

## Deb Allen starts first year as Y&G President

Gilbert Botham  
Heritage Oswego East

The new president of Y&G is a very busy woman, from answering advisor and delegate questions to speaking about the program.

Deb Allen has taken over the presidency of Y&G, a spot that, for the last 35 years, was formally held by Allen Moore. "It's big shoes to fill," said Ms. Allen.

Even though the shoe size might be comparable to Shaq's, she didn't fly blind.

"I was in a mentoring mode. I was able to work along side the president and able to see Y&G last year," said Ms. Allen.

Even though she knew the ropes, she was still nervous. "Allen [Moore] was known across the country for running a good program, but I am confident. It may not be the same exact [program], but it will still be a quality program. It's a good nervous," she said.

The board worked well with the change. "The board has been positive and supportive. [The board] has been very welcoming," said Ms. Allen.

Since she is new to

## Gov. candidate wears interesting clothing during Friday speech session

Tessa Statzer  
Springfield Williamsville

Andrew Benson, the Network Shepard candidate for Youth Governor, makes it clear to all that he is an eccentric individual who is looking to challenge the status quo.

In his speech on Friday afternoon, Benson told the delegates that he wanted to become governor.

"I want to be your friend," said Benson.

Despite his positive and friendly message, Benson gave out mixed signals with his speech by wearing a black flag symbol on the back of his vest.

Generally black flags are symbols of anarchy, which represents free will and, essentially, no government.

Benson apparently understood the meaning behind the black flag.

"Yes, I am aware of what this symbol represents," Benson said, when asked about his choice of attire.

Though the anarchist message might offend some delegates who are attending a pro-

gram that values organized government, Benson stood by his use of the black flag.

"I have put my blood, sweat, and tears into this vest [which bears the flag]. It represents who I am and where I come from," said Benson.

When asked why he would wear a symbol of anarchy at a program that focuses on the opposite, Benson replied that the black flag is more about personal taste.

"I am a fan of this 1980s punk band," Benson said.

"Black Flag" is the name of a California band formed in 1976.

Though the black flag might stir up controversy, Benson's vest features more positive symbols as well, such as rainbow-colored studs, a fact which Benson happily acknowledged.

"Rainbows are pretty," he said. "I'm straight, but supportive."



Governor candidate Andrew Benson sports a denim vest with various patches and flair. The graphic of the "black flag" raised some concerns since the "black flag" is a universal symbol for anarchy, which is a peculiar symbol for one who is running for Y&G's highest elected office. Benson saw no reason for worry.

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DEB ALLEN BEGINS  
TERM AS PRESIDENT

# Speeches are just too much of the same

Each year Y&G delegates gather in one room on Friday afternoon to listen to the candidates give their speeches. This year, events unfolded much as they have in the past. Many of the office hopefuls tried to use humor to win votes, some more successfully than others.

There seems to be a fine line between funny and absurd, and some of the candidates accidentally stumbled over. The attempts at comedy most likely stem from the candidates' desire to stick out, but some seemed to be grasping ineptly at straws in order to make their speech memorable.

Other candidates took a much more serious route in their speeches and tried to win over the crowd with promises that may or may not be fulfilled. Secretary of State hopeful Kelsey Allen, from Jefferson County Frankfort, said in her speech on Friday afternoon, "I promise that I will get your bill on the Governor's desk."

This is a rather sweeping and ambitious promise to make, considering that there are so many bills this weekend and that some will not even make it out of committee and into the realm of the Secretary of State's jurisdiction, more commonly known as Bill Flow.

Also, in an attempt to win votes through promises, multiple office-seekers have pledged to have an "open door" policy. Among the delegates to make such a promise, one would find Janesh Rahlan (Heritage Waubonsie Val-

ley), Tony Rogina (Network Carl Sandburg), and Tyler Hamer (Network Stag).

Another common thread in many speeches was promising to keep the bill flow process moving quickly. Chief Justice candidate Dan Cronin (Heritage Waubonsie Valley) even mentioned the overuse of the words "bill flow" in his campaign speech, making a joke out about how often it is used in the Friday afternoon speeches.

While such promises are undoubtedly alluring at first, they lose some of their appeal when so many candidates pledge to do the exact same things. Instead of enticing the crowd of listeners to vote for them, the office seekers' speeches end up blending together.

That is not to say that the candidates' entire speeches are unmemorable (some that used such phrasing still did well), but overall there was a cookie-cutter feel to them that was not all-together effective.

Now, with the candidates elected and the speeches over, we can settle in for the weekend ahead and hope to accomplish as much as possible. There will, of course, be school and geographic loyalties that will decide some of the votes.

The rest was up to the candidates' speeches. How much effect the speeches really have in deciding our office holders for the Y&G weekend is unclear, but I think it is safe to say that for some, a speech can make or break their campaign.



**Chelsea  
Dreher**  
*The Observer*  
Editor

## 2010 Y&G Election Results

### GOVERNOR

296 Andrew Benson  
343 **Janesh Rahlan**  
195 John Palmer Rea

### LT. GOVERNOR

118 Samantha Allen  
555 **Chris Fernandez**  
151 Tyler Hamer

### SEC. OF STATE

180 Kelsey Allen  
310 Jessica Jozwik  
330 **Rani Shah**

### CHIEF JUSTICE

692 **Dan Cronin**  
128 Tony Rogina

### SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

74 Zach Hersh  
229 **Jeannette Straeter**  
184 **Spencer Teiken**  
217 **Clay Jackson**  
102 Kelsey Fitzpatrick

### PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

106 **Emily Drone**  
132 **Sean Fouts**  
70 Ashley McKibben  
124 **Kayla Sample**

### EXEC. DIR. OF LOBBYISTS

57 **Michael Burrafato**  
41 Caroline Hensley  
43 Kathryn Spenn

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# Deb Allen begins term as president

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the presidency, she has not made any large changes to the process.

"[I have made] no major changes, just minor tweaks. For example, we invited advisors to tell what they have been doing with their delegation . . . No massive overhauls."

When asked what she wishes to accomplish as president, Ms. Allen said wanted to maintain the success of the Y&G program. "I want to continue the legacy of a positive program to provide as many great leaders as possible, and to have more schools involved."

Ms. Allen stressed the importance of the Advocacy Days in creating new interest in the program. "In February, all of the YMCA

directors, in Illinois, come to Springfield for Advocacy Days. This year Y&G had a presentation. Also we send a packet to most of the schools in the state," Allen said.

During the advocacy weekend, the directors learn about all the different programs the YMCA offers, in the hope that they will promote them when they get back to their own YMCA.

Ms. Allen hopes to create more interest in the Y&G program by improving on the Advocacy Days packet.

"We have no idea how effective the packets are. We are hoping to get more technology involved, mainly with our website."

Y&G looks to grow and improve with help from our new president.

# Bill seeks to control online info

Shannon Dennis  
Springfield Williamsville

Olivia Flores of Network Heritage introduced a bill aimed at protecting the rights of students on the internet.

The bill redefines the guidelines concerning social networking and personal websites.

According to the bill, protecting the rights of students means "no publicly funded collegiate education system may use written information on social networking websites and personal websites as a basis for punishment unless the given information violates constitutional law."

The specific violations of constitutional law, how-

ever, could cover a very wide range.

Flores points out that there are provisions in the bill that further protect students' rights.

"This bill gives the chance for the student to appeal their punishment, and it protects their first amendment rights," said Flores.

The students can be punished for information that they publicly publish online that is a deliberate lie or intentionally misleading.

Flores went on to specify that these punishments dealt with text-only violations, not with pictures or videos.

# Delegates excited about Y&G weekend events

Katie Schmidt  
Springfield Williamsville

What are delegates looking forward to most this weekend?

This question was an exciting subject for most members of Y&G to discuss. No two students had the same response.

Diamond Armstrong, a page from Kankakee Bradley Bourbonnais, said, "I am most looking forward to mandatory fun night."

Armstrong is in his

first year of Y&G and has heard good things about the annual festivity.

Mandatory fun night is a favorite of many delegates.

Other delegates just want to get to the Capitol.

Kayla Sample said, "I am looking forward to spending time in the Sen-

ate." Sample is from Jefferson County Sesser-Valier

and was a candidate for President of the Senate.

Some students did not have specific things they were looking forward to. Rather, they just came just for the program.

Yiewen Zhang is a Chinese foreign exchange student who is attending McHenry Faith Lutheran.

She is just looking forward to getting the "American Experience," which is what she believes Y&G is all about.

Nina Palmer, a senator from Elmhurst Lake Park, looks to visit the Capitol and see how it all works.

Palmer said, "I want to see how kids can manipulate the government."

"I want to see how kids can manipulate government."

*The Observer*, which is distributed free of charge to Illinois YMCA Y&G participants, is published four times annually. Please send letters to the editors to the press room in the Holiday Inn Express. The advisors/editors reserve the right to edit the letters for considerations of brevity, clarity, and tastefulness.

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# Pages play necessary role in Y&G process

Danielle Dow  
Springfield Williamsville

The pages in Y&G undertake a variety of tasks. Some of these individuals have special titles including recorder and election officials as well.

People who fill these roles are chosen at random. As a result, some pages are just pages. This group is responsible for delivering notes that legislators pass to each other.

Sophomore Courtney Mize from Jefferson County Frankfort said, "Basically, I run things back and forth and all around, just delivering."

Pages, while often looked upon as a less important role in Y&G, do have some authority. "As a page, I am going to try to make sure everyone is doing their job," said sophomore Alan Delbone from Jefferson County Sesser-Valier.

While recorders carry out basically the same responsibilities, a few tasks are added to their agenda.

"I am assigned to a special committee, where I am a personal page. I also maintain the docket, or order of court bills to be discussed. I count hand, standing, and ballot votes as well. I also take attendance and deliver messages to committee," explained Page Reporter Kaitlin Lounsberry, a sophomore from Springfield Williamsville.

Besides the normal,

run-of-the-mill page and recorders, some pages also act as Election Officials.

Nolan Bone, a sophomore from Jefferson County Sesser Valier, is one such official. "Holding this duty gives me the responsibility of making sure everyone votes."

The role of page has always been popular with the Y&G newcomers. Fatima Pirtle, a sophomore from Jefferson County DuQuoin said, "I thought being a page would be a good idea because I could learn about government, the processes, and how everything works. Just let it all soak in. I thought it would be a good transition for next year."

Bone echoes Pirtle, explaining, "[Being a page] is a good beginning step that allows you to watch others."

Michael Sneideraitis, a sophomore from Network Carl Sandburg, decided to be a page for a similar reason. "I wanted to look at everything and see what to do."

Before delegates think about passing along pointless notes to the opposite side of the Capitol, "just because they are pages," remember these individuals are the workhorses of our program, and our future leaders.

Angie Barrett, a sophomore from Springfield Williamsville, said, "I wanted to be a page so I could have something a little less stressful my first year and



Page Kaitlin Lounsberry, from Springfield Williamsville, serves as a recorder in a Gray Committee session.

get used to everything. That doesn't make me, or any of us, lazy or any less important. Next year, I'm sure we'll all be ready to dive into the hecticness, and I'm sure a lot of people will be surprised."

## Actions by former delegates put future Y&G in jeopardy

Jori Moore  
Jefferson County Sesser-Valier

Last year's General Assembly had a downfall, but it was something many were unaware of until yesterday.

During the 2009 Assembly, a couple of Y&G students abused facilities inside the chambers, and the program was almost not allowed back into the Senate and House this year.

Specifically, someone had vandalized a couple of desk tops with graffiti and inappropriate pictures.

Most delegates, such

as Alyssa Schloss from Jefferson County Frankfort, feel that the damages were a travesty, specifically the effect to the page program.

"Because of this [behavior], the [new pages] will not have the experience they need or [one similar to what] other pages have had in the past, and they will suffer," said Schloss.

Troy Kirkpatrick from Jefferson County Mt. Vernon agrees.

"Because of this im-

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CHAMBERS IN JEOPARDY  
FOR 2011

# Variety of factors influences vote

Stephanie Mindock  
BR Ryall Wheaton Warrenville South

After sitting through an hour and fifteen minutes of candidate speeches, the 2010 Y&G delegates exercised their democratic power by adding their input in this year's election.

In an informal survey, delegates were asked to identify the top two influences on their decision at the polls.

For many candidates, the decision came down to the candidate's personality.

The candidate's personality was the deciding factor for 43.3% of eligible voters.

One of those voters was Jessi Watts, a lobby-

ist from Jefferson County Elverado.

"John Palmer Rea cared more" about the issues and the topic at hand.

Watts went on to explain that Rea's press conference showed that he truly cared what was going on in Y&G.

Despite the importance of personality, many other factors affected the voters' decisions.

3.3% of the thirty people interviewed believed that the campaigning done before the speeches was an important part of

the vote-making process, while 6.7% of Y&G attendees based their decisions on the attractiveness of the candidates themselves.

A n - other important factor in the process was the candidate's school affiliation. 20% of those polled decided to vote for a candidate based on what school they attend, and 6.7% claimed to vote the same way as their friends.

Other delegates were more concerned with the issues.

16.7% of those polled

cited the issues presented by the candidates as the deciding factor in the vote.

Though delegates based their votes on a variety of factors, the most important factor in a voter's decision seemed to be the speech itself.

A vast majority of voters (57.6%) based their decisions on the candidate speeches.

Technically, an outstanding speech should encompass all the aforementioned factors.

Most Y&G voters recognize this by basing their decisions on the promises that the candidates made in their five minutes of fame.

"I want to see how kids can manipulate government."

# Chief Justice candidates discuss position's role

Miranda Freeman  
Springfield Williamsville

As a nominee for Chief Justice, Dan Cronin from Heritage Waubonsie Valley would like to make a difference.

Cronin says that once he is elected he would like to "unify" everyone and help pass good bills.

Though Cronin is a junior and younger than some candidates, he feels secure about his chances of winning the Chief Justice election.

"I'm rather confident, seeing the way the

audience's reaction was to my speech. I believe that I will win," he said.

Another candidate for Chief Justice, Tony Rogina from Network Carl Sandburg, seemed to scoff when Cronin

claimed to have read the entire bill book.

"I don't have the time for that," Rogina said.

Cronin, however, did not take offense to the comment.

"I didn't really take it personally," he said. "I know he was saying it as a joke."

"I know he was saying it as a joke."

Rogina also felt badly for his poor choice of wording.

"I was not in any way trying to knock down Dan. He's a good guy. The way that everyone took it made it seem like I was trying to be mean."

Rogina decided to run for Chief Justice because

the position requires a great deal of responsibility and affects all aspects of the Y&G program.

Rogina demonstrated his willingness to challenge bills when he was asked about a bill offering financial aid for young pregnant mothers.

"My gut feeling as of right now would be a no," Rogina said. "I would have to discuss it with the ones who wrote up the bill because this is a very tough issue, it is similar to rape victims and the issues need to be worked out there."

# Proposed syringe program has some delegates concerned

Zach Mierzejewski  
Springfield Williamsonville

A group from Indian Boundary Hinsdale Central is introducing a bill, S-G-20, in the gray legislature that calls for a statewide development of Syringe Expansion Programs (SEP).

The bill's House sponsor, Lexi Gross, said, "It's just a way to prevent the spread of HIV. It's contributing to the safety of society."

Kate Althoff, a senator from Christian County Taylorville, believes that

the bill may have the opposite effect.

"I would say it's a bad idea because it would promote drug abuse," said Althoff.

Ryan McGuire, a page from Network Carl Sandburg, agreed.

"It's kind of promoting that it's ok to do drugs in a way," he said.

Gross believes that those who oppose the bill are avoiding the reality of addiction. "I wouldn't necessarily say that we're okaying drug abuse. You

can't ignore the fact that there are drug users," said Gross.

Other delegates were more concerned with the financial impact of the bill.

"I would be curious to find out where their funding is coming from," said Emily Drone, a Jefferson County Frankfort Senator.

Gross maintains that the SEP would come at minimal taxpayer cost.

"The program is already in place. It comes from public funding, so it would continue to come

from public funding. The cost of treatment for HIV is over half a million dollars. The syringes are only \$0.97, so it's relatively cost effective," said Gross.

Danielle Barr, a hostess at the Rosewood restaurant was undecided on the issue.

"I am completely against helping them doing something morally wrong in the first place, but it will probably save, on some level, of government aid," said Barr, who is not affiliated with Y&G.

# Chambers in jeopardy for 2011

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mature action it is going to cause pages to be almost useless," he said.

Kirkpatrick was also concerned about many of the delegates' reaction to the news.

"Some of the students were not paying attention so they obviously do not care about the program," he said.

John Petropoulos from Network Stagg was appalled by the students' action.

"What these students did was very unnecessary and disrespectful," said Petropoulos.

John Palmer Rea, a governor candidate from Jefferson Co. Sesser-Valier, noted the loss of the President's and Speaker's seats

in each of the chambers.

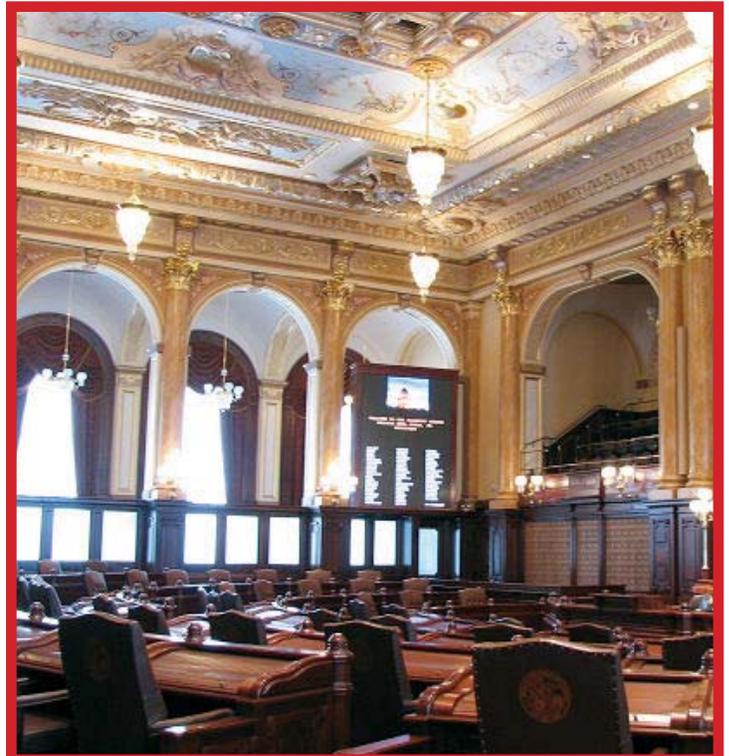
"It's a shame that the Presiding Officers can't use the actual President and Speaker seats or even the Clerk and Secretary seats," Palmer Rea said.

"That was the best part of being President of the Senate for me last year."

In his opening speech, the chairman of the Y&G Board of Directors, Andy Paul, emphasized the impact of these actions.

"Youth and Government will lose the privilege of using the chambers if something like this happens again," said Paul.

According to the delegates interviewed, the inappropriate actions that occurred in 2009 are unlikely to happen in the near future.



Facilities in the Senate chambers in the Illinois State Capitol (pictured above) were damaged during the 2009 Assembly. Consequently, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate is watching Y&G delegates very closely this year. Image from <http://www.ilstatehouse.com/images/62307s3.jpg>

# Bill group wants to require high schools to distribute condoms to its student body

Emily Mordacq  
Springfield Williamsville

Bill S-O-09 appears to be one of the most controversial bills to be presented this year in Y&G.

The bill proposes to make it mandatory that all public high schools in Illinois distribute condoms.

The bill's Senate Sponsor, Micah Wintner from Lake County Stevenson, knew that the bill would garner a great deal of attention.

"My bill group and I wanted to promote a controversial bill that was fun, and it's something that we all believe in strongly. Safe sex should be promoted, and this is a good way of doing so. The sooner this bill can get passed, the better."

Wintner says his bill will be a clear alternative to abstinence-only education.

"It is important for people to know that we aren't promoting abstinence. We are promoting safe sex in the public schools of Illinois."

In committee, the bill seemed to have mixed reviews.

Legislator Alex Hejna from Network-Carl Sandburg said that the bill is contradictory to the rule of

schools. In stating his objections to the bill, Hejna asked, "If you're going to provide provisions for safe sex, why not safe drinking and safe drug use as well?"

The issue of parent reaction to the bill also garnered differing opinions.

Legislator Marc Cota from Network-Eisenhower stated, "My parents would probably agree with it and not have a problem."

Hejna, however, disagreed.

"I would hope my parents would be against it because I believe it promotes promiscuity," said Hejna.

Overall, the delegates' opinion of the bill seemed diverse.

Page Sam Gossett of Jefferson County DuQuoin supported the bill.

"I think the bill's a good idea so that it reduces the number of teenage pregnancies," said Gossett.

Others, such as Legislator Hong-Ah Do from Heritage Neuqua Valley, were still undecided.

"I think it's a bill I could go either way on. It's obvious that a lot of sexual activity goes on, and it's a step of responsibility for the school and its students."

# Springfield Williamsville health care bill gets mixed reviews from delegates

Spruha Shah  
Elmhurst Lake Park

The need for a sufficient health care policy is a key concern for many American families.

A Springfield Williamsville delegation hopes to reform health care policy by introducing a bill written by sponsors Katelyn Lazar and Krista Hardy.

The bill "legalizes the sale of health insurance across state lines" in Illinois.

The bill's lobbyist, Taylor Kovacevich., believes the bill would be effective in providing convenience to society as a whole.

"It allows consumers to find the policy that best fits their needs and budget," she said.

Page Andrew Marr of B.R. Ryall Wheaton Warrentonville South agrees.

"I am a supporter of providing health care for all persons, so I think this bill is a step in the right direction," he said.

Marr believes that each individual deserves the right to choose the plan that is the best for them.

Secretary of State Rani Shah of Heritage Wau-bonsie Valley adds that the bill allows for a great deal of versatility.

"It doesn't restrict people and allows them to choose the best doctor

from a wider spectrum," she said.

Others, however, argue that the bill is unrealistic for interfering with health care policies in existing states.

Legislator Alex Dinos, from Network Carl Sandburg, is insistent in his opposition towards the bill.

"I would not support the bill because I believe that you should not intermingle policies," said Dinos.

Legislator Vamanan Gopalakrishan of Lake County Stevenson believes the bill is a recipe for economic disaster for the state of Illinois.

"I support the proposition for more options, but this bill would take revenue away from the state of Illinois," said Gopalakrishan.

Lobbyist Sam Niuro of B.R. Ryall Wheaton Warrentonville South agrees that the bill could create more problems.

"It is an interesting concept, but it creates loopholes. It interferes with other state legislatures, and that raises questions," he said.

While an overwhelming majority seems to agree that there is a dire need for health care reform, the road to a more efficient system continues to be widely debated.

# Speeches have effect on delegates

Lindsay Holler  
Springfield Williamsville

After today's candidate speeches, there were many feelings floating around before voting began.

Kristen Jensen, a lobbyist from Christian County Taylorville, felt that Dan Cronin, a candidate for Chief Justice from Heritage Waubonsie Valley was the most memorable.

Jensen said, "I liked him the most because I thought it was awesome that he did the all of that research because not many people do that."

Lauren Siegrist, a lobbyist from Christian County Taylorville, also favored

Cronin.

Siegrist felt that he was relatable, caught people's attention, and was very committed. "You can tell how committed he is by the fact that he read everyone's bills and did all that research," she said.

Another common favorite was Lieutenant Governor candidate Chris Fernandez of Heritage Waubonsie Valley.

Katie Marejak, lobbyist from B.R Ryall Wheaton

Warrenville South, said "Chris combined entertainment value and passion in his speech".

She felt that he was most entertaining and passionate about this program and that those qualities are important in any candidate.

Lucy Li, a lobbyist from Heritage Oswego also liked Fernandez's personality.

"He was very humorous, and he caught people's attention".

Governor candidate, Andrew Benson of Network Shepard, was a controversial figure to many of the delegates.

Both Jensen and Siegrist felt that he was illusive when answering questions and failed to take the issues seriously.

However, Zachary Golob and Brian Beré, lobbyists from Network Stagg, favored Benson.

Beré says, "He lives among the people and doesn't act like he is better than others. Also, he is an all-American guy."

Matejak liked his slogan and that he seemed passionate and not jokey like other candidates.

"He lives among the people."

# Youth Governor Rahlan looks forward to leading

Jack Sullivan  
Elmhurst York

The ballots are in, the race is over. Janesh Rahlan of Heritage Waubonsie Valley has been elected Youth Governor of the 2010 Y&G assembly.

The veteran Y&G member was inaugurated last night during the banquet.

Rahlan promises to bring a more open-door policy during his tenure as Governor.

Early Friday afternoon, the former Secretary of State began by promising "a much faster bill process to the assembly this year."

A self-proclaimed pro-

tégé of 2009 Y&G Youth Governor David Poleski, Rahlan promises to return an element of seriousness to an Assembly that in previous years has been lacking in decorum.

Similar to the other candidates, Rahlan openly advocates communication.

Rahlan said he looks forward to "bill groups approaching me to discuss their bills. I'm trying to consider everything that is progressing through the House and

Senate this year."

Rahlan states that as for the more controversial bills, such as one creating leniency for sex offenders and another concerning the legalization of marijuana,

he is attempting to stick to his morals.

"I understand that openness is needed

when it comes bills like these," said Rahlan, "but a good leader is one who should stick to his morals. And I think that if we are able to create a conversa-

tion between all sides of government we will accomplish something.

Rahlan is irked at accusations of playing favoritism in compiling his cabinet.

He said that "the Brain Trust [his cabinet] is a way to get the most qualified members of Y&G to share ideas in order to pass bills that will really benefit the state of Illinois".

Rahlan relishes the opportunity to lead the student government. He says that by working hard and keeping an open mind, he and the rest of the assembly will make this one of the best sessions of government ever.

"I understand that openness is needed."