Cornhusker Boys' State
Bulletin

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Boys' State 2013 Begins

Hundreds gather for 73rd session of CBS

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Boys' State Arrival

Zayne Kinkade, Valley Forge

When I arrived I found myself surrounded by sixteen-, seventeen- and eighteen-year-old guys, almost none of which I recognized. I found one or two that I knew from past experience, mostly Debate, but other than that, I found myself alone. I quickly found my room and escaped downstairs to get my shirts. The elevators were, of course, packed, and found myself saying that I won't be using those anytime in the week.

Finding this all out, I have a couple of questions for myself. What will I do here? Run for Governor, Legislature, or even Attorney General? How many close friends is it possible to make within a week? Will I make rivals who I will end up running against? This is all a mess for me right now, as I'm sure it is for everyone else that happens to be along this wild ride that is Boys' State, or at least the wild ride it seems to be. All I know is that right now, as I am writing this, I want to get back into my town, make friends and figure this out, because I know that once I start to make a friend or two, the rest will come easy. I will figure out what I want to do, what I want to run for, what my campaign will be about, anything else that is needed along the way. I just hope no one is having as hard a time as me, or harder, trying to figure out what to do here. I know I'm going to be writing a lot here, taking notes, but that's the easy part. Who do I befriend right away, my roommate or someone else?

In the auditorium the Secretary of State was talking, along with others, about how we are the future of the country, and I know that since this country has a huge impact of the rest of the world, we can have a gigantic impact on this world we live in today. All we have to do is try. And man, are we trying right now. Looking around and talking to people, I realized the potential of the boys, no, men, in that auditorium today. Sure, some of us might have been nodding off, but some of us also got up around three o'clock in the morning, hopped on a bus, and headed out here to Lincoln. We are all capable of changing this world, no matter what anyone says otherwise. Then I walked back right to this very spot and thought about what I was going to write. I wrote some, deleted some, wrote some more, deleted some more, but I realized that it was never going to be perfect for me, just like most of us out here on campus, nothing will ever be perfect, there will always be the tiny details that we want to change, and we can be the change.

One tiny detail that I'm sure is on all of our minds as I write this is something I want to change pretty badly, I'm hungry, and I want food.

Get Some Sleep

Shane Brichacek, Bataan

Itinerary seems to be what we need to know to succeed in this one-week camp. The first assembly held in Kimball Hall today marked the beginning of the 2013 Cornhusker Boys State. With speakers such as Secretary of State John Gale and Scott Day, this annual event started strong. It seemed, though, that the speakers had one important thing to mention in each one of their speeches: get some sleep. They stress the idea that you have to get a good amount of sleep to successfully make it through this week's overwhelming itinerary and that is exactly what you should do. Getting enough sleep in this week will be vital to every candidate to succeed in what they are trying to accomplish this week whether it be running for Board of Education, or something massive like Governor.

Another thing the speakers consistently spoke of was for every candidate to step out of his comfort space and meet new people and have some fun with the short time that you spend at this camp. They push to run for the tough positions and learn from the losses that are bound to happen to many candidates that are in the program. So get out there and have fun because, after all, "This week is what you make of it."

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Children of the Corn

Thomas Hawbaker, Alamo

The drive to Lincoln was typical with most drives across Nebraska; waking up early the morning, brewing a fresh pot of coffee and hitting the road as soon as possible. Arriving in Lincoln and seeing the four hundred of us gathered together put Boy's State into scale. The purpose of this gathering is to ensure the passing of the torch of democracy from generation of Americans to the next. To quote the James E. Koutz letter addressed to the American Legion Boys State citizens,"Our form of government requires citizen involvement if it is to continue." Boys' State is the necessary involvement.

America is a democracy, or at least a constitutional democracy; the ultimate power of government rests squarely on the shoulder of the citizenry. But what does it mean to be a democracy? Taken too far, democracy can be nothing more than mob rule; liberty is crushed by the will of a majority. In the opposite direction of democracy is totalitarianism; liberty is crushed by the will of an individual. The purpose of the American system of government is to protect individual liberty. To protect ourselves from the tyrant, the founding fathers envisioned the constitution. Laws, not men, would govern. To protect from the rule of the mob, the Bill of Rights came into being, guaranteeing that the government would respect unalienable rights of its citizens.

In order to preserve Liberty, there must be laws and institutions to protect it. In order to have these laws and institutions there must be people with the knowledge to operate and maintain them. That is what Boy's State does — it educates us on the laws and institutions of America so that when our days come there will be men there to protect liberty. Take it seriously. If we don't learn how to maintain our government and our way of life there won't be anyone else who can.

CBS Overview

Micky Osten, Yorktown

What does American Legion Cornhusker Boy's State mean to me? It means a fun week of getting to know nice young gentlemen from all across the state of Nebraska. We will also learn how the government works in our state. In this week of learning we will meet some of the senators and some other important and famous people from Nebraska.

As a newspaper representative it will be my responsibility to write articles from the different activities that there are to do. There is football, basketball, softball, band, and chorus. I will also write about the many different speakers we have the opportunity to listen to. The first speaker of the day was Secretary of State John Gale. We also listened to last year's Governor Carrick Perlinger and the representative of the Boys' State that went to Boys' Nation, Robert Leddy. Other speakers were Eric Jones and Marcus Donner; they talked about the athletic activities. The last speaker was Scott Day. He talked how the elections will go down.

All the boys are expected to run for an office. It starts at the top at the state level and goes down into the town the boys are in. The top position is the governor. The next position Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, and then Public Service Commissioners are all the duties on the state level of boy's state. On the county political level there is a County Sheriff, Attorney, Treasurer and Clerks for the District Court. At the county nonpolitical level there is a County Judge, Public Defender, County Superintendent of Public Instruction, and State Board of Education.

First Day

Luciano Ramirez, Manila Bay

My experience today during the first day of Boys' State was one of uncertainty. I was not quite sure what to expect out of all of this. Despite the cloud of uncertainty, there is one thing that is guaranteed: elections. I believe that to ensure a victory in the primaries and ultimately the general election for anyone who wishes to be elected in any elected office is not all of that simple. For any aspiring Boys' State politician to succeed, they must be recognized out of the rest of the students.

First of all, name recognition is absolutely essential. Of the over 400 students participating this week, recognition between each other prior to this week is almost virtually nonexistant. So, to be recognized out of this large is important. It is imperitive to get to meet with large swaths of the candidate's hometown and with the members of the other towns. Seize opportunities to stand out during town meetings and during party meetings. Without meeting others, chances are that you may lose to the fellow with the funniest-sounding name.

Overall, name recognition would probably the most important factor in getting votes. This is especially important for any aspiring governors to achieve their goal: a victory in the general election.

Perspective

Aidan Clarke, Bunker Hill

Perspective is important. This can apply to how a piece of writing is presented, as well as a person's outlook on events. Keeping the circumstances in perspective is vital to having a good time. My name is Aidan Clarke, and my summer is far busier than I would have expected.

Two days after completing finals at school, I left for a hiking trip to the Grand Canyon. It consisted of driving for three days and then entering the canyon itself. From there, our group embarked on a four day, 27 mile hike. Physically, the excursion was very strenuous, but the challenge was mental as much as anything. The distances could be easily overcome if a person was in the correct mindset. I talked to other members of my group, trying to help them think about the hike in a more positive light. After leaving the canyon, two days of driving put me back in my hometown of Lincoln.

A few hours after getting back, I was at Boys' State. I had heard great things about the program from friends that had participated in it previously, but I was less than thrilled that my time off was so small. After getting acclimated and hearing more about what Boys' State actually consists of, it dawned on me that I should follow the advice that I had given others the week previously. We have been presented with a great opportunity in coming to Boys' State, and it is our responsibility to make the most of it. If we are able to set our minds on making the most of our situation at hand, it can be assured that a fantastic experience will be had.

Within a few hours of leaving Boys' State on Saturday, I will climb into a van and drive to Colorado for a week of Scout Camp. That will make three solid weeks of activities. Rather than be upset about the time that I am missing at home, I will choose to appreciate what I have the opportunity to do, and have a much better time because of it.

The E Generation

Craig Thor, Bataan

Expectations were set in the Cornhusker Boys' State introductory meeting today in Kimbal Hall. Keynote speaker Secretary of State John Gale spoke of what those expectations are. Secretary Gale spoke of our generation and the stereotypes that are associated with it. The Entitlement Generation is what he called it, a generation that expects great things but does nothing to achieve them. He called this a horrible thing to be titled and expected us to change that title.

Secretary Gale talked of another title for our generation, the Electronic Generation. The Electronic Generation means being able to share information at the press of button, to see the major events of the world from the comfort of our own home, to communicate with one another without having to see another person face-to-face. This ability to share information at the push of a button was described as both a blessing and a curse multiple times throughout the meeting today.

The curse is a simple one, being able to spread slander and discontent quicker than ever before. The blessing is slightly less simple. It is being able to communicate with other citizens quickly and effectively that makes it a blessing. The Internet can be used as a campaign tool, a way to meet up with friends and discuss the day's events and plans, and a way to learn about other citizens'.

Secretary Gale gave set an expectation for all of us: he wants us to be the Exceptional Generation. A generation that stands apart from our peers and make a difference in our communities and homes. To go above and beyond what is called for should be the goal of every Cornhusker Boys' State citizen. Whether that means running for a honorable position like mayor or just simply being constantly active no matter what the day calls for. However you interpret the message, one thing is clear: it is up to us to make tomorrow a better and brighter day than it is today. It is time to step up and be exceptional.

Starting the Journey

James Richards, JR, Alamo

Signing up for the Boys' State program has brought all of us together into a similar environment. My personal reaction is that we all have our expectations and predictions on how Boys' State will pan out. For most of us, this is a first time deal, and we all have the swirling gut telling us this will either be fun, or a disaster. All I can say now is that Boys' State will give us all an experience of some significant measure.

The main speakers we heard today all gave us a similar speech: we are here because we were chosen, and you only have a week to show us what you will do. To some, that may be a relief knowing that we only have a week here at "government" camp. On the other hand, all the good-willed boys here that are committed to putting their best efforts toward going forth and taking action at Boys' State, you only have one week. That week has already begun, so if you are going to accomplish great things and make a difference somewhere, it's time to get started, but don't forget to have fun, too.

First Day, Away!

Zachary Burns, Yorktown

Picture this: its 5:45 in the morning and everything is all foggy. You take a shower, but since you're half asleep it may not have been effective. When you get out of that warm heaven and embrace the much cooler air you notice the time is 6:30. The bus is scheduled to leave at 7:15, and your mom is nagging at you so you can get there at 7:00.

That scenario was me this morning. I was half asleep throughout that entire process. Worse yet, I don't even remember getting on the bus, or the first two or three stops. It was ridiculous and I slept like a rock. Suddenly at one of our stops, the one I was awake for, we took a 15-30 minute break. This wasn't scheduled so I pretty much started to panic, but then reassured myself that we were just ahead of schedule. After that nice break, meeting some of the people, and refreshing Sinclair breakfast pizza slice, we were off again.

I dozed in and out of sleep, already deprived, and struggled to stay awake for any conversation. Then, York was closing in, and I could just taste the food. Yet, to my dismay we heard over the intercom that we weren't making a stop for food. Rather, we were going to coordinate our timing with another bus. I could see the point for this, but at the same time my stomach cried for just one fattening load of French fries or a burger. Something! The slowly mounting pain kept me from falling asleep for the rest of the journey, and I mainly stared at my phone unsure of what to do.

Arriving was a massive relief. Despite the awkward silence within the halls, and the overzealous smiles of the councilors, I personally was ready. Or, so I thought. Little did I know that when I would return upstairs to Yorktown some strange voodoo ritual was taking place, as toilet paper was being passed around. My heart skipped a beat when I heard a councilor say "Take as much as you want, because that's all you get for the next week." Immediately I questioned why I signed up for this, because if they can't afford to give us all a decent supply of toilet paper, then I won't be able to void my bowels anytime soon. Quickly I took a plentiful amount, probably 10 or 15 squares, still not as much as I wanted. However, it was sickening to hear this next part; IT WAS ALL A GAME.

I'm naturally reclusive so when I heard that for each square of toilet paper we had, we must say one interesting thing about ourselves I had a stroke, heart attack, and seizure. Sneakily I tore off some of my squares till I had only two left, and no one said a thing. When it was my turn, I happily shared two facts, knowing I dodged a multitude of more awkward moments.

I sat back and saw other sorry souls have to list off ten or more things about themselves, knowing I had slipped by undetected. Ah, the relief. Shortly after that horror of a game was complete my town went downstairs and amassed for a journey. One trip that had us all questioning where we were walking, and whether or not we would make it. Right out of the gates with no lunch, in the blazing sun it seemed like this walk would never end. I feel sorry for my other bus mates too, after all who knows what horrors their councilors subjected them to. All exaggerations aside, I think Boys' State will be fantastic experience. Plus, the opening ceremony ran pretty smoothly and was a nice introduction to Boys State. One thing is for sure though; I really hope we don't have to hear more about Wayne State.

#CBS2013