have been to similar courses before though it was the people factor which was most important. The course, though a little warm in the middle of July, does a lot to help build the team dynamic of a group. You get a better feel for how people react in certain situations and what role they take on in different tasks. Mental notes that you make in regards to how someone handles stress or how lax or authoritative someone is at delegation may be crucial in determining what role you might place them in. The practices which we started out doing did make learning everyone's name a lot easier. The course was a good time and helped with team bonding.

TALL Social and Reception

We had a formal reception at the Hagler building on Thursday night. In attendance were several TALL Alumni, contributors and our dinner hosts for the night. Mr. Jim Schwertner spoke on behalf of the Board of Regents and Mr. Kyle Smith introduced Dr. Mark Hussey. Dr. Hussey, Vice Chancellor and Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, was the keynote speaker. We introduced ourselves for the first time as the TALL XII class, and were introduced to our dinner host for the evening.

Day 4: (Friday, July 16, 2010)

“Update on Food Animal Diseases and Role of TVMDL – First Line of Defense for Bio-Terrorism”

Dr. Roger Parker, Deputy Director of the Texas Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Laboratory, spoke about the role which TVMDL plays in identifying Food Animal Diseases. The proper identification of animal disease is an intricate part in the fight against Bio-Terrorism. Safe and efficient testing must be done in order to rule out possible diseases in regards to Bio-Terrorism and to work with local veterinarians and law enforcement to control and monitor any possible outbreak

“Animal Cloning and CC”

Dr. Duane Kraemer, Professor at the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology, spoke about animal cloning. He covered the timeline from the first clone produced and outlined the advances made in the field along with new technologies where are now being developed. Dr. Kraemer spoke of CC (the first cloned cat) and the other species which have been cloned, with the cloning of some species being much more difficult than others. When asked the question regarding ownership of the intellectual properties associated with cloning; these were privately purchased for a period of 17 years.

“Bio Energy Research”

Mr. Adam Helms, project manager for Texas AgriLife Research Corporate Relations & Bio Energy Program, discussed the current and on-going bio energy research. Main project which Adam outlined was an algae farming operation and use of the algae for bio energy production. The west Texas pilot study was constructed predominately with a tractor and blade in attempt to see if such a project could be feasibly done by a farmer with the equipment which is already on hand. There has been research with several varieties of algae and water types to see which are productive and cost effective. The water type used in the study was salt water. In the use of fresh water algae, it is important to consider cross contamination and hybridization of algae types by birds.

“Homeland Security Responsibilities at the Vet School”

Dr. Jeffery Musser, Clinical Assistant Professor – Vet Med Pathobiology, covered the animal side of Homeland Security. Dr. Musser spoke about the importance of early notification in the event of a suspected outbreak and outlined the programs in place to combat and control an outbreak if one arose. Main challenge in control is the cooperation of local producers with early recognition and reporting. Most producers will avoid at all cost, getting local and state officials involved in their operation. This most often means that things are not reported until they are out of control.

“George Bush School of Government and Public Service”

WOW.... Dr. Jim Olson, Senior Lecturer and Director of the Certificate in Advanced International Affairs Program, is the most inspiring person I have ever had the opportunity to listen to. By listening to Dr. Olson about his service to our country and the demeanor with which he speaks, you can not help to feel a sense of insignificance. I mean this is a good way. It is people like Jim Olson who are the unsung heroes whose accomplishments and sacrifices we will never hear about. There is a certain inspiring air about a person who has selflessly given up their life and comforts they once knew, to truly serve this country in order to preserve

Freedom as we know it and all take for granted. Our every day complaints are menial and unsubstantial. We have a lot to be thankful for and it is our responsibility to embrace that and give back through public service.

“Behind the Scenes” Tour of the George Bush Presidential Archives

We toured the Presidential Archives of the George Bush Presidential Library and I had no idea exactly what to expect. It was eye opening to see the expanse of information and things that is housed there. The tour was given by one of the Archivists (the archivists read and declassify document after document, organize and catalog the documents and pull them when someone formally request them per the Freedom of Information Act). The Archives included gifts that President Bush was given while in office, and many others that he still receives, including gifs from the people, heads of nations, diplomats, etc.. Every document which was produced by President Bush, his VP, and all of his staff that was once held in the White House is now stored in the archives there. From documents regarding possible appointees, to correspondence with a senator, to every speech which was drafted by one of his staff is there. It is overwhelming to see the volume of documents which are there and eerie to know that if you were a person of interest during his presidential term then you probably have a folder with your name on it there filed in the archives.

Personal summation:

When I made the decision to apply for the TALL class I believed it would be a good investment in my time. Like everyone, I too have 24 hours in a day, but it seems like I need 36 just to scratch the surface of the daily demands. Committing two years to the program was not a decision I took lightly. After this first session I know the commitment was one of the best decisions I have made to date. I look forward to growing as an agriculturalist and as a leader.