

The Boys State Dispatch

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- Gavin Jarvis - **Editors** - James Rioux -

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A Life Changing Crossroad

Noah Petras - James City

During our first night at the 80th session of The Virginia Boys State, the newly ordained citizens were welcomed by David Horton, Radford Mayor

During his illuminating welcoming speech, the sea of men were enlightened on the history of Radford. How the town's roots began with the Wilderness Road, a monumental path in western civilization towards the mountains in Kentucky and Tennessee; later, making a powerful impact as a "Central City" between Lynchburg and Bristol railroad system. The town benefited from commercial and economic growth by being a convenient central stop for the major railroad.

Radford served as one of few southern Virginia cities to introduce a paved highway in 1920. Providing travelers west and back to the east with a convenient rest point. Mayor Horton painted a vivid picture of Radford as a monumental crossroad for western expansion in early American life. In



comparative likeness, Boys State is our monumental crossroad in our early life.

"For some this is our first major accomplishment in a life to be filled with many more. Others another prestigious title amongst many others we hold," said Horton. "Regardless of who we are, how we got here, or where we are going in our life, today we are one, all equally tasked with the personal challenge of self growth through leadership, hard work, and pushing outside our comfort zones."

Mayor Horton left the citizens applauding with energy and inspiration, providing motivation towards the common goal of fulfilling our title as "Best of the best... in Virginia," as Dan Dellinger emphatically proclaimed. Well gentlemen, the week has officially begun, it's our duty and our responsibility to satisfy the goals laid out for us.

Mail Clerk: An Elected Position?

Colin Miller - Puller City

For our first day of Virginia Boys State, cities were tasked with choosing special participants and representatives for various activities.

Delegates of each city gave speeches and campaigned for why they should be

selected to attend competitive afternoon activities such as Moot Court, speech classes and a wide variety of sports. The delegate with the best speech and experience were selected for the position they were best suited for

Other positions such as Mail Clerk were simply assigned for anyone willing to do it, but Puller City saw this play out differently; instead of someone begrudgingly agreeing to be Mail Clerk, four delegates competed for the “esteemed” position. Delegates gave speeches emphasizing notable qualities such as speed, an intense passion for mail and even experience with observing mailmen.

The candidate Jaylyn eventually won for the speed and efficiency at which he claimed he could collect the mail with. The standing applause he received shook the walls of Moffett Hall. It was the highlight of the night.

While he had a unanimous victory, the other candidates weren’t happy. They claimed that he didn’t have the intense passion and love for mail shown by the others.

One may not guess that the Mail Clerk would be a highly contentious elected official position, but it has been said that Boys State inspires excellence and

innovation. This is what delegates are clearly striving towards. While they may be underlooked, the Mail Clerks at Boys State may be the best mail handlers ever seen.

Lunch Receives Lackluster Approval

Alexander Owen - Marshall City

Jake Janus - McArthur

The hungry mouths of 450 fatigued young men were practically drooling, they all knew their beloved break, dinner, was near. They eagerly checked the schedule in their Flag Books, praying that their respective groups would be first to enter a tantalizing land, a heavenly place, the cafeteria. When the fortunate early birds shuffled into Dalton Hall, they were met with an interesting scent wafting around them like a blizzard of distasteful spices. There was no way it could get worse, or so they thought. “The food was, to say the least, something special,” stated James City resident John Talton. “It was a unique spin on the classic cafeteria cookery.”

The spread lay before them, starting off strong with chicken nuggets, followed by penne pasta, krinkle-cut fries, green beans, broccoli and rolls. The nuggets had a consistency close to that of a cardboard box. “One bite had me gasping for water,” stated Burke City resident JP Janus.

The pasta was by far the most “artistic” of the dishes. The penne was a collage; there was penne and there was a smattering of what seemed to be lawn clippings and carrot tops. The strange assortment of veggies was off-putting to most who laid eyes upon it. “Is this pasta salad, or what,” Washington City resident Edgardo Gonzales, disgruntledly noted about the perilous pasta.

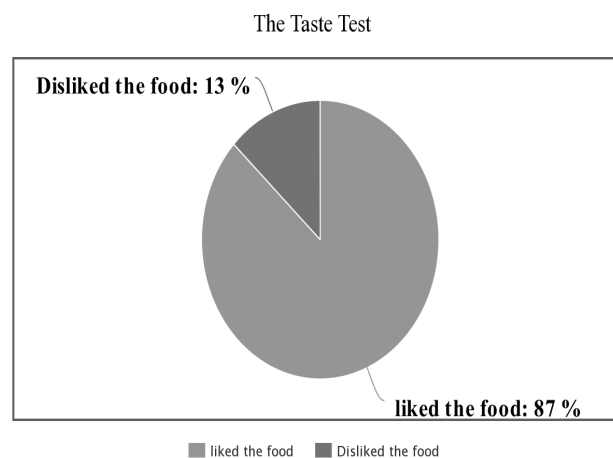
The fries were generally well-received, while green beans and broccoli were simply uneaten. “It’s not like I expected much, but I think I would have liked something more appealing to nourish my empty stomach,” stated Gravelly City resident James Russo.

There was, however, a saving grace to the dreadful dinner scene — dessert. As a consolation to the disappointing dinner, cookies, cakes, cinnamon rolls and danishes layed waiting for all the unhappy campers. The sugar-laden banquet seemed to have an aura, drawing the citizens in, as if sirens beckoning to sailors lost at sea. “I am a man who loves food,” said Talton. “The dessert [saved the day].”

Alongside the food the citizens were offered, a variety of beverages were offered to quench their raging thirst. Ranging from the nectar of the gods, Mountain Dew, to the

generically branded “Starry”. The people flocked to the sugary drinks like moths to a flame. Unfortunately easy times wouldn’t last, as armageddon struck the fountains like a thief in the night; the syrup ran out. In the blink of an eye, what was once thought to be the fountain of youth transformed to nothing more than a myth of old. In hopelessness, Washington City resident Anthony Dominguez cried out, “This isn’t even lemonade, it’s just water!” Finding the light in the darkness, Gonzales remarked, “At least it’s healthier,” in self-consoling sarcasm.

Despite the harrowing accounts, in a survey asking “Did You Like The Food?” conducted amongst Marshall City, the people responded with a whopping 83% positive review of the food. However, 13% of those polled responded with a small yet resounding “NO!”.



Citizen Loghan Shanmuganathan accused the food of being “mid” and rated it a “5/10”. The conclusion of the examination is clear as day. Marshall City has a bad sense of taste. Regardless of the data, one question still remains. What subsistence are we going to be consuming tomorrow...

Senator Angus King Welcomes Participants

Joshua Davidson - Burke City

During the Official Opening of the 80th Session of the American Legion Boys State of Virginia, Senator Angus King welcomed us by video message.

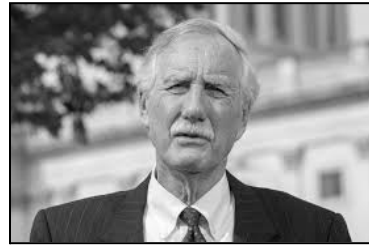
As highlighted in both his speech and his introduction, Senator King is an Alumni of Virginia Boys State and served as governor of his state during the 1961 conference.

After his attendance at Boys State, Senator King would go on to graduate from Dartmouth, and eventually return to Virginia to graduate with a J.D. from UVA.

Before entering the political field, King worked as both a lawyer and a businessman, which culminated in his election as the independent Governor of Maine in 1994.

He then pursued a career in the Senate in 2013, and as mentioned in his

welcoming speech, Senator King is devoted



to improving bipartisan relationships within Congress. This is exemplified

by the barbeques that King holds at his home, during which, “political talk is banned and the focus is getting to know one another” per his website.

Senator King is a true representative of the values that Boys State aims to bring out, such as leadership, patriotism, and americanism. His leadership is exemplified in congress with his formation of two new caucuses, as well as in his community with his business dealings in creating alternative energy.

His patriotism is exemplified by his continued commitment to the bettering of our country through his actions in congress, as is his americanism.

The entirety of the Boys State community cannot thank Senator King enough for his meaningful message to start off our Boys State experience.

Two Factors to Success: Effort and Attitude

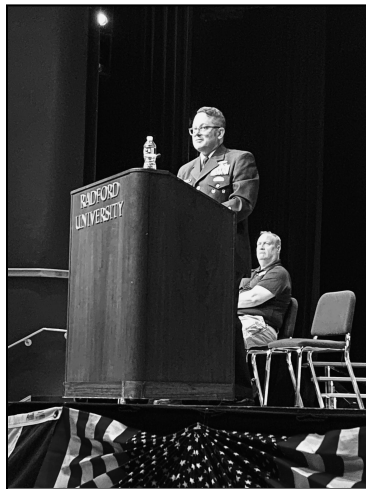
Ethan Deptola- Bradley City

Some rising Boys State participants have been questioning both ways to better involve themselves within the program and truly appreciate the opportunity to be involved in such a prestigious program.

Former attendee and now rear admiral, Russel Dash, states his two recurrent pillars to building success off of his personal experience through effort and attitude. Effort is defined as: “a vigorous or determined attempt”; attitude being “a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.”

Dash eludes the notion of branching out, participating in oratorical, athletic and educational experiences thrown at them. He intertwined these core factors with the aspect of having patriotism for one's country.

Admiral Dash states that with a positive outlook for the program, prosperity for the



nation as a whole can be constructed and preserved. With sufficient effort, a positive attitude and passion for the opportunities ahead, all participants can make the 80th annual session of Boys State a beneficial experience.

The Recruitment Crisis Among the American Youth

Edgardo Gonzales - Washington City

Maleeq Jennings - Washington City

In the official opening of the 80th session of the American Legion Boys State of Virginia, esteemed guest Rear Admiral Russell Dash came to answer questions from the members of the program concluding his opening speech.

One concern raised by a curious camper was the crisis of the dwindling numbers of military recruits as of recent years. The camper then proceeded to ask Rear Admiral Dash his opinion about the best method to aid in increasing recruitment numbers for the military.

With his background of working against the recruitment crisis for the United States Coast Guard, he thought the answer to the problem would be to reach the youth and rekindle the lost passion for serving in the military.

”First, the number of young people who are eligible to serve in the military

dropped precipitously last year — from an already low figure of 29 percent to a shocking 23 percent — largely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Barno and Bensahel).”

Rear Admiral Dash also expanded on the topic of the way pop culture and media affects the youth perceives serving in the military. The creation of anti-war films such as “American Sniper” and “All Quiet on the Western Front”, many of the younger generation have created an image of military service as something akin to a death sentence or positioning oneself to develop trauma. This negative connotation that envelops the path of serving the country has created a generational bias against joining the military hurting the recruitment numbers.

The reason for the importance of reaching the youth’s perspective on serving and patriotism is because they are the future leaders of America. Once patriotism is instilled into the minds of the younger generations, recruitment numbers will rise and the crisis will be solved.



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