



1 June 2008



Courtesy Nick Brown

Martin Cram, Yearbook, and Blake Reed, PACs, take a break in between meetings. Reed is a three year counselor and Cram is a first year counselor.

Striving for definition

by **Jordan Watson**
News Counselor

What is Boys' State? Many eager young men are racking their brains for a definition of the week ahead of them. Boys' State is not just a summer government camp. Boys' State is a camp that builds leaders through the incorporation of a diverse set of concepts.

These concepts are simple enough to understand but take passion to fully execute.

The American Legion Boys' State of Kansas prides itself on staff retention, something it could not always claim. Counselors return year after year for many reasons, but first and foremost, they cite a desire to try to make

an impact on staters' lives. Boys' State counselors are passionate, hard-working and loyal. When most counselors are asked why they return, they usually refer to a moment where they impacted, even in a seemingly minute way, the life of a stater.

"I like seeing the new staters every year," Danny Varde-

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Courtesy Nick Brown

Shelton Burch, Chorus, explains why he decided to come back to state.



Courtesy Nick Brown

Scott Bley, IT Coordinator, shares stories of how he impacted staters lives during a training session.



Courtesy Nick Brown

Matthew Root, Eisenhower Assistant County Counselor, waits to eat "Bubba Burgers" at the Jardine plaza.

Meet your coordinators

Jake Ellis



Spencer Sward



Paul Day



Jared Meitler



Kevin Mechtley



Scott Bley



Jeremy Harland



Code applies across the board

by **Spencer Sward**
Office Coordinator

Recently, I graduated with bachelor's degrees in social work and art from Bethel College.

The professional actions of all social workers are governed by the Social Work Code of Ethics.

The first line of the preamble to the code of ethics states that "the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and

help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty."

Key points in this statement are, first, enhancing human well-being, and, second, empowering people to help themselves rise up to the challenge of meeting potential.

I see a great deal of connection between this and Boys State. The counsel-

ors want to enhance the lives of all the delegates who attend the program. This is why we all come back every year, giving a week of our summer, volunteering our time to be a part of this program. This is why many of the advisors have dedicated 30-plus years of their lives to the program — helping it grow and be the best it can be. It is my hope that all of you have the best possible experience here.

I hope that each of you

walk away from this program profoundly changed in disposition, direction and demeanor..

The goal of the Boys State Staff is to empower each and every one of you to become the best leader you can be. We want to help give you the skills to become just that, in whatever position you are elected or appointed to.

Another major concept in social work is the strengths perspective. The

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Age-old question answered

by **Jake Ellis**
Schedule Coordinator

Congratulations on being selected to attend the 71st session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas.

Young men from all across Kansas have been selected as exemplary leaders and have come together to participate in a week filled with government, leadership and fun.

During this week you will have the opportunity to participate in a simulated government, complete with tangible, real-time economic results.

Some of you will be cho-

sen as city councilmen and county commissioners and will be given the challenge of improving the welfare of all of the citizens within your jurisdiction. Some of you will work for Political Action Committees, organized around particular interests, and your job will be to promote your PAC's ideology to the pertinent governing bodies.

Others will run for the House or Senate and will be responsible for passing the budget as well as other legislation that will affect the entire state.

Finally, staters will be appointed to different depart-

ments and positions within the state level of government. These positions are all equally important to the success of the democratic system of government that we operate under.

Through this week we hope that you gain knowledge of how our government works and how different entities must interact in order for our government to be functional.

Most importantly, we hope that you are able to create interpersonal relationships that you can continue to foster throughout the rest of your high school careers.

by **Brandon Ellis**
News Counselor

Boys' State is back again for many of us, but for the people, this thing is all about, this is the one and only they will have. At least in one a capacity.

Good night, and Good luck

They are you, staters, and I promise you one thing. You will be inundated with stories of the beauty of state, and skepticism had better start kicking in. If not, I worry about your

ability to survive in the information age; after all more mass almost invariably means more fat. So I propose and challenge to you this one thing: question but do not doubt.

Take nothing at someone's word.

All the positive words are true, but they may be yours to speak one day, maybe sooner than you think, so make sure you KNOW from where they came.

Learning experiences require courage

by **Scott Bley**
Events/ IT Coordinator

Welcome to the 70th session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas. An army of volunteers has dedicated many hours in the off-season to improving various aspects of the program so that each of you has a positive experience. The fruits of our labors will soon be revealed during the course of this single week. In short, we

are excited that you are here.

I can distinctly remember my first day of Boys State back when I was a

them... more like uncertainty, confusion, and fear. Many of you are probably experiencing some of those same feelings.

of why you are here, the realization is that you are here. Someone back home thought enough of you and your abilities to sponsor your participation in Boys State.

Now each of you is faced with a choice. What will you do with the week you have been given? A world of opportunities awaits you. You alone must choose how you will spend your week at Boys State. In the end, you will get out of the week what you put into it. Will you take an active part in the Boys State simulation and government process? Will you work with one another to solve the problems that confront your cities and counties?

The choice is up to you. We wish you well in your decision. We wish you courage to face your fears. We wish you success for your week at Boys State.

What is boys' state? Why am I here?
Is this just a conspiracy by my parents
to get rid of me for a week?

delegate in 2000. I had a lot of feelings bottled up inside me, but excitement definitely wasn't one of

Don't worry – you are not alone.

You may be asking yourselves the same questions I asked myself five years ago. What is Boys State? Why am I here? Is this a conspiracy by my parents to get rid of me for a week? Did I get sent here because I failed my history class?

Unfortunately, I can't answer those questions for you. Boys State means different things to different people, and in the end, the reasons that delegates give for being here are as numerous as the delegates themselves. Regardless

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idea behind this concept is that every individual has strengths which help them survive and thrive in their environment.

As Maya Angelou said, "Diversity makes for a rich tapestry. We must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value, no matter their color; equal in importance no matter their texture."

A core value of the field is a belief in the dignity

and worth of each person, regardless of creed. As you debate, work and interact with other individuals this week, remember to treat each other with dignity and respect.

This session of Boys State is my third year as a coordinator, and I am very excited about it. I am looking forward to working with you all.

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man, head of the PAC's. "Everyone has something to bring to the table. It seems like most of the staters I have like me for some odd reason."

Everyone involved in Boys' State is part of what Jeff Schrag, Executive Director, calls the "Boys' State Family." Almost every counselor, coordinator and advisor looks upon at least one other person involved as a member of their extended family. Many admit that the program is the seemingly lone vehicle to making in a matter of days friendships that will last a lifetime.

"The friendships I've made during state were made quick but were strong. Coming back as a counselor I look forward to seeing these people ever year," Ryan Miller, Head of State Offices, said. "We may be together only one week out of a year but we stay interested in each other's lives. It's great to come back and catch up."

The cities and counties in which staters find themselves will become a point of pride and fellowship. Screaming out the name of their county during drill will grow out of routine and into responsibility to the impact their county has made on them. Awards adorning on the

walls will become monuments to strides made as a group. County counselors will also bathe in the accomplishments of their staters and relish in the unique personalities resid-

so we could give back to the program."

State can be a culture shock and in all likelihood, will be for many staters. One of the key tactics to having a great time at state

of this "week to change a lifetime" is still extremely difficult for counselors to pin down. Boys' State fosters a multitude of experiences for those involved. The time that staters and



C.J. Harries, Senate, and Rick Wohlfarth, Head of Precincts and Departments take time for a laugh in between training sessions.

Courtesy Nick Brown

ing in their counties. One inspiring part of state is the combination of competition and teamwork. These two mesh together to make a tight knit group of staters across counties and the entire state.

"Two of my best friends came from my county, Rick Wohlfarth, Head of Precincts and Departments, said. "We returned back on staff year after year

is making a diverse group of friends, something not just simple to achieve but hard to avoid. As staters settle into their positions in the simulation, these friendships will serve as a valuable looking glass into all different parts of the state.

Even after several years of returning to state, a definition

counselors spend here will consist of unforgettable memories and experiences that will doubtless shape the path their inscribes on the pages of history.

Contributing:
Brandon Ellis

Letters to the editor policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and accepted. Letters must be signed to be considered for publication. All letters will be edited for space, grammar and legality. Letters should be taken to the Stater's Union office.

All stories pertaining to Boys' State within these pages refer to a simulated society, and editorial license may have been used to report the 'facts' of such stories.