



THE American Legion Boys State of Kansas Staters Union

May 31, 2009

Volume 72, Issue 1

Optimism required



Scott Bley
Director of Operations

Welcome to the 72nd 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 delegate in 2000. I had a lot of feelings bottled up inside me, but excitement definitely wasn't one of them... more like uncertainty, confusion, and fear. Many of you are probably experiencing some of those same feelings.

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?

"Is this just a conspiracy by my parents to get rid of me for a week?"

– Scott Bley
Director of Operations

see Experiences page 4

Striving for Definition

Jordan Watson
Newspaper 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," John Moeder, Office Coordinator. "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

see Definition page 4

Age old question answered

Jake Ellis

Program Coordinator

Congratulations on being selected to attend the 72nd 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 chosen 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 ap-

pointed to different departments 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 function.

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.



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

— Jake Ellis
Program Coordinator

MEET YOUR COORDINATORS



Jake Ellis
Program Coordinator



Kevin Phillips
Depts/PACs Coordinator



Jared Meitler
Marlatt Local Events



Paul Day
Goodnow Local Events



Jeremy Harland
Personnel Coordinator



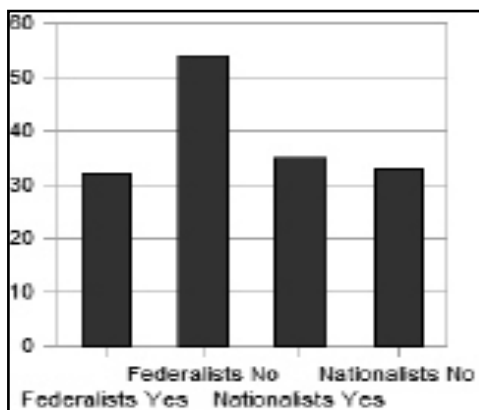
Andrew Roozeboom
State Events Coordinator



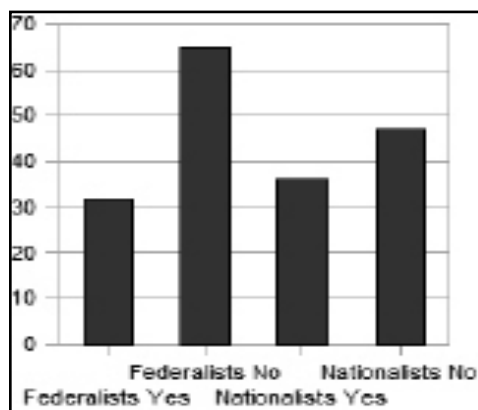
Adam Doyle
IT/AV Coordinator



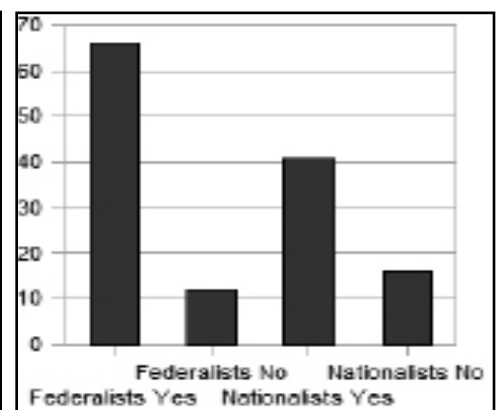
John Moeder
Office Coordinator



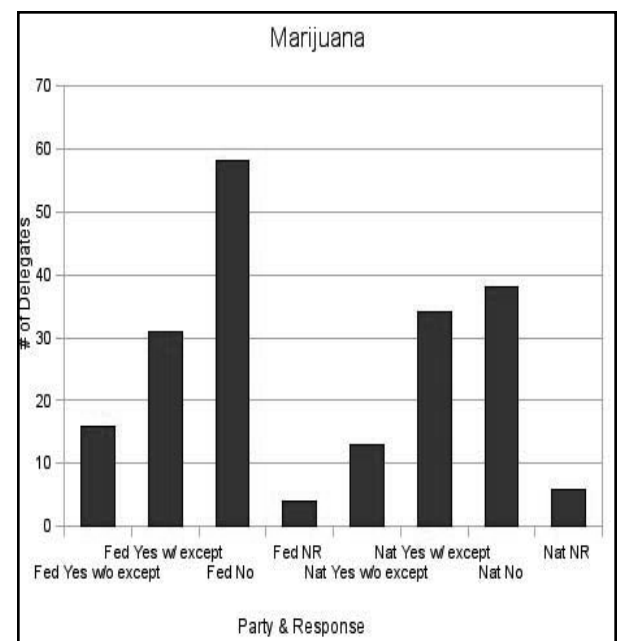
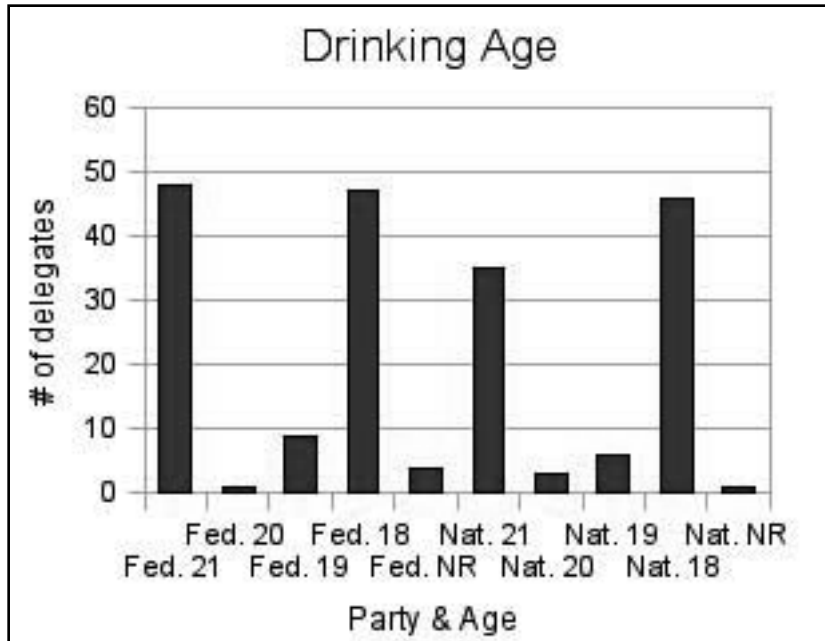
Should the H1N1 virus (aka swine flu) carriers be quarantined?



Do you support same-sex marriage?



Should illegal immigrants be deported back to their home country?



John Moeder
Office Coordinator

Algernon Black once said, "Why not let people differ about their answers to the great mysteries of the Universe? Let each seek one's own way to the highest, to one's own sense of supreme loyalty in life, one's ideal of life. Let each philosophy, each world-view bring forth its truth and beauty to a larger perspective, that people may grow in vision, stature and dedication."

Essentially, Black was arguing that diversity of opinion makes individuals and society stronger and more culturally rich. Of the many lessons Boys State teaches its delegates, this is one of the most important. That is why during the week the program emphasizes the need for dialogue and friendly debate.

Throughout the week delegates will be introduced to many new experiences

and ways of thinking and being. This is a result of the diverse backgrounds from which our delegates come and their differences in terms of race, religion, political ideology and future goals.

At Boys State we encourage everyone to share their unique interests and beliefs. This is not merely an exercise in multiculturalism for the sake of multiculturalism, but is an attempt to show the necessity of cooperation and interaction among people with diverse experiences. For example, the problems that delegates will face throughout the week do not have set solutions and no one view of the world will provide the necessary answers.

There is an old story about a group of blind men that come upon an elephant. Each of them touches a different part of the animal and come

"At Boys State we encourage everyone to share their unique interests and beliefs. This is not merely an exercise."

Viewpoints

JOHN MOEDER

to very different conclusions about what it is. One man touches the trunk and insists that it must be a snake, while another man embraces the leg and emphatically states that it must be the trunk of a tree. Finally, a third man grabs the elephant's tail and declares that the others are wrong because it is most definitely a rope. For some time, the men continue to argue until a fourth man comes a long and explains to them that they are all close, but have overlooked

the entirety of the picture. Just like the story of the blind men and the elephant, the delegates this week will face problems that they cannot fully grasp based on the experiences of any one individual. Instead they will have to share and collaborate in order to understand the problems they face and discover possible solutions.

During this week we ask all of our delegates to be open to new experiences. Frankly, just showing up demonstrates a willingness to try new things. Hopefully, this week will only enrich this curiosity.

THE
NEWSPAPER

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.

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.

Join the group on Facebook for The American Legion Boys State of Kansas!

Share with others your amazing stories about Boys State and keep in contact with your fellow staters.

Search for The American Legion Boys State of Kansas on Facebook and join today!

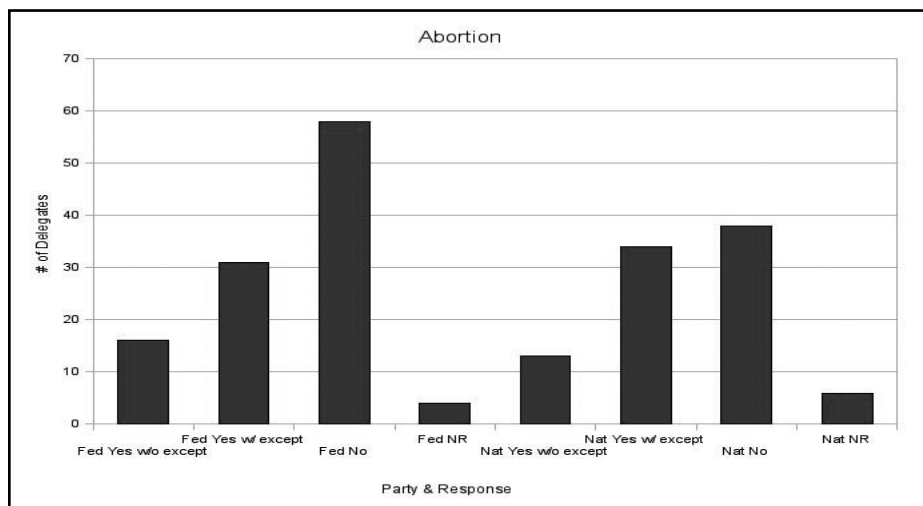


photo by Students Name

POLLS

These results are from a survey of approximately 200 delegates and was taken prior to this session of Boys State.

from Experiences page 1

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 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.

from Definition page 1

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," C.J. Harries, Legislature Staff, 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 residing 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 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 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 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 counselors spend here will consist of unforgettable memories and experiences that will doubtless shape the path their inscribes on the pages of history.

Interested in Journalism?

Run as your county's delegate for the Staters Union tonight. Only one from each county will be elected. Good luck!