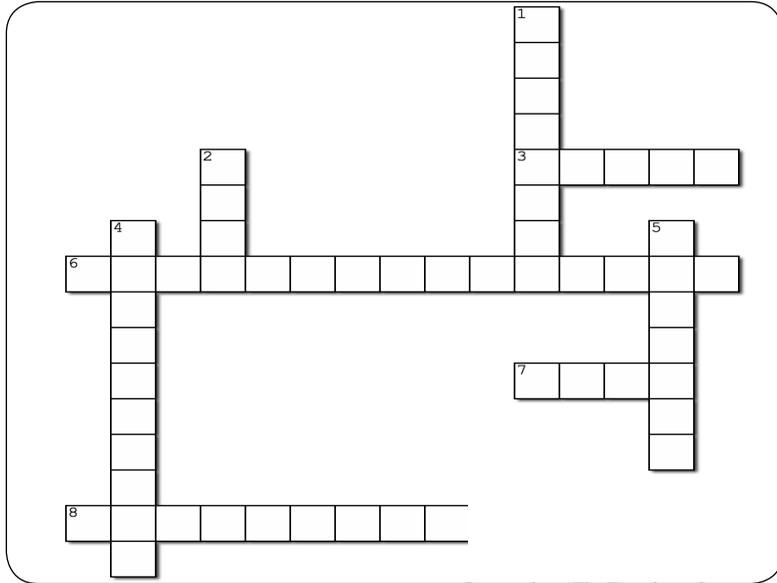


Crazy CONA Crossword



Olivia Conforth, OK

Staff Writer



Down:

- 1. The Vanderbilt House that some delegates visited today.
- 2. Some delegates took a ___ through the woods today.
- 4. The kind of fabric worn on Tuesdays on the mountain.
- 5. The final proposal session.

Across:

- 3. The group at CONA who creates awesome news content.
- 6. The proposal session delegates attended today.
- 7. The name of the conference you are attending.
- 8. The pool contest where candidates jump into the water on their stomachs.

ANSWERS 1) Biltmore. 2) Hike. 3) Media. 4) Seersucker. 5) Plenary. 6) General Assembly. 7) CONA. 8) Belly Flop

Presiding Officer of the Day: Ben LaZebnik



Photo by Staff Photographer Michelle Chung, MA

- 1. He is originally from California.
- 2. He studies urban studies and political science at Columbia.
- 3. He watches "Jeopardy!" most days.
- 4. He studied Japanese for about six years and has forgotten almost all of it.
- 5. His uncle is a writer for "The Simpsons."

2015 Media Corps

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The Blue Ridge Journal

48th Annual YMCA Youth Conference on National Affairs

Wednesday, July 1, 2015

Beauty Abounds at Blue Ridge Assembly

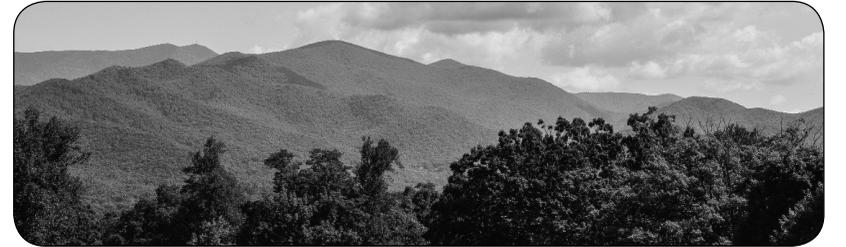


Leah Schweibinz, NC

Staff Writer

The YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly is a beautiful place. When looking forward to CONA, delegates from all across the country think of not only vibrant debate and discussion but also the beautiful landscape that surrounds the conference center. Every year, many participants make it a point to take a nature walk around the conference grounds, to observe the flora and fauna and to take an opportunity

Continued on Page 3



CONVERSATION STARTERS. The view that mesmerizes us all also gives us a healthy dose of nostalgia. The green rocking chairs on the porch spark innumerable conversations and friendships.



RELAXATION. The hidden, secluded swinging bench faces the gymnasium towards the bottom of the mountain.



SERENITY. The gorgeous greenery in the hidden shortcut between the Blue Ridge Center and Asheville Hall inspires.

Photos by Photo Editor Sareena Fayaz, PA

CONA Cherub Joins Growing Group of YIG/YAG Babies



Essence Jones, IN

Editor-in-Chief

Most delegates join YIG or YAG at some point during their high school career. Some are even lucky enough to join in middle school. A small, select group grow up as YIG/YAG babies.

These unofficial delegates are often seen around state conferences and CONA, innocently taking in all that YIG and YAG has to offer. Virginia advisor Sharon Davies brought a new addition to the CONA family this year. The official CONA cherub, also known as

Finn Davies, is five months old, and like his mother, hails from Virginia.

Finn Davies already has begun his political career after having met both the governor and lieutenant governor of Virginia at three months old.

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Hawaii and Alaska Join the CONA Club



Olivia Conforth, OK

Staff Writer



Jack Densmore, TX

Staff Writer

The Alaska delegation is at the Conference on National Affairs for the first time, while Hawaii returns after a long absence.

"We were really excited to come down and meet everyone and experience this," Shaw said. "We were all so extremely intimidated, but after a while we got really used to it because the vibe here is so nice and everyone is so welcoming."

In such a professional and friendly atmosphere, the Hawaii delegation has felt welcomed by other delegations from the beginning.

"The experience is great because we already met so many people and made so many friends," Shaw said. "We really like the program because it's similar to the one we have back home, but at the same time it's extremely different."

Delegates from Alaska came to the mountain for their first time in CONA history. Only a few delegates are in attendance this inaugural year, but it marks the beginning of an



WELCOME, NEW FRIENDS. Delegates Marie Alice Shaw, HI, and Jonah Parker, AK, join the CONA party.

Photo by Staff Photographer Jack Densmore, TX



"... we set the bar for other Alaska delegates to follow."
- Jonah Parker, AK

even better CONA experience with the addition of the Last Frontier.

"It feels extremely exciting and fulfilling to be here representing Alaska for the first time," Alaskan delegate Jonah Parker said. "It's awesome knowing we set the bar for other Alaskan delegates to follow."

Though the travel was arduous and extensive, arriving at the mountain made everything worthwhile.

"My experience has been amazing," Parker said. "Everyone is so open with each other. It feels as if I've been here

before. I just feel that comfortable here at CONA. I would 100 percent recommend CONA to my friends back at home. [I hope all of] my homies ... join the Alaskan delegation next year!"

With Hawaii and Alaska joining this year, the continuing hope is that all 50 states will be at the 50th conference in 2017. Then, they too will be able to share their first-year experiences.

"I think everyone, if they could, should take this opportunity," Shaw said. "Where else could they get it?" ■

Appreciating CONA Beauty

Continued From Page 1

to soak in the place that's so special to all of us. We hope these photos will give you a sense of what nature has to offer at the Assembly. Before you leave the mountain, please take in and be thankful for all of the beauty around you. #blessed ■



CLOSE-UP. Beautiful nature lies all around the Blue Ridge YMCA.

Photo by Leah Schweibinz, NC

Humans of CONA



"I'm just trying to brighten someone's day." - William Schiple, NC



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Davies Baby Rocks CONA

Continued From Page 1

For other babies, such accomplishments would be surprising, but for a YIG or YAG baby, this can only be expected as great things always come to those associated with these programs.

Sharon Davies sat down for an interview and when asked how she believed the experiences Finn will have at CONA and YAG will influence him in the future she responded, "He'll see that young people can make a differ-

ence, and it will be something that he'll want to be involved with. He's been a part of YAG for a very long part of his very short life."

From this statement alone, we can all anticipate that the CONA cherub will grow to be an active CONA campaigner. So, if you see the CONA cherub stop and speak to him. Who knows who he will become one day? ■



LEARNING EARLY ON. Sharon Davies leads her son, Finn, to great places.

Photo by Staff Photographer Amy White, VA