

# The Observer

Volume 22, Issue 4 • Illinois YMCA Youth & Government • Final, 1994

## Speaker responds to letter writers

**Anna Costello**

Criticism isn't always easy to take.

Just ask presiding officer Nicole Pavlatos.

In Sunday's issue of *The Observer*, a letter to the editor claimed that Pavlatos was not following parliamentary procedures, and that she allowed her personal feelings to influence debate and voting on HB-O-26 (regarding lowering the drinking age).

Pavlatos, a speaker of the Orange House, said the criticism was totally unfounded, and that the end result was correct.

"The standing vote was 74," said Pavlatos, a member of the Southwest Richards delegation. "It did have the majori-



*'It was a fun debate—I got into it—but I didn't make any biased comments.'*

*—Nicole Pavlatos, Orange speaker*

ty."

Also, the speaker maintained that procedures were followed correctly.

"Everything ran according to parliamentary procedures. The standing vote upheld the majority," she said.

On the claim of allowing

her personal feelings to affect the debate, Pavlatos said that just wasn't so.

"It was a fun debate—I got into it—but I didn't make any biased comments," she said.

Pavlatos added, "I make it a point to only speak on factual information. Everything I did

was standing with parliamentary procedure."

The speaker said that the job of presiding officer is quite challenging.

"You really have to know parliamentary procedure. It's basically learning how to run debate, and I know it sounds easy, but it's really stressful."

In spite of the stress and controversy, Pavlatos enjoyed her role.

"It was a lot of fun to preside. It's great to be up there leading debate. It feels wonderful to have the honor to carry all that responsibility."

She felt the weekend as a whole was quite successful.

"I think it's by far the best Y&G I've ever been to," said Pavlatos.

## Opinions mixed on quality of committee work

**Sienna Crawford**

Legislators and lobbyists described their committees anywhere from "very good" to "boring."

"They weren't the way I thought they'd be," said Joe Kessler, a lobbyist from Naperville Central. "At Pre Leg I we have to follow exact parliamentary procedure, and here we didn't."

"People voted for the bills just to vote; they didn't think about their decisions," said Tamara Pace, an Orange representative from Kankakee. "I didn't find the committee's helpful in getting bills passed."

"I thought the committee work did help to get legislation passed," said John Thompson, a lobbyist from Mt. Vernon McLeansboro.

"The debates were interesting," said

Mike Pinto, a lobbyist from Southwest Carl Sandburg.

"The meetings could have been shorter," said Merrilee Guenther, an Orange senator from Elmhurst Lake Park.

"The committee meetings could have been better organized," said Amanda Bailey, an Orange representative from Southwest Eisenhower.

Similarly, opinions on the abilities of committee chairpersons were quite varied.

One delegate described her chairperson as "running the meeting like Hitler."

Others complained that chairpersons would not call on everyone equally, or were not familiar enough with procedures.

However, chairpersons were sometimes described as "quite friendly" and "very efficient."



Executive director of lobbyists Bao Nguyen, left, and board of directors member Judy Bucci in front of the governor's suite.

## People

# College staff adds a lot to program

**Rob Shurig**

Many college students return to Y&G to help those newly elected to their positions, and also to discuss old memories with their friends.

In addition to helping to advise delegates, college staffers fulfill a variety of functions—everything from helping to set up voting booths, to keeping watch over the copying machine.

There are several requirements for college staff, including that they have completed one full year of participation in Y&G, and that they are enrolled in a college curriculum.

College staffers pay one half of the normal program fee.

"It's just a tremendous experience and a chance to see old friends and relive to some extent our days in Y&G," said Ben Hall, the 1993 youth gov-

**'I come back for the togetherness and the comradery.'**

ernor.

"It's the coolest thing on earth," said Sydney Gohring, who ran for speaker of the House last year. Gohring is attending the University of Iowa.

"It's enjoyable to see high schoolers get involved and watch the high schoolers learn the process," said Sara Stubblefield, who is at Greenville College.

"I came back because it's fun, and it gives you the opportunity to keep in touch with your youth," said Megan Gliwa, who attends the University of Illinois.

"The most fun part is being with everyone we've met in the

past. We're all crazy," said Kristin Clark, a president of the Senate in 1993. She is at Bradley University.

"I come back for the togetherness, and comradery," said Craig Garner, a president of the Senate last year. Garner is attending Rend Lake College.

"It's the idea of the old friends and good times that brings me back again," said Geno Valente, the 1992 youth governor. Valente is at the University of Illinois.

"I came back so I could wear my cool ties and get free pizza," said Michael Yokley, a former presiding officer. Yokley is now at the University of

Illinois.

Other college staff members this year were Zachary Brown (Southern Illinois University-Carbondale), Lori Burdick (Illinois), Penny Carter (Lincolnland College), Amanda Clark (Millikin University), Adam Compton (Rend Lake), Jessica Garretson (Kaskaskia College), Staci Harvey (Rend Lake), Richard Jennings (Bradley), Chris Kirk (Southeast Missouri State), Mary Miller (Eastern Illinois), Jason Moore (SIUC), Peggy Penrod (John A. Logan College), Melinda Piereson (Murray State University), David Russo (Illinois), Christy Waldhoff (Illinois), Suzanne Whitehead (St. Louis University), and Troy Williams (Logan).

Board of directors member Andy Paul supervised the college staff this year.

## Chairperson resigns after 15 years in the Y&G program

After 15 years with the program, including two as chairperson of the board of directors, Michele Walker has decided to devote her time to other projects closer to her home in Indianapolis.



Michele Walker  
"I really enjoyed every minute of it," said Walker. "But I was recently married, and I'd like to be involved in more things here."

She started in Y&G her sophomore year with the Kewanee Geneseo delegation. Her senior year she was with Kankakee Herscher and was president of the Senate.

Among her contributions was a manual for presiding officers, she said.

## Six board members stepping down

**Laura Baccash  
& Alicia Homampour**

Five members of the Y&G board of directors have decided to step down from that responsibility.

They are Mary Boehler, Judy Bucci, Bob Stelton, Jean Tello, Chuck Tramel and Michele Walker.

Boehler has been with the program for 15 years and is in charge of bill flow. "I just thought 15 years was long enough," said Boehler.

Bucci, lobbyist coordinator, has been on the board since 1985. She is leaving to work with the Y&G program in her adoptive home state of Indiana.

"It's been tremendous for me both personally and professionally. In my opinion, there is no greater experience for young people in government," said Bucci.

Tramel has been the judicial coordinator for six years and he's been involved with Y&G since 1979. He is not leaving

the program altogether, but merely stepping down to the position of advisor.

"When supervisors remain in charge for too long and then they leave, the system tends to fall apart," said Tramel. "It's a great program. The judicial program is the best part with the hardest working students. The best way for it to grow is to get new ideas into it."

Stelton, a member of the board of directors and supervisor of the video press, has been with Y&G for 28 years. He is retiring from teaching also.

"From the time that I was literally drafted, I've found it an exhilarating experience and have looked forward to it each year," said Stelton. "It's a unique experience for students. As soon as I finished one year's program, I began thinking about the next. It was very sustaining that way."

Tello, who teaches at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School, was unable to be reached for comment.

## Presiding officers rate well in survey

*Claudia T. Torres & Yvonne Quinn*

In a survey of legislators conducted by *The Observer*, the four presiding officers—Emily Holt, Nicole Pavlatos, Emilie Porter and Joe Sterbis—were given very favorable overall ratings.

Legislators gave the presiding officers scores of 1, 2 or 3 (with 1 being the lowest) in the areas of *knowledge of parliamentary procedure, efficiency, and fairness.*

Then the scores were converted into percentages, with a 1 equaling 33 percent for instance, and the percentages were totaled and averaged.

**'Emilie was doing an excellent job in every aspect.'**

Pavlatos, speaker of the Orange House, scored 59 percent for her parliamentary procedure, 63 percent for efficiency, and 72 percent for fairness.

"Nicole was fair to the reps," said Jonathan Twitty, a Knox County Galesburg representative.

Holt, speaker of the Blue House, received 81 percent in both parliamentary procedure and efficiency, and 88 percent in fairness.

"Holt deserved and earned her position," said Mt. Vernon legislator Ryan Pancoast.

Sterbis, president of the Orange Senate, had an 84 percent in parliamentary procedure, 93 percent in efficiency, and 90 percent in fairness.

"[Sterbis] was open-minded and a good listener to all our problems," said Terese Pidrak, a senator from Southwest Eisenhower.

Porter, president of the Blue Senate, scored 100 percent in her knowledge of parliamentary procedure, 96 percent in efficiency, and 91 percent in fairness.

"Emilie was doing an excellent job in every aspect," said James Stefani, a senator from Indian Boundary Westmont.

## Legislators pleased with their bills being signed into law

*Gail Rodek*

Several legislators were successful in their efforts to get their bills signed into law.

Jeff Warren, senator from Mt. Vernon, said, "I fully expected the bill [SB-B-07] to pass. It's not that controversial. It was designed to help ease the enforcement of the law requiring drivers to have auto insurance."

Another new law is a merger of SB-B-12 and SB-B-13, which says, "all rights to an adopted child born in Illinois are to be awarded to the adopting parent(s) after a set of 12 months."

"The main reason our bill passed was because we stressed how important children are and how they go through so much useless trauma when cases like this happen," said Mt. Vernon's Amie Williams.

Also successful was bill HB-B-16, relating to the requirement of all welfare recipients (18 to 65 years of age) to begin work in any Illinois government agency where they are needed.

"Our bill was immediately favored by legislators because they felt it would be a good step toward welfare reform," said senator Ralph Brown of Knox County Galesburg. "The citizens of Illinois on the welfare program have got to start taking responsibility for themselves."

Bill HB-B-33 related to the unlawful possession of firearms and/or ammunition. The new law makes possession a class IV felony rather than a class A misdemeanor.

"Basically the bill passed by itself," said Kirin Murphy of Elmhurst Lake Park. "The bill had no trouble passing in either the House or the Senate."

## Executive departments help out legislative area

*Courtney Wise*

The executive departments are an experimental program in its second year at Y&G.

"The executive departments are a good part of the program, and it's gotten better organized each year with the help of the delegates," said Jennifer Wicks, a McGaw Evanston delegate representing Children and Family Services.

There are seven executive departments which assist the entire legislative branch in obtaining information and developing budgets for each department.

They provide facts for legislators and lobbyists to use in committee debate. Executive department members can also testify regarding a bill in committees. However, they are not able to vote on the bill,

even if it affects the department's budget.

"There could be a bill that I really like and want to pass, but if it doesn't fit in the budget, then I have to testify against it," said Illinois Environmental Protection Agency head Brian Dietrich from Springfield Williamsville.

Departments have thick books full of information about bills. The governor uses these books quite often when evaluating legislation.

"The executive departments are a great way to learn about the roles of officers in government. You get to see different positions at work at once," said Naperville North's Judd Kaufman, the Alcohol and Substance Abuse head.

Board of directors member Tom Graham supervises the executive departments.

## Legislators get crazy

*Amanda Nases*

Usually during the last legislative session, House and Senate members start to act a little crazy; this year was no exception.

The Senate, under president Joe Ster-

bis, adopted "Beavis" instead of "Mr. President" as the proper designation. And Aye and Nay were traded for Oooh and Ahhh.

The House, under speaker Nicole Pavlatos, tried to impeach governor Matt Wolfe for waiting to veto bills until later in the afternoon.

# Justice

## Bills subjected to judicial review

**Matthew Nordin**

The judicial review process may be one of the least understood activities in Y&G, but it may also be one of the most important.

Saturday evening, chief justice Brandy Glasser of Mt. Vernon Murphysboro and several attorneys met with legislators whose bills were possibly unconstitutional.

That is the objective of judicial review: to determine if a proposed piece of legislation is in violation of the Constitution.

In the past, legislators were not consulted prior to reviewing their bills.

The chief justice selected the bills during her campaign.

The attorneys and legislators involved seemed to agree that the activity was worthwhile, but improvements could be made.

"It would have been more useful if people would have been given copies of the Constitution," said McGaw Evanson attorney David Linsenmeyer.

Sunday, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled on the constitutionality of the selected bills.

SB-O-22, introduced by senator James Longfellow and representative Karen Kresin of

Paris Chrisman, was being reviewed because it limited the number of appeals a convict can use after being sentenced to death.

Another reviewed bill was HB-B-16, written by senator Ralph Brown and representative Jim Feirtag of Knox County Galesburg. It mandated all "able-bodied" men and women between the ages of 18 and 65 who are receiving welfare to work for any Illinois government agency which requires his or her assistance. Failure to work would result in a reduction in that week's welfare payment.

SB-B-30 sought to outlaw

doctor-assisted suicide for patients who have not undergone intensive psychiatric treatment. The bill was presented by senator Mary Eastin, and representatives Melissa Frieden and Nicole Dahl of Mercer County Aledo.

The final bill whose constitutionality was reviewed was HB-B-01, which mandated the drug testing of athletes in Illinois. The bill was proposed by Southwest Stagg's senator Christa Russo and representative Elizabeth Lee.

"Bringing in the legislators beforehand, should help avoid confusion about the bills," said chief justice Glasser.

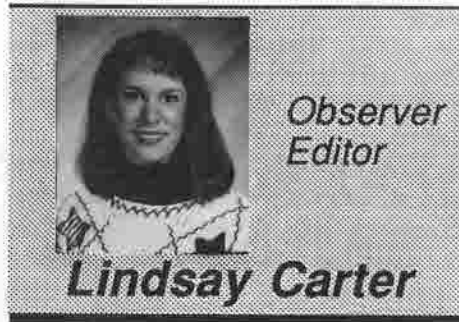
## 'Room' policies should be revised next year

The delegates in Y&G represent model students of the state of Illinois. We are accepted into the program as intelligent, responsible young adults.

For the most part, we are treated with respect. However, program officials are condescending in one important area: their "no members of the opposite sex in your room" policy is quite demeaning.

Throughout the weekend, delegates are given many challenging duties that are handled promptly and intelligently. Each person here is knowledgeable in their special area.

The "room" policies of many delegations demonstrate a lack of confidence in our maturity and in our decision-making



skills—when I think that confidence has been earned.

I understand the policies regarding members of the opposite sex in rooms varies slightly from delegation to delegation, and I understand the need for a "close

leash" approach for the weekend in general.

Everyone knows that the weekend is a stressful experience, and that there is very little "free" time. The current room policy restricts the few minutes we do have to socialize.

As an alternative to a total prohibition of members of the opposite sex being in each other's room, I'd like to suggest an "open curtain and door" policy.

Delegates work hard and they achieve many goals for themselves, for their schools, and for the program. A little more freedom, and a little more confidence that we know how to use that freedom, would be an appropriate reward from the equally hard-working delegation advisers.

The *Observer* is a publication of Illinois YMCA Youth & Government, and is published four times annually free of charge to Y&G participants.

Please direct letters to Allen Moore, Knox County YMCA, 1324 W. Carl Sandburg Drive, Galesburg, IL 61401.

Or phone 309-344-1324.

Editor-in-Chief

**Lindsay Carter**

Staff

Laura Baccash	Jacqueline Odle
Jennifer Baril	Yvonne Quinn
Anna Costello	Sarah Resnick
Sienna Crawford	Gall Rodek
Alicia Homampour	Rob Shurig
Michelle Lee	Claudia Torres
Amanda Nases	Courtney Wise
Matt Nordin	

Advisers

**Jennifer Bassak**  
**Chris Caponigri**  
**Penny Carter**  
**Bryan Chumbley**  
**Jane Morrissey**  
**Ted Morrissey**  
**Barbara Sullivan**

Note: Thanks to Mt. Vernon Township High School for the use of computer equipment and software.