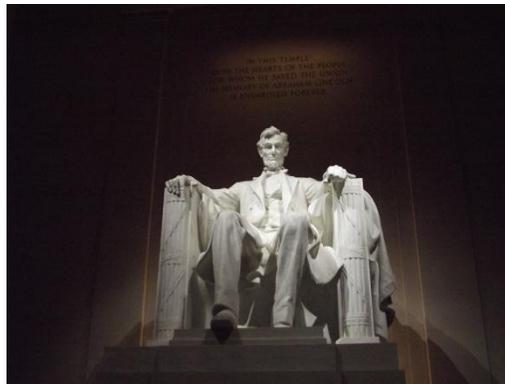


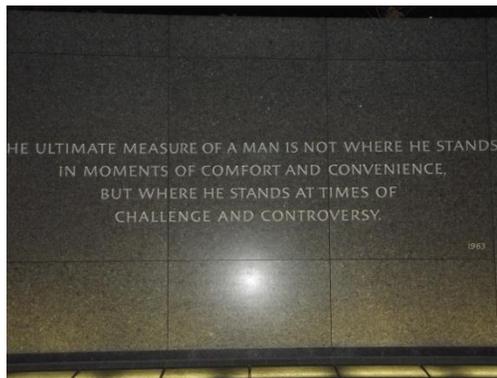
**Monday, March 12, 2012**  
**Scribe: Liesel Grauberger**

An early departure from our scattered places across Kansas began our excursion to the nation's capital. Departing at 6:30 a.m. on March 12th, I picked up my two KARL Pool buddies Paula Landoll-Smith and Jarrod Bowser. We completed the trek to Kansas City International, arriving at about 10:45 a.m. Upon checking in, we met our other fellow KARL travelers at the gate to our Delta flight.

While our group had a relatively hassle free flight with a connection in Memphis, others experienced delays that held them in Chicago. Our group got to the airport and shuttled over to the hotel just in time to gobble down a snack and board the tour bus for a night tour of the nation's monuments. After a short wait for our delayed classmates, we were on our way to a wonderful evening tour.



The weather was absolutely perfect for our evening tour. A light breeze flowed through the parks as we wound our way through the many monuments. We stopped at the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, FDR Memorial, Korean War Memorial, and countless other memorials and statues that represent important points in our nation's rich history. Several class members were particularly moved by the newer Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, having seen it for the first time this evening. The quote on the side "Out of a mountain of despair, a stone of hope" was a very powerful message of the triumphs and tribulations of our country.



Going through this evening tour was a very quieting moment for many, bringing a deep sense of respect for the people who have shaped our country by giving their passion to the cause and some cases, giving the ultimate sacrifice. I was reminded of a song I heard by Dierks Bentley, called "Home." I put a snip of the lyrics below. This evening tour was really a reminder that while we still have a ways to go, this is our home and we should be very proud of where we come from.

Brave, gotta call it brave  
To chase that dream across the sea  
Names, and they signed their names  
For something they believed

Red, how the blood ran red  
And we laid our dead in sacred ground  
Just think, wonder what they think  
If they could see us now

It's been a long hard ride  
Got a ways to go  
But this is still the place  
That we all call home

With our tour concluding around 11:00 p.m., a tired, but inspired KARL class retired to their rooms for the evening. We have a tall order; to continue to make our own sacrifices to make our communities, our state and our nation great. What a wonderful way to start off our National Directions Seminar.

**Tuesday, March 13, 2012**  
**Scribe- Hannah Grape**

We left for the metro station at 7:40 a.m. and made it safely to our Nation's Capital at 9a.m. As we waited for our tour guides in the front visitors' lobby, several KARL members took the opportunity to read about the various works of art on display around the room. Three tour guides arrived; two Legislative Aides and a staffer split us into three separate groups. I was a member of Group 1 with Robert from Senator Moran's office. Our first stop was the North Theater where we viewed a 15 minute introduction video all about the Capital—when it was built, its history, and its mission. It was short but very powerful. We then went on a tour of the Capital building itself with stops that included the original Supreme Court Justice chambers/courtroom, the Rotunda, and the Czechoslovakia chandelier. During this time we were able to ask Robert about the Capital, some of the artwork and events that have taken place, and its history. We reconvened with Group 2 in the cafeteria for some drinks and snacks. During this time we had a Q&A session with Robert and the second legislative aide, Thomas. We asked them how they got involved in this job and their day to day routine. Both went over their correspondence efforts and some of the more enjoyable things they see coming out of the Capital, as well as what they hope to do with this experience. After meeting up with Group 3 we were given about an hour to tour the Exhibition Hall on our own before lunch.



We trekked through the underground tunnel system to the Senators Buffet where we met up with staffers from Sen. Roberts, Sen. Moran, and Rep. Jenkins offices. Brandon was a staffer for Sen. Moran, Ryan who sat at my table, works with Sen. Roberts, and Wayne works with Rep. Jenkins. Before we ate we went over the previous day's events and what we learned from it as well as had a brief intro from each staffer and what their office is currently working on. Rep. Jenkins is a member of the Ways & Means Committee and is helping shape some of next year's tax plans. Sen. Roberts is working on the Transportation Bill as well as the Farm Bill, which is currently set to sundown in September. Sen. Moran is working on solutions to the current Department of Labor initiative that involves child labor on farms. He is facing a lot of resistance from DOL Secretary Solis and is trying to overcome it to help preserve an ancient way of life. During lunch we were split again into three main tables and dined with one of the staffers. Ryan from Sen. Roberts' office dined with my group and discussed some of his background, his future goals, and the problems he sees facing agriculture and rural America. He thinks that Ag producers have started to take a "heads down" approach to our issues and as an industry we need to transition to more of an open, transparent, educator role in order to help people understand what and how we operate.

After lunch we had another short Q&A session with the staffers before heading to Sen. Roberts' office to meet up with him. The Senator had been detained at a meeting so Ryan sat with us for several minutes and discussed his day to day workload in the Senator's office. Currently he spends a good amount of time talking to constituents, working through specifics on proposed bills, sitting in on committee meetings, and helping maintain communication databases. Shortly after Sen. Roberts arrived from a meeting with The American Soybean Association, where he had been discussing the Farm Bill, unfortunately he had to leave within about 5 minutes to present an amendment to the Transportation Bill so he only had time for a few questions. He discussed his main concerns with the Farm Bill including SNAP funding, and how it plays out for the future of America. Upon his departure we were invited to the front of his office to watch him give his amendment suggestions to Congress.



Our group adjourned the Capital and headed to the front of the Justice Building where we split into two groups to workshop. Each group was tasked with coming up with reasons to be for or against the Senators Transportation amendment and we had to present that view to either Jack or Marisa and sway them to vote one way or the other. My group was for the amendment and we presented it to Marisa. After hearing the opposing side she agreed that the bill should be amended. I believe that Jack sided with the group opposing his amendment in their session.



We took some “proof of life” and group photo’s in front of the Justice Building and then split into our respective district groups. My group, District 2, walked to meet up with Rep. Jenkins’ two aides, Wayne and Emily. Our visit landed on one of the Reps bye weeks so she was back in KS conducting meetings and town halls. However, Wayne and Emily were very well versed in the day to day. They discussed with us Rep. Jenkins’ day to day schedule, her role on the Ways & Means committee, and some of her views concerning Obama care, NBAF, and issues facing KS. After thanking them for their time, we re-grouped with the rest of the class for a drink and individual discussion of our day.

Our next stop was the Peruvian Embassy where we met with several diplomatic members. The Trade attaché Pepe and the Agricultural attaché Luis both gave power point presentations that broke down the country’s current economic situation, and some of the unique agriculture aspects. We learned that Peruvian exports have increased over the last ten years while inflation has remained incredibly low. Currently Kansas exports more into Peru than they import due to our aerospace industry, however our import ratio with the country is increasing. From a crop standpoint, Peru has many different climates which allow them to grow produce unique to

that country. Among some of these crops, asparagus, avocado, rice, and fruit are their top exports.



Our main host (also named Luis) then gave a presentation about Peruvian culture. He highlighted that Peru is a small country with a rapidly growing population. They are currently working on ways to be competitive and modernize for their people while maintaining the rich traditions and heritage. Peruvians participate in week-long festivals and dances mainly in Lima, their capital. He told us about a week-long festival that is completely centered on food, its production, how to cook, it and the best meals to eat. Luis explained to us how the Peruvian government works and how they run elections. Currently there is a lot of political unrest as the country doesn't trust its government, however he personally thinks that it's improving and polls have shown that the people are becoming more active in their government. Luis finished the discussion with the GMO concerns, the country's views on GMO and what place that type of industry has in Peru in the future. Once the discussion was over all three hosts invited us to try Pisco—a traditional Peruvian brandy drink made of grapes, eggs, and sugar. My fellow class members seemed to enjoy it and said it had a very unique flavor. Afterwards we said thank you and adjourned for an evening of group dinners and enjoyment.

**Wednesday, March 14, 2012**

**Scribe: Natalie Gosch**

KARL Class XI had another early morning to make the trip on Metro Blue Line to the Smithsonian stop. After a quick walk, we arrived at the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest cabinet in the United States' Government – the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We were able to meet with several speakers, including one who spoke specifically on Peru's agricultural imports/exports with the United States. The most impactful speaker that morning was Hui Jiang, Global Policy Analyst with the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Ms. Jiang spoke about 6 points which will impact agriculture the most.



1.) Developing Countries' Purchasing Power

BRIC countries (**B**razil, **R**ussia, **I**ndia, & **C**hina) are currently driving the need for more grain. In these countries, every dollar extra earned by a consumer does translate directly into more dollars spent on increasing their food or nutrition intake. They will purchase a larger volume of food, and they will purchase more meat. Both of these demands will demand more grain production. Currently,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of each soybean row planted in the United States is exported to China. And, the USDA expects China to become a corn importer within the next 10 years.

2.) Valuation of US Dollar

Because the valuation of the USD is decreasing, the purchasing power of other currencies is increasing. This will put pressure on grain prices as the United States begins to export more grain and agriculture products.

3.) Biofuel Production

We have already seen increased grain prices as grain is sent to biofuel production, and we should expect to see more.

4.) Fuel/Energy Prices

Agriculture is very energy intensive, and the global demand for energy will increase fuel prices further.

5.) Uncultivated Land

Brazil, the former Soviet countries, and the Ukraine are all starting to cultivate more land.

6.) Biotechnology

The USDA stated that *technology is the key to meeting future demand for food*. USDA believes the global population will reach 9 billion by 2025, and the world will have to use technology to meet the nutrition demands of these 9 billion people.

For lunch, KARL XI was privileged to have lunch with Senator Jerry Moran and our sister group from South Carolina. Senator Moran spoke about the importance of the work ethic and skill sets agriculture jobs build in Kansas's workforce; he stressed the need to keep our youth working in agriculture to learn these values and skills! We also very much enjoyed the company and conversation with our sister group from South Carolina!

In the afternoon, KARL XI divided into groups and met with subgroups within the EPA and USDA. I was fortunate to attend a session with the EPA. My experience was that the EPA understood the environmental challenges in the agriculture sector. The EPA did listen to our concerns about future environmental regulations on agriculture, but they did not have answers or proposed solutions for how to compromise.

We closed a long and productive day at the FBI building for a briefing on Agro terrorism and Biosecurity. Needless to say, getting through security at the FBI was a chore. But once inside, KARL XI was privy to an impressive presentation. We learned that the food industry alone employs 1/5 of all workers in the United States, and the food industry accounts for 1/10 of our total GDP! Not only is United States Agriculture feeding the world, we are also driving the economy and jobs!



**Thursday March 15, 2012**

**Scribe: Mandy Fox**

Mark Fowler led a group to visit the National Corn Growers Association. They met with Elizabeth Jones, Director of Public Policy and Ethan Mathews, manager of public policy and regulatory affairs. The team gained a better understanding of how NCGA works with the Kansas Corn Growers Association to improve Kansas agriculture. They were presented an overview of current NCGA initiatives in the areas of Marketing, Production and Utilization, and Policy. In addition to the NCGA overview, Thomas N. Sleight, Vice President of Operations and Membership for U.S. Grains Council joined the meeting and explained the role of the Grains Council in promoting agriculture and U.S. exports. The U.S. Grains Council works to develop markets, enable trade, and improve lives of consumers and producers. The U.S. Grains Council is a member organization of corn, sorghum, barley producers and agribusiness organizations which supports free and fair trade worldwide. USGC pursues and supports alliances with organizations of like interest worldwide and administers FAS market development programs and is the steward of funds for FAS.

Tanner Ehmke, Luke Thornton, Kris Graves and Tyler Ediger met with the Environmental Working Group's agricultural policy team Thursday morning to learn more about the EWG's policy initiatives, views and goals as an organization in regards to farming and ranching. Sheila Karpf and David DeGennaro met with us for an hour and were very open with their thoughts on

how to improve the Farm Bill currently being debated in Congress. Their main objective is to encourage farmers to implement conservation practices to reduce fertilizer and pesticide runoff and reduce pollution. An incentive-based system tied to farm payments rather than forcing farmers to comply with environmental standards, they said, would be the preferred route of implementation considering the strained relationship farmers already have with the EPA. Other key objectives for the EWG are to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars going to large wealthy farmers; help young farmers; encourage crop diversity rather than having subsidies favor only a few select crops; and encourage organic production.

A group of eight met with Paul Shapiro and Joe Maxwell of the Humane Society of America (HSUS). HSUS were very courteous and allowed for a very open dialogue. All of our questions were answered and even if they disagreed they did so respectfully. They gave the impression that they did not want to do away with production agriculture, but rather provide for safe and humane treatment of all animals. They accept all walks of life including vegetarians, farmers, ranchers, and hunters. Overall, they were a very polished group that seems to be actively advancing and making change.



Approximately ten class members met with the National Cattleman's Beef Association (NCBA) on Thursday afternoon. This was a comfortable setting with professionals who share similar views to that of the KARL class members. In contrast to the HSUS meeting in the morning, the NCBA seemed less refined and more reactive than proactive. Although they are very good at their jobs, our group felt that the industry as a whole need to be more aggressively representing the industry if they intend to compete with groups such as HSUS. The Lean Finely Textured Beef (aka Pink Slime) was surfacing as we were in Washington D.C. and NCBA representation seemed to be scrambling for answers and media focus. This is just one example of how the industry has lost ground due to reacting versus reaching out.

Five members of KARL Class XI were able to meet with Dana Peterson, CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers, on Thursday 3/15/12. We were able to visit with Ms. Peterson for over 2 hours; her dedication to our education of how agriculture, and wheat specifically, impacts Kansas and the nation was most impactful. We left the meeting a tremendous amount of knowledge, and we wanted to highlight six of the most important points we took from our meeting.



- 1.) Huge swings in Congressional members forced most association groups to spend a majority of their time educating new members. Ms. Peterson had put together materials that described what wheat was – down to the elementary school level. This isn't meant to imply that Congressional members do not have an elementary school education; this is meant to highlight the ever widening divide between all our population and their knowledge level from where their food actually comes.
- 2.) The topic of Congress's inability to formulate compromises was a reoccurring theme of all our meetings in Washington, DC. We heard the same frustration from the National Association of Wheat Growers.
- 3.) Ms. Peterson did state that there are foreign multinational companies entering the United States to invest and innovate in agriculture technology fields. These foreign multinationals cannot invest in GMO research, or other similar technologies, because their countries have regulations against these types of technologies. Our belief is the lack of regulations in the United States has enabled more investment and jobs into the agricultural sector.
- 4.) We were surprised to discover that the EPA has been reimbursing environmental groups for court costs and legal fees from bringing lawsuits against companies and other entities. For example, the environmental groups suing the Sunflower Power Plant expansion in Holcomb could be paid by the EPA for bringing the suit should their efforts stop the expansion. This same strategy is applied by the EPA to other environmental groups who stop what they perceive as threats to air, water, soil, and wildlife. The EPA is funded by taxpayers.
- 5.) When we discussed the growing trend toward "Organic" and the groups who are trying to introduce regulations against the application of technology to agriculture, Ms. Peterson communicated an interesting theory. The "Organic" movement is a niche market; these groups have carved out a specialty and they have done it well. However, they need cost parity to compete better with traditional agriculture. So the "Organic" movement is using their marketing niche as a tool to push for consumer emotion, and thus regulations, which will increase traditional producer costs and result in price parity for "organic" products.
- 6.) We have heard on several occasions – and Ms. Peterson reiterated the message – that agriculture supports must use Facebook and Twitter and YouTube and other new communication technologies to get our message to the masses. We cannot stay quiet and hold these tools at arm's length. Ms. Peterson said that our voice on these

communication tools would be more powerful than money for the support of agricultural and feeding a growing world.

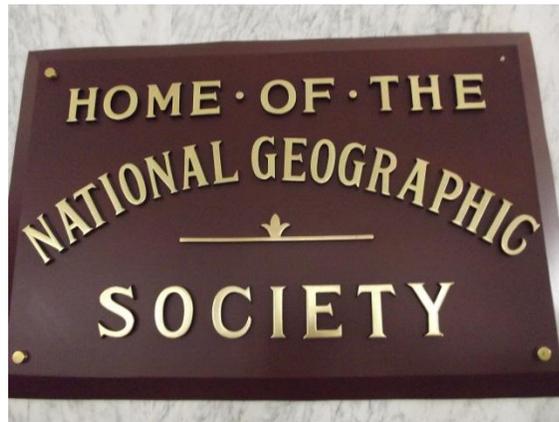
**Friday, March 16, 2012**

**Scribe: Mark Fowler**

The first activity of the day was a visit to the headquarters of the National Geographic Society. National Geographic is a private, nonprofit organization. We were greeted by Betty Clayman, typographer, and Alice Jones, deputy director of research. After allowing some time to enjoy the photos and exhibits in the museum and courtyard, we were taken to the layout room where we learned a little more about how the magazine is created. It takes on average two to three years to complete a story for the magazine and up to 35 people may work on a single story before it is approved for publication.

National Geographic takes pride in the fact they are not a news magazine, but an information source. Even with their growth into other media, such as the TV and internet, the magazine remains the backbone of the company.

After the program in the layout room, we were escorted into the board room where Dennis Dimick, Executive editor covering all environmental stories, presented a program entitled Population, Food and the Future; Where are we going and How will we feed to world.



Key points to take away from the presentation include:

- ✓ Impact = Population x Affluence x Technology. Simply stating as the population of the world continues to increase, and spending ability of the individuals increase with improving technology, the impact of the growth on the environment increases exponentially.
- ✓ Food security is a global concern
- ✓ Soil you inherit defines your society success

The presentation was thought provoking and several in our group do not agree with the arguments presented, but it initiated a dialogue and emphasized our need to be vocal advocates of agriculture to tell our side of the story.

The presentation included several photos taken by Jim Richardson of Lindsborg, KS.

The afternoon was spent at the office of NACo. The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments before the Administration and Congress. NACo provides lobbyist services to the nation's 3,068 counties. Emerging issues include; continuing consolidation of local governments, reduction of workforce, budget constraints, fiscal realities of rural America, and transparent policy creation as well as implementation.

Their focus is working through the continuing changing relationship of various levels of government acknowledging that public trust not as big of issue at county level. It does however get worse as we get higher up the chain to state and then to federal. NACo works to balance issues and concerns of all sizes of county government. Lobby more unanimous positions. Stay away from more controversial positions. Their focus is on rural development title in the current Farm Bill debates.

While at the NACo office we were also addressed by Marlis Carson, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. Her full presentation is available for review, but the main points addressed the policy and business interests of Farmer Co-ops including:

- Protecting the Capper-Volstead Act
- Ensuring tax reform doesn't harm farmer co-ops
- Easing regulatory burden on producers/co-ops
- Advocating for co-ops in the 2012 farm bill
- Ensuring an adequate labor force
- Providing education and networking forums

Friday evening was spent enjoying a casual dinner at the Fish Market in Old Town Alexandria enjoying good conversation recapping the week's activities.

**Saturday, March 17**

**Scribe: Andrea Feldkamp**

The day started with a visit to Arlington Cemetery. The group walked the grounds and observed the changing of the guard. Participants also had the opportunity to view other historic graves and land marks while visiting.



Following Arlington, class members divided into groups to take in DC sites. Groups visited various places including the Smithsonian, memorials and other historical markers.

The group gathered together for the evening at the Kennedy Center for a delicious dinner featuring Salmon or Beef Tenderloin and an orchestral/opera performance. We saw the National Symphony Orchestra's production of *Fidelio*, Beethoven's only opera.



The evening ended with a short bus ride back to the hotel!

Sunday, March 18, 2012

Scribe: Tanner Ehmke

Starting very early in the morning, we all departed DC and headed back home.