

Inside the YG State Conference numbers



BEHIND THE BENCH
Get a sneak peek into life as a TEXASYG Judge

Who's Forcing Religion on Whom?

Golden Gavel



Sunday, January 31, 2016

TEXAS YOUTH GOVERNMENT



VOLUNTEERS Britton takes top service award

By Rawon Shimray
Print Editor, District 2 & 7

Outgoing Texas Youth & Government Board Chair Chris Britton received the John Kaempf Volunteer Service Award at the 69th Annual State Conference Closing Ceremonies.

A 1988 YG alum from Cleburne, Britton participated in the judicial section as an attorney. He began serving on the YG board in 2003 and has played an integral role in the program's significant growth over the past five years. In addition to his role as Board Chair, Britton has served as program standards chair, strategic planning committee chair, and vice chair.

In his professional career, Britton has over 20 years of public and private sector experience, including 8 years in the state legislative and executive branches. He is currently Managing Director at Caddo Associates, where he applies his skill in legislative and administrative procedure.

ELECTIONS MONTGOMERY TAKES GOVERNOR'S RACE, NEW SLATE OF YG OFFICERS ELECTED

Students produce record voter turnout, AG race headed to runoff



Governor
Kennedy
Montgomery



Lt. Governor
Jessie
Searles



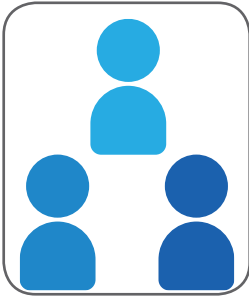
Secretary of State
Teyonce
Peyton



Chief Justice
Jose
Sauto



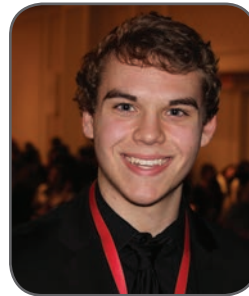
Attorney General
Run-Off - Cole Lehman
Monica Earley



State Affairs Chair
Zain Imam



Print Media Editor
Gracie Porter



Broadcast Editor
Peyton Lawrence



Social Media Editor
Marie Harris

By Gracie Porter
Reporter, District 4

As this 69th YMCA Texas Youth & Government conference winds down, all the delegates gathered into the conference hall one last time. The meeting opened up with a heartfelt thank you to the delegates by our State Director Angela Castilleja, and delegates watched as State Awards were handed

out to well-deserving staff members. Quentin Keller then took the stage and congratulated each branch on their job well done, while also thanking his Governor's Cabinet and his Lobbyist peers. As the conference continued, Lt. Governor Patton Maynard urged the delegates to treasure their time in YG, saying that he

would always cherish the times he had with his peers. "Bald isn't better...you guys are," Maynard, District 4, said as a last goodbye to the stage before bringing out Zachary Pate to award the top chairs and clerks. As the night wore on, it was obvious the heartache the seniors faced while leaving their beloved Youth & Government friends. As all of

the 2016-2017 State Officers were announced, and Keller said his last goodbyes, the delegates shuffled off to celebrate the ending of a great conference. With the hope renewed by first-time attendees and the new slate of officers, the future is bright. The next conference is still far away, but it already promises to be a great one. See you next year!

New YG State Director Celebrates Successful Debut

By Gicela Lechuga
Reporter, District 2 & 7

With the move of the Texas YG headquarters from Dallas to Austin in 2015, Angela Castilleja assumed duties as the new State YG Director. With the goal of capitalizing on Austin's proximity to the legislature, the Capitol and state agency headquarters, Castilleja aims to develop new relationships, communication, and logistics between the districts to flow freely amongst the different delegation groups. "I was familiar with the program because my daughter is in Youth & Government, and it was an opportunity to work with youth, which I've done for many many years. Castilleja has developed an extensive amount of knowledge regarding the process of government. "I've

worked with Travis County for many years and have an undergraduate degree in Political Science," she said. "It's my interest and experience I've had with the government that drew me to this great opportunity." The students of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Participating in Youth and Government improves leadership skills, and gets students interested in the electoral process. The program teaches youth how the court system works as well as the importance of government. "It's an opportunity for our youth to have that platform to use their voice" explained Castilleja. Honored with the opportunity of being appointed as the new state director, Castilleja does however admit that it is a lot of work. "There were lots of hours



put in as we planned this year's conference not only by me but by a lot of YMCA staff." Although this is Castilleja's first year as State Director, the program successfully attracted more students like previous years. For the 2016 State conference, there were approximately 1,200 students. The goal of the state director is to bring more students to YG and Castilleja is already well on her way.

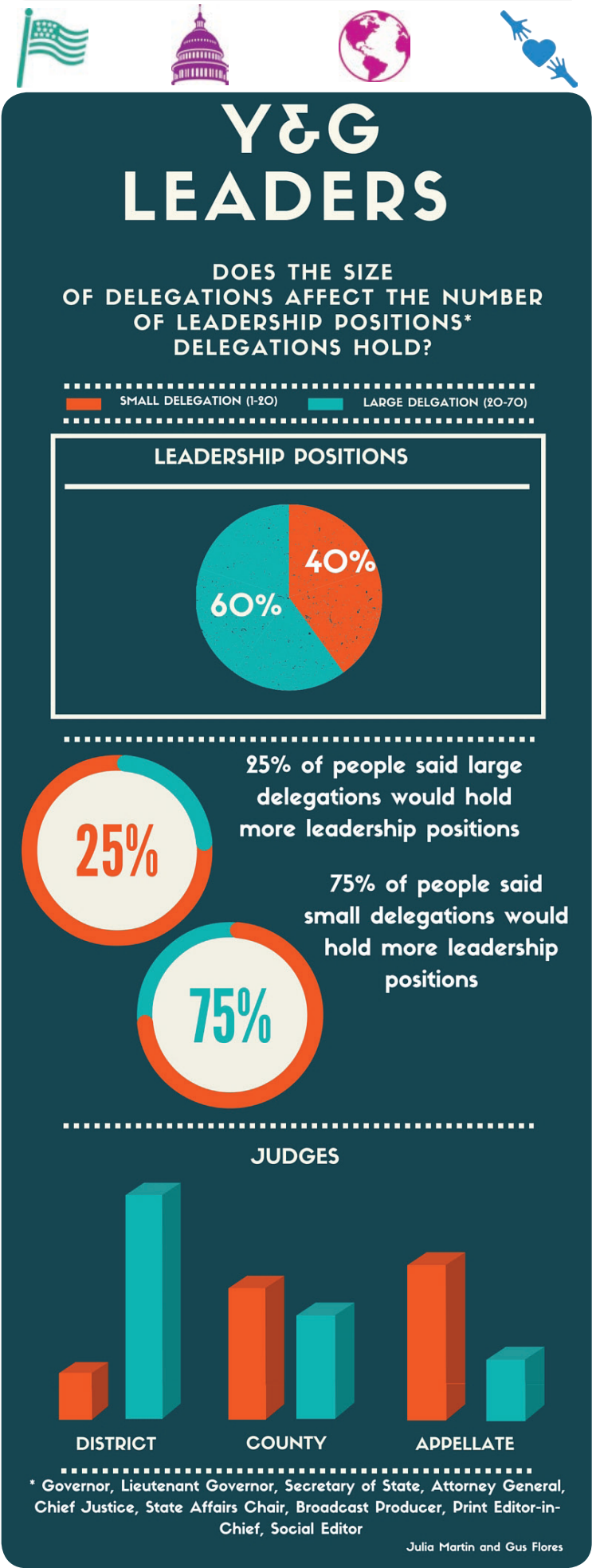
Appellate Court Wraps with a Flourish

By Heather Costello
Reporter, District 2 & 7

On the final night of Youth & Government, the top appeal court judges joined for session to address an appeal that was presented by appellate lawyers of Don Coleson. The appeal was to redraw the search warrant because was of an "error" made by Detective Amelia Hogges. The Appellate argued Detective Amelia Hogges had no right to obtain Mr. Coleson's computer hard drive because it was not one of the original items on the search warrant she had. They also argued that the court was violating his first amendment because Mr. Coleson practiced his religious beliefs in efforts to save his daughter, not to endanger her life. Parental Doctorate was also brought up as an example of how Mr. Coleson had the

right to give his daughter the medical attention he saw fit. The Appellant or State lawyers bounced back with a counter argument. The Appellant brought to the court's attention that it was their right to intervene in a person's religious beliefs if a child was in any immediate danger. The question about the "error" in the search warrant was answered by replying that the letters from Kate Riley to Mr. Coleson would have been revealed when she was interviewed by detectives. The Appellant fought the argument that they Mr. Coleson was being prosecuted, because of his attacks rather than his religion. The final decision was that the Appellate won and the search warrant was withdrawn from the trial.

YG Lifestyle



PROFILE

Behind the Bench: Life As a Judge

By Cassidy Reich & Catherine Umana, Reporters, District 3 & 4



Judge Nick Leufrey

Judge Nick Leufrey describes the experience he’s had in being a judge as “pretty great” because it gives him a perfect challenge and helps him “become less stressed and more confident.” In the courtroom, one of the most difficult things he does is deciding a verdict when faced with “two very impressive teams.” Youth & Government has helped Judge Leufrey decide to pursue “a career in law or political science, but perhaps not as a judge.”



Judge Elektra Ryffel

“I just really like trying the cases,” said Appellate Judge Elektra Ryffel of District 4. “Using the law to determine whether or not someone is innocent guilty is really interesting to me.” Ryffel was intrigued when she overheard friends talking about Youth and Government at her school, Southwestern Christian, in Fort Worth. After a year as an appellate attorney, she’s spent the past two as a judge. “It teaches you to pay attention to detail and have more confidence when you’re speaking,” Ryffel said. “It gives a lot of confidence to people on public speaking and gives you connections with friends as well.”

HUMANS of YG



why are YOU in YG?

“Because debate was too hard.”

Augusta F.R. - Ann Richards School, District 2 & 7

“I’m here to participate in the appellate court and mostly just to improve myself as a better speaker overall.”

Reese K. - Keller High School District 4



“I’m here because I have always been interested in the way our government works, not only that but our media system. And I just wanted to get a closer look at it at all the State Capitol.”

Naod E. - Trinity High School, District 4

YG Creates Delegates for Life

By Raymond Navarro & Michael Elving, Reporters, District 2 & 7

Liam Garcia, a senior; Foy H. Moody High Delegate, and two year returning YG participant, was thrilled to see returning Alumni return to this year’s state conference. “I think it’s really cool; I’m considering returning myself,” Garcia stated as he sets off to University of Texas at Austin. How are people affected by the organization and what

motivates them to come back year after year? YG Lt. Governor Jessie Searles, a six-year returning delegate, says she returns to the program each year because of the people, and the friendships made within the program. “It was intimidating at first,” Searles said, “understanding the challenges of first-year attendees.” Searles also described what motivated her, stating, “It’s being able to make your voice heard.” Michael Elving, Jack C. Hays High School delegate, took away numerous

lessons from his four years of being in the program. “It taught me how to listen to a lot of people’s point of views and how to compromise,” stated Elving. “I enjoy



connecting with people all across the state of Texas and creating friendships that last a lifetime.” Elving appreciates “all of the valuable lessons that you learn about our government you can’t get

anywhere else.” JeanMarie Kmetz, SATCH Houston delegate, has been involved in the YG program for eight years. “I’m extremely competitive; all of my siblings have been in the program for years,” Kmetz said. She described what she took away from the program stating, “The realization that I will improve my speaking ability and my social skills by meeting new people.” She has plans to run for Attorney General in the future as she continues her involvement. YG Alumni, Josie MacLean, has returned for her fifth year to the program. This year she’s volunteering in

the judicial branch. She describes how much she enjoys the program and how she continues to guide the high school YG participants in the Trial Court. Her advice toward first year state attendees is that “it’s all about experience; don’t be afraid to figure it out.” The lessons and friendships people take away from the program show that they leave a lasting effect on delegates from the first year they participate up to their graduating years, even after high school.



Letter from the Editor

Hello! And may I also add thank you for being one of the people who accepted a newspaper from our outstretched arms.

As a newspaper reporting on a mock government, I feel it is appropriate to discuss the politics behind what we do as a newspaper. We, as a staff, feel that in our paper we are exercising our rights outlined in the first amendment: the freedom of speech.

Offentimes, the media section can be overlooked as a part of the YG conference. In school, we learn about the three branches of government: Executive, Judicial, and Legislative--so media just doesn't fit in that trademark image we have of what government is.

Yet at the core of democracy, the very element we strive to preserve through all our efforts in YG, is the acknowledgment of individual voices. And this is exactly what media - often referred to as the fourth estate - strives to do.

Some pieces in this paper express strong opinions on controversial issues, and I find it to be our civic duty to do so. If we reject the freedom of speech, then we are withholding something from YG: a platform for public communication of ideas and opinions.

We don't write with any ill intentions. In this newspaper, the prime goal is to provide you with the opportunity to learn information and hear a side of the story you may not otherwise be exposed to. We only request that you read with an open mind.

Happy reading!

Rewon Shimray
Print Media Editor

Footloose Reality Stranger Than Fiction

By Anonymous
Reporter, District 4

Youth and Government's Saturday night dance has been a beloved part of the weekend for years. However, this year some schools are not allowing their students to attend the dance.

While most students are unaware of this situation, the students affected are feeling the pressure from their school. The school's board has also stated that if any student is caught at the dance, at any point, he or she will be suspended.

It is hard to define the exact motive of the school, but it is believed that the cause of the ban is due to the perception of a lack of safety and the possibility of inappropriate actions to happen on the dance floor.

"Wait, wait, wait. Jump back. Are you kidding me? Dancing is against the law?" said Ren McCormack in the 2011 remake of the classic film "Footloose," which is also a proper way to describe the student's retorts.

While many students believe that this action is uncalled for, many others believe that the school is just looking out for the best interests of its students.

Gunner Avenetti, District 5, commented on this issue by saying, "People who deserve to experience the dance shouldn't have it ruined, but I do understand why the rule is in place."

Most of the delegates, however, are confused by



the rule and the threat of punishment.

"I think the punishment is too intense," said Emmaline Jeansonne, District 2. Some students complained about the way that the ban was placed, saying that it was a rash decision and was extremely uncalled for.

The ban on students attending the YG dance is a dramatic issue for the students involved, and for the students who hear about it. From whispers, or from conversations, delegates are astounded by the ban.

Even if the ban is not from one delegate's school, it affects their opportunity to build and cultivate relationships on the dance floor. First-time attendees, who never had a way to experience the dance, have already talked about dropping out of the program because of this issue. Leaving YG is not the most logical reason, but many kids are facing this challenge. While the theme of this year's dance is "America," for some, there is no freedom of choice in this debate.

Immature bill proposals mock spirit of YG

By Austin Graham
Reporter, District 2 & 7

With great choice comes great responsibility. Students are free to draft any bill proposal they want on any topic they choose. And while many use this to their benefit and choose serious legitimate topics, some take another path.

Delegates who draft bills on topics that are immature, not serious and aren't topics that would legitimately be discussed in the Legislature are almost disrespectful to the entire meaning of Youth & Government. It's supposed to be mock government, not a mockery of government.

It's especially disrespectful to delegates who spend hours practicing debating

their bills and improving them. This means a lot to them, and for someone to just come in and treat it like a joke is plain rude.

For example, under no circumstance would a bill legitimately be drafted declaring that Tony Romo should have an entire holiday dedicated to him, or that the day after Super Bowl Sunday should be a national holiday.

It's slightly understandable for bills like this to be trialed at District conferences, but certainly not be brought up to state. It brings down the level of professionalism and seriousness that is required to make this process all the more realistic. While delegates can debate, defend and argue professionally on a bill like this, they're



almost holding themselves back from reaching their full potential and being able to tackle a serious topic that could potentially help them make it to nationals or even become a legitimate bill.

What do you think?
Share your opinion on twitter @texasyg.

Brains Over Brawn: Bill on P.E. classes in public school

By Ethan Pulfrey
Reporter, District 2 & 7

Claudia Norman, a delegate from Jack C. Hays High School, introduced a bill on the House floor that, if passed, would have eliminated the ability for athletes across the state of Texas to participate in a sports class period.

"The State of Texas glorifies sports, so much that we lose sight of academics," Norman said, in her opening remarks. "Having a sports period in the middle of the day means classes before that period, are often packed with athletes. At my school, AP statistics is third period, right before football, so every football player that can fit

into that class, is in it. Thirty-nine people are shoved into a tiny room, sharing desks and calculators."

Scholarships are another issue, as many are concerned that abolishing sports class periods will prohibit a student from receiving a scholarship and pursuing a higher level of education. Norman calmed their fears by sharing how she has not taken any sports class periods but currently has scholarship offers to play tennis at the collegiate level.

Ian Blount, a delegate with another controversial bill, and an athlete himself, has made up his mind on the matter.

"Clearly, she doesn't see the health benefits, both

physical and mental that the sports class periods offer," he said. "These class periods offer athletes a break from the school day, and a way for athletes to stay in shape during the off season."

Norman's bill passed in committee, but never made it to the Governor's desk for signing.

However many questions are still unanswered on the topic. What happens when band or debate are seen as activities "harmful" to a student's academic studies? And what about the freedom of choice? It's all a matter of perspective, over which freedom outweighs the other - freedom of choice, or the freedom of access to a healthy education.

OPINION

Who's Forcing Religion on Whom?

By Niara Pelton
Reporter, District 3

Sparks flew, as the ever-present battle between the spirit and the mind was renewed in a YG legislative debate. Delegate Tyler Pawley wrote a bill proposing an equal education system that allowed students to think for themselves. Currently, in American public schools, students are taught evolution as the origin of life theory, despite the fact that this theory has many holes. There are missing links to prove that evolution doesn't exist.

Pawley stated that it wasn't right to force kids to study this, and that it doesn't allow them to think for themselves. Many people agreed with him - after all, education is a necessity to our society - until he brought up his alternative: intelligent design.

He proposed that the theory of evolution and the

Evolution debate has multiple sides

theory of intelligent design should be taught side by side in public schools. That way the students can evaluate the information and decide for themselves. Although Christians, Muslims, Jews and followers of other monotheistic faiths are often criticized for forcing their religion on others, Pawley stated that by only teaching evolution in schools, educators are forcing atheism on students.

This caused an uproar. Many supported the theory, until the subject of religion was brought up. His bill was immediately and repeatedly refuted on the premise of the first amendment and its call for a separation of church and state, of government and religion. It was a very long-winded debate, passion underlying every argument, because whenever the subject of religion comes up, there always is: passion for God or passion against God.

Ultimately, it ended with Pawley, bravely standing for his faith in the government, as many people vehemently opposed his bill and its principles because of the beliefs expressed.

Finally, the delegates were given the decision to choose whether or not to pass this bill, and it was ultimately voted down, helplessly outnumbered. Yet many people seemed to support it before intelligent design was mentioned.

That being said, who is this idea really being forced upon? Are monotheists stuffing their religion down everyone else's throats, or are atheists shoving their lack of religion down ours?

What do you think?
Weigh in with your opinion on twitter @texasyg.

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YG CROSSWORD PUZZLE

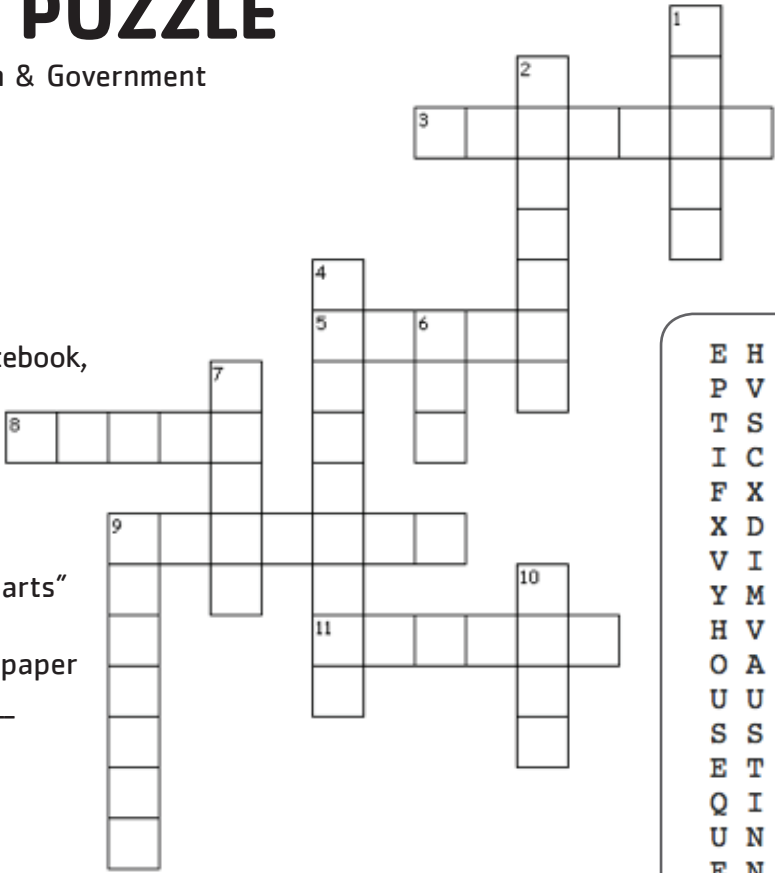
Test your knowledge of everything Youth & Government

Across

- 3. Youth Governor ____ Keller
- 5. Print Editor in Chief ____ Shimray
- 8. Secretary of State ____ Maggio
- 9. Attorney General Amy ____
- 11. Branch of Media that takes care of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

Down

- 1. Keep Austin ____
- 2. State Affairs Chair Jack ____
- 4. Branch of Media that does "Street Smarts"
- 6. Broadcast Producer Madi ____
- 7. Branch of Media that writes the newspaper
- 9. Youth Lieutenant Governor Patton ____
- 10. Chief Justice ____ Reeves



YG WORD FIND



Games created by
Kristin Haynes,
Katherine Guess
& Karis Tautges

E H P C G A I L R C X D C Y E K L
P V G E F G M G O O J H N W Z Q G
T S I Y B B O L N N O L Q F C R M
I C Z T A I O V R F V L D U A O O
F X R Y A L C G E E P E N P L M U
X D N M W L R D V R L F L D J A S
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E N R W W G P L A T F O R M H V V
A Y E G U X W Q C E H J M A D G C

AMENDMENT	CONFERENCE	MEDIA
APPELLATE	DELEGATE	PLATFORM
AUSTIN	GOVERNMENT	SENATE
BILL	GOVERNOR	STATE
BUSINESS	HOUSE	TRIAL
CABINET	JUDICIAL	YMCA
CAMPAIGN	LEGISLATIVE	
CAPITOL	LOBBYIST	

TRAVEL

Exploring the Capitol & Downtown Austin

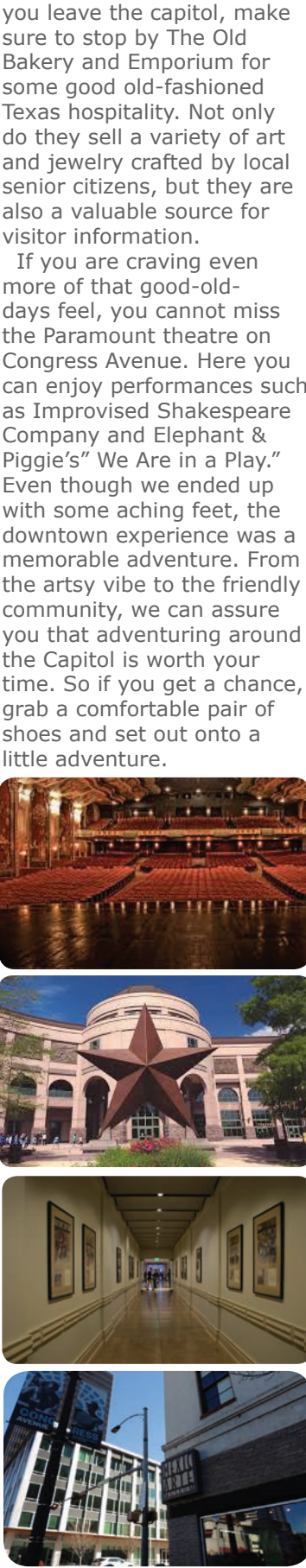
By Claire Smith & Elizabeth Reyna
Reporter, District 1, 2 & 7



you leave the capitol, make sure to stop by The Old Bakery and Emporium for some good old-fashioned Texas hospitality. Not only do they sell a variety of art and jewelry crafted by local senior citizens, but they are also a valuable source for visitor information.

If you are craving even more of that good-old-days feel, you cannot miss the Paramount theatre on Congress Avenue. Here you can enjoy performances such as Improvised Shakespeare Company and Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play." Even though we ended up with some aching feet, the downtown experience was a memorable adventure. From the artsy vibe to the friendly community, we can assure you that adventuring around the Capitol is worth your time. So if you get a chance, grab a comfortable pair of shoes and set out onto a little adventure.

Downtown Austin has much to offer if you are itching with curiosity about Texas history. The Capitol itself offers tours of the building where Texas has been governed since 1888. Surrounding the Capitol are several historical monuments such as the Heroes of the Alamo, Volunteer Fireman, Confederate Soldiers, and the Ten Commandments. Outside the Capitol grounds, there are several interesting museums to choose from such as the Le Zavala State Archives and Library, and The Bob Bullock Texas State History museum. The Le Zavala museum is currently featuring a special exhibit over the evolution of the Texas Rangers. The Bullock history is the holding place of the Pennsylvania Petition of 1844, which called for Texas to be annexed as a state. Not only is it home to such vast memorabilia, but it also happens to sport the largest IMAX theatre in Texas. It is currently showing The Force Awakens (for all of you Star Wars junkies). The downtown area also features numerous art exhibits. In addition to its South American colonial paintings, The Blanton Museum of Art is promoting a special exhibit called the Crusader Bible. On the other hand, the Mexic-Arte museum is the home to a colorful assortment of Mexican and Latino art. You can take a piece of this Mexi vibrancy home by visiting their gift shop. But before



All Good Things Must Come to an End

By Olivia Crouch
Reporter, District 2 & 7

As this year's conference comes to an end, feelings of nostalgia and heartache are both things our elected officers have come to know all too well. From the various conference calls to a myriad of inside jokes, our officers have been able to form a great bond and create many memories that will forever represent their last year at Youth & Government. A few of the officers were not afraid to share their thoughts and experiences as they prepare to go their separate ways and head off to college.

Secretary of State and fourth-year participant Peter Maggio seemed excited to be here. With a smile on his face, Maggio talks about how he became involved with Youth and Government. "I got involved primarily because of my older brother who was in [Youth & Government] two years before me. I always enjoyed debating, but I was really quiet. I looked at this as a chance to come out of my shell." Successful in his wishes, Maggio has proven himself to be a leader and come out of his comfort zone by not only holding a major office position, but socializing with other delegates.

Similarly, Patton Maynard fifth-year participant and Lieutenant Governor joined YG because his older sister had been involved causing him to immediately become intrigued with the fictional bills being created. Coming into this year's state conference, each officer had goals that they hoped to accomplish. Madi Way, this year's Broadcast Producer, was happy to share hers.

YG Officers Pose with Land Commissioner George P. Bush at the YG VIP Luncheon



"[As an officer] I really want everyone to work together and to keep busy and organized. I don't want them to be afraid to ask questions-- we need to get this stuff done professionally and have fun with it."

Maynard had goals of his own. "We wanted obtainable goals. In the past, candidates have shared goals that wouldn't be obtainable. We wanted to make the Senate more realistic in the way that we did things. We were able to change so much this year, more than in the past few years combined."

Most goals that were accomplished were due to the team effort of the officers. "[Bonding with the officers] has been way more fun than it should have been," Maggio said. "We've gotten pretty close in just the last day. I can honestly say it's been a pleasure to be around all of them."

Way has also been enjoying her fellow officers' company. When asked about her favorite Youth and Government memory, she was quick to reply. "[My favorite YG memory] is from Wednesday night. All of the officers were just sitting in the hallways eating candy and bonding."

"This has been the best year yet," said Maynard. "Bonding with the other officers has been so crazy. As soon as we got here on Wednesday, we meshed. We are all so sad that we have to leave."

As Way continues on to pursue a career in the medical field, she would like her fellow delegates to not shy away from speaking their mind. "If you think you know something, go ahead and say it. Jump in and be a part of it."

Maynard hopes to major in both Theater Direction and Political Science and later receive his PhD in Ancient History from Texas Christian University. He urges younger delegates to look at what you have, while you have it. "I feel like yesterday it was just announced that I was Lieutenant Governor and two days ago I was a freshman. The older you get, the faster everything moves."

Maggio plans to attend Texas A&M and study Electrical Engineering. He has considered the idea of becoming a lawyer and politics are definitely on the table, but not something he plans to jump into right away. "Never pass up a chance to stand up for the truth. The thing you will regret most in this program is passing up a chance when you feel like you really have something to say, because if you don't you don't know what would have happened," said Maggio.

Although they will be going their separate ways, the officers hope to stay in touch and are happy with how the this year's State Conference turned out."