

67th annual Virginia Girls State Convenes



Tomorrow: Party Conventions

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600 rising high school seniors gather at Longwood to practice leadership and learn civic responsibility



Many of the bus arrivals gathering their luggage.

Photographer Amanda Ault

Amanda Ault

Sunday afternoon marked the arrival of more than 600 young women at Longwood University to participate in the 67th annual American Legion Auxiliary Virginia Girls State. Six buses brought hundreds of participat

from various parts of the state, while many other arrived with parents and other family members to begin a week of learning the workings of state and local government by building their own.

The Honorable Jessana Westbrook is the presiding governor.

The young delegates, all rising high school seniors from schools from all over the Commonwealth, spent the first afternoon getting to know each other and learning the basics of how city government operates.

At the opening session, the Auxiliary Department President Cindy Kokernack

challenged the delegates to embrace the opportunities of this week.

“This program gives you endless possibilities to meet new friends and practice leadership skills,” Kokernack said. “Within a few days, you will be in charge. I know you will do a good job.”

All delegates were sworn in as citizens of Virginia Girls State following heartwarming stories of immigration and naturalization from Auxiliary members Rosel Fredericksen (Germany) and Pearl Klingebiel (Northern Ireland).

Klingebiel reminded all citizens that even adopted countries can be honored through patriotic pride with a little creative thinking.

“This is my country,” she sang. “Land of my choice.”



From orientation to citizenship; Girls State gets under way

CRUSH CITY

Morgan McCombs

The girls of Crush City arrived yesterday, bags packed and attitudes eager to participate in the Girls State program. Girls slowly opened up as town chore positions were filled and icebreaker activities started to form relationships. In the night session, the girls of Crush chose their city's theme of "Candy Crush," and planned cheers that are bound to stun neighboring cities. The city of Crush returned to their dorm floor to make posters with their new city theme and excited outlook on the coming week.

INGLES CITY

Shelby Ethington

Ingles takes Virginia Girls State by storm! The kinship between the residents has already formed, and with chants as catchy as their's it's not hard to see that these girls are special. Beyonce has been quoted and Hollywood is emerging in the hallways of the city. However, it doesn't take stars on the floor to prove that these girls are shining bright

with charisma, intelligence, leadership, and flair. Ingles is all in.

MADISON CITY

Angelica Walker

Here in Madison we like to get things done right. Today we moved in and became acquainted with our roommates. We shared a meal, heard some great speakers and all chose an activity. In Madison there are some great girls who are all looking forward to a great week of meeting new people and learning new things.

MONROE CITY

Lauren Taylor

When first arriving at the Longwood University campus for Virginia Girls State, nerves filled the air for many young women. The quiet anticipation of receiving room assignments and going a week surrounded by new people in a new setting was settled after meeting roommates and having our first Monroe city meeting. Following the first meeting, we led our city to dinner and then respectfully observed the retreat of the



Virginia State Police demonstrating how to fold the American flag. *Photographer Amanda Ault*

flag. At the first assembly, everyone bonded over dancing to "Timber" and laughing with the lively guest speakers while learning more about Girls State and the American Legion Auxiliary. The first official city meeting led to the election of the nightingale, purchasing clerk, and mail clerk, along with learning about the other elected positions and choosing our activities.

PRESTON CITY

Emily Barritt

Girls From all over Virginia migrated to Longwood to embark upon Girls State. Some waited 10, 20, or even 30 minutes

to squeeze onto the elevator while other trudged up five flights of stairs to their new city of Preston. The girls went door-to-door to meet people of their community - a few began forming alliances and strategically campaigning for desired city positions.

A startled Preston fitted out for the fire drill and through trial and error finally lined up in and headed for dinner. The ravenously hungry teenagers were confused when they had no seats in the cafeteria. After making five laps around the cafeteria, the girls sat down and munched. At the city meeting positions were

appointed and cheers were practiced. *There ain't no restin' for the patriotic Preston.*

POCAHONTAS CITY

Morgan Wood and Katelyn Morris

Lined down the fourth floor hallway in Frazer the 44 citizens of Pocahontas. As introductions flew from loud and excited mouths, each member shared an interesting fact about herself. From Elizabeth Weller playing the fiddle to Cassandra Appiah-Ofori holding a dual-citizenship in the U.S. and Ghana, the girls of Pocahontas each had unique and individual character-

istics. Yet one stood out amongst the crowd: Kellen Cody. Cody stood out as she sported a Pocahontas dress. She also stood out from other city residents due to her recent surgery to repair a hole in her heart.

Cody took one for the team and dressed as the mascot for the Powhatan Princesses that run Frazer's fourth floor city. Each citizen holds a unique and beautiful characteristic that is fit for a princess as the city's roar of tribal calling flats around the campus of Longwood.

TYLER CITY

Elma and Katie L.

Girls State is off to a fantastic start. In only 10 hours, we were able to accomplish a retreat in which each city was able to demonstrate their unique cheers and city spirit. Specifically, the city of Tyler is already full of friendly girls who bonded from the first second they met. Our honorable guest speakers inspired us at the assembly to actively participate and take advantage of the great opportunities not

only at Girls State, but for the rest of our lives. These brave women courageously discussed their influential life stories with us, which touched each of us and made us proud to be Americans. This first day paved the way for many fun and life-impacting memories to be made the rest of this week at Virgin-

ia Girls State.

REMINDER:

City stories are due by 11 p.m. either in the Girls State Office or emailed to newspaper@vagiralsstate.org



Longwood Conference Staff helps with moving in.

Snap Shots

Email your snapshots to newspaper@vagirlsstate.org

