



Gov. Tomblin Inspires RGS Citizens

By Isabella Malone & Julia Mellett, both of Northern Panhandle

Having West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin come speak at the 2014 Rhododendron Girls State was not only a blessing, but a privilege to all ambassadors.

"[My purpose for attending Girls State is] to congratulate all the young women from all across the state of West Virginia who are here attending Rhododendron Girls State.

"It's a great program especially to know that almost all the girls are leaders at their schools and in their communities.

"It gives them a chance to interact, gives them a chance to learn a little bit more about politics, holding office, how to do campaigns, and so forth.

"So, it's just a real experience for all the young women here today," he said.

Although he has only attended one other session here at Girls State, he has already made a large impression on the candidates and citizens.

Governor Tomblin addressed the 18 governor candidates with advice about campaigning and how to properly hold an office.

"[My advice for the young women running for Governor is to] just campaign hard, just continue to go out there, smile a lot, make sure you speak to everybody, and don't be ashamed to ask for their support.



Director Michelle Sirbaugh, WV Governor Earl Ray Tomblin & RGS Governor Chantel Kidd.

"A lot of times we're a little timid, but just say, 'I need your help,' and have a good platform. Think of something. People want you to be their governor," he said.

Governor Tomblin attended Mountaineer Boys State in 1969 and claimed the title of Mountaineer Boys State Sheriff.

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PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS

Governor: Bonnie Walton

Secretary of State: Peyton Panger

Auditor: Sarah Appel

Treasurer: Andrea Pettit

Commissioner of Agriculture: Allyson Royston

Attorney General: Ashley Bruner

Justice of the Supreme Court: Alyssa Al-lowatt, Sarah Cox, Liz Adams, Tori Anderson, Anna Crogan

Governor: Marissa Bailey

Secretary of State: Emma Harrison

Auditor: Kathryn Quillen

Treasurer: Maggie France

Commissioner of Agriculture: Taylor Stewart

Attorney General: Lauren Dea Harris

Justice of the Supreme Court: Genna Liu, Jana El-Khatib, Mackenzie Bosley, Jillian Kinder, Gabrielle Hersey



FEDERALIST



NATIONALIST



RGS Governor Chantel Kidd, WV State Treasurer John Perdue and Ashley Faulkner



Rocky Fox, State Detachment Commande of the Sons of The American Legion

Fox keeps Sons of The American Legion in Line

By Townsend Midcap, Webster

On Tuesday night, Rocky Fox graced the girls of Girls State with his presence and a wonderful speech.

Rocky is the Detachment Commander for the state's Sons of The American Legion.

Rocky Fox became a member of the American Legion in 2000.

He then only moved up from there, becoming a Historian in 2009 and serving in several other positions later on.

Rocky's role in the state's Sons of The American Legion is keeping the SAL in line.

This includes 46 quadrants and 2,875 SAL that he has to watch out for.

The girls of Girls State respect all that you do, Rocky, and we thank you for speaking to us.

Credit Cards, Education & Women *WV State Treasurer Perdue Visits*

By Jess McLain, Calhoun & Mikenna Poling, Upshur

"I see a lot of young women here, but I'm used to that. I have a lot of women in my life," said John Perdue, WV State Treasurer.

He explained his mother, his twin sister, his wife of 39 years and his two daughters have given him "the understanding of women in all kinds of ways," which was very apparent during his speech.

Perdue's advice to all women was to "dream your dream and chase your dream."

His original dream, as a 6'6" tall man was to be a basketball player.

When things didn't work as ex-

pected, his father advised him to do the next best thing; get a college education.

Being interested in pursuing politics, the request seemed reasonable.

While in college, he claimed the nearest town as his home but after his father's second piece of good advice, "never be ashamed of where you come from," he proudly claims the hollow from which he comes as his home.

WV State Treasurer
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ALA volunteers 1,850,000 hours to West Virginia

By Lauren Welsh, Northern Panhandle

Irene Weber spoke to the citizens of Rhododendron Girls State Tuesday, June 10, at 7:30 p.m.

She spoke on the story of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).

Mrs. Weber is an exceptionally passionate member of the ALA Board of Incorporations.

She is the former Director of RGS, where she served for 17 years and is the loving mother of current RGS Director Michelle Sirbaugh.

Mrs. Weber embarked on her ALA journey in 1963, and joined her RGS family shortly after in 1968.

Throughout Mrs. Weber's outstanding speech, she strongly encouraged RGS citizens to volunteer within their communities and join the ALA, to which she referred to as her "Legion Family."

What Mrs. Weber persistently acknowledged was the extensive volunteer hours the ALA contributes to their beloved state.

Statistics show that the ALA reached an impressive total of 1,850,000 volunteer hours as a whole.



Irene Weber

Hall, RGS Light Beacon for POW/MIA

By Catelyn Knollinger, Calboun

Freedom doesn't come free.

David Hall, a past department commander discussed the Prisoners Of War (POW), Missing In Action (MIA), and fellow soldiers known as comrades.

As of today, over 88,000 MIA or POW soldiers are yet to be found, and within the 88,000, seventeen are POW or MIA from West Virginia.

Serving as infantry during the Vietnam War, David Hall feels a personal connection with his fellow comrades, the POW and MIA.

In 1984, Hall joined the American Legion and is thankful for what benefits they offer and what they stand for.

For more information on how you can have a role in finding the POW or MIA military visit www.westvirginiastatecouncil.com.



David Hall
Past Dept. Commander

SYMBOLS OF POW & MIA DISPLAY

- Small Table: One prisoner is against all of his/her captors.
- White Table Cloth: the innocence of American Soldiers.
- Red Rose: The bloodshed by those protecting us as well as the tears of their families and friends.
- Red Ribbon: Represents those on the lapels of soldiers.
- Lemon Slice: The bitter fate of POW & MIAs.
- Salt: The callus fallen tears.
- Inverted Glass: Some can never toast again.
- Empty Table: Some are not here now.
- Candle: The light of hope held by both prisoners and families.
- Flag: Those who will never return.

History of the American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary was established by an act of the First National Convention of the American Legion, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 10-12, 1919.

Two years later at the Kansas, Missouri Nov. 1-2, 1921, the First National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary was called to order by Commander John G. Emery.

National officers were elected: a President, five Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Historian and a Chaplain. The name was changed from the Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion to the American Legion Auxiliary and adopted the poppy as the memorial flower.

They created committees and immediately went to work on setting their Departments' in order in every state. Eligible for membership were to be the mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of veterans.

Through the years the organization has expanded to include veterans who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Lebanon, the Panama Canal and the Persian Gulf. Eligible Auxiliary members now are the wives, mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of these courageous veterans.

Junior members are birth to 18 years of age.

Bringing you up to the present in West Virginia, the Auxiliary was first organized in Grafton, WV, on July 20-21, 1922 and at that time there were 14 units and a total membership of 1,011. By the close of the year there were 26 units with a total membership of 1,273.

Today we have 74 units, which are divided into Districts and there are eight districts, each having two conferences a year, in the Spring and in the Fall. There are 9,900 members to date and they assist by volunteering at four medical centers, a veterans nursing home, Barboursville, hosting one comfort item drive and four gift shops at Martinsburg Medical Center, Clarksburg, Beckley and Huntington.

At the state level the Department meetings are held in July and three executive meetings are held each year, in the Fall, the Pre-Convention and the Post-Convention meetings. We have a Mid-Winter Conference jointly with the American Legion in February. We also have an active Junior's group on the state level, who meet in July at the same time as the American Legion Auxiliary.

Over the years, West Virginia has had many honors. We had one member, Mrs. Bowden D. (Ruby) Ward from Kingwood, Unit #56, who served as Na-

tional President in 1955-56. There were seven members of West Virginia who served as Central Division National Vice Presidents, Ruby Ward, Wilma Mayfield, Laverne Davis, Anna Jane Williams, Shirley Davis, Betty Rea and Irene Weber. One member served as National Historian, Diane McClung from Mineral Wells.

There is much more I could say but I want to arouse your interest and curiosity and hope you will join our organization and keep on helping our veterans.

As Ruby Ward, Past National President, trademark poem said:

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do and what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do.

This brings us to the present National President, Carlene Ashworth's theme, "Power of One."

You, my friends and my future, are the "Power of One."

Thank you and God bless.



Donna Ray Speaks at RGS

By Sydney Pander, Braxton

American Legion Auxiliary Central Division National Vice President Donna Ray, delivered some inspiring words at the 72nd session of Rhododendron Girls State, hosted at Wheeling Jesuit University this past Monday, June 9, at 6 p.m.

An active member of the ALA for 29 years, Ray, enjoys participating in sponsored activities while performing numerous jobs at the VA Medical Centers in the multiple areas she covers, which includes Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Her responsibilities entail speaking at sponsored conventions, pushing membership for the American Legion Auxiliary, and most importantly, inspiring others to feel a sense of pride for this nation while forming friendships.

“You are what make me feel like there’s hope in this nation,” said Ray, as she elaborated upon her own hopes to one day be a national chairman, although she currently serves as the holiday committee chairman.

In a recent interview, Ray claimed that the girls at this year’s RGS each display impressive potential yet need the corresponding confidence with which comes with the fact that “any job you can take, you can make a difference.”

She suggests running for a political position at RGS while putting your “full heart and soul into it.”

Ultimately, the great-grandmother of seven states about each conference she attends “when I come, I learn.”



Donna Ray
American Legion Auxiliary
Central Division National
Vice President

What? No Visors?

And other Adventures in State Gov’t

By Makayla Shaffer, Randolph

Rather than the usual sleepy entrance, girls entered Senator Jack Yost’s State Government class with a handshake and a booming voice.

Yost is from Brooke County and presides over the 1st senatorial district.

As well as his enthusiastic disposition, he also won over students once he had us remove our visors.

Throughout the class, he noted that the Legislature does not get as much credit as they deserve.

The Legislature places the regulations on many things, from the food we eat to the workforce.

Students were also taught how they could reach their local Legislature to address whatever issues concern them.

To reinforce this, he asked the students on what they wish to change about their schools.

Issues included school food, standardized testing, and teacher quality.

We, as students, could lobby the Legislature to try to create change in our

schools.

He then noted that while young people are very interested in politics, but they hardly ever act.

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Senator Jack Yost

Board of Education

Braxton: Caitlin Moxley, Josie Kemper, Rachele Subik, Hannah Hayes, Hannah Wyatt

Calhoun: Hannah Hall, Brianna Lynuch, Brianna Farnsworth, Ashley Stewart, Grace Skidmore

Kanawha: Delena Teets, Jenna Marsh, Rachel

Lewis: Cerria Kendall, Brianna Logston, Callie Riggs, Sarah Settle, Katelyn Benson

Marion: Marissa Bragg, Brandi Buchanan, Jennifer Kinder, Bryanna Munoz, Lauren Cain

Monogalia: Molly Blackwood, Amanda Medovic, Jessica Davis, Alexis Spell

Monroe: Brooklyn Bailey, Hannah Lemaster, Olivia Richardson, Olivia Wilson, Courtney Oran

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City Government Keeps it Running Smooth & Proper

By Erika Utt, Marion



Allison O'Konski

Every single city in every single county in West Virginia needs to be run by a chosen group of officials, the city council, to function smoothly and properly.

Each city council is responsible for hosting public events such as parades, gathering up everyone's taxes to pay for certain services such as cutting down tall grass in city areas, tearing down evacuated and useless buildings,

and paving bumpy and torn up roads, etc.

This is one of the many things you learn about during City Government, run by Allison O'Konski.

During this very informational class, the girls are brought in to learn about all of the positions of leadership and council in their city.

They learn exactly how important each individual

position is, its purpose, and what tasks the person elected to that position will have to perform.

Also during this class, a YouTube video was shown on Wheeling, WV, and its purpose was to teach everyone to take pride in their home city.

The girls were also allowed to ask their own questions at the end of the presentation.

Overall, it was a great learning experience.

WV State Treasurer

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Perdue said from then on he wasn't ashamed of his country home; his father once again had put his insecurities to rest.

After he had his own family, his daughter in college got into trouble, which many can relate to.

Calling "daddy" for "money" was her only option after ending up in credit card debt.

When three months of no interest on a credit card turned into 22.7 percent interest, the bills became too much for a

college kid.

As treasurer, his warning about debt only seemed fitting for a large group of 17-year-old girls.

He ended his speech with an empowerment to all the girls here, "There will be a lady president in our lifetime, if not in the next election."

As a believer in both education and women, Perdue gave us all the courage to "chase our dreams."

Get Involved in County Government

By Ashley Hartzell, Lewis

West Virginia is comprised of 55 subdivisions created by Legislature, known as counties.

Each county is made up of numerous elected officials who are in charge of the different jobs and roles in county government.

Although every county is a separate unit of the overall state government, that all collectively contributes to the maintenance and growth of West Virginia.

Toni Chieffalo, assistant to the Ohio County Clerk, is concerned about the involvement of younger people in county government.

Chieffalo encourages every citizen of Girl State to become more informed and concerned with their county's administration.

"I would suggest that more teens get in touch

with their county's commission and shadow for a day or so in the courthouse," Chieffalo recommends.

"It would give young people the chance to see what the jobs are and what they do."

Some roles of the local and county governments across the state include providing a county sheriff, a Board of Education, as well as taking care of licensing, voting, and birth and death records.

Counties receive funding from primarily property and real-estate taxes, as well as numerous grants.

In conclusion, it is important for West Virginia's youth to become informed and involved in county government.



Toni Chieffalo

Troopers take Social Media by Storm

By Graeson Baker, Marion & Sadie Helmick, Braxton

TA public safety course, ran by Trooper D.R. Meredith and Trooper B.M. Justice, was offered to citizens on Monday and Tuesday at the Acker Science Center.

The class was targeted at the pros and cons of social media, and elaborated on both the benefits and risks that accompany the growing technological world.

In this "arena of social networking," the troopers sug-

gest to balance positive and negative aspects of what you post daily.

Common problems such as bullying, inappropriate messaging, and the threat of the online predators prove to be a danger to teenagers.

However, Trooper Meredith believes that with proper knowledge and being aware and responsible, one can safely interact on social media.



GUARDIAN ANGELS FOR THE WEEK - Trp. D.R. Meredith and Tfc B.M. Justice.

Inspires

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Due to his upbringing in Logan County, an interest in politics from a young age, and JFK as his political role model, Governor Tomblin takes pride traveling around West Virginia and speaking to the newest generation of Girls and Boys State future politicians.

Hitting the High Notes

Girls State Choir excels

By Rachel Gammon, Kanawha

During the 72nd session of the annual Rhododendron Girls State, the chorus continues its tradition of excellence.

For the time I observed the talented ladies, Ashley Brunner, a Citizen of Rhododendron Girls State, was acting as conductor.

With a sort of confidence, which emulates what RGS is, the choir performed "My Home Among the Hills."

The song was both gentle, yet powerful, and all around beautiful.

Jessica Simpson

The song, which I had the privilege to hear, emphasized the grandness of our state and it couldn't have sounded any lovelier than it did coming from these ladies.



Support Comfort Warriors Project

By Hannah Vincent, Kanawha

For years in the past, Rhododendron Girls State has participated in a national service project called the Wounded Warrior Project.

Wounded Warrior is intended to raise awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, assist the wounded, and provide unique, directed programs and service members.

As further research was done The Girls State National program under the American Legion Auxiliary switch to Operational Comfort Warriors after discovering that only 80 percent of the donations go directly to injured troops.

Operation Comfort Warriors is a program dedicated to the needs of wounded, injured, and ill military personnel by providing them with comfort items not usually supplied by the government.

The American Legion Auxiliary made this change during the 2013 Girls State year.

Da Dellinger, a leader of the American Legion Auxiliary, decided we needed to make the change to Comfort Warriors because all the proceeds go to supporting our troops.

You have the opportunity to help a veteran. You can make a donation, or visit a veteran. Support our troops in any way you can. Thank them, and you can make a difference.

Girls State Preps for College

By Jillian Wiseman, Monongalia

Citizens of Girl's State 2014 had the opportunity to learn about the college admissions process and Wheeling-Jesuit University.

Vince Sirianni, a 2001 graduate from Wheeling Jesuit and now admissions counselor, began by teaching about the importance of letters of recommendations, ACT scores, campus visits, personal essays, and interview etiquette.

Above all else, he stressed the point of making friends not only with your high school guidance counselor, but with your college admissions officer as well.

After learning about the admissions process, he taught about life at Wheeling-Jesuit University.

With a little over 1,000 students enrolled, Wheeling-Jesuit is a small school which can focus on the individual development of a person.



Vince Sirianni

Roughly 50 percent of the student population participates in sports, and all teams are very competitive.

Mr. Sirianni helped make the application process for all Girl's State citizens easier, by helping to inform us.

Education

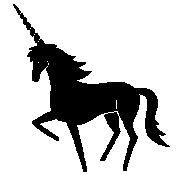
Continued from page 4

Northern Panhandle: Carli Harlan, Taylor Broadwater, Cassity Monkley, Kayla Hizer, Danielle "Nicky" Schlappo

Randolph: Glenna Brown, Lauren Spadafore, Cassidy Taylor, Carly Suplita, Glenna Brown

Upshur: BryAna Stearns, Emily Hicks, Calandra Olenick, Kayla Simon, Sadie Janes

Webster: Alyssa Jones, Amanda Young, Alyssa Johns



Adventures

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West Virginia has one of the lowest demographic of young voters.

With the low amount of young voters, many of our needs cannot be met.

Young people need to channel their concerns and get involved.

At the end of class, I told him I was writing an article for his class in the *Rhododendron Daily* and asked for his input.

He noted just how engaged we were in current events and politics, we just need to get more involved.

If the Shoe Fits: It's Leadership

By Nicole Taylor, Monroe

The citizens of Rhododendron Girls State had the privilege of having Mary Jo Thomas speak about leadership.

During her class she presented what she believes each letter in the word "leadership" stands for.

L is for loyalty. A leader has to be loyal for what they are fighting for.

E is for excellence. You can't have a terrible leader. Leaders try new things and get out in the world.

D is for doesn't give up. Leaders have to fight and never give up.

E is for extra caring. Leaders

have to care for what they believe in.

R is for ready to help. Leaders put others before themselves.

S is for stays calm. Leaders can't overact or panic.

H is for has character. Leaders can't be boring.

I is for strong. Leaders can't be weak.

P is puts up with anyone. Leaders deal with all kind of people.

She told citizens to step up and be a leader today.

"Put on the right pair of 'shoes.' Make sure they fit," she said.



Mary Jo Thomas

Public Speaking Plays a Big Role

By Stephanie Woodrum and Allie Lambert, both of Northern Panhandle

Rhododendron Girls State is held at Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Girls State gives an opportunity to hundreds of juniors in all the counties of West Virginia.

This gives all the girls a week of training and self-improvement in leadership skills and the government ins and outs.

Public speaking plays a big role in everybody's Rhododendron Girls State experience because you get to see many speakers who have accomplished great things in life while developing their own skills.

It was my privilege to be able to interview Rontina

McCann, one of RGS's public speakers.

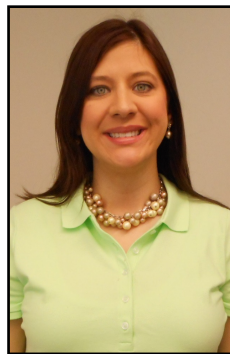
Rontina went to girls state in 1998, she was a Nationalist.

She went to West Virginia University and got a degree in journalism and broadcasting.

She came back to RGS for a second time as a Junior Counselor.

When she came back for the third time she was a Senior Counselor and that is when the staff of RGS asked her if she would teach Public Speaking.

Ever since then Rontina McCann has been coming to RGS for 15 years. Rontina now is a sports reporter for ESPN and etc.



Rontina McCann



Order Photos Online

Girls State citizens have the opportunity to order photos from throughout their week at RGS.

From community or party pictures, to parade or Inauguration photos, a variety of shots are available for purchase at: www.p.wvgirlsstate.org

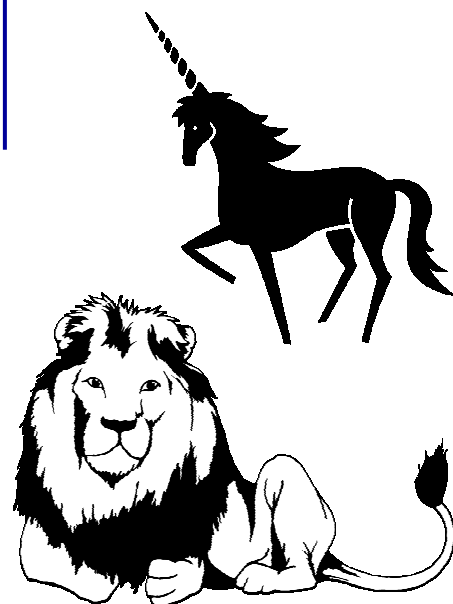
Prices for group photos including Party, Community and Inauguration are 4x6 = \$6.00; 5x7 = \$8.00; 8x10 = \$12.00; Digital Download = \$35.00.

Larger images are also available.

Candid photo prices are 3.5x5 = \$2.00; 4x6 = \$2.00; 5x7 = \$3.00; 8x10 = \$4.00; Digital Download = \$5.00.



Anyone with questions on the site may speak with Director Michelle Sirbaugh or Rontina McCann.



Past Directors & Roomies

Weber, Rea Supports RGS

By Karalee Flobr, Monroe

Irene Weber and Betty Rea, both former directors of Rhododendron Girls' State, returned for 2014 as members of the Board of Incorporators and as roommates.

They both retired from the position after 17 years of service, but that did not stop them from continuing to attend and help with the program.

Irene Weber retired from the director's position after serving from 1997 to 2013.

She was the last director before this year's current director Michelle Sirbaugh, took over her position.

Betty Rea served as director from 1987 to 1995, and she has continued attending



the event since.

Weber and Rea have been making the best of their time by helping out around campus including the Country Store and socializing with other staff members.

**Betty Rea
&
Irene Weber**