Cornhusker Boys' State
Bulletin

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Enthusiasm, Excitement, and Endurance

By: Eli Moody and Christian Maurer

In accordance with Cornhusker Boys' State tradition, the famed and fabled Dr. Joanne Owens-Nauslar graced the presence of "300+ of [her] close new friends" with a well-beloved motivational speech. After a heartfelt intro by Mr. Zabawa, she opened with her background and her many titles before sharing with the audience about her mother and the struggles that she had, which motivated Dr. Joanne to be the woman of action that she is. She invited those present to likewise ponder those who inspire them and thank the mentor figures in their life Other points she covered included invitations for the rising generation to be larger than its stereotypes; not to label other people, but to speak with them; to be in charge of how the day begins; not to waste energy, and to do everything with purpose; to use enthusiasm to enable others to act; to beware miscommunication; and to find something to do with passion.

Dr. Jo's unique tactics defined her speaking style. Fan-favorites included the optical illusion of the frog and the horse, the chuckle-worthy examples of miscommunication, the inspiring stories of her grandfather and third-grade teacher, her souvenir handouts (shoutout to that one guy from Gordon), and everything else she did.

Her life-changing message was well-placed in this week to change a lifetime. Boys' State certainly wouldn't be the same without this speaker defined by her storytelling, energy, and uncanny quotability. Everyone was glad that her cows came to our pasture.

Gettysburg Town Report
By: Jonathan Wiesenfeld

Tuesday morning, Gettysburg performed its first performance of the national anthem, as mandated by ordinance, with Easton Dutcher playing the guitar. Since flag raising was canceled because of the rain, the town then proceeded to Hawks Hall and split into Nationalist and Federalists. Gettysburg residents, contributed to the debate of party platforms and gave speeches for several roles. After getting soaked by the rain, residents went to lunch and then began campaigning for county and state offices, followed by voting.

Fun in the Valley
By: John Gilmore and Jacob Cover

The Valley Forge City Council established a series of much-needed yet unconventional city ordinances yesterday. Applauding when any adult in a red polo comes to our floor (including the counselors), forcing each other to run the Harper Hall stairs whenever they show up late to roll call, and establishing mandatory cheering practice were among these ordinances. The counselors also sadly announced that Valley Forge would have to remove its display of empty soda cans in the lounge window.

During the night, Valley Forge's Federalist Party faced a massive challenge: two great candidates for governor but only one spot. Between Smoqy and Edwin, no one could decide who was the better representation for Governor and who would run for Lieutenant Governor. Counselors opened it to a secret ballot for the entire floor, both parties included, where brothers entered the enclosed lounge and told our senior counselors who they wanted as governor. In the end, Smoqy won; however, no hard feelings were felt.

What's New Belleau Wood
By: Cael Wiegert

Life is good up in Belleau Wood. The top floor teams of volleyball and softball took home wins against Bataan during the June 2nd Games. To help show town spirit a flag was created to help show support to the Belleau Wood group. The flag depicts an eagle holding two baguettes with a beret atop its head.

Bataan Town Report
By: Hayden Reznicek

Bataan is starting to thrive; delegates all woke up this morning excited to work toward improving the town. The residents of Bataan eagerly attended sessions and had plenty of questions for the Republican and the Democratic representatives. Residents of Bataan grew relationships at the lunch table and learned more about each other while also promoting members on our floor for their desired positions. Bataan had a city and school board meeting with the town's elected officials. During this meeting, the City Council established some rules and expectations to better the town and help it run more smoothly. We worked together to collaborate on ideas and what we can do for each other. We are eager to continue growing as a brotherhood and work toward bettering Bataan.

Yorktown Town Report
By: Matthew Monnich

Yorktown's two political parties divided up in the morning to hear the state convention, as well as the caucus meetings for the state and county levels. Throughout the rest of the day, we heard numerous candidates come onto our floor and speak about their political campaigns. The candidates left approximately 20 posters proclaiming their interest in their government positions. During the blitz, the candidates received a bombardment of differing questions and statements specifically from Yorktown members that tested their critical and quick thinking to ensure that our primary candidates would properly represent our county and state. Yorktown saw several good candidates and the town easily agreed on the candidates that we wished to support in the campaign trail. Shortly after casting our ballots, about 7 members of the Yorktown municipality stuck around afterward to help count. During preparation for the athletic events of the day, our members decorated their uniforms with stater numbers and names to promote individuality and creativity.

Thank to you our amazing town counselors!

Alamo Town Report
By: Case Richardson

Spirits are high in Alamo. This is due, in large part, because of the city ordinances passed and the celebration generated by the campaign blitz. The first ordinance passed by the Alamo city council, stating that all of the counselors must, at the end of the night, have to sing a rendition of Pink Pony Club by Chappel Roan to the entirety of Alamo. The counselors were also given the punishment of running up and down the entire stairwell while singing Pink Pony Club, if they refused to sing in front of the town. After much of the campaigning was finished by the Alamo hopefuls, the delegates from Alamo gathered into a dance circle and showed off their moves.

Manila Bay Town Report
By: Brody Maurer and Keston Rubeck

On Monday, Manila Bay won three of its four sports games, with the baseball team unfortunately losing. Yesterday's State Conventions have helped set a path for Manila Bay candidates on their campaigns with an exciting new Statewide Campaign Blitz. The blitz was a successful event that allowed county and state candidates to network throughout each floor.

Battle of Belleau Wood
By: Kendall Heidemann, Belleau Wood

Each of the Boys' State Towns is named after historical battles or events in which the United States participated. This article will be about the battle of Belleau Wood that took place in France in World War 1. The Battle of Belleau Wood was the bloodiest battle in which the Marines participated, and it would continue to hold that record until World War II.

The Germans had attacked through Belleau Wood, a very dense forest. The Marines, as well as French and British forces, beat the Germans back; the Marines in particular were so ferocious and tenacious that the Germans gave them the nickname "Teufelhunden", or "Devil Dogs". Other notable moments include Marine Captain Lloyd W. Williams, captain of the 2nd Company, 5th Marines, uttering the retort of "Retreat!? Hell, we just got here!".

Another famous moment is when First Sergeant Daniel Daly (later Sergeant Major) motivated his troops during the final charge on the Germans with the famous quote, "Come on, you sons of *****, do you want to live forever?!?"

College Life Feeling
By: Dierck White, Yorktown

How many people wake up throughout their senior year and begin to wonder what college life will be like? The answer to this question is almost everyone. The majority of high schoolers will attend college after they graduate high school. Many students attend college visits throughout their high school career in hopes of picking a college, learning what each college has different to offer, and learning what the college life experience is like. Boys State is a perfect opportunity to learn some of the similarities and differences between high school and college.

By opening the eyes of many high school students, Boys' State gives Staters a little hint of the college life experience. This fun filled event provides students the opportunity to be independent because it gives students the responsibility of waking up on time, meeting with their group by a certain time, and attending sessions in specific buildings. Boys learn what it is like to live in a dorm with a roommate and they get the opportunity to make lifelong friendships. This event is a week-long event that shapes your life forever.

Chants and Competition
By: Lucas Skalberg, Bunker Hill

On Saturday, as each of the towns first gathered, we were instructed to make our first town chants. Bunker Hill made its first, and for a while, only chant as we had hoped that would be enough. We would soon find throughout the day it wouldn't be. Competition between towns would spike as each of the groups met Monday morning for the flag-raising ceremony. With each town eager to show off their mettle and dedication, rivalries began. It all reached a climax on Monday, right before Dr. Jo was about to speak. Each group was at their loudest as we faced each other and chanted with all of our strength. From stealing chants to the introduction of new ones, it felt as if everything was on the line to protect the pride of our town that we had created a deep connection to, even though we had just met our fellow citizens.

There are very few doubts among Boys' Staters that these rivalries will continue throughout the rest of the week, bringing further energy and life to each passing event. And when it's all said and done, we will be proud of what we have accomplished. We are not only proud of our respective towns but also proud of everyone in the CornHuskers Boys State program.

Tough Battle for County Party Candidates
By: Evan Zhang

A new day begins in Boys' State, and with it comes the highly anticipated primary elections for both the Nationalist Party and the Federalist Party. However, the candidates need to convince people from not just their town but the rest of the party to vote for them. For those aiming for county positions, the rainy weather has unfortunately restricted them to giving speeches to one town at a time. With a smaller audience, there is the opportunity to better connect with voters.

In LaCoursiere County, the Nationalist candidates for the positions of County Clerk, County Sheriff, County Treasurer, and County Attorney all took time to visit each town in the county to convince their party members to vote for them. For County Clerk, Wesley Swanson and Everett Gleason, despite both being from Manila Bay, competed against each other with determination. Swanson focused on the qualities of being a good listener that a county clerk would need, and Everett discussed his previous experiences as a speech competitor and member of the student council as something that prepared him for the task of making sure records are kept in order. Jarek Erickson from Belleau Wood and Alex Werner from Bataan competed for County Treasurer. Erickson stated that he thinks it's important for money to be handled honestly and wisely. It's important for citizens to feel assured about where their money goes, with Erickson's work experience volunteering, helping him feel more prepared for the job. Similarly, Werner says he's grown up on values like trustworthiness and transparency. He understands the importance of money management, and with his experience from helping manage finance at his parents' golf club, he has the qualities of a county treasurer.

Christian Lemburg from Belleau Wood, Kyle Lenstrom from Bataan, Ryan Thompson from Manila Bay, and Case Richardson from Alamo all ran for County Sheriff. Lemburg explained how his experience of watching their county sheriff in action and managing ordinances in their town has prepared him for the role. Lenstrom, planning to be part of a third generation police force, says his strong passion for criminal justice and going to a police cadet program shows his dedication and promising qualities.

Cont. Tough Battle for County Party Candidates

Thompson spoke about his interest in law enforcement and military and how he has learned from law enforcement patrols with his parents. Richardson talked about how he felt confident about how he could lay down the law. David Maurstad from Bataan, going for the role of County Attorney, talked about how the rough streets of Bataan have shaped him to honor the law, drawing strong attention from not just Bataan residents but also other towns. Jack Baker and Kempton Florea both from Belleau Wood talked about their backgrounds and the goals they have as County Attorney. Even with the rain bringing an unexpected change of event, every candidate showed great courage and conviction, and the primary election will inevitably be filled with tough decisions for Staters to make.

Campaign Chaos
By: Jonathan Wiesenfeld, Gettysburg

Boys Staters campaigned for the primary election Tuesday afternoon. Those running for state office and county office were encouraged to head to every town and promote themselves. Some citizens created campaign posters and plastered them across towns, some wore shirts or taped papers to themselves that promoted a candidate, and some wandered the towns and introduced themselves. The towns differed on how they handled campaigners: most simply let them walk around, but Valley Forge gathered around and encouraged candidates to deliver speeches. Near the end of the "blitz," political aspirations devolved into Staters just having fun, especially since they were allowed to go to any town. Alamo formed a dance circle and played music, and one counselor breakdanced. The campaigning event was more than an opportunity for Boys Staters to get their name around: it allowed campaigners to connect with each other, creatively advertise their name (especially through memorable mottoes), and view other towns.

From Mock Votes to Real Impact
By: John Gilmore, Valley Forge and Keston Rubeck, Manila Bay

For generations, Cornhusker Boys' State has built a proud tradition of mock elections and spirited debates. These are not just fun activities, they are powerful tools for learning how the government works and how leaders are made. They give us the chance to step into the roles of public servants, challenge ideas, and discover the impact of policy and persuasion.

At Cornhusker Boys' State, our mock elections and campaigns aren't just about winning, they're about learning. Each vote cast, each debate held, and each office pursued teaches us how democracy truly works. By participating, we gain a deeper understanding of how every voice matters and how leadership begins with service. Let's take these lessons and carry them forward as informed citizens of Nebraska and the United States. We must also thank all the volunteers who helped count the votes and the Election Commissioners who assisted with distributing ballots and providing guidance on checking procedures.

Girls State and Boys State, What's the Difference?
By: Cael Wiegert, Belleau Wood

As many Boys' Staters are aware, Boys' State is going on at the same time as Girls' State. Their program has many similarities and differences to Boys' State. While the Boys' State towns are named after famous battle grounds from the Revolutionary, Civil, and both World Wars, the Girls' State towns are named after U.S. Presidents including Carter, Obama, and Clinton.

While the names come from different backgrounds, the Girls' Staters still show the same spirit as the Boys' Staters, shown by their town chants. One of the major differences that can be seen is the attire that each chapter has to abide by. The Boys' State attire's sole restriction is the mandate to wear the Boys' State shirts. Meanwhile, Girls' State attendees have to wear professional attire that rules out shirts, shorts, and jeans. These similarities and differences allow for both boys and girls attending Cornhusker State to experience how Nebraska's government works while getting different opportunities in each.

Blitzes and Backflips
By: Christian Maurer, Alamo

The Nationalists started their morning avoiding rain and campaigning for their party. As the members shuffled in, they began with their prospective Lieutenant Governors. Second amendment rights were discussed between party members and candidates. The Secretary of State candidates then spoke. From there, conversations started to shift from amendment rights to more local issues, such as agriculture and education. As they got to hear from other candidates campaigning for other positions, agriculture and education were still the main topics. Though the topics hold serious regard, Nationalists were able to make fun of the situations and their campaigns. Catchy slogans and laughter filled the room as each candidate gave their pitch. However, due to the rain, we only got to hear from our state candidates.

After being given a free shower from our trip from Hawks Hall to Harper Dining Center, wiping our mouths from lunch and faces to keep water out of our eyes, the Nationalist party kept moving along with their county positions. They had to move to a new system of campaigning. Each group of boys moved from floor to floor to continue their pitches. After everybody got their say, the Blitz took effect. 300+ boys ran up and down the stairs, eager to meet new people and share their ideas. Once most people had networked, the only party that mattered was a dance party. Floor 7 showed many talents through singing, dancing, and a couple backflips here and there to all kinds of club bangers.

Federalist State Convention
By: Jeff Shen, Bunker Hill

Behind closed doors, the federalists chair and secretary members had met at Harper hall on monday to draft a tentative party platform. The meeting was adjourned and a rough idea of the party platform was beginning to materialize. With the platform's six main pillars of belief released shortly after the meeting, the ideas were ready to be grilled and inspected under the searing scrutiny of the entire federalist party. The next day, the mass of federalists hurried to the state convention under the rain, droplets of water splattering with them as they entered Hawks Hall. Edwin Naranjo, who had been voted in as Federalist party chair the day before, led the discussions about the party platform planks. His booming voice announced we would discuss improving agriculture first.

Soon, hands began popping up from the federalists. The primary concerns included protecting small ranchers and farming. Some proposed to decrease property taxes, lowering regulations, or allowing expanded right-to-repair for farm equipment. The discussions transitioned to questions of urban development, with walkable cities with expanded public transit being a popular idea. The education plank proved to be a passionate topic for many who felt their more rural schools were being ignored or afforded less opportunity than urban schools. "Teachers just see our school as a stepping-stone in their careers," Destry Russell from Bunker Hill commented during a discussion about teacher retention in rural schools. Healthcare was the next plank, and the federalists focused primarily on the increasingly unbearable costs of healthcare in the state. This was when transparency and accountability began to take shape as an ideal of the party, when many federalists pointed to the hidden costs and evasive insurance practices as the core issue.

The last proposed plank was clean energy. The federalist party was significantly more unified on this topic and came to a strong consensus on the story of future clean energy in nebraska: renewables are not economically nor pragmatically efficient in their current state of development, but investment in nuclear energy, on the other hand, promises spearhead clean and efficient energy. The final plank added to the platform ideals was responsible use of AI, recognizing both the potential for innovation and misuse when it comes to the AI era. Throughout discussion of these seemingly disparate topics, a common hidden theme emerged though.

These planks were ambitious and sought wide systemic reform. Questions of monetary and economic feasibility constantly punctuated the discussions of the topics without clear answers. Toll roads, higher taxes, other cuts were proposed, but no clear agreeable consensus emerged. It seems that federalist leaders will likely have to take a confident stance on funding to get the rest of the party fully on board. One aspect of the federalists are clear though, they have a drive to improve the state and hold their proposals in high seriousness.