

TEEN-RELEVANT PROPOSAL MAKES THIRD COMMITTEE

MORGAN SMERAGLIA

In true Blue Ridge Spirit, four girls from four very different parts of the country came to CONA to find they were all in agreement on one very controversial issue: Sex Ed. Asha Purohit of South Carolina, Alexis Morin of Massachusetts, Justina Linebarger of Idaho, and Tracy Ingram of Kentucky had nearly identical proposals relating to the elimination of abstinence-only sexual education curricula in American schools.

The delegates chose Morin's proposal (#383-- "To award federal education grants only to states with laws mandating that comprehensive sexual education is taught in all public high schools.") as a base to present to committee with no amendments because, although they were all thematically similar, Morin's proposed a more drastic plan for enforcement, instead of a ban on abstinence-only programs, which would have created an issue of state's rights.

In the proposal, Morin argues, "The current state policies regarding sexual education, especially those that ignore contraception, are not properly educating our youth about how they can avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, and our nation is paying dearly for this lapse in policy." The facts included in all four proposals regarding teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections illustrate the severity of this cost, monetary and otherwise.

As of Monday night, the girls felt the proposal was doing very well in committee. The delegates noted the topic was very debatable, though they were surprised to find that in Second Committee, delegates were turning the proposal more into an issue of federalism and states rights than of comprehensive versus abstinence-only curricula. Still, they enjoyed a great deal of support throughout the debate. These notions were right on as their proposal ranked well enough to make it through to Third Committee.

The author delegates really appreciate the fact that the atmosphere of CONA is so conducive to debate for controversial, teen-relevant issues such as this which, in an actual legislative debate, would likely be avoided for lack of urgency, perhaps, or maybe just because it is uncomfortable to discuss. In an interview, Linebarger explained, "A lot of adults try to be closed-minded about [these issues]."

Another aspect of CONA that contributed to the delegates' success is the fact that people from such different background, such different places, could pull together and fight for the same thing. "I wasn't expecting [to combine with people from such different places]," Purohit explained, "But I wasn't surprised, and I'm really excited."

This controversial proposal made it to the Washburn General Assembly and was the second to be passed there Wednesday evening.

FLORIDIAN FRIENDSHIPS

Perhaps the words "history" and "tradition" are not the first words that spring to mind when one thinks of Florida, but they are certainly applicable to the Florida delegation to CONA. The Florida state Youth In Government program celebrated its fiftieth birthday this year and is one of the few states to have sent a delegation each year to CONA since CONA's beginning 40 years ago. Florida maintains cherished traditions such as its shell necklaces and annual theme. This year's theme is "rock stars," reflecting the delegation's unique combination of spunk and excellence. The delegation's T-shirts, which take their inspiration from rock concert shirts, have become a hot commodity on the barter market. Florida looks set to continue its tradition of excellence this year with a number of proposals making it to second and third committees. The most important tradition, however, goes beyond bartering and proposals. Floridian delegates aim to use their time on the mountain to find their best possible selves and build friendships with members of other delegations. As one delegate put it, "after all, friendships last a lot longer than proposals."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!

CONA-LICIOUS FASHION: WE'RE HOT!

MORGAN SMERAGLIA

Not only is CONA an amazing opportunity to meet new people from all over the country, practice debate skills, and grow as a person; for some, it's also an excuse to dress up and show off some of our best fashions without feeling over-the-top. While the typical black dress suit and jacket look is plenty for some, others like to take it a step further and spice up the strict business dress code. Here's a look at some of the hottest GA and Plenary fashions.

Thelma Santiago of the Connecticut delegation brought sunshine to the auditorium with a bright yellow, floral-patterned dress from Forever 21, matched with a canary yellow J. Crew jacket, and accessorized by black flats by Bandolino, perfect for looking classy without the burden of climbing hills in heels, along with pearl earrings from Claire's, a class ring, and another ring she bought from a boardwalk vendor in Boston. An emerald green knit purse from Urban Outfitters completed the outfit.



Thelma Santiago

A classy, clean-cut, yet unique look was sported by Ali Lappas of the Pennsylvania delegation. Her violet knee-length skirt from The Limited stood out under the black, quarter-length sleeve button-up from a boutique.

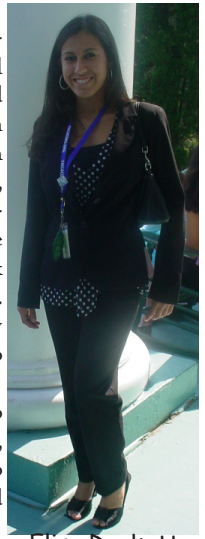
Her headband was borrowed from a friend and her black and white, floral-patterned heels were made by Chinese Laundry.



Ali Lappas

Model UN's Elisa Duckett spiced up the typical black, business pants and jacket from Kohl's with a polka-dotted shirt from Forever 21. Her black, open-toe heels, embellished with a black rose on each, were bought at Macy's and her black Coach bag matched perfectly with her outfit. The bag was the ideal size for carrying a few basic necessities and not too overwhelming to carry around all day.

Take some of these unique fashion ideas into consideration for your next trip to CONA, YAG, or perhaps your next job interview to stand out while sticking to the dress code and keeping your own comfort and needs in mind.



Elisa Duckett



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