

The MIG Journal

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Rutherford prompts delegates to take position

by **Brittany Potoenic**
Eastern Illinois University

Faculty and students from different universities in Illinois met Thursday night at the Capitol Building for the opening ceremonies of the Model Illinois Government simulation.

There were many delegations representing different institutions in attendance, including first-year delegates from Benedictine University and Monmouth College.

The keynote speaker was Republican Sen. Dan Rutherford. He pointed out that one of the institutions participating in the simulation, Illinois State University, was his alma mater. Early in his career, he reached the status of executive director for Illinois during the presidential campaign for Ronald Reagan. As a Republican activist, Rutherford was a state representative in 1992.

Rutherford's message to the students was to "jump in, take your position and get on early." In addition to offering the students

advice, volunteered to help them establish connections with political leaders in their communities. As repeated throughout his speech, Rutherford emphasized the importance of making connections. "He or she who knows the most people, wins," he said.

Rutherford also gave inspiration to the younger generation of leaders by stating, "you can do anything you want if you set your mind to it."

The audience was able to have a question-answer segment where Rutherford took a stance on some of the most debated issues in state government. The budget deficit was the first issue addressed by Rutherford. When asked if he agreed with Gov. Rod Blagoavich's stance, he replied, "I don't really agree with everything he campaigned about, but I have faith in the system and Gov. Blagojevich."

Other hot topics discussed were gun legislation, in which Rutherford supports an overall policy for the state to have a conceal and carry law based on

training. He opposes statewide tuition caps, stating "we [institutions of higher learning] have trustees to appropriate." Funding for higher education was among the heated topics, where Rutherford stated, "higher ed is going to have to take cuts like everything else."

The room was filled with students eager to rebut his comments. "I feel education usually gets the boot. To hear him say education needs to take a squeeze is sad," said Amarna Bugarin-Chazaro, a junior Business Administration major from Northern Illinois

University.

Another issue addressed was of his position on the death penalty. He did not take a stance, but did say, "I think the blanket clemency provided by Governor Ryan was wrong."

"I felt he did a wonderful job, however, I feel he focused more on his

resume instead of appealing to the needs of these future leaders of Illinois," Craig Smith, a senior political science major from Eastern Illinois University, said.

After Rutherford finished his speech, students were sworn into office and read the rules for the Model Illinois Government simulation.

MIG overcomes funding obstacles, maintains simulation experience

by **Brian Bartoz**
Benedictine University

The State of Illinois' budget crisis this year has required the Model Illinois Government Executive Board to maintain the simulation's standards with less resources.

Comptroller Kari Hillcock said that this year, MIG faced a \$10,000 reduction in funds from the State of Illinois and the Illinois Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation. This year, she said, a total of only \$1,100 was allocated.

According to Treasurer Franklin Awah, the state

budget crisis "hit us pretty hard." To mitigate the damage, Awah said, the Executive Board "looked into possible solutions (such as) fundraisers and scholarships."

Awah said that Sen. Patrick O'Malley made a donation to MIG this year to make up for some of the lost funds. House Speaker Kevin Whaley added that MIG negotiated a favorable group rate for accommodations at the Hilton as well as a discounted package from Lincoln Land Communications for operating the sound system during sessions in the

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MIG veterans advise first years

by **Brian Bartoz**
Benedictine University

Members of the MIG Executive Board encouraged freshmen delegates to fulfill their roles during the simulation with enthusiasm during the First Year Delegate Orientation Program (FYDOP) on Thursday, Feb. 27.

The session, held in

the Springfield Hilton's Ambassador Room at 4:30 p.m., featured remarks from a number of Executive Board members on the lessons that they have learned from their participation in the simulation.

"You get out of it exactly what you put in," Lt. Governor Terry Hanson said.

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First Years

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He encouraged participants to have a good time and also recognize the simulation's educational dimension. Hanson said that his first simulation "was kind of a neat experience." Hanson progressed through the ranks of chair and comptroller before being elected lieutenant governor last year.

Reflecting on her one-time belief only past participants could be recognized for their contributions to MIG, Comptroller Kari Hillock said, "I thought...only the people who have been here a long time to get an award." In her first year in the simulation, however, Hillock received an award.

Hillock also encouraged participants to nominate their peers for awards during the simulation. "I need your input for this," Hillock said. "If you see someone who goes above and beyond their job, nominate them," she said.

Chief Justice Nick Will offered "a shout out" to thank the individuals who worked on Wednesday night to prepare the nametags for the simulation. Hanson then quipped, "and I guess I'll give a negative shout out to all those who didn't help out last night."

The MIG experience, Hanson said, "is a good mix of entertainment as well as education."

MIG Funding

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Capitol.

The Executive Board also decided to increase the delegation fee from \$50 to \$100 and offer a lunch plate as opposed to a dinner plate for the awards banquet to keep its budget in balance.

The decision to increase delegation fees rather than individual delegate fees, Awah said, was made in part because "we (the Executive Board) know schools could better afford an increase than students."

Awah added that the Executive Board economized with regard to expenses. Last year, he said, each of the Executive Board members had his or her own office suite at the Hilton. This year, by contrast, the treasurer (Room 1015) shares a suite with the chief justice (Room 1017) while the speaker of the house (Room 1117) shares a suite with the director of the Bureau of the Budget (1115).

Awah observed that concerns over funding go hand in hand with conducting the simulation. "You have to look for these bumps on the way," Awah said. Whaley said that earlier in the year, a lack of funding threatened the simulation's viability. The Executive Board, Whaley commented, "it will be incumbent on next year's governor, next year's Executive Board, to see that MIG has the funding to survive for years to come."

Springfield: More than just the Capital

by Julie Trueblood
Millikin University

It is noonish. All morning long, your stomach has been growling, obviously annoying the large group of people surrounding you. You fight off their angry glares with your own fiery gaze. You glare at them with a look that says, "Back off, or I'll take a bite out of your arm!" When your meetings finally finish, you step out onto the sidewalk and suddenly realize that you have no friggin' idea where to go...which is where I come in.

For those on foot, there are truckloads of possibilities that range from a light snack to a grand buffet meal! I know that it may be hard to believe, but downtown Springfield is *not* a ghost town. All of the restaurants are open for lunchtime. If your wallet is feeling a little light, then you might try out one of these fine eateries: Robbie's, Schlotzky's Deli, Quizno's, Jimmy's Sub Shoppe, Jake and Elwoods, Caffe Panini, and Coney Island, with its old fashioned specials, and old fashioned prices! If you are willing to spend a little bit more money, go for the daily lunch buffet at the Holy Land Diner. Spice up your life with a little Greek and Lebanese cuisine!

If you are blessed with a car, you should most definitely try out some of the more famous chains. Yes, Springfield has *many* Mickey D's. But Springfield is also home to

some superb sit-down restaurants like Chili's, the Olive Garden, Hooters, T.G.I Friday's, Lonestar, Ruby Tuesday's, Ned Kelly's, Red Lobster, and another buffet, Shakey's Pizza & Buffet. You will be in awe of the plethora of pizza before you! And then there is always Chuck E Cheese's, where quite frankly, a kid can be a kid. (Call each restaurant for directions.)

After eating, you may feel in the need of a little rest and relaxation. You can go and see a flick at one of these fine movie theatres: White Oaks I, II, and III; Parkway Pointe; The Esquire, which is extremely affordable at a mere \$2.75; and the Springfield Showplace. For the best quality movie experience, I would recommend Parkway Pointe, which really is top-notch—but beware the steep \$7.50 ticket price. The cold hard reality is that there are no student discounts.

If you are feeling the historical vibe of Springfield, there are many locales for you. Abraham Lincoln has many a site, including his tomb, house, New Salem, and the Lincoln-Herndon law offices. The two capital buildings, and the beautiful Dana Thomas House, built by famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright, are in walking distance and also feature tours daily.

For those in the mood for something different, check out Déjà Vu. And for those of you who are not familiar with the "Vu," it is very much a gentleman's club. (Wink, wink...) Or, try one of Springfield's many other clubs. If you would like to laugh a little (or a lot), go to the Funny Bone—it features many up-and-coming comedians. If you are itching to shop, Springfield has White Oaks Mall, a Barnes & Noble, Target, and of course, Wal-Mart, which is sadly not open 24 hours a day.

Springfield, Illinois is not a big town by any means, but there are things to do, and there is food to be consumed by all MIG-folk. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, you will be able to find something you both can enjoy, even if you may not agree on how to get around to it.

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MIG: Get in the game or sit on the bench

Editorial by Thomas Phillips
Triton College

Daley College delegates were spotted by many a person at yesterday's opening ceremonies wearing a uniquely worded slogan emblazoned on their backs.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT, the pull-overs read.

This is not merely an advertising slogan. The message, however, is crystal clear: standing by and watching the democratic process from the bleachers is an option, but an extremely unappealing one to many of the Model Illinois Government delegates who chose to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary of the simulation. More on that topic in a few lines.

As editor-in-chief of this year's MIG Journal, I would like to welcome those who have taken time out of their busy schedules, whether it be from family, work or school, to showcase their love for the democratic process. MIG is a extracurricular activity that requires com-

munication skills, speaking ability, the desire to work with others, and an overall desire to become involved in an often confusing political atmosphere.

This is where the topic of democracy's place as a necessity or a spectator sport comes in.

For twenty-five years, MIG has been a source of pride for several colleges and universities through-out the state of Illinois, drawing media attention as the program expanded over the years.

The hundreds of delegates and faculty members in attendance in our state capital this weekend are living proof of the fact that there are many participants willing to participate in one of the oldest sports known to man: politics.

But the question remains in the minds of those who have never

experienced MIG: is the simulation a vital necessity, or just an excuse for a college roadtrip?

With the state of MIG in question by some, longtime devotees of the program are wondering if the program will be saved. Some are even wondering if the program is even worth saving at all.

That last comment might have turned a few heads, but the truth is that some feel that the program is a waste of funding.

Even more shocking? The same people believe that a few students spending their time in State Senate chambers for a weekend a year isn't enough to convince those that fund the program that youth are interested in the democratic process.

My response? Prove them wrong this year.

In my second year as editor-in-chief of the Journal, my staff

and I will bring quality coverage to each and every story we cover in these pages, as well as breaking new ground and covering angles previously unreachable to journalists. I look forward to covering each and every aspect of this year's simulation, and with old and new faces coming into the office to contribute their skills to the journalistic process, this year looks to be one of the best ever.

Unfortunately, for the duration of the simulation, democracy is a spectator sport for most of the journalists on this staff, due to possible conflicts of interest.

However, we will do the best we can to make sure that the simulation is covered fairly and accurately. We will make sure that democracy is no longer a spectator sport, but that all are on a playing field that is level and provides benefits for all involved.

No, democracy is not a spectator sport. But all of us are here, twenty-five years later, ready to get into the game.

Play ball.

Is the simulation a vital necessity, or just an excuse for a college roadtrip?

Melissa Spurgeon

FOR

COMPTROLLER

Putting MIG First

New Bills introduced by the Senate

by Rhonda S. Eisenhauer
John A. Logan College

A new bill introduced by Senator Heath Stapleton (R-47th), of John A. Logan College, proposed an amendment to the Criminal Code of 1961, which made the carrying of a concealed weapon illegal. According to Stapleton, neighboring states that have already adopted similar legislation, and Texas has seen a 30 percent reduction in the number of criminal attacks.

Stapleton stated, "The right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution insures all Americans the right to bear arms." He went on to say, "Freedom to carry concealed weapons is important to personal safety."

According to the online

source www.concealcarrycouncil.org, 378,392 criminal attacks were thwarted by people carrying concealed weapons last year in Illinois. The total rises to 2.5 million when the numbers of attacks that law enforcement prevented are factored in.

Stapleton feels that his bill is important for personal safety, but he did express concerns.

"My biggest concern is the possibility of the lack of firearm safety," Stapleton said. The bill would make firearm safety a mandatory requirement as well as mandatory licensing by the state.

Another piece of original legislation introduced by Leonard Simpson of Black Hawk College proposed that the Illinois Gaming Commission grant the tenth license for a water based casino to the city of Chicago. If granted, the new bill

would not only allow the city of Chicago to collect the revenue but allow the state of Illinois to collect 10 percent above the normal tax liability.

Simpson stated that last year Illinois collected \$1.3 billion in revenues from casinos. A recent study by the University of Illinois estimated a potential \$2.2 billion in revenue if the bill were passed.

Simpson said, "The purpose of this bill is to generate revenue to help maintain Chicago's infrastructure and strengthen its economy."

According to Simpson, the state could use the revenue to help fund important programs such as education, roads and prisons. Since 1990, the state of Illinois has allocated \$500 million in revenues from casinos to education.

Caucuses elected

by Heather Shaffer
University of Illinois-Springfield

Elections were held during party caucuses last night for the positions of minority and majority leaders, and whips for both the Senate and the House. Republicans are the majority for the Senate and Democrats are the minority. Conversely, the Republicans are the minority in the Senate and Democrats represent the majority.

Jim Scott from Western Illinois University was elected Senate Majority Leader. Heath Stapleton was chosen as Assistant Majority Leader. The Floor Whip for the party this year is Andrew Hollingshead. For the House of Representatives, Christian Reyes was elected as the Majority Leader and Alfanzo Santanyo was chosen as Minority Leader.

For the Democratic Party, Art Moore from University of Illinois at Springfield was elected as the Senate Minority Leader after a close four-way race. Jason Stuebe, also from UIS, defeated Scott McFarland. The Senate Democrats chose a total of five whips. "Both parties in the Senate had very qualified candidates leading to hard fought elections. This looks as a good indicator of solid debate on the floor and in committee," said Art Moore.

Elections for next year's executive board will be held on Sunday. By looking at all of the campaign stickers, signs, and beer bottle labels, this should be a good, competitive election.

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