



The Mountaineer



LEARNING TODAY...

LEADING TOMORROW

Volume 72
Issue 6

June 20th,
2009



Behind the Scenes with Steve Sluss

By Marcus Constantino

Boys State is a week-long camp for the elite of upcoming seniors in West Virginia. However, the planning, administration, and preparation for Boys State is a year-long process. Steve Sluss, administrator of Mountaineer Boys State, has the great responsibility of coordinating the program, along with performing his duties as in-house attorney and chief deputy to the assessor. This is his 32nd year of being involved in Boys State – and in the first, he was a citizen here. He began as a junior counselor and worked his way to the camp administration. “It’s a year round project, but all of us bring it all together. We’ll have a follow-up meeting on this camp in July and then we’ll start planning next year’s camp within a couple of months.” When asked what his favorite part of Boys State is, Sluss replied, “The most fun for me is watching the guys getting into running their government and watching how they can make a difference.”

Mr. Sluss may be the administrator, but he’ll be the first to tell you that organizing Boys State is far from a one-man job. “This is a team effort. A lot of people put a lot of effort into this.” Every year, the administrators try to improve Boys State based on surveys filled out by the citizens. Then, the administrators collaborate and decide upon what needs to be done different next year. They try to bring out new ideas every year. “Just because that’s the way they’ve always done something, doesn’t mean that’s the way we’ll continue to do it.”

All citizens received an application to be a counselor next year, and Mr. Sluss encourages all citizens to consider the opportunity. “It’s a lot of work from the counselor’s point of view, but it’s a lot of fun and it’s rewarding.”

Ferocious Kocsis

By Alex Bolano

Yesterday I was lucky enough to get the chance to sit down and speak with Randall, Kocsis Assistant Director of the American Legion Mountaineer Boys State.

MBS: So, Mr. Kocsis, what did you do when you were a citizen at Boys State?

RK: I was a citizen in 1979. I had a sincere interest in pursuing a Law Enforcement career. I was a Boys State Trooper, in the Boys State Color Guard, and I also ran for the position of sheriff of Panhandle cottage under the nickname “Ferocious Kocsis.”

MBS: Why have you stayed at Boys State for so long?

RK: I believe in the principles of the American Legion; God and country. This program gives me the opportunity to positively influence three hundred to four hundred young men annually in regards to God and country, with the hopes that those young men will return to their communities and make their communities, the state, and the country better for all of us.

MBS: Do you have any advice for the citizens?

RK: Be proud of having attended Boys State. Return to your communities and lead by example. Do not be embarrassed to place your hand over your heart and lead others in the singing of the national anthem in public venues such as sporting events.

THE PEOPLE IN GRAY

*By Mark Byers, Senior Counselor, Lewis Cottage, 2004
Revised By Betty Ann Williams, Headquarters Director, 2005*

By the time you get here, we've been here a day, the people in gray. Some of us started work on this year's program before last year's ended. Some meet at least once a year at a remote location to improve the program to make it a better learning experience for you. Some of us invest a great deal of our personal time to put together programs that attempt to make the complexities of the law and budgets and government a simple, enjoyable experience for you. We do it because of our love of for this program, we do it for you.

Who are we, the people in gray? We're veterans who fought in wars you've only read about. We're lawyers, engineers, teachers, businessmen, bus drivers, technicians, and students. Some of us are high school students only a year older than you are. We come from as far away as Illinois, Southern Virginia, Florida, and from as close as Weston and Buckhannon. We take vacation and schedule our early summer around you, so important is your cause. We're volunteers.

The Saturday before you come, we come, the people in gray. Some of us haven't seen each other for a year: each greeting is a family reunion. Old friends who come together for this program and for you, embrace and honor the friendships forged here years or even decades ago. Pleasantries are exchanged, then the business of your week discussed. While you're having a last night with your families and friends, we're working with our Boys' State family to make sure we're ready for you. After the meetings, we eat and visit and catch up on a year's worth of news, knowing that time is precious once you arrive. We vote for the Weston Fire Department Flame Queen with our change. Pizza hut loves the people in gray.

The day you get here, we've been up for hours, the people in gray. Nametags and shirts and medical forms and rosters and blue books and handbooks are stacked and sorted and labeled and ready: ready for you. Counselors in cottages stand ready to receive you and your families, our gray shirts fresh to impress upon your parents that you will be in good hands. We receive you in all your forms: on foot, on crutches, in wheelchairs, with special needs or otherwise, there is nothing we cannot handle, even if you forget your physical forms (which you always do). You come in all sizes, colors, and creeds. You come with baggage, both physical and emotional. Some of you have never been away from home before. We answer a thousand questions for the thousandth time. You're silent and shell-shocked. We smile.

During the week, we make your day, the people in gray. We direct, correct, guide, answer, demonstrate, announce, and teach. Forms and ballots and schedules and the things you need each day appear as if by magic. While you're in classes or doing athletics, caucusing, or assembling, we're making sure the next thing you need, will be right when you need it. If you are up at 0600 we are up at 0530 or earlier. If you're in bed at 2400 we're in bed at 0100 or later. If you're tired we're more so. The people in gray will sleep when we get home: right now you're more important.

When you leave, we'll linger, the people in gray. There will be tearful goodbyes fueled by a sense of accomplishment of having taken 400 strangers and molded them into teams of bright young men with a greater knowledge and appreciation for America. You'll be on the road back home and we'll be embracing, relieved that it's over, but not wanting it to end. We drag our feet, trying to get in that one last personal contact that we didn't make because we were busy serving you. We meet at the Wendy's in Weston so we can have those last moments together and to bask in the glow of our love for this program and each other. Eventually we'll say our goodbyes and resolve to return another day... as the people in gray.



*Special thanks to the staff, sponsors, speakers, and instructors
who made this week at Boys State possible.*

College Fair

By Brent Bailey- Editor

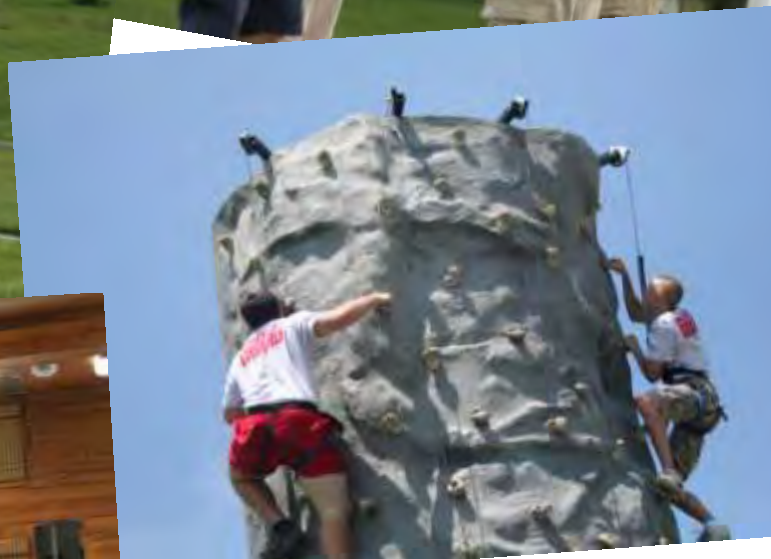
Friday afternoon, the citizens of Boys State had the opportunity to visit with representatives from multiple colleges and organizations around the state. Boys Staters “are the best of the crop of West Virginia,” said Ryan Boyd, a representative from WVU and former Boys State citizen, adding that WVU wants “to be sure, as the state’s land grand institution...that we get out there and they know our programs.” Matt Shiftlett, a 1991 Boys State Citizen and the associate director of admissions at Alderson Broaddus, said that the decision to visit Boys State was easy, “knowing how much I enjoyed the time that I was here.” The citizens of Boys State readily took advantage of this opportunity- “I think it’s a great way to see a large variety of colleges that helps me decide where I might go in the future,” said Grant Noel from Calhoun.

Concord University
Davis and Elkins College
West Liberty University
Glenville State
Marshall University
University of Charleston
Salem University
Mountain State University
Bethany College
Fairmont State University
Alderson Broaddus College

FBI
Drug Enforcement Agency
West Virginia Wesleyan College
West Virginia State Police
WVU Institute of Technology
Wheeling Jesuit University
West Virginia University
Bridgewater College
Wabash College



Don't forget to check out Mountaineer Boys State on the web. at www.mountaineerboysstate.org. You can also check us out on facebook (search for Mountaineer Boys State) or find us on www.twitter.com/wvboysstate.

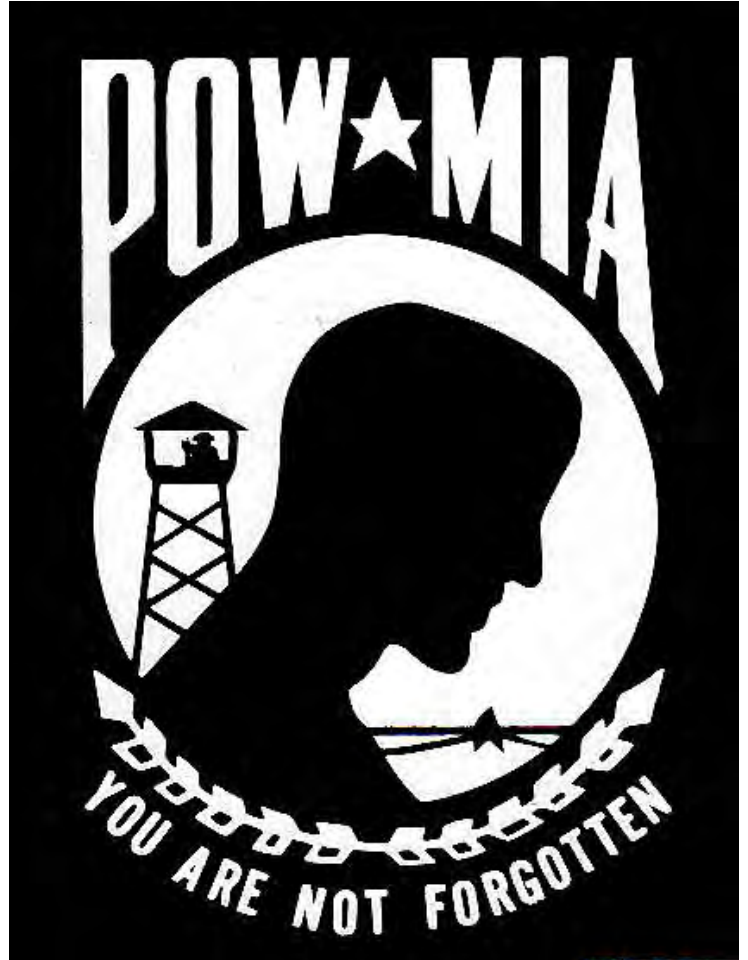


POW/MIA Recognition Day

By Brent Bailey

POW/MIA recognition day is the third Friday in September. It was chosen to salute all prisoners of war and soldiers who have gone missing in action, and a flag was created with it to bring recognition to unreturned soldiers- that flag is now officially a national flag. On this day there are ceremonies throughout the nation for remembrance of the fallen or unreturned, so as not to let the public forget. Our own West Virginia American Legion has created its own day, the American Legion Family Salute to All Veterans Past and Present, which is held September 19th at Holly Gray Park in Flatwoods. It is a remembrance and tribute to all veterans, past and present. The event was started by the West Virginia detachment of the Sons of the American Legion as something to promote the American Legion family and, according to our very own Bill Diedrich, an SAL member, it's "something to promote the American Legion family and educate the public that we're more than just a legion post in their town. It has ceremonies similar to the empty table Boys State witnessed earlier this week, a field of white crosses, and behind that, 25 POW/MIA flags for the 25 West Virginia men who went missing during Vietnam and were never recovered. There is American Legion literature available, a pavilion with memorabilia from all wars, and a replica a prisoner of war cage from Vietnam. All funds received at this event go towards the West Virginia Children's Hospital and the Legacy Fund (scholarships for children of soldiers killed in service of their country), both of which are American Legion programs. Ceremonies are from 10 to 2, and all Boys State citizens are welcome and encouraged to attend and honor the men who gave everything for their country.

Thanks to Bill Diedrich for providing the information necessary for this article.



Anyone interested in the service academies:

West Point
US Naval Academy
US Air Force Academy
US Merchant Marine Academy
US Coast Guard Academy

Contact: COL Bob Marshall, Ret
USMA Field Force
(724)-612-7614
bob.munhall@att.net

Be sure to tell him that you attended Mountaineer Boys State.

The Mountaineer

WV Scholar Finalist Needs Your Help!

MAX GARNER—Fellow Boys State Attendee is one of 12 finalists for the WV Scholar Competition

This Scholarship Awards one full scholarship to West Virginia Wesleyan. This phase of the contest is a public on-line vote which runs from June 10 to midnight on June 21. This segment accounts for 1/3rd of the candidate's criteria to be considered by the award selection committee.



To vote, please visit:

www.wvscholar.com or

www.wvmetronews.com

View video & voice recorded interviews of each finalist

This Scholarship is made possible by Sponsors including: WV Radio Corp, Friends of Coal, Energize West Virginia, West Virginia Health Care Association, West Virginia Directors of Senior and Community Services and West Virginia Wesleyan College

Max is an incoming senior at Bridgeport High School, maintains over a 4.0 GPA, is active in Marching Band, MHS Swim Team, has earned an Academic Letter and lamps, and is a member of the National Honor Society. He also swims for out local YMCA; attended Y Nationals in Fort Lauderdale, and is a member of USA Swimming. He is an active member of the Bridgeport United Methodist Church and enjoys youth group activities. He is also an avid musician.

We appreciate your support!

~The Garner Family

Cottage Articles

Wet Randolph

By David Tennant

The Randolph cabin was in a sea of rain on Friday. The rain was pouring, causing any citizen of the cabin to be drenched as soon as they got to their second step on the porch. Ponchos couldn't even keep the citizens dry. It was dangerous to walk outside because there was lightning flashing whenever you didn't expect it. The rain made a melody that made everyone in the Randolph cabin to want to sleep in their beds, but it was before inspection time, so they were unable.

Introducing the Lewis County 5K

By Ryan Turner

Yesterday marked the first official Lewis County 5 K. Though it may not be an actual 5 K (3.2 miles), its difficulty is almost equal. But before I get into the rules, let me explain the background of the LC5K.

So, while we were waiting to go back inside, I realized I forgot something that I really needed, but wasn't allowed inside to get it. So I returned to the group and started joking around that I was going to run into the cabin, holding my breath, grab what I needed, and run down the fire escape. This is where the LC5K began. The rules of the LC5K have been changed a few times.

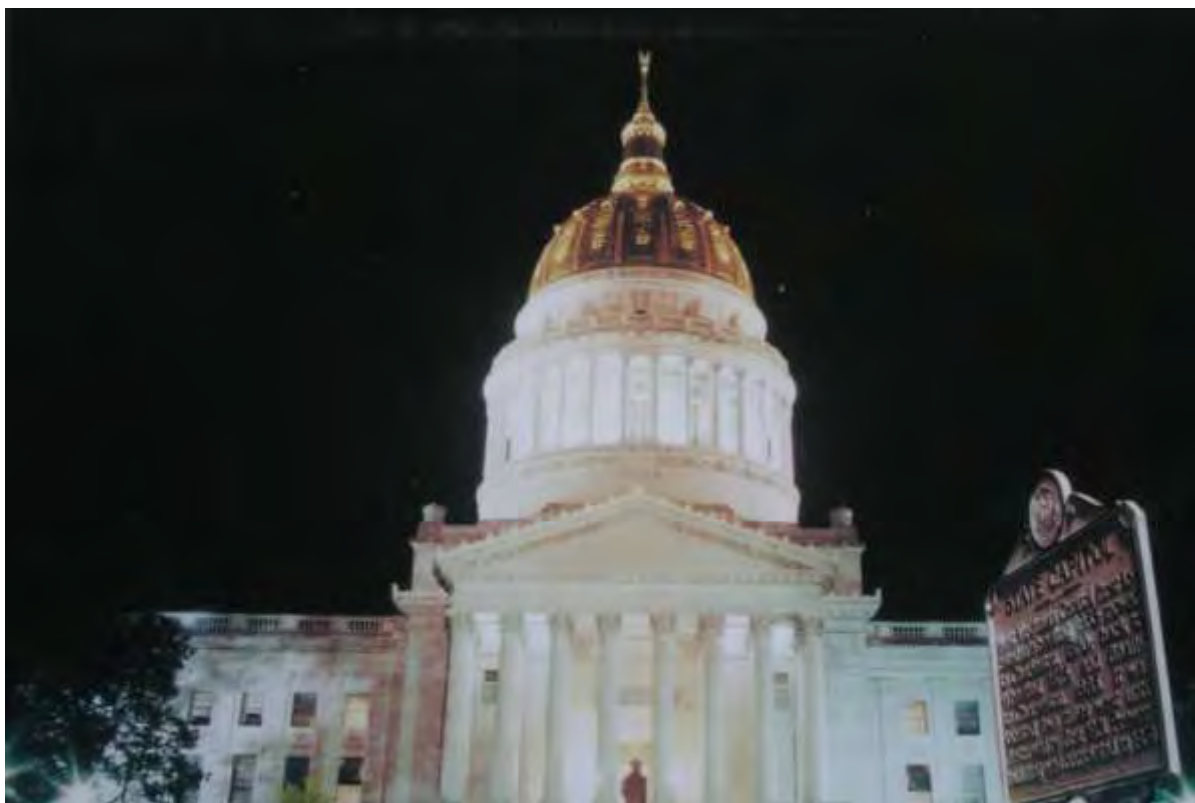
Once everyone has run the course, their times are recorded, and the winner is determined, the winner receives a trophy that Lane Horter and I purchased Thursday night at the General Store next to our cabin. The trophy has been named the Lewis County 5 K Trophy, obviously, and it displays Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson standing with his right arm on his chest and his left arm behind his back.

Randolph's New Teacher

By David Tennant

The Board of Education of Randolph County held a meeting to find a new teacher. Dillon Carden was appointed to become a teacher for grades 9 through 12 in Randolph. He was overjoyed to be a math teacher for the City of Elkins. He claims that his experience with math is the reason that that he was hired as a teacher.

Carden had to interview with the Board of Education to get the job in order for the members of the Board to understand Carden's qualities. This process was completed quickly in the Randolph cabin.



West Virginia Day is Today!

**Today is the day West Virginia became a state.
Get out there and honor your West Virginia
heritage!**

Group Pictures



The Mountaineer Boys State National Guard *Photo by Christopher Ho.*



The Bank Staff



The Newspaper Staff

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

6:45 – Reveille and clean quarters

7:50 – INFORMATION AT DINING HALL

7:55 – FLAG RAISING

8:00 – BREAKFAST

8:30 – 9:15 – Clean quarters and prepare for FINAL INSPECTION and departure.

All luggage and belongings must be removed from the interior of all cottages and deposited on any cottage's covered porch, the Assembly Hall porch or the interior of the West Virginia building.

9:30 – FINAL ASSEMBLY (Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend) in Exhibition Hall; Presentation of awards, honors and closing comments.

11:00 – ADJOURNMENT

**HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME AND BEST WISHES
IN YOUR FUTURE ENDEAVORS!**

Menu

Yum!!!

<i>Breakfast</i>
Sausage Gravy
Biscuits
Hot and Cold Cereal
Bananas and Apples
Orange Juice
Milk

Yum!!!

We would like to thank every Boys State citizen for allowing us to watch and document this incomparable experience. It's been a long week, but one we, and hopefully all of you, will never forget. Special thanks to Betty Ann Williams and Amanda Sluss for working many late nights, without them The Mountaineer would not have been possible.

Thanks,
The Newspaper Staff

ATHLETICS!!!

Ultimate Frisbee

Game 1—Marion

Game 2—Panhandle

Softball

**Game 1 – Tie—Lewis (N) and
Kanawha (F)**

**Game 2—Tie—Monroe (F) and
Randolph (N)**

Volleyball

Area 1

Game 1—Upshur

Game 2—Kanawha (N)

Area 2

Game 1—Calhoun

Game 2—Lewis (F)

Basketball

Game 1—Gilmer (Randolph

**Lewis BEAT Barbour in the
Tug-of-War Championship!!!!**

But then LOST to the COUNSELORS!