

## **The Last Day, a Day to Remember**

*-Rydell Wilkins, Washington City*

Yesterday was the last official day of the Boys State Virginia program. We laughed, we sang along, we cheered, and most importantly we learned more about how to become better leaders. We forged friendships that will last indefinitely. It may be a sad day for some with the program coming to an end, but it is not sadness you should feel. When you sit down in that seat today looking across at the stage, remember where you started on Sunday and now look where you are. You should feel proud of your accomplishments, you should be proud of the person that you are, and you should be proud to lead into the future. Everyone here has different interests and different passions, that will take you to different places and expose you to different things. This is a good thing because you will then have the opportunity to assert yourself as a strong leader. To celebrate the last official day of Virginia Boys State there were lots of events to commemorate its citizens. Such as tug-a-war, a final Moot Court, College Day, a Boys State Parade, an award show, and a City Parade to close it off. There was also a talent show the day prior. All to celebrate and showcase the hard work of all of our citizens of every city. Congratulations on your successful completion of the 82nd session of the Virginia Boys State!



## **The Art of Repacking: Finding Hidden Skills and Carrying Lessons Learned**

*- W. Joel Simpson, Marshall City, Speaker of the House, and "Paper Boy"*

Goodbye Boys State. Never did I think when I arrived here that it would be so bittersweet to leave, and I think that is a sentiment shared by a lot of Boys State citizens. Every person I've talked to has been able to share multiple ways they've grown this week and dozens of new people they've met that they can now call friends, and my experience at Boys State is no different. Since I wrote my first article here at Boys State about packing, I will try to *repack* my thoughts to fit that same metaphor.

So, as the title suggests, my thoughts are broken down into two sections, the first of which are the tools and skills we didn't know we brought with us to Boys State, an idea I can especially speak to. Most of you probably recognize me as the Speaker of the House of Delegates, a position I will be forever grateful to have sat in. However, when I came to Boys State, this was not the position I had in mind for myself. Known lovingly by my citymates as "Paper Boy," I was determined to be the best reporter I could be from day one, trying to report different angles and unique stories from the background of Boys State; this was my only aspiration for the week. But as the party nominations for delegate approached, I was encouraged by members of my city to run. With the support and votes of my fellow citizens, which I couldn't be more grateful for, I was eventually elected as a delegate, but my city's encouragement didn't stop there. As the only delegate from my city to caucus with the Nationalists, they pushed me to run for Speaker of the House, a position that had far more recognition than I thought I could handle, and to my surprise, I won. Thanks to the encouragement of the people in my city, I learned a valuable lesson about myself — I came to Boys State with skills I never thought I had. The ability to run for an office and the ability to connect with people as a public speaker are skills I never thought I possessed, especially with 455 people I had never met before, and I know almost everybody who attended this week has a similar story. Obviously there were people who saw those skills in us because they sent us here. School Administrators, Legionnaires, and hopefully our parents, all believed that we had these traits within us, and we're the lucky ones because they believed that Boys State was the program that could unlock them and they gave us the chance to attend this week.

Lastly, I couldn't head home this week leaving the friendships and connections I made along the way behind. All of us are lucky enough to have made friends among the best of the best, the top 0.01%, as we were reminded last night. All of us who were lucky enough to have connected with each other over the past week weren't here because of chance, whether you believe in a higher power or not, because chance doesn't have the results of a program like Boys State. No matter how hard it tried, chance couldn't assemble the 456 rising seniors that gathered here over the last week; it would have been a statistical anomaly. Again, 0.01%. We were all here for a reason, and now we are charged with finding out why once we head home, and to help us are the best of the best that we met along the way. So as we repack our suitcases, both physical and metaphorical, may we keep in touch with those we met, keep in touch with the society around us, and may the 2025 Virginia Boys State go on to create positive change in the world.

## Military Parade

*-Rydell Wilkins, Washington City*

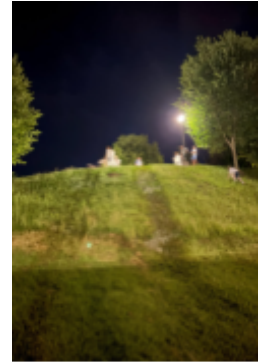


Another exciting day at Boys State with more events, one of which was the military parade. Citizens of all cities marched around the Radford University campus, singing patriotic songs, and marching on the beat of the drums. This is another example of a Boys State activity that promotes teamwork and friendship. One that will be remembered by many for a long-lasting while.

## Moffett Hall Hill Mania

*-Jackson Mayfield, Patton City, House Majority Leader and "Scribe"*

Late Thursday night, Moffett was astir with citizens' enveloped in trash bags and covered in dirt after Patton citizens discovered the entertainment and joy that the steep hill just behind the dorm hall beheld. After the rain earlier that day, the long grass was perfectly slick to allow citizens to slide down



*Citizens  
"bombing" the  
Moffett Hill*

the hill on their stomachs, backs, and inside dish soap lubricated trash bags. Soon enough, all of Moffett Hall was made aware of Patton's antics, and citizens from across cities were joining in on the new found outdoor activity. Paths were being blazed in the tall grass by anonymous citizens who when asked why they enjoyed the Moffett Hall Hill sledding they said, "It brought together citizens across cities that otherwise do not regularly interact, even though we all live in the same building." Another citizen added, "It is a real thrill going down the hill." Others made similar comments, expressing their excitement for continuing the hill sledding for the rest of our stay at Radford. Last night, once again, some brave hill sliders hurled their bodies off the top of the knoll down through the groomed tall grass towards Moffett in celebration of our soon to be graduation ceremony. Congratulations to everyone reading, and maybe one day we can reconvene on this



now sacred hill to sled as brothers and alumni.

### **Jahd Khalil: VPM's Statehouse**

#### **Reporter**

*-Paul Manetto, Nimitz City*

Jahd Khalil, a reporter with VPM, the Virginia NPR affiliate, visited Boys State this morning to discuss his experience with politics and journalism. Khalil, who attended Nebraska Boys State in 2006, worked as a correspondent in Cairo, Egypt during the 2010s Arab Spring Uprisings. He credited this experience as one that expanded his worldview and political vision. He helped found Mada Masr, an Egyptian news site dedicated to promoting democratic ideals. Returning to the states, he accepted a career covering the Richmond statehouse for VPM, working with the senators and delegates Boys State seeks to imitate today. Khalil stated that his work cycle typically is more intense during the 6-8 week period

when the state government is in session. In addition, during a General Election, his responsibilities increase dramatically, mentioning how next week this year's General Election begins with Abigail Spanberger's bus tour. Khalil offered a perspective into politics without being a politician, and is wished luck in his upcoming coverage of the general election.



*Jahd Khalil, Virginia Capital Correspondents  
Association*

**The Daily House**

*Paid for by  
Matty T*



## **Message to Our Sponsor**

*-SD Team*

We apologize to Mathew Taylor, Patton City President of Gambling, for the lack of House yesterday, it was an honest mistake. We have compensated your funds by (a bit more than) doubling the size of today's House.

## **Seven Hoorays for the Bill!**

*-Nathan Heineman, Patton City, the Employed One*

Last night, following the legion's address to the entirety of the citizenry, Moffet Hall was flooded with excitement as people took to the corridors to celebrate the passing of House Bill 7. This bill had a controversial history within the senate, and faced trouble getting approval from Governor Fuller, but was announced as fully passed. Excitement was shown at its announcement; however, this would not compare to what followed. As citizens from several cities made their way into the lobby, returned to their rooms briefly, and prepared their celebrations. Coming down from the upper floor while chanting, Puller city met with residents from Patton playing music, and began creating a ruckus that lasted into the night. They played games of billiards and generally sowed excitement. Celebrating what the bill allowed, they showed flagrant disregard for the dress code, wearing disapproved shirts and pants. This was all the culmination of a week-long escalation of excitement in Moffet, particularly revolving around a certain Counselor John, and his popularity within Patton City.

## **Justice William C. Mims**

*-Kenneth Lucas, Henry City; Paul Manetto, Nimitz City*



The guest speaker yesterday was former Virginia Supreme Court Justice William Mims. To say justice Mims is a notable character in Virginian history is an understatement. He is the only person in Virginian history to hold office in all three branches of government: a former member of the house of delegates and senate, the 2009 attorney general, and a Virginia supreme court justice from 2010-2022. He is known for his advocacy in mental health reform, higher education finances, and an upstanding career as a fair and just public servant who upheld the ideals of the constitution. I was given the opportunity to sit down with justice Mims to discuss his career and beliefs regarding justice in our society.

## **What Is the Most Important Principle in the U.S. Constitution?**

As I said earlier, the most important principle in the Constitution is the *rule of law*. That principle is fundamental—it's what holds everything together. When the Constitution was first adopted in 1787, it wasn't about equality or freedom. Those ideas were central to the *Declaration of Independence*, but the Constitution itself

was more about survival—holding the country together after the Articles of Confederation failed. The framers knew it was imperfect. They didn't believe they were creating a flawless document for the ages; they believed they were creating something that could keep America functioning. But it had serious flaws. First, it didn't guarantee freedom or equality. Second—and most critically—it failed to address the sin of slavery. That unresolved issue led, eventually, to the Civil War.

### **What Is Justice? How Do You Know If Something Is Fair?**

Justice is best understood as *fairness*. And fairness means looking at things from another person's perspective—putting yourself in their shoes and asking, “Would I believe this process was fair?” Our Constitution favors fairness over perfection. It's designed to minimize the chances of convicting an innocent person—even if that means some guilty people may go free.

### **What Makes a Good Life?**

David Brooks, in *The Road to Character*, talks about two sets of values:

**Résumé values:** Grades, titles, awards—things that help you get jobs or promotions.

**Eulogy values:** Who you were as a person. How you treated others. Whether you made the world better.

A good life is not about being remembered for your achievements, but for how you helped people. You don't need a high-ranking title to make a difference in your community, school, or family.

### **College Day**

-Rydell Wilkins, *Washington City* & William Hoosier, *James City*



Yesterday was college day at Radford for Virginia Boys State. Over 40 colleges from around the nation came to the events yesterday. Colleges ranging all the way from UVA to the Air Force Academy. Two colleges absolutely stood out with the mass amount of people. Hampden-Sydney and Virginia Tech both managed to stand out of the crowd with the Hampden-Sydney spokesperson (second picture) using a catching promise of money with him saying “Do you want 100 grand”? Where he would then give you insight about a scholarship you can receive by just being at Boys State. On the other hand, Virginia Tech captivated students with a Spokesperson (first picture, left man) who would answer any question about applications from anyone where when asked “What is most important about a

college applications” he responded “The most important thing is the court work you have out of high school which means your taking your AP, DE, and honor classes.” One student, James Song (first picture, right), who immediately after being given advice by The VT spokesperson said “College day was great. I loved the variety of colleges here and I loved the information with it being especially helpful when the advice is given one on one and the advice helping change my perspectives on college.”



### **Sounds Of Freedom:**

### **The Final Melody: a farewell of Honor from the Heart of Boys State.**

*-Felix Garcia, Burke City*

Last night, the Boys State band and choir gave their final official performance in a heartfelt tribute to the Armed Forces. The ceremony, filled with solemnity and gratitude, featured patriotic hymns, choral harmonies, and moments of profound silence.

It was more than just a performance—it was a farewell to a tradition that for years gave soul and rhythm to the program. For many, it was also a living lesson in respect, unity, and legacy.

**“We sang as if it were the last time... because it was. But also as if it were the most important.”**

Though the music may stop, the echo of this final melody will live on in every participant who witnessed this historic farewell.





## A Song for the Future: An Exclusive Interview with Mr. Demas Boudreaux

*-Felix Garcia, Burke City*

At the heart of Boys State—amid flags, speeches, and decisions—a special harmony echoes through Boys State. It is the collective voice of over fifty young men, led by someone who guides not only their notes, but also their spirit.

Chaplain and Choir director, the interviewee shares how he balances the spiritual with the civic: “it’s not about separating, but integrating. The values we promote here are deeply spiritual as well.”

In an event shaped by diversity, his approach is clear: include without imposing. “**I use language that everyone can understand. We don’t speak of doctrines, we speak of humanity**” he says. In doing so, he builds bridges in every interdenominational service

His role as choir director was unexpected, yet welcomed. “Someone said, ‘Do you know music? We need you.’ And I said yes.” Since then, he has led the group through solemn acts and patriotic ceremonies, facing challenges like limited time and emotional pressure.

To him, the choir is a living metaphor for democracy: “**every voice matters. Harmony is built by listening to one another - just like true leadership.**”

Both roles intertwine. “**As chaplain, I care for the soul; as director, I awaken it,**” he

says. And with every song, he strives to leave a lasting imprint.

His final message to the youth is simple but powerful: “**You are not alone. Your voice matters. You can be the kind of leader who lifts others up.**”

For this leader, Boys State is more than an event. It is, as he describes it, “**an incubator of hope.**” After all, Boys State is shaping the leaders of tomorrow - today.



*Demas Boudreaux, Choir Director and Chaplain for Boys State 2025*

## The Governor’s Bills

*-Camden Fowler, Burke City*

During the legislation period, the House of Delegates and Senate were tasked with voting on the three bills written by the Governor. In the House, Governor’s Bill No. 1 was amended, as the bill was blank. The contents of the bill were only included in the title and the bill itself only defined what a First Responder is, without stating the changes of the bill. The amendment agreed to copy and paste the title into the bill

itself and passed in the House, allowing the bill to address the mental health of First Responders to move on. However, Bill No. 2, the bill aimed at mandating transportation be provided so that students can attend classes that their school does not offer, failed. Some of the delegates argued that similar programs already exist and that a bus driver shortage is already present in the state. Governor's Bill No. 3, the Boys State Bill that mandates 2-ply toilet paper and hand soap be present in all bathrooms, failed to pass. Some delegates suggested amendments to the bill, some of these ideas included: **removing access to bathrooms entirely, providing "0-ply toilet paper", supplying soap but not letting any citizens use it**, to name a few.

## IMPEACHMENT?

*-Camden Fowler, Burke City*

Not long after Thursday's inauguration, controversy already began to ensue. The Governor, James (Jay) Fuller is under fire for allegedly lying to the citizens of Boy's State. After voting on his bills, the House of Delegates proposed to impeach the Governor (the 3rd year in a row). However, the grounds to impeach him are almost nonexistent, with vague rumors of him having his shirt untucked or rolling down a hill being the majority of dirt the House had on him. Some delegates claimed he "stole their hearts" as evidence of theft from the Governor. Within ten minutes of the proposition, the delegates (ChatGPT) drafted impeachment papers that passed in both the House of Delegates and Senate. Despite this, the odds that "justice" will be served to the Governor is unlikely as there are only a few hours left of Boys State. Friday was full of chants to impeach the Governor, yet real evidence of his wrongdoing is sparse. If the Governor was removed from his position, the Lieutenant

Governor Zachary Johnson would likely inherit the title.



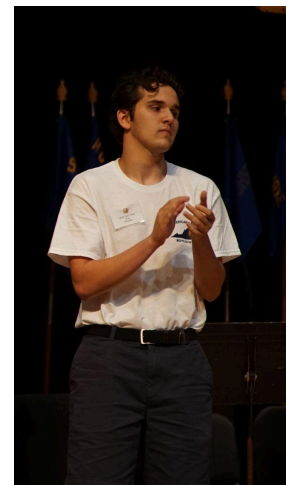
## Litty, Turnt Functions

*- Javier Garcia, Bradley City*

"Breh, on everything we gettin' turnt," one of the citizens proclaimed. Today, all of the cities hosted their own graduation parties in celebration of completing the Virginia Boys State Program. Cities have been warned to be responsible but still have fun...Although, as a reporter, I had to search for interesting news.

A huge congratulations to all of the citizens of Boys State that made it through the long and treacherous week. While prowling through the streets for any interesting events, I came across citizens the happiest I've seen them.

When passing the Bradley Commons, there were wrestling matches, intense games of tag, and a competitive tournament of Sharks and Minnows taking



place. Songs ranging from Travis Scott's "FE!N" to Arizona Zervas' were being blasted on speakers.

"I think I've never felt more connected to my brothers in my city this whole week."



*Bradley city group picture before graduation*

## **Facts and Logic: Moot Court Final**

- Enoch Tan, Eisenhower City



Five days of prep, no sleep, and well-developed arguments culminated in the Boys State Moot Court final between Washington (prosecution) and Eisenhower (defense). This final was performed in front of the entire body of citizens with the newly sworn in supreme court justices acting as judges. In *Swift v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, teams had to argue whether the defendant, Joseph Swift, (a). knew whether he had an illegal amount or type of drugs and (b). if so, intended to distribute these drugs.

For the case to be won, reasonable doubt for Swift's guilt had to be established or dispelled by the respective teams.

Eisenhower posited that certain illegal materials within Swift's leased house may not have been within his knowledge while Washington argued that Joe's unemployment and unaccounted wealth together proved that he was using illicit methods to gain wealth.

In the end, Eisenhower took the win but props to all teams who participated. Your dedication and public speaking skills are admirable and you should continue to develop them!



## **Journalist Signout!**

- *Enoch Tan, Eisenhower City*

Hey everyone! Throughout this week at Boys State,. While some citizens take center stage with strategic campaigns and rousing speeches, your editors have been working diligently to report on local events, write articles, and keep you informed. I would like to shout out our editor Wilson Lucas. He has shown up to every single meeting, organized our team of reporters, and stayed up deep into the night to ensure the newspaper gets printed with quality content. While he may work discreetly, leadership isn't always big and loud. Let's show our newspaper team some love!

*Wilson Lucas - Henry City*

*Thank you Journalists and Counselors. You'll notice I only have two articles in all of our papers. This is the sign of a good team. A team that was reliable and efficient in their work. A team that never left loose ends in their writing for me to finish. Furthermore, thank you Mr. Hillman and Collin, our counselors. You guys didn't just make the newspaper process easy, but were role models for all of us. Thank you to all who created and read the Statesman Daily*

*Enoch Tan, Eisenhower City*

*Thanks to the newspaper team! I was expecting to stay up until 3am but we only went until 2:30 at the latest. This program motivated me to open my eyes to all the amazing things happening around me and, despite the lack of sleep, enhanced my experience to the point I can't imagine the camp without it. I hope you enjoyed our*

*stories and will continue to live out your own by God's grace!*

*Camden Fowler, Burke City*

*Thank you to Mr. Hillman for being the GOAT. Sorry Bristol for getting back in the middle of the night while you were asleep 🥱🙏. (I started the trend of addressing roommates, everyone else copied me btw) Thanks readers for being interesting so we could write stuff.*

*Felix Garcia, Burke City*

*This is the writer for Sounds of Freedom. I arrived here feeling scared, not knowing why I'd been chosen, and after a full week, I still don't know. But what I do know is that I found friendship at the Statesman Daily. Thank you, Boys State, for this unforgettable week.*

*(P.S I was going to apologize to my roommate for coming in late but it turns out the man was still awake even after I got here. Actually, he was the reason I couldn't sleep in the first place. Not only do you snore, bro ... you talk in your sleep too. So yeah, thanks for everything but honestly, I lost more sleep because of you than because of the newspaper.)*

*Om Chhibber- Gravely City*

*Oh boy, oh boy... Where do I even begin? But in all seriousness, I want to take this opportunity to thank all those that supported me throughout my time here at Virginia Boys State. If it weren't for my friends at Gravely City, I would not be here typing for the newspaper nor be a delegate. Boys State has taught me many valuable lessons, the most important being how to overcome adversity and how I can take these lessons and be the*

*best version of myself. I learned to make new friends in a new environment, but also learned to have fun as well. {he's from Georgia!}*

William Hooser, James City

*I love the Daily House. Thank you for the opportunity to see the daily house on my screen for 2 straight hours at night from 10:30 P.M to 12.30 A.M. #im*

Nathan Heineman

*I will take what I have learned here to usurp the current leader of my school's journalism club. Thank you Mr. Hillman for this tactical knowledge.*

Javier Garcia, Bradley City

*Thank you, Mr. Hillman, for keeping me on my feet whenever you said the most out-of-pocket statements. You have been such a great supervisor for the program. That's what I love about this club; it gave me the opportunity to calm down at the end of the day and debrief. My favorite quote from the newspaper meetings is: "Must've been the wind." Staying up until 1 A.M. has been very tough, but God bless Celsius and America. (PSA: Sorry to my roommate, Emmitt, for coming back to the dorm at 1 A.M. every day.)*

W. Joel Simpson, Marshall City

*Thank you again to everybody in Marshall City, Mr. Hillman, my colleagues at The Statesman Daily, Delegates of the best House ever assembled, and most of all*

*to my family, who are reading from home every day.*

Rydell Wilkins, Washington City

*Thank yall for reading the newspaper this week! You guys are all amazing; be proud of all of your hard work and accomplishments and have an amazing Senior year Class of 2026.*

## **Journalism Tips**

- *Reporters, Boys State VA 2025*

To future reporters and editors, here are the best tips we've compiled from this year's editors!

- Make a spreadsheet of your elected city offices so you don't have to message people for their names.
- Use the voice memo app on your phone to get direct quotes for interviews.
- It's better to have too many articles and cut some down, then to not have enough and stretch it.
- Let your roommate know that you'll probably arrive after midnight
- Plan when to take your showers during the day, because you won't have any time once you come back at night, and you won't have enough time in the morning since you'll wake up very late. I prefer to shower after dinner because that's when you'll have the most time.

### **Thank You to Our News Director and Counselor**

This entire newspaper would not be possible without the supervision, assistance, and humor of Mr. Hillman, the Newspaper Supervisor. Mr. Hillman is the Senior Vice-Commander of Post 143 in Georgia, but still chooses to come to Virginia Boys State after his work at Georgia Boys State. Mr. Hillman is a Naval Veteran, with a life so full of experiences and adventures we wouldn't have time to print the paper tonight if we included them. Mr. Hillman, the news team of Boys State is greatly indebted to you and offers our gratitude for volunteering your time to make our week brighter. Thank you for staying up with us until 1 a.m. Thank you for your light hearted humor that kept the nights bright. Most importantly, thank you for your life guidance. Your stories and advice have cut a path in the tangled forest that is our future. You are truly leading a generation. Thank you for your service, dedication, and trust in us and our path to continuing this great nation. We will never forget your words "If you don't like what you are doing, do something about it or shut up."

### **Thank You to Our Media Director**

Collin Lee made not just the media of this newspaper, but the entire Boys State week possible with his work as our media director. He is a graduate of Boys State and Nation, just a few years ago. Collin now serves as a counselor and head of the media team for Virginia Boys State. He helped with interviews and embodies a look into our futures as former Boys States Citizens. Thank you Collin, for your caring personality and relentless effort in giving us an educational and enjoyable Boys State.



## **Letter from the Editor**

- *Kenneth Lucas, Henry City*

I came here expecting the unexpected. Like many of my peers here at Boys State, I have a rigorous schedule and workload at home. This past year was especially challenging, as I faced more AP classes, a higher level of athletics, and greater extracurricular responsibilities than ever before. Despite my successes and triumphs over these challenges, I felt drained and empty. I lost purpose and intent with what I was doing; I lost a love for many things I once held dearly. This was a new place for me. I desperately searched for outlets through familiar things like biking, music, and friends; but, they quickly depleted from any fulfillment they once brought me and I fell back into the same inescapable numbing until it came time to leave for Boys State. Sitting in that unfamiliar lounge on that strange Sunday afternoon, I made an impulsive decision: I raised my hand for the newspaper. Having no prior experience in a newspaper, I quickly realized I was underqualified for the job. Yet, the revitalization I experienced in my mental state from the initial election caused me to double down and run for editor. I wanted the job because I didn't know what to expect, it was an unfamiliar opportunity to do something new. By no means did I do this myself. The reason I was able to function in an unfamiliar setting was because of the unwavering trust my journalists gave me. It was their exceptional reporting skills and Mr. Hillman's tactful experience and lighthearted humor that made the job easy. They don't realize it, but they greatly guided

me in leading them. It was this environment of commoderation and effort that made the job not just easy, but enjoyable. Throughout the week, I received a great amount of sympathy from other citizens for the late nights that often extended past 2am. However, in reality, I enjoyed the work. I loved hearing the headlines of the day and conducting interviews with the guest speakers; I loved telling stories. Boys State taught me a lot about politics and government, but I learned more about people and fulfillment. I **was given** the opportunity to interview Attorney General Jason Miyares, our most esteemed guest of the week. Miyares was respectful and answered the questions with thought. I can't thank him enough for his time and consideration, but he stuck to his political agenda; I knew the answers before I asked the questions. I also interviewed writer and speaker Jason Wright and former Virginia Supreme Court Justice William Mims. I had conversations with them, not interviews. They communicated on a personal level, expressing their ideas not as truths, but as personal beliefs, and being vulnerable with their uncertainties. They're fulfilled by never being content. It's the recognition that perfection is impossible, but the consistent determination to be as close to perfect as you can be in our actions, decisions, and character that leaves you fulfilled. I couldn't remain in my cycle of monotony and normal and expect to have a better life. Thank you Boys State for breaking this cycle and providing me with a new experience in my life. "I advise you, we cannot remain as we are" (Stolen from Plato but nevertheless true).

