

THE OBSERVER

Delegates appreciate exquisite facilities

JESSICA HARVATH

Delegates who participated in this year's Y & G program were among the lucky few given the opportunity to use their state's capitol building. Youth & Government is the only student group in Illinois allowed total access to the capitol building.

Snapping pictures at the gorgeous rotunda, Y & G delegates seem to appreciate both the architecture and trust given to them by the state.

"This is amazing that we've been able to use the building at all. We should thank the state legislators for allowing us to use their building," said Michael Komalarajun, a senator from Heritage Waubonsie Valley.

"I think it is just amazing. With-

out the capitol, it [Y&G] wouldn't be the same at all," said Akif Irfan, a lobbyist from Heritage Naperville North.

Last year, damage to restrooms in the capitol building spread fears of the end of Y&G in its prestigious facilities.

"There is only one problem. You have a bunch of people who appreciate the experience, but you also have a few who are immature and don't realize what a special opportunity they've been given," said lobbyist Cynthia Sun of Heritage Naperville Central.

On the whole, however, most delegates have been impressed by the architecture around them, and a

few even have favorite rooms in the capitol.

"My favorite was the lobbyist headquarters. I liked the portraits on the wall, and the temperature was nice," said Ian Reynolds, a lobbyist from B. R. Ryall Wheaton Warrenville.

"The governor's office is really cool," said Komalarajun.

The best part of using the capitol for many delegates was the sense of having their ideas and bills brought to the real house and senate floors.

"The most amazing thing was to go to the Senate gallery to hear my bill being discussed for the first time," said Irfan.

Y & G weekend reviewed

KATE SULLIVAN

The weekend is coming to a close and the suitcases are packed, waiting for the journey home. As the end approaches, the *Observer* takes a final look at the highlights and lowlights of the Springfield experience.

Although the days were long and the sessions frustrating, there was a general agreement that the experience of working in the capitol was a highlight of the trip.

"The best part of my weekend was the legislative sessions," said Sarah Hood, a page from B.R. Ryall Wheaton Warrenville South.

Ashley Norris, a page from South Suburban Seton Academy, said, "The

best part was definitely being able to work in the capitol building and mock the actual state government." Fellow Seton page Ally James agreed, saying her favorite part was "getting the whole experience."

While most everyone enjoyed the ability to participate in government in such a realistic manner, there was a split over the quality of committee.

"The worst part was my unresponsive committee," said Representative Marcy Farrey of Wheaton Warrenville. "We only debated about two bills."

Representative Christy Bridge, also from Wheaton Warrenville,

agreed.

"The worst part was definitely committee," Bridge said.

There was also appreciation for the small sessions. Laura Naughton, a representative from Wheaton, said her "committee was amazing." Springfield Williamsville Senator Josh Heigert agreed.

"Committee was cool... wait- the guy who sang 'Don't Stop' in the senate was cooler," Heigert said.

One of the biggest complaints observed pertained to footwear.

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Y & G experience summarized

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"The worst part was definitely my sore feet from my high heels," Naughton said.

The road was especially hard for the pages. Seton page Ally James described the worst part as "all of the walking that the pages do and the painful feet."

Governor Justin Cajindos' page Venitia Morris agreed.

"The worst thing was being a page all day Saturday and bringing the wrong shoes," Morris said.

Another high scorer on the gripe list was "Mandatory Fun Night."

"The worst part was 'Mandatory Fun Night,'" said Roger Harty, a lobbyist from Network Stagg.

Senators Amar Patel and Kerith Thakkar, disagreed. They both thought Adventure Fun Night, along with karaoke, was the best part of the weekend.

There were also normal, everyday issues such as a stolen wallet and complaints of having to get out of bed before sunrise. Tedd Hawks of Springfield Williamsville had is own, unusual complaint. He said the worst part was his

roommate's feet after a long day of wandering the capitol.

And so the *Observer* proves that as students step out the capitol doors, everyone takes something different home with them.

Are you ready for
Y & G 2004?

Dress code: Taken seriously or serious joke?

SAADIA AHMAD and AREFA PATEL

Dress code must be observed at all officially scheduled sessions for all delegates, including legislative sessions, committee sessions, breakfasts, banquet, and all other meetings. The dress code requires Professional Dress and applies to all students.

It seems obvious in the rules, right? Then why is it that so much controversy is associated with the adherence, or lack thereof, to the

dress code?

Advisor Laura Littner, from Indian Boundary Hinsdale South says, "[The dress code] is not enforced strictly enough. I saw a lot of girls wearing sandals ... it's hard for an advisor because you're the bad guy."

Let's analyze the situation. Obviously, guys are rather limited to suits and sport coats. However, there is a growing movement to allow boys to remove their jackets in

session, as believes Samir Shah, from Elmhurst Lake Park.

The girls are a completely different story. From blue raincoats to jogging suits, girls have a lot of leeway, which is often abused.

In addition to short skirts, gym shoes, midriffs, jeans, hooded shirts and open-toed sandals have been seen. Where are the fashion police?

In the end, what matters is the work we did here.

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Blood alcohol level reduction ensures safety

LOGAN LENKER

Increasing public safety by lowering the legal blood alcohol level is on the minds of legislators Adam Zec, Kirsten Gruenberg, Matt Burgofferand, Debika Ghose, from Heritage Naperville Central.

People driving recklessly, under the influence of alcohol account for many of the automobile accidents across the United States.

This bill group wants to be safe while on the streets of Illinois. Therefore, they would like to lower the legal alcohol percentage level from .08 to .05.

A number of new measures need

to be taken to reduce the numbers of deaths and injuries. According to the bill group, it seeks to do this with fines and restrictions.

In the year 1997, 16,000 people died as a result of drunk driving auto accidents. In addition, many others were injured and 1.4 million people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Under this bill, minors caught driving with a .05 blood alcohol level or higher will have their licenses suspended. After the required time has passed, the license will only be given back to violators who have paid all

their fines and served the full suspension time.

The basis of the withdrawal of the person's driving privileges should be that person's refusal to submit, or their failure to take a chemical test or tests following their arrest for the offense of driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or both.

If this bill is passed, it will go into effect on April 1, 2005, upon the signature of the Youth Governor of Illinois.

Co-editor emphasizes importance of passion

KRISHNA PATTISAPU

During the Y&G weekend, many young people embark upon lifelong journeys. Whether urged to join by family members and friends or inspired by personal interest, those who have entered the program are destined to walk away with something.

However, the level of results achieved lies in the amount of personal emphasis placed on a role. When interest is heightened, ones perception of occurrences are stimulated. With this stimulation comes the ability to grow and achieve wonderful things.

As a first-year member of Y and

G, I was afraid and apprehensive about my role. My decision to run as Executive Co-Editor in Chief created within me a sense of extreme personal interest. After becoming comfortable with my position, I grew to understand what truly compelled me to join this program. After a while, it became second nature to me.

I love my job. In life, personal interest determines success. Without it, nothing can be accomplished. In the real world, as well as in Y and G, passion is the essential element needed to fulfill dreams.

Those who are passionate about what they do develop a strong per-

sonal presence and gain the potential to change lives. Not carrying fervor for what is being done disables potential change.

Changing the world one step at a time begins with individual interest. Here at Y and G, personality is the epitome of success. This weekend, I have learned more about government, social interaction, and myself than I have ever believed possible.

I urge you to find what you are truly passionate about. With this realization, you can make a great difference in the world, no matter how small you think you may be.

If you give a politician a microphone

BRITTANY LEGGANS

If you give a politician a microphone, he'll ask to give a speech. So he'll send for a page to fetch a note card and a pen.

When he sees the page, he'll remember an urgent mote he needs to send to his friend. As he fills out the committee information on the mes-

sage slip, he'll realize he promised to support a bill in that committee during his campaign.

He'll duck into his office to avoid fulfilling campaign promises. While dodging the public, he'll be reminded of all the questions he dodged during his interview earlier.

Thinking of his interviews reminds him of his 2:15 press conference. And if you give a politician the opportunity to talk at a press conference, he'll probably want a microphone to go with it.

North vs. south—the battle rages on

KARLY KUPFERBERG and SAMANTHA KLEIN

The purpose of the Y&G delegations gathering in Springfield is to unite the members of the program and share political ideals that delegates have been diligently preparing. However, when debating bills and other aspects of Y&G, there is a distinct division between opinions of the north and south. Do people really walk away with a broadened view?

In committee, it's fairly simple to determine which bills are proposed from the north versus the south. Consequently, during debates it's difficult to understand where other people are coming from. For instance, a southern bill could be pertaining to gun control, while northerners can't especially relate to the necessity of owning a gun and firing it in the privacy of one's own backyard. On the other hand, a southerner might immediately table a bill proposed by the north to legalize conjugal visitation rights for prisoners.

The general consensus is split while the typical stereotypes of one another seem to hinder any probable

chance of unification.

A northerner, Ben Kaberon, from McGaw Evanston said, "It encourages the stereotypes that plague the great Illinoisan society which we are lucky enough to be a small part of at this point in time, the year of our lord two thousand and three ... If the southerners could actually speak simple English instead of a tidy summary of colloquialisms, communications between civilization and the south could improve."

"I think that the Y&G weekend in Springfield unifies and broadens everyone's horizons," stated southerner Dana Smith from Mt. Vernon. "Chicago is a different world. I came here with the preconceived notion that northerners would be snotty, since they are more materialistic due to their urban environment, which provides them with fancier stores, but I didn't sense it as much as I anticipated."

Southerner Colby Craig, from Mt. Vernon DuQuoin, claimed, "It does unify the north and south. I've made a lot of friends with northern-

ers. But I think ya'll [northerners] talk funny. The word 'pop' is used frequently instead of soda and there is a big contrast in school size, seeing as I attend a high school of about 400 students and my northern friends are amongst a class of over one thousand."

Despite the encouragement of integration, students are finding it hard, or aren't putting forth an effort, to branch out of their comfortable realm.

"There is a segregation that I didn't expect. People are extremely opinionated and the north sides with the north and the south sides with the south. The regions gang up on each other as if we aren't all from the same state!" exclaimed northerner Supriya Nair from Network Stagg.

So, upon reflection of your experience in Springfield, ask yourself if this program unified the delegates. Has this exposure enhanced your initial reference of others or completely altered your impressions of them?

Comfort and style duke it out

LOGAN LENKER

Why, especially at Y&G, would a person wear stylish shoes over comfortable shoes, when you know you will be doing a lot of running?

Everyone has to wear shoes, right? Well, if you are going to wear shoes why wear uncomfortable ones. On Sunday, March 15, 2003 I asked different people with different positions if they would choose stylish shoes over comfortable shoes.

Ashley Sampson a legislator from Edwardsville said, "I love shoes! Comfortable shoes aren't cute shoes."

I then asked her if her shoes were comfortable. She said, "No, they crush my toes near the tip. At least they match."

College Staff also have problems

with comfortable shoes. A.J. Black, from Rend Lake College, said, "I was asked to change from tennis shoes to my dress shoes. It was a good thing they told me, because College Staff is supposed to be a good role model for all Y and G program students."

According to Chris Kirk, Board of Directors, the Y&G program keeps a professional outlook at the students.

Emily Wurth, a legislator from Mt. Vernon said, "Comfortable shoes are a must have necessity or else you will die a very painful death."

Arefa Patel said, "While comfort is important, other factors need to be considered. Personally, I have a height issue, so I choose to wear 4" heels most of this weekend."

In conclusion, style will be bought for comfort, for the simple fact the more comfortable the shoe, the uglier they are.

The Staff of *The Observer* would like to send a special thank you to the advisors.