

Journalism City Recording The Weeks Events

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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As Girls State took over the campus of the University of South Dakota, nine of the more than 400 participants were set to embark on a more ambitious path of the week. They were the select few named to Journalism City.

Journalism City is an application based group who are chosen to be the record keepers for the year's Girls State, by writing stories, taking photos, oh, and putting out four full newspapers during the week-long event.

The nine girls selected range from South Dakota's smallest schools to its largest and every level of journalism experience between them. They include: Brianna Schreurs, Milbank; Molly Graesser, Gregory; Madison Rost, Sioux Falls; Jordann Krouse, Sioux Falls; Mikaela Neubauer, Harrisburg; Elyse Helkenn, Clark; Kate Finley, Chelsea; Anna Koepppe, Veblen; and, Morgan Fischer, Arlington. They are being assisted by senior counselors Josie Flatgard, Mary Lack and Beth Mayrose.

Rost explained that the selection process included submitting several stories.

When asked why they were interested in Journalism City their answers varied.

"I think it is the only opportunity we have in South Dakota to have an introduction to journalism outside of our own school newspapers," Krouse said. "It is the only really good opportunity we have."

Helkenn and Schreurs said because they come from small towns they don't even have the school newspaper experience.

"We have absolutely no journalism class it is just English 1, English 2 and maybe yearbook, if you can fit that into your schedule and that is like 15 minutes," Helkenn said. "It was just a great opportunity and it prepares you for the future."

Schreurs said, "Journalism city is a great way to get experience if you want to start thinking of writing, taking photos, editing, if you want to think about it as a life career."

However, Neubauer said it is just something she enjoys doing.

"I am not really looking to get into journalism," she said. "I love it as a passion on the side. I love doing things like this. I am editor of my newspaper at school and it is just a great opportunity to expand my writing skills."

The girls put to bed their first paper last night and they said it was an experience they will not forget.

"It was a learning experience, we had to get in the swing of things quick," Helkenn said. "We had to figure out our roles and where we are supposed to be. But we have our first publication out and it is beautiful."

Others noted that it was difficult to meet their deadlines.

"We were supposed to be done by 3 p.m. and there were people in the media room until after midnight," said one participant. "Most of us got done with our stories in time, but last night we got one of our stories from one of the cities that we were supposed to have by 3 p.m. at 11 p.m. They didn't even fill out the whole sheet so we had to go chase them down to find out information."

However, between writing, editing and attending sessions the girls then were able to deliver the papers at 5 a.m. Wednesday morning.

"They weren't up yet," Helkenn said. "My best friend sent me a picture of it with my name showing. She said, 'I didn't read it but good job.' Then she came up to me later and said she is going to read everything else but not mine."

Flatgard, who is responsible for helping put the paper together, said it was a typical first night in the newsroom.

"The girls put in a great effort and gave help when we needed it," she said. "I did the layout last night but my goal is to integrate them into it so they get experience in all aspects of the newspaper business. They all should be proud of what they accomplish here."



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Journalism City is in full print mode during the 2015 Girls State being held in Vermillion this week. The nine girls who make up this year's Journalism City are: From left to right: Josie Flatgard (senior counselor); Brianna Schreurs, Milbank; Molly Graesser, Gregory; Madison Rost, Sioux Falls; Jordann Krouse, Sioux Falls; Mikaela Neubauer, Harrisburg; Elyse Helkenn, Clark; Kate Finley, Chelsea; Anna Koepppe, Veblen; Mary Lack (senior counselor); Morgan Fischer, Arlington; Beth Mayrose (senior counselor).

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Elizabeth Spier Ending Year As Girls State Governor

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN
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Not many high school students can say they've acted as governor, but this year, Elizabeth Spier has taken on the role at South Dakota Girls' State.

Each year, more than 300 high school junior girls from across the state convene at the University of South Dakota (USD) campus for one week in June to take part in Girls' State.

"It's girls who are selected and nominated by their schools and their cities and chosen to represent their local American Legion Auxiliary unit and they just come here and they do mock government," Spier said. "Last year, I really was only in the position of governor for one day at Girls State, but this year my job and duty is kind of to lead and be in charge of Girls State. I'm in charge of leading all the assemblies and I kind of act as a dean to the junior counselors."

Spier graduated in May from Sioux Falls Washington High School, and this will be her second year attending event. She got involved when she saw fliers around her school encouraging girls to apply and was one of 12 girls from her school selected to attend.

During Girls State, the participants are divided into cities and they elect different government positions



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within the cities. At the end of the week, a governor is elected.

"You get nominated and then you have to fill out a petition," Spier said. "From your petitions you are chosen as possible candidates for your party. (The girls) are divided into nationalist and federalists and then from that, just like any other election, they narrow it down until they have one party slate candidate. From there they do the whole general elections and that's where they pick just the one."

She fell into the role of governor after being encouraged to run for the position.

"When I came I had no intention of running for any position, especially not governor, but just over the week the position was encouraged to me. It opened up to me and I ended up just getting it," Spier said.

Her involvement in Girls State, and role as governor, has sparked an interest in

politics for Spier, who admitted she had never even taken a government class until that past year when it was a requirement at her school.

"I didn't really have much familiarity with government itself, especially politics, and Girls State really peeked the interest for me," she said. "I would say that since then I've definitely become more aware and interested and just a better understanding."

Though Girls State is just a week-long event, the governor position entails year-round duties and allowed Spier to travel the state attending government events.

"At the drop of a hat I could kind of do anything," she said. "I went up to Pierre for the legislative session this year and throughout the year I did some traveling to meet with auxiliaries around the state. I like it and this week is my anticipation. This is my week to shine."

She will attend the University of Minnesota next year to study international studies and Spanish as a double major and has plans to go into pre-international law.

"I would say that was definitely influenced by being involved in Girls State among other things," Spier said.



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