http://www.mtymcayouthandgovernment.org/

Montana YMCA Youth & Government Update

January 2007

Bills

Now is the time to begin researching current issues. Some tips to remember:

1. This is a model STATE government program. Look at issues facing Montana.
2. Local newspapers are your best resources. Check those like the Bozeman Chronicle that have searchable websites.
3. Remember to think about the cost of your proposal. Fellow legislators will ask about that in debate on the floor. It is wise to put a "fiscal note" explaining where money will come from!
4. You may work on a bill with ONE co-author. No more than two people may author a bill. If you work together on a bill, you need to work together on TWO… There should be a bill for each delegate in the legislature.
5. Is you are not going to be a legislator, remember to get someone in your delegation (or another one) to sponsor your bill. Better yet, get both a Senator AND a Representative so you have backers in both chambers.
6. Bills in the First Year House will be written and introduced the same as in the House and the Senate. The difference is that if they pass committee and floor debate, they will go right to the Governor.

Conference Dates

May 6-9, 2007

(This year the conference conflicts with *some* AP tests… look at the YAG website to see which ones. Work NOW to make arrangements to take the test in Helena!)

Elections

The following offices will be elected positions chosen this year to serve in 2008:

- Governor/Lt. Governor
- Speaker of the House
- President of the Senate
- Secretary of State
- Chief Justice

Think about running for an office! Anyone who wants to run is free to do so. Each person running needs to fill out a nominating petition when s/he gets to Helena. After that, nominees need to get thirty signatures from delegates in at least four different delegations, and then campaign!

We run a partisan primary (just like a real Montana election); winners go to the General Election. See the article about the partisan system on page 3.

Running for Office

Most people who run for an office decide to do so ahead of time. Some people create fliers and other items to promote their candidacy. There are a few guidelines for this:

- Make posters ahead of time so you can achieve a certain degree of class – a crayon sprawled on a box lid will do in a pinch, but putting some effort in ahead of time will pay off.
- NO TAPE! Do not place any adhesives on any surface in the Capitol. This is an historic building – keep that in mind and respect it always.
- Keep individual handouts (pencils, tokens, etc.) to a nickel a piece or less.

Reminders about running for the Lt. Governor position:

- Candidates run as a team with a Governor candidate.
- Lt. Governor candidates must be from a different delegation than the Gubernatorial candidate.
- The Lt. Governor is the presiding officer of the First Year House, so this is an important job as it introduces the new delegates to the program.

Your 2007 Officers

Governor: Ford Smith, Gardiner
Lt. Governor: Jennifer Hepp, Great Falls
President of the Senate: Ben Underwood, Gardiner
Speaker of the House: Jacques Dupuis, Great Falls
Secretary of State: Sheya Rivard, Livingston
Chief Justice: Gene Riordan, Butte

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Fabulous Prizes!

There are numerous awards available for individuals and delegations who attend the Youth and Government session. Some awards are selected by judges and others are voted upon by the delegates.

Voted Awards:

- Representative of the Year
- Senator of the Year
- First Year Rep of the Year
- Lobbyist of the Year
- Reporter of the Year
- House Page of the Year
- Senate Page of the Year
- Court Page of the Year
- First Year House Page of the Year
- Attorney of the Year

Judged Awards:

- Gold Medal Bills – Top five best-written legislative bills
- Outstanding Briefs – Two awards will be given for the best brief written on each case.

Special Awards:

These awards are given to those who meet the required qualifications for the award:

Lobbyist Pin:

We will present an award to all lobbyists who complete the "official lobbyist" duties outlined in the registration materials.

Outstanding Delegation:

This award is given to those delegations who meet the following criteria:

- Registrations and fees paid in full by May 8.
- Bills, Lobbyist papers, and third party platforms postmarked by their respective due dates.
- Legal briefs turned in, postmarked by due date.
- All rejected bills rewritten and returned by March 30.
- Chaperones at a 1:12 ratio
- Advisors and chaperones volunteering for program-wide tasks during the session
- No code of conduct violations by members of the delegation
- Delegation participation at Y-Night and Banquet

Character

Character Development is an important part of what the YMCA is all about. The YMCA challenge to Youth and Government participants is to accept and demonstrate the positive values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. So what does all this mean? Here are some ideas that may help you decide for yourself:

Caring: • **To love others** • **To be sensitive to the well-being of others** • **To help others**	Responsibility: • To do what you ought to do • To be accountable for your behavior and obligations
Honesty: • To tell the truth • To act is such a way to be worthy of trust • To have integrity; making sure your actions match your values	**Respect:** • **To treat others as you would have them treat you** • **To value the worth of every person, including yourself**

Website

Please use the YAG website located at: http://www.mtymcayouthandgovernment.org/. On the site, you can find:

- Party Platforms
- Forms
- A bill template
- Newsletters
- Rules & Procedures (Manuals)
- Bills (old and new)
- Position Papers
- List of deadlines
- Etc…

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Full Participation

All delegations are expected to "fully participate" in the program. To do so, please try your best to do the following:

- Submit Committee Chair or Vice Chair applications for at least 10% of your delegation's legislators – 15%-20% would be even better. We will get good committee leadership if we have a bigger pool from which to choose.
- Submit clerk applications numbering roughly 3%-5% of your total delegation. The conference doesn't run well without competent clerks!
- Know that **each student** has a pre-conference writing requirement.
  - Legislators (even first year legislators) write a bill (if a pair of students co-author, they need to co-author ***two*** bills).
  - Lobbyists write a position paper.
  - Cabinet members write positions.
  - Reporters write an article/editorial
  - Attorneys write briefs; justices write bench memos…
  - Am I missing anyone??

Deadlines:

- March 15: Briefs due
- March 15: Lobbyist position papers due – this is a change
- March 15: Party Platforms – this is a change

Follow Legislation Online!

- Students – You can (and should) be following the proceedings of the Montana Legislature online! Many proceedings can be seen live!
- Visit http://leg.mt.gov/css/sessions/60th/default.asp for a starting point to track legislation this session.

Sign up for email notifications of what is going on in Helena in the next three months: http://leg.mt.gov/css/sessions/60th/signup.asp

Party Reminder

If you want to create a third party, you need to have a one page written platform completed and turned in to the State Office by March 15. You may turn your platform in as a word document attached to an email (susanquinn@gmail.com) or by pasting the text into an email. If you need help formulating a platform, please see the platforms that are online now (http://www.mtymcayouthandgovernment.org/platforms/index.htm) or look in the Elections Manual online (go to the YAG site, click manuals and look in section two where it talks about writing a platform.)

Why do we have a Partisan Youth Legislature?

Some people have asked why there are real political parties at Youth Legislature when other programs have imaginary parties or no parties at all!

We see one of the strengths of Youth Legislature is that we try to be as much like the real world as possible. The Montana Legislature, like all legislative bodies in the U.S. (and most of the world) gives its leadership and many other tasks to the party with a majority in that chamber.

We don't run things exactly the same because we elect our House and Senate leaders a year in advance, but when possible, we try to operate the same as the "real" legislature.

A historical note: Even though George Washington may have urged Americans to avoid parties and factionalism, he wasn't even out of office before two of his closest advisors, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, were clearly forming factions! It seems to be human nature to divide the world into different groups.

Here is the problem: Sometimes people who are different from one another get along just fine, and to her times they use differences to act like idiots!

In Youth Legislature, we hope that you will learn that political parties have a role in helping people of similar viewpoints gather together to better express what they believe in We also hope that you understand that "opposition" is not the same thing as "enemy." Perfectly decent people can have radically different ideas about how the world ought to be.

The good thing about parties is that when both sides compromise a little, the result is usually good policy that is helpful to the vast majority of ordinary people. And, if legislators are effective public servants, then discussion, sharing different points of view, compromise, and consensus are the tools they use to make policy.