

I am a third generation harvester. My Grandfather began his harvesting business in 1949 and my father was raised following the harvest. Something that I have in common with my father is that neither one of us has ever spent a summer at home as he continued the harvest tradition after my grandfather retired 23 years ago.

In May, when school was ending, my friends had very different plans for their summers than I did. While we would visit a swimming pool occasionally, our main focus was moving into the trailer and getting ready to go. I have many memories of helping cook meals and load the suburban for the daily trip to the field with the evening meal. By junior high, I would relieve combine drivers, allowing them to eat dinner without stopping the machines.

This past spring, I obtained a class B CDL and for the majority of this summer, I worked as a full time crew member. I had driven a combine for short times but working day after day was a new experience for me. Our crew rotates between their trucks and combines every other day so I was forced to learn to operate our tandem trucks as well. Although I have been a part of harvest all of my life, I realized this year that there was a lot I didn't know. Binning wheat has taken on a whole new meaning after standing in dust and wind load after load.

I have had the opportunity to use my harvest experience this past semester at school as I plan to obtain a degree in Milling Science. As my instructor was taking my class on a tour of the college's elevator and explaining how it works, I realized I had the advantage of already experiencing it. It has been interesting to study the grain in more detail and to see the process that makes it edible and useable. The experiences and friendships that harvest has allowed me to have will be an integral part of my life that I know I will always be thankful for.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lauren Pauls

