

The Capitol

CHRONICLE

The Research Room

BY GINA DENNY

This year's presiding officers have developed a solution to what they feel is a pressing issue in the realm of debating bills. In the past, it has been nearly impossible to access the Internet to find insight on the numerous topics being discussed. In debate The Research Area is making its debut in hope to improve debate by providing delegates access to computers, and by extension, information that can strengthen their arguments and speeches.

For many years, program leaders have been looking to incorporate research into the legislative branch. During debate, delegates are not permitted to use any electronic devices, allowing for order and focus. Due to this, it is impossible to look up information. Some people feel that it is difficult to debate without a thorough understanding of the issue being discussed. With all the work that the bill authors have put into writing their bills, the presiding officers felt it was only fair if the bills could be fully understood. Presenting facts can strengthen arguments. Furthermore, the new addition also gives bill authors the opportunity to strengthen their speeches. They can now easily follow through with any suggestions that others have made and find out more about their topic. According to Youth Governor Lainey Newman, "The Research Area will afford legislative delegates the opportunity to use technology at the Capitol to assist them in crafting speeches and arguments by means of quickly looking up statistics, facts, and information regarding bills." Thanks to the new Research Area, debate can become more fact-based and help to legislators make a more informed, educated decision about whether or not the bill should pass.

The presiding officers are hoping the Research Area will expand in the future. By adding more computers and personnel, it will become easier for delegates to access the area and find more information for the topics. As Lieutenant Governor Rafay Nasir points out, "Over the next several years, I hope to see research become a backbone of debate, positively impacting the model experience of every delegate." It is up to the future presiding officers to expand the Research Area and to find other ways to further incorporate research into Youth and Government.

Each year, the Youth and Government program changes a little to give students more opportunities to do their best and work their hardest while making the experience more enjoyable. Leaders leave their mark by bringing in new ideas. Governor Newman states "The presiding officer team put a great deal of effort into actualizing our idea of elevated and more informed debate in chambers." The new computers will allow delegates to find information and improve their arguments. Be sure sure to check out this year's new Research Area.

The Red Lion Hotel

By Gabby Pino

With the Youth and Government program growing rapidly every year, it was inevitable that eventually it would outgrow the facilities it once used. To ensure that everyone would fit comfortably in the hotel, Model Convention will now be held in the Red Lion Hotel in Harrisburg.

Located at 4751 Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, PA, the Red Lion Hotel is about a 20 minute drive from the Pennsylvania Capitol Building. It is only a slightly longer distance compared to the Best Western where YAG conventions were previously held.

The Harrisburg Red Lion Hotel is a short distance from the major attractions in the area, including Hershey Park, National Civil War Museum, and the Capitol. It's

proximity to these attractions and the hotel's high-quality facilities have made it the third highest ranked hotel in Harrisburg.

The conference rooms that YAG will be utilizing are split between two different floors.

The lobby level houses the Pennsylvania Ballroom, Hanover Room, Lancaster Ballroom, East and West Capitol Ballrooms, and the Keystone, Hershey, Nittany, and Governor Suites. Senate and House Representatives, row officers, and the administration are a few of the groups that will be consistently using these rooms.

The level above is the ballroom level which contains the Dauphin Ballroom, Harrisburg Amphitheater, Harrisburg Suite, Middle

Paxton Room, Susquehanna Room, and the East and West Derry Rooms. Justices, the Press Corps, and lobbyists will be some of the groups stationed in these rooms.

The Dauphin Ballroom, which can hold up to 1,500 people in a reception style layout, is the largest room in the hotel. This ballroom is where opening, closing, and other program wide meetings will be held. With ample space and a variety of large rooms, the Red Lion Hotel will have no problem accommodating the ever growing Youth and Government program.

COMMONWEALTH CHARTER ACADEMY

BY MAGGIE ROSS

Commonwealth Charter Academy (CCA) is an organization that was only recently welcomed into the Youth and Government (YAG) organization. The delegation is unique in several ways, the first being how CCA has their nightly meetings. Instead of grouping together like most delegations do, they interact with one another and prepare for big YAG events through a different system: a computer!

Quinn Broussard, delegation president, explained, "Through our school we have a virtual meeting system we use for class through Adobe." CCA members will also communicate through different media outlets, such as "Facebook group chat" or through their "school's built-in email system."

Their system is very unique and proves to have many advantages. Said Broussard, "it's easier for delegates to ask questions online instead of in person, which also helps to make sure

anything they're unsure about can be clarified." Broussard reports that CCA only has small difficulties when meeting, some of which include limited contact with one another.

CCA is built like most delegations in the Youth and Government program. "I've had the opportunity to visit a few other delegations this past year either through campaigning for Lt. Governor, or when working with other delegates on projects," said Broussard. "And our delegation meetings generally run pretty similarly. We'll all meet together to start, my advisor and I will make any announcements, and then we split up by branch."

CCA may appear different by their mode of meeting, but their delegation is very similar to other Youth and Government clubs. As Broussard concludes, "The only real difference is the system we use in which to conduct those meetings."

Candidate Colin Black

Article by Olivia Reid, Photograph by Clare Gibson

Model is quickly approaching, and so is the election of the next PA Youth Governor. One of the two candidates running is Colin Black from the Boyertown delegation.

Black joined the program as an eighth grader and immediately “fell in love”. His first year he was placed in the Blue Senate. He claims that he worked hard to keep up with the very skilled upperclassmen he was debating with. Two years ago, Black ran for Blue Committee Chair and had succeeded at earning 405 out of a possible 407 votes.

The Youth and Government program, Black says, has done so much for him throughout his many years in the program. It is where he learned how “to be confident without being arrogant,” and how to avoid being “blinded by passion.” He says it was these lessons that the program has taught him, along with encouragement from friends, family members, and past YAG members, that

motivated him to campaign for the position of governor.

“I chose to run for governor in hopes that I could inspire someone to take a chance to do something that they may not have the confidence to do,” says Black, “and to teach everyone the importance of speaking with both confidence and passion.”

Black believes that in order to be Youth Governor there are certain qualities that one must possess; namely eloquence and a willingness to compromise. Black feels that he possesses both of these key traits, and that he portrays eloquence in a manner of demonstrating his speaking skills. For example, throughout his four years in the program, he learned to efficiently exemplify his different speaking mannerisms and techniques during the various speeches he gave. As far as his ability to compromise, Black identifies with no political party and is an Independent, an attribute that he feels enables him to be unbiased regarding any decision he is required to make.

Black intends to harness these qualities in order to successfully complete his goals as Youth Governor, should he be elected. “My three main goals as Youth governor are to increase communication between the branches, increase the practicality of the club kit as well as the publication date of the bill book, and make the constitutional challenge a staple of our Model Legislature.”

In addition to these goals, Black wants to create a YAG mentor program in order to help first-year members feel more included and informed about the various happenings during the course of the year and at Model. He plans to pair up first year members with veteran YAG members to accomplish the goal of setting up a successful mentor program.

Overall, Black wishes to convey the message that he is running for the people, not the title of the position. He has one phrase that he wishes to share, one he claims to live by everyday: “Be passionate about what you have to say, be confident when you say it, and be proud after you have said it.”

Candidate Sameer Khan

Article by Natalie Timko, Photograph by Clare Gibson

blossom into the person I am today.”

Khan feels that his opponent is highly qualified; however, he believes that his passions and experiences inside and outside of YAG distinguish his own candidacy. Within YAG, he has served as a Blue House Committee Chair for the past two years. Additionally, Khan was honored to receive the “Best Blue Chair” award at Model. At the club level, he is the current President of the East Shore YMCA delegation and the Service Committee Chair. Outside of YAG, he is the president of the high school Pre-Med Club, vice-president of his FBLA chapter, and was named “Outstanding Delegate” at the Ivy League Model United Nations conference.

Khan says that a governor has to have certain personal qualities to be successful, and must be able to balance leadership and friendliness. From Khan’s experiences as Committee Chair, maintaining order within committee sessions, he believes that he has the ability to create this balance.

Khan has many goals for this upcoming Model, if he is elected. His ultimate goal is the technological optimization of Youth and Government. Living in the Golden Age of Technology, he feels that there are countless obstacles within YAG that can be overcome by harnessing the power of such advancement. He feels that all the branches of the program will be united as one through the mediums of communications and technology.

Another goal of Khan’s is expansion and recruitment. If elected Youth Governor, Khan says he plans to expand the program to online cyber schools and northern Pennsylvania where the program has not yet blossomed. Furthermore, with the guidance of current successful online delegations, the program can inspire other online delegations, while also assisting YAG to new pinnacles of success. For more information about his platform or for contact information, visit his website www.sameerforgov.com at www.sameerforgov.com.

As Sameer Khan drove back home from his final YAG meeting in late April last year, a handful of thoughts were racing through his head. Filled with the amazing experiences of Model Conference, he could not help but realize how fast everything had flown by during Model. The brevity of Model last year lead Khan to ask himself: what has he done to better the experience of YAG, not just for himself, but the entire state as a whole? Khan’s advisor had always told him, “YAG is what you make of it; you will get back what you put into it.” With leadership being such a key component of this program, he finally wanted to be able to give back to a program that has given him so much. With these thoughts in mind, Khan then drove away from his final YAG meeting and towards his candidacy for Youth Governor.

Khan was encouraged to run by his advisor, David John. Coming into the program as an introverted freshman, John helped him enhance his public-speaking and leadership skills. Khan states, “Though this may seem cliché, the priceless experiences of Model Convention helped me

First Year Survival Guide

Feature by Emma Lamoreaux and Alex Sanna

Model is the culmination of all of the delegates' work throughout the year. However, for those in their first year of YAG, it can be quite daunting. Some older members have shared their experiences and given some tips for younger members.

Kole Kramer, a freshman in Judicial said, "I learned right off the bat is that it's not always some criminal court, it's not that someone murdered another person, or anything like that. It's not like, you know, your classic case of law and order, it's a lot of 'Is this law legal and constitutional?' or 'Did this statute violate the constitution?' and not much of what you see on TV. It's cool because you're learning something totally new."

Alex Rapp, freshman in Legislative said, "Just relax. You don't have to speak on everything or expect for your bill to get through. Just relax and speak when you want to. I'm not saying to be shy the entire time! Just break out of your shell and push yourself to speak to entire strangers and on topics you're not a pro on, but you're not obligated to speak if it's too uncomfortable. You don't have to be the best person in the room, you just have to impress yourself and the rest will come."

The first day at Model can be stressful enough as it is, so getting an idea of the schedule for each individual branch can help with time management and preparation.

Rapp explained, "The Legislative schedule can be a bit hectic (especially for the chairs). There's a lot of running around from committee into caucusing, and my best advice is to find a friend and try not to get lost together. There's power in numbers! The sessions can seem endless, but if you're engaged, four hours can seem like mere minutes. Just stick to the schedule and listen to where your chair tells you to be. Use your down time to have fun and make friends."

Throughout the past Model conventions, many types of preparation have been done. Considering each branch plays different roles, each type varies from reading cases to writing articles and conducting interviews. Kramer reflected, "Before you even get the case, what you want to prep on is your public speaking and journal, not using "like" or "um", start enhancing emotions, how your stance can influence the justices and officials, all of that is very important to learn because they are all going to correct your case. Then when you get the case there's a ton of studying. It's sort of like studying for finals, you want to study every single sentence, every single case. You get around 12 cases, so it's a lot to read through, it's basically reading through a textbook. It takes a lot, but when you get to writing your brief, that's tough too, it's a lot of writing and a lot of thinking. Oral arguments are thankfully pretty easy, it's just

taking your brief, putting it onto some note cards in a folder and practicing speaking it and saying it and getting use to having confidence. When Model hits, be ready to argue."

Rapp recalled, "Last year I was very stressed and didn't take the time to take in my surroundings. You're in a room full of smart, passionate, and extremely talented kids, and you should take the time to appreciate that you are among them. I'd like not to be so closed in and panicked the entire weekend because it really does take away some of the great fun that comes with being around great people."

The overall atmosphere of Model is an ineffable experience to describe in one word. While some members described the atmosphere as "friendly", some others have used "anarchy" and "an ordeal". Rapp explained the importance of Model to the YAG experience and why YAG is an important club. "Model is what makes it feel real. YAG isn't a normal club. It has its own heartbeat and creates a community where everyone from every corner of the state and even country has a connection. Model is what brings everyone together and creates this community that lasts beyond just a 4 day conference."

Where Are They Now?

Feature By Julia Townsen

Youth and Government has been shaping lives for years. Rachel Hoover is one of the many examples of someone who was greatly impacted by this program. This year, Hoover is returning as an alumni, to give back to a program that she feels has given her so much.

Hoover had expressed that Youth and Government is the best thing that ever happened to her, and that it influenced her life, “in every way you could possibly imagine. Youth and Government has helped me find what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Hoover is currently

studying Government and politics and plans to go to law school for constitutional law.

Although Hoover is glad to be back, she says there are some things she will miss about being a delegate. Hoover says she misses the people the most, but also wishes she could still participate in arguing cases and discussing bills.

After being part of Youth and Government for so long, Hoover had quite a few favorite memories of YAG. She discussed how she loved working with such brilliantly minded young people and being able to learn as much as she did. She was glad to

experience and learn about others’ perspectives and viewpoints while carrying out her own passions.

Now that Hoover is an alumni, she has been watching the new delegates and has her own hopes for them

“This program has given me so much and has made me want to come back, so I hope it does the same for other students,” Hoover said.

Hoover wants to give back to the program that changed her life and feels she is doing just that. As a first year alumni, she says she can't wait for what's to come in the near future.



Illustration by Eric Manny