

## Neuqua Valley bill group wants to add a criminal database

Abigail Defino  
Elmhurst Lake Park

A Heritage Neuqua Valley delegation introduced a bill designed to help establish a private database filled with DNA identification for all violent felons.

The bill is designed to build upon current criminal databases.

Co-sponsor Kevin Wei said, "We thought that in having a sex offender database already, we thought why not add a violent felon database."

Wei said the bill is all about promoting safety.

"People need to be aware of who's near them, and we thought it would promote the general safety of the public," he said.

It has been over fifty years since Watson and Crick first discovered the structure of DNA, and since that discovery, it has been the basis of scientific and medical progress.

According to the bill group, this database, which builds on that progress, can help solve a crime or

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BILL GROUP WANTS TO EXPAND  
DNA DATABASE

## Youth governor candidates look for big weekend



David Gembara

Lindsay Holler  
Springfield Williamsville

David Gembara is a senior from Network Stagg. As a sophomore in Y&G, Gembara served as a clerk-bailiff, and last year he was a legislator.

Gembara would like to be Youth Governor to give back to the program.

"I decided to run for the position, because I felt that Y&G has given me so much in the past that I should put my talents to work to help the program," he said.

Gembara takes on leadership roles in and outside of the classroom.

"I was the captain of my school's Scholastic Bowl team this season. Instead of a regular PE class, I participate in a program at my school called Senior Leaders. I help the teacher

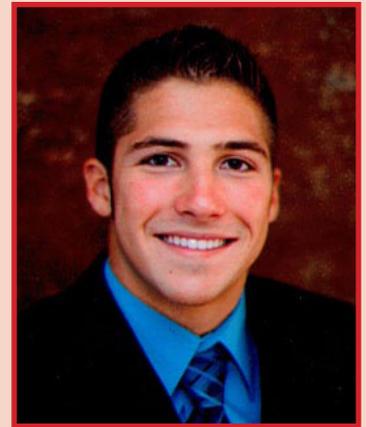


Robert Lampros

Lindsay Holler  
Springfield Williamsville

Robert Lampros is a senior from the B.R. Ryall Wheaton Warrenville South. Previously in Y&G, Lampros participated in the judicial branch. "As an attorney, I argued for the defense. My partner and I ended up winning the mock trial but losing in the appeals process," said Lampros.

He also has seen the legislative side of the weekend by being a bill sponsor. Lampros said, "As a legislator, I sponsored a bill that promoted voter turnout in the state of Illinois. My bill passed out of committee fairly smoothly, but was tabled in the House of Representatives due to procedural issues. We pushed to have our bill reconsidered, and it passed through both



Simone Pensabene

Lindsay Holler  
Springfield Williamsville

Simone "Sam" Pensabene is a senior from Springfield Williamsville

This is Pensabene's third year in Y&G. His sophomore year he was a lobbyist, and last year he was a legislator and co-sponsor of a bill concerning ACT Prep Classes. His bill last year was passed and signed into law.

Pensabene has held many leadership roles at school, in his community and at home.

"I was a varsity captain of the football team, and I am a leader on the basketball team. I also have leadership roles at home, especially with watching over and helping my two younger sisters," said Pensabene. "I'm pretty comfortable being a

# The press reports what is going on during the weekend; please don't judge

It's not a hidden secret that the news press hasn't had the best reputation over the past years of Y&G.

I'm not being biased when I say this because I'm a part of the news press, but I feel all this hatred for a group of people simply because we report the news is totally out of line.

For one, you don't know us as people. I use the phrase "Don't judge a book by its cover"; in most everyday situations, it keeps me from judging people. Unless I've come to know a person on a personal level, I try not to make quick assumptions about him or her. This should go for the news press.

Y&G was established to give students the opportunity to experience our government in a real life situation. So wouldn't it make sense that those involved in the media programs deliver news like it would be reported in real life situations?

Sometimes, in the real world, the things being reported aren't all nice and full of sunshine. Sometimes, people make mistakes and they make enemies, and guess what happens?

Newspapers report it. They put all connections, emotions and relationships aside to deliver the news. So it would prevent students from being fully informed if the press only concerned itself with feelings.

With that said, I do agree that when delivering news that is less than delightful, it needs to be done delicately. It's not professional, or ethical, to insult people or spew hurtful comments.

Writing stories that could possibly hurt a person's feelings needs to be done in a proper manner, to prevent the least amount of "drama."

Lets be honest, it's Y&G. Drama is bound to occur, which is expected when you throw a large of amount of teenagers together for a weekend.

To make everyone's life easier, lets all try to avoid drama.

So it might just be wise not to engage in behavior that you would not like to read about in *The Observer*.

And here's a wild thought, maybe instead of jumping to conclusions about the news press, you should try to get to know the people running around trying to make deadlines.

Because judging me based solely on the fact I'm a part of the news press would be similar to judging someone based on their race, sex, or sexual orientation, which is ironic considering how people have been pushing tolerance and acceptance of people as individuals.

Wouldn't making an opinion of a person based on how we spend our weekend be a violation of that message?

Perhaps it's not our fault that we write what may be considered mean stories, and that sometimes those stories get published.

Maybe, just maybe, we aren't the people you should be singling out simply because we're covering what is happening during Y&G.

Maybe, you should give us a chance. After all, we're not cannibals.



**Kaitlin  
Lounsberry**  
Co-Editor

# Let's do the work that we are here to do

Mandatory Fun Night is always one of the fondest memories of Y&G, but we shouldn't let the fun overshadow the real reason we're here.

If the final weekend was all work and no play, the delegations might drop in numbers, so a balance is necessary. However, the scale is tipping more towards the fun aspect, and the seriousness is basically forgotten by some.

I'll admit, I'm a proponent of a little fun and games sometimes, and the fun I've had at Y&G is definitely one of the reasons I've continued with the program, but I know when the time comes to get down to business to defeat the Huns.

We all know how boring a session in committee can be when the author introduces a bill, and then there's silence.

I'm not blaming it on one thing in particular, but one reason is technology, which has become more and more dominant in our culture. I have a cell phone, I have a Facebook, but committee meetings aren't the place for these.

During my experience covering stories for the newspaper, I've seen numerous legislators texting instead of participating in debates.

This creates not only a more prolonged and often boring session, but the bill group doesn't gain those crucial final hours to adjust and argue their bill before hitting the floor.

It's not right.

A few years back, Y&G was almost not allowed to use the Senate floor due to graffiti on the desks and disrespect of the property. Sitting in the actual desks in the chambers is one of the highlights of Y&G and largely contributes to getting the full experience. If we don't use these facilities for their designed purpose, what's the point?

So as I'm sure many delegates who worked long and hard on their bills and preparation for the weekend would agree, let's keep the main focus of Y&G at the forefront--getting to experience a few days in the lives of politicians--and have our loads of fun second.



**Angie  
Barrett**  
Co-Editor

# Bill group wants to expand DNA database

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rescue the falsely convicted from prison sentences or even from execution.

Although the bill group sees the benefit of this legislation, they expect

some opposition.

"I think the main obstacle is that, like the sex offender database, what if people are harassed by this database? Or is this database to personal? I think that's the biggest issue right now, but I think

eventually we can overcome that," said Wei.

While some people may think that this database can turn out to be too personal, according to Wei, others may believe that it can end up being valuable to the public in

many ways.

"[It is] beneficial for the general public to know what's around them. I saw the sex offender database as a opportunity to just pursue this public safety thing even further," said Wei.

## Bill group proposes to lower age of consent to sixteen, anticipates opposition

Rachel McCullar  
Springfield Williamsville

Jefferson County Mount Vernon legislators, Summer Karch, Paisley Stewart, Maggie Aaron, and Summer Hobson, presented a bill aiming to lower the age in the current statutory rape law.

Lobbyist Katie Aaron is also advocating for the legislation.

Currently the age of consent to a sexual relationship is seventeen years old.

Senate sponsor Karch explained that this bill would lower the age of consent to sixteen years of age.

"The average age of a person becoming sexually active is sixteen years old, and that's part of the reason we chose sixteen," she explained.

This bill will also intro-

duce an age range of two years difference for a sexual relationship between minors and adults.

As there is no age limit currently, Karch admits that this would be "restricting their [seventeen year-olds'] rights a little."

A point was made in committee that under this legislation someone could be wrongly accused of rape, such as an ex-girlfriend accusing their ex-boyfriend of rape when, in fact, it was consensual.

"There needs to be two positive testimonies of it being a consensual relationship," Karch explained.

Lobbyist Aaron believes the bill will be beneficial.

"I think it will help because there are a lot of people that are dating right now that are adult and minor... so this bill changed it

to be legal if they're in a consensual relationship," she said.

House Sponsor Stewart points out that as the law currently stands if an adult and minor have a consensual relationship, the adult would be the one to take the punishment, but according to Stewart, it is "just as much the younger person's fault as the older."

The bill group anticipates some opposition on moral and religious grounds, but Stewart insists "we're not promoting sexual relations in any meaning of it" and says that "people need to take their morals aside and see that there's a separation of church and state... People push it down when they're against it, and we're against it to, but they don't see that."

## Legislation seeks to increase punishment for animal abuse

Eileen Lennon  
Network Stagg

An Elmhurst bill group proposes legislation to help abandoned, neglected, and abused pets. The bill was introduced by Senate sponsor Peter Pische, House sponsor Justin Sumait, and legislators Angelica Colletti and Adam Pische.

The bill states that "a person who violates Illinois stature law" will be fined with \$1,000. Money gained from the enactment of this bill will go toward helping animal shelters and rehabilitation.

Sponsors of this bill feel that animals are being neglected more frequently

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BILL GROUP WANTS TO PUNISH  
PET ABUSERS

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# Bill group wants to punish pet abusers

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because of the state of economy.

According to the bill brief, "with the recent economic downfall, people are quick to abandon their pets to save a few extra dollars."

If a person's financial position is so that he or she is struggling, Peter Pische contends that animals are the first living things to suffer neglect.

The sponsors of this bill feel that this neglect is not because of lack of affection, but rather the animal being an animal.

Delegates may be

taken aback by the hefty fines contained in the legislation. However, the bill group sees the fines as necessary.

"Dog fighting is a gruesome crime and a gateway crime," says Sumait. Sumait and his co-sponsors strongly believe that dog fighting is a crime that leads to other illegal activities like gambling, drug use, and gang activity.

The bill received strong support in committee.

"If anything, the punishment should be higher. Animals need to be treated with respect," said Matt Sheedy, a legislator from Network Andrew.

**Saturday Paper Delivery**  
**Because of copying issues, Saturday's edition of *The Observer* will not be delivered during breakfast in the Stratton cafeteria. Papers will be made available to delegates Saturday morning between 11 and noon. They will be distributed in the Chambers and Capitol Rooms, and will also be available in the Press Room and the Governor's Office. Sunday's edition will be delivered in the cafeteria during breakfast.**

*The Observer* STAFF

# Delegates feel newspaper is effective covering Y&G

Elizabeth Choat  
 Springfield Williamsville

We at the paper wondered how we were doing our job at Y&G, so we decided to ask the delegates at PreLeg II.

Here's what we found.

Most people responded positively to the work the newspaper press performs.

"I think it's a really interesting add on to the program," said Joseph Marlo, legislator from Jefferson County Sessier-Valier. "It allows people that aren't all the way interested in just the legislative process of the bills to do something else regarding government. It adds a whole new look to the program."

Many of the other delegates felt just as strongly. Abby Yeley, a delegate from Springfield Williamsville said, "I like the idea of it. I think it's good experience for the people in it."

Ashley Peterson, also from Jefferson County Sessier-Valier, likes the name recognition that the press provides.

"I think they're help-

ful. They get people's names out more since there are so many people who go to Y&G," she said.

Others felt that the press did a good job explaining delegates' views and helped the program overall.

"It's a good thing because you get to hear so many different opinions," said legislator Angelina Adams from Decatur.

Brenaye Peete, a legislator also from Decatur, said, "I think it's good that they're interested in politics because this program is helping us become better people."

Although most responses were positive, lobbyist Samantha Steely, from Jefferson County Frankfort, alleges that the press could be a little tough.

"I think they're doing their job, but they could back off a little bit," she said.

Springfield Williamsville legislator Corey Conklin just "hopes the paper is good."

# Legislation wants to stop drivers' ed in schools

Ali Vignali  
Springfield Williamsville

A Jefferson County Mt. Vernon delegation introduced a bill that proposes eliminating drivers' education from all public high schools in the state of Illinois.

According to the bill's sponsor, eliminating drivers' education will help reduce Illinois debt.

Jessica Connaway, Senate Sponsor said, "I wrote this bill because of the state deficit we are in right now in Illinois."

While referencing her school, Connaway said that at Mt. Vernon High School, there are three drivers' education teachers, each making \$77,000 per year. The program also has three Ford Escapes that cost \$17,000 individually and use up to \$155 per month on gas.

After adding on \$5000 for insurance costs, she

gets a total of \$288,395 for the operation of the Mt. Vernon High School Drivers' Ed. Program.

To Connaway, that expense is unjustified, and she is attempting to remove it through this legislation.

Connaway felt that the time students spend in drivers' education can be better used.

"I feel that people

should be taking classes they really need, instead of classes they make you take. It's important to have higher ACTs, so more time in mandatory classes would help this," she said.

Lobbyist Sadie Schnautz said, "In Missouri they have already eliminated drivers' education classes, and students have to go to a private driving school. This will help support many businesses, and it would save the state millions of dollars."

"I wrote this bill because of the state deficit we are in right now."

# Legalize euthanasia, bill group urges

Emily Capranica  
Springfield Williamsville

A Springfield Williamsville delegation introduced a bill designed to make euthanasia legal and to help people who would prefer to undergo the procedure.

The bill brief states the person must be over the age of eighteen to be euthanized, and he or she must be in the right state of mind to make the ultimate decision. The bill also calls from a mandatory two week time period between the time of deciding to be euthanized and the actual procedure.

"This time shall serve as a grace period in case the patient should change his or her mind and not wish to prematurely end his or her life," according to the bill brief.

The bill group contends that euthanasia has been shown to help many families cope with the death of a loved one.

Legislator and sponsor Kathryn Spenn said, "Euthanasia is for families who want to remember

their loved ones at a time when they were alive and not hooked up to a million IVS dying in the hospital."

Legislator Emily

"No one else has tackled a bill quite like this."

Chesser said, "The bill [makes euthanasia] completely optional, and it is up to the person and the person only decision." She also said, "No one can force them into it."

Euthanasia has only been legalized in the states of Washington, Oregon, and Montana.

Statistics show that euthanasia is mostly commonly used in the Netherlands, and the United States is near the bottom of the list.

The bill group does not think that people will see this legislation as promoting random death.

"People are going to have a hard time with thinking that you are killing someone for no purpose," stated Spenn.

Yet, Chesser recognizes the uniqueness of this bill.

"No one else has tackled a bill quite like this," she said.

# Three candidates seek to be Youth Governor

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## David Gembara

lead and run a freshmen gym class. I also have been on the board of my church's youth group for the past two years. I work with the adult leaders to plan the group's meetings and outings," he said.

His main goal for the weekend is for all delegates to have a positive experience.

"I will consider myself accomplished when everyone has gone home on Sunday knowing that they had the best time that they could have and that everything went as smoothly as possible for the whole weekend," said Gembara.

Gembara added, "My top priority is to ensure that no student feels that he or she did not have an opportunity to put his or her skills to their full use to accomplish his or her hopes and goals for this weekend."

Gembara believes that his experiences in Y&G over the years make him the strongest candidate.

"I think that one thing that sets me aside from the other candidates is the fact that I have experience in both the judicial and legislative sides of the program. I think this will lend me a unique perspective as to how the whole weekend works as a whole," he said.

As Youth Governor, Gembara wants to "[get] all of the participants in the program to work together, whether legislators or attorneys, northern or southern, lobbyists or press, first timers or Y&G veterans."

Gembara's future plans include going to college, likely getting a mas-

ters or a doctorate, and improving people's lives through advances in biomedical technology.

## Simone Pensabene

leader."

In an effort to help lead Y&G, Pensabene decided to run for Youth Governor because he wanted to give everything he could for his last year in the program.

"I wanted to do something really special with my last year in the program so I decided to push myself to reach the top spot in the program, and I also feel that if given the opportunity, I can make the final weekend great for everyone involved," he said.

Pensabene has many goals to achieve if he takes office. His top priorities are bill equality and accessibility.

"I think bill equality is very important and accessibility to anyone looking for input on their bill will be something that I will strive to accomplish in office," he said. "I will work very hard in office and always keep my word."

While Pensabene has no doubt that the other candidates are qualified as well, he believes he has what it takes to be Youth Governor.

"I have rarely met others with the motivation and ambition that has driven my success thus far in my life. Through sports I have learned that victory takes more than 100% effort, and I am willing to carry that level of effort into pursuit of the governorship, and subsequently how I handle the responsibility sets me aside from most people," said Pensabene.

Pensabene's top priority for the weekend is to make it the best possible

experience for everyone.

"I want everyone to have a great time while ultimately gaining valuable knowledge to help them later in life," he said.

Next year Pensabene plans to attend college to pursue a degree in either Biomedical Engineering or Petroleum Engineering.

## Robert Lampros

the House and Senate."

Lampros is a leader both in his community and school.

Lampros explained, "I am most active in Boy Scouts. I recently achieved the rank of Eagle and was elected three times as leader of my troop. [At school] I am a part of the National Honor Society. I am also a part of my school's speech team, where I have helped to coach younger students and assisted in running our home tournament. I have also served on the leadership board of my school's orchestra and am the founder of the German Club."

Lampros wants to take his leadership skills to Y&G as Youth Governor.

"I have really enjoyed participating in Y&G over the past two years. I decided to run for [Youth] Governor because I thought I had some good ideas that would improve our experience in Springfield," Lampros said.

Lampros has great praise for Y&G and does not want to disrupt its procedures.

"As Youth Governor, I plan to do my best to avoid interfering with the process of the youth government," Lampros said. "The whole system runs well enough on its own. If things go well, I would maintain a relatively hands-off approach. Of course, if the same issues that we see

come up every year start to reoccur, I would have no issue stepping in to help smooth the process."

Although he wishes to not to be heavy-handed, Lampros will use his powers as Youth Governor to help all have a stronger Y&G experience.

"I do not plan on using the veto in any case unless it is extremely required. I will work closely with the chief justice to ensure that there are no slip-ups from bill to judicial review. If anyone, including pages, lobbyists, attorneys, press, etc. encounters any issues over their weekend that are preventing them from enjoying their time, I urge them to come to me and together we can try to improve the experience as a whole," he said.

Lampros said that his experience separates him from the other candidates.

"I think one of the key things that sets me apart is my variety of experience. Since I have been part of both the judicial and legislative aspects of Y&G, I understand the difficulties on both sides of the process. I think that gives me the experience needed to help make the weekend better for everyone involved," he said.

His top priority for the weekend is "fun" for all. "Y&G is a painful experience when things go wrong. I aim to keep the whole weekend according to procedure. Once we move past bureaucratic red tape, we can focus more on the fun parts of the weekend, like debating bills, arguing cases and Mandatory Fun Night," Lampros said.

Lampros is not sure where he is going to college yet. He hopes to attend George Washington University to study International Relations.