

YEOs Explore Politics in Ancient Lands

Three YEO members traveled to the nations of Egypt and Jordan with the delegation from the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL). Missouri State Representative Beth Low, New Mexico State Representative Al Park, and Tallahassee, Florida City Commissioner Andrew Gillum flew halfway across the world to experience the cultures and politics of these nations. The following pictures have been provided by Rep. Park.

In the Middle East...

By Representative Beth Low (MO)

I must admit I hesitated before traveling to the Middle East, although I'm no stranger to travel. I studied in Great Britain and have traveled extensively Europe, and within the United States. I love a good adventure. I traveled to a still relatively unstable Romania in 1998, for example, and had a wonderful time using pidgin-Romanian and meeting the gypsies.

But still, I hesitated briefly when the American Council of Young Political Leaders offered me the opportunity to travel to Egypt and Jordan for two weeks as part of a bipartisan political delegation. As an American woman in the Middle East, would I be welcome? Would I be expected to wear hijab (a head scarf)? As a young, unmarried elected woman, how would I be received?

After a relatively brief pause, I realized that the very fact I was asking these questions was the best possible reason for me to participate. I had far too little real knowledge of either country to turn down such an amazing opportunity. I said yes to ACYPL's offer.



YEOs and ACYPL Delegates at the base of the Great Pyramids in Egypt.

It was the right decision. My two weeks in Egypt and Jordan were amazing. My head hurt every night from all the learning I was doing; my cheeks hurt from all the smiling, and my eyes were opened to the beauty and complexities of a region and its people, whom I might never have otherwise experienced.

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The ACYPL delegation meets with Mr. Stuart Jones, Charge Affairs for the US Embassy in the Cairo, Egypt (Center).

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In the Middle East...

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Egypt and Jordan are America's strongest allies in the region. They also rank high on the list of recipients of US foreign aid. Their largely arid landscapes and Bedouin have fomented an intense culture of hospitality and emphasis on family that is unrivaled in the US (My family is from Mississippi and Missouri – I know about hospitality and big families!). The ancient history of the nations is breathtaking, as are the ancient monuments, such as the Great Pyramids in Giza and the lost city of Petra.

Despite the widespread frustration, disappointment, and even anger over US foreign policy in the region, we were greeted with tremendous warmth everywhere we went. This included everyone from the Egyptian Senate to the elderly shopkeeper in downtown Amman who sold us water on a day of record-breaking heat.

I have a much deeper and wider understanding of the politics of these nations, and of the region now. I have no simple solutions to offer to the region's intractable problems. However, I believe one cannot begin to see American foreign policy and its repercussions clearly until one gains a personal knowledge of the other cultures, nations, and people who are involved.

President George W. Bush visited only one other country before office: Mexico. I think it is neither surprising nor coincidental that his foreign policies have been dismissive of other cultures, of other nations' needs and interests, and have failed to create and maintain peace both at home and abroad.

I implore you to visit the Middle East. As young elected officials, we will be tomorrow's state and national leaders. Our nation and the rest of the world desperately need leaders who are familiar with more than just American interests and culture. We need people of great vision, great understanding and great courage. And I hope the people of the Middle East continue to meet Americans who demonstrate these qualities while visiting the region.



(Above) While in Jordan, the elected officials met with the US Ambassador to Jordan, David Hale, and Jordanian officials.

(Left) The delegation meets with Dr. Osama el-Baz, Political Advisor to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (3rd from the right).



Interested in ACYPL?

Go to page 8 for more information about the non-profit educational exchange organization.

Wisconsin YEO Flies South for the Summer

Marina Dimitrijevic visits South America in cultural exchange

She studied in Spain and has traveled to Europe, but Milwaukee County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic knew very little of the countries she visited this summer.

The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) took Dimitrijevic and five other young leaders to Uruguay and Argentina in June to learn about their systems of government and to establish networks and relationships with their counterparts in those countries.

Dimitrijevic said her trip was a “once in a lifetime” opportunity. “I’ve learned so much I’ve already brought back here,” she said. “I think it’ll make an awesome difference... I made about 100 friends.”

The ACYPL delegation spent one week in each country and participated in ten meetings per day with local and national elected officials and representatives of public institutions. They visited urban and rural areas in three “departments” (roughly the same as states) in each country.



Supervisor Dimitrijevic sits in the middle amongst Argentinean children and fellow ACYPL travelers.

Examining the politics of each country, Dimitrijevic found that both Uruguay and Argentina invest in their citizens- both have free, universal health care and offer free college education. Additionally, she noted, Argentina recently implemented a program that provides a laptop for every kindergartener.

Another “forward thinking” policy is a law in Uruguay that does not allow development on or near the country’s famed beaches because they belong to the people.

While there has been some progress, both countries do face critical housing issues and struggle with poverty, unemployment, and environmental challenges. Also, Dimitrijevic noticed about 90 percent of the public officials they met were men. She was dismayed that there were only a few women in government, particularly local and state level.

“I learned about completely different governments and ways of life, but common bonds,” she said. “It was a chance to step away from my work for a little while and bring back new perspectives and new ideas.”

Source: BayViewNOW.com



YEO Network Updates

YEOs Lunch in Boston at NCSL

During this year's National Conference of State Legislators gathering in Boston, the YEO program hosted a few YEO members for lunch. In attendance were Representatives Hannah Pingree, Carl Sciortino, Kyrsten Sinema, Chris Pearson, Scott Kawasaki, Alisha Morgan and Nikki Randall. The YEOs were able to celebrate some notable victories over lunch, including Carl and Kyrsten's respective marriage amendment victories, Hannah's win as Maine's majority leader and Alisha's new baby. They enjoyed connecting with other YEOs and focusing on what the network can do for them in the future.

YEOs IN THE NEWS



NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
State Representative Juan LaFonta says a new state law requiring voters show photo identification with an address and signature will discriminate against black voters in Louisiana. The New Orleans legislator and chairman of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus, wants the U.S. Department of Justice to object to the law. If it does,

the mandate would not be in place for the 2007 elections.

<http://www.wdsu.com/news/14035873/detail.html>



BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN
City Commissioner Ryan Hersha

has been the most vocal proponent of the hybrid buses for Battle Creek, touting the significant reduction in diesel emissions and the environmental benefits. The city commission postponed a decision to "hybridize" any of the four new buses it has ordered. Hersha said he was willing to give administrators more time to look

for alternative funding sources. "Buses are extremely inefficient when it comes to fuel consumption. We're spending a lot of money each year on fuel," he said. "I want a solution that's going to work."

<http://www.battlecreekenquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070905/NEWS01/709050319>



TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
City Commissioner Andrew Gillum

has spent two years piecing together resources and key players for the Digital Harmony Project, a pilot program that will equip sixth-graders at Nims Middle School with something no other students in the district will receive – new computers equipped with Internet access right

in their homes. Gillum's Digital Harmony Project will help monitor each child's progress at the underperforming school. Dell donated 100 computers and provided a discount for an additional 100 computers. Florida A&M University is paying for 50 of the computers, and Comcast is providing the free Internet access. Other benefits include help-desk support and free software that will allow teachers to track each student's progress. "They want to see Nims succeed," Gillum said about local businesses partnering in the project. "We're all leaping out on faith."

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070816/NEWS01/708160374/1010/NEWS01>



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

City Supervisor Chris Daly co-sponsored a charter amendment to create a \$100 million annual fund for affordable housing. The money would fund several priorities, including building, buying, and maintaining two-bedroom units for low-income people; rental assistance for

low-income people who have HIV; homeowner and tenant assistance programs; and repairs to public housing.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/08/16/BAGEIRJQE4.DTL&type=politics>



ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy and Warren Wilson College agreed to work together to help protect the climate, in an agreement believed to be the first such partnership between a city and a college. "This partnership makes sense," Bellamy told the Asheville Citizen-Times.

"The city and college share a common concern about the scope of global warming, and we share a belief in the power of community to overcome this challenge." The collaboration is expected to generate an exchange of best practices for monitoring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions; the development of educational resources; and the use of Warren Wilson College as a demonstration site.

<http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200770807002>

Special Features?

If you have interesting policy or experiences to share with your fellow YEOs, please contact Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org to arrange to write a special feature.



Center for an Urban Future CITY FUTURES, INC.



RETHINK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

City Futures, Inc. in conjunction with the YEO Network will host a policy retreat for young elected officials interested in rethinking, reframing and improving the debate around economic development. Their groundbreaking research and experts will allow YEOs to envision and create workable solutions using a community-based approach to economic development.

**December 7 - 9, 2007
Hamilton Park , New Jersey**

REGISTER TODAY!

For more information or to register for the Northeast Region Policy Academy, go to www.YEONetwork.org.

All expenses will be paid for YEO Network Members.

Please register today — space is limited to 30 YEOs!

For questions, contact Joshua Hicks at jhicks@pfaw.org or call 850-877-0307



YEO ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Councilman Eric Garcetti Los Angeles, California

The Los Angeles City Council unanimously reelected Eric Garcetti as its president for two more years. "This place is an idea factory and it's time to put some of those ideas into action," Garcetti told the LA Daily News after the 15-0 vote by the council at its annual reorganization meeting. Garcetti said he believes the council is prepared to be more aggressive on a variety of fronts, and to take advantage of the smooth relations it has had with Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in the two years since his election.



http://www.dailynews.com/ci_6290288?source=most_email

Mayor James Walls District Heights Maryland

Mayor James Walls was recently appointed as chairman of the National Conference of Black Mayors Committee on Small Town & Rural Development. "I am deeply honored to be chosen for this prestigious post," Mayor Walls said in a statement. "The National Conference, and this committee in particular, are dealing with some of the most pressing challenges America's small towns and cities face today." The small town and rural development committee develops special strategies and programs to promote community and economic development in rural areas.



City Councilman Eric Gioia Queens, New York

The Young Democrats of America (YDA) honored Queens, New York City Councilmember Eric Gioia as the John F. Kennedy Outstanding Young Democrat at their national convention in Dallas, Texas in July. "This is a testament to the fact that when people get together and unite behind common goals and values, there is no limit to what we can accomplish," Gioia told his local paper, The Queens Gazette. "I am incredibly honored to be chosen as the recipient of the JFK award."



In nominating Gioia, Queens County the organization's president Matthew Silverstein lauded him as "the best of the American Dream." Silverstein told the paper, "[Gioia] represents and has demonstrated the difference a young person can make through hard work and a solid commitment to public service."

<http://www.qgazette.com/news/2007/0822/features/027.html>
http://www.timesledger.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=18631003&BRD=2676&PAG=461&dept_id=551069&rft=6

Darfur's Genocide- Not on Our Watch

By Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (AZ)

I was privileged to live in Kenya, Africa in 1995, shortly after the Rwandan genocide. Fresh out of college, I learned nearly first-hand of the devastation that had occurred in that country. At the same time, I learned about what was happening simultaneously in southern Sudan.

The country was torn by civil war, with thousands and thousands of young orphaned boys crossing the country by foot for years on their own. My interest persisted over the years, and when the Lost Boys of Sudan first came to Arizona, I became involved in their resettlement and made efforts to work with these extraordinary young men here in our state. Now, years later, I have been privileged to do more work to help both the country of Sudan and to stop the genocide.



Rep. Sinema with the Lost Boys at the Arizona State Capitol.

Since 2003, the government of Sudan has waged a genocide on the people of Darfur (the western region of the country). More than half a million people have been killed, many more have been raped, tortured, maimed or beaten, and millions have been forced out of the country into neighboring Chad. While our world promised “Never Again” after the Holocaust, we have not kept our promise. We are breaking it again right now in Darfur.

So, about two months ago, I was reading the book “Not On Our Watch” by Don Cheadle and John Prendergast. The book described their travels to Darfur, and urged readers to take action in their communities. I decided that morning to hold a forum at the state capitol to educate fellow members and the public about Darfur and to tell people what they can do to help stop this 21st century genocide.

Two weeks later, we held a great forum at the capitol, where Lost Boys spoke about the history of armed conflict in Sudan and described of what is occurring now in Darfur. The forum was a great success; the public attended and the local media covered the event, teaching even more people about Darfur.



Arizona Rep. Sinema with the Lost Boys at her 31st Birthday Party— a fundraiser to help stop the genocide in Darfur.

The book “Not On Our Watch” also urges readers to raise money for groups working to stop the genocide or help survivors. One example the book give is to ask friends to donate money instead of giving you birthday gifts. This was a great idea, so I decided to celebrate my 31st birthday with a fundraiser for Darfur. Six weeks after I read this book, I hosted a fundraiser and raised \$31,000 to help a local group that serves survivors of the genocide in Arizona, and a global group that is working to seek a political end to the genocide in Darfur. It was a wonderful event – we educated people, talked to the public via television, and raised money to help stop this genocide.

I was so inspired by what others around the country are doing to stop the Darfur genocide that I have committed to working on this issue for at least one full year. Right now, I'm working to bring a filmmaker and her documentary about Darfur to four universities in Arizona this September. And, with the support

of great activists in the state, I'll keep raising awareness about the genocide in Darfur until it ends.

Photos provided courtesy of Floyd Galloway

Special Feature by a YEO:

Campaign Finance Reform Efforts in Pennsylvania

**By State Representative
Josh Shapiro (PA)**

Lack of Campaign Laws

Over the past year, the desire of Pennsylvanians to reform the way Harrisburg operates has grown, resulting in the election of 55 new members of the General Assembly in 2006. Citizens of the Commonwealth recognize that reforming our campaign finance laws will do a great deal to level the playing field in our elections, and ensure that their elected representatives will respond to the needs of their constituents and not the needs of the special interests.

I held a hearing on campaign finance reform on Pennsylvania's toothless campaign finance laws. As co-chair of the Speaker's Commission on Legislative Reform. Testimony from the National Conference of State Legislatures identified Pennsylvania as one of only 13 states that place no limits on campaign contributions by individuals. In addition, campaign finance disclosure statements are required infrequently. As a result, an individual can make a million dollar contribution to any candidate for state office, and the citizens would not know about it. This is wrong, and should not be allowed to happen.

Reform

I support the ability of municipalities to enact more stringent campaign finance limits on local candidates than ex-



ists on the state level. In April, the State Supreme Court upheld contribution limits set by Philadelphia for candidates for city office. Notwithstanding these actions, the state should act to limit contributions in all races in the Commonwealth.

My legislation will bring Pennsylvania into line with federal campaign finance laws. My legislation limits an individual's aggregate contribution to a candidate to \$2,300 per election. A PAC will be limited to a \$5,000 aggregate contribution. A candidate may increase the limits on contributions he/she receives threefold when one of his/her opponents spends more than \$250,000 of his/her own funds to finance his/her own campaign.

My legislation also increases the number of campaign finance reports a candidate is required to file. Under current law, a candidate may only have to file one finance report in a non-election year and five reports in an election year. The bill requires quarterly reporting during both election and non-election years. During election years, candidates will also need to file pre-election and post-election reports for both the primary and general election. After a candidate's committee files the pre-election report, the committee will need to declare any contribution exceeding \$50 within 24 hours of receipt until the election.

Next Steps

The outlook for passage of my legislation is good. The forces for change in this state are strong. The chair of the House Finance Committee supports my legislation, and I am confident it will receive an affirmative vote on the House floor.

Update Us!

Have you passed any great progressive policy? Introducing something soon? Starting a project in the community to serve your constituents better? Please send any and all updates to Raquel at rsimon@pfaw.org so we can feature your hard work!

GREEN UPDATE

The June edition of YEO Frontline News featured green energy efforts. Since that time, YEOs have been hard at work making their own cities green. If you have efforts to report, please email updates to Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org.

Leaving her “Green Print” on Milwaukee

County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic believes that green energy is vital for her community. She has spent the past few months working with a coalition of citizen groups to push through a conservation plan called “Green Print.” The plan will transform the way Milwaukee County operates and will help to preserve resources for future generations. By a commanding 16-0 vote, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors approved the plan.

“With the Green Print, Milwaukee County can lead by example.



I’m proud the County Board is playing a major role by investing in our infrastructure and making a bold statement that the status quo is no longer acceptable,” Supervisor Dimitrijevic said. “I thank my colleagues for supporting this important legislation and I encourage the county executive to sign it. I also appreciate the support the Green Print has received from so many grassroots organizations.”

Grassroots organizations supporting this plan include the Sierra Club; Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful; the Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods Coalition; The Parks People; Milwaukee County Conservation Coalition; the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters; IBEW Local 2150; Friends of Milwaukee’s Rivers; Groundworks Milwaukee; Urban Open Space Foundation; Wisconsin Green Building Alliance; One Wisconsin Now; and The Institute for Wisconsin’s Future.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education

Fund: 33rd Annual Los Angeles Dinner
October 30, 2007 Los Angeles, CA
<http://www.maldef.org>

The Council of State Governments:

Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum
November 11-14, 2007 Oklahoma City, OK
<http://www.csg.org>

National League of Cities:

83rd Congress of Cities and Exposition
November 13-17, 2007 New Orleans, LA
<http://www.nlc.org>

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislatures:

5th National Summit
November 15-18, 2007 Miami, FL
<http://www.nhcsl.org>

National Black Caucus of State Legislatures:

30th Annual Legislative Conference
December 12-16, 2007 Little Rock, AR
<http://www.nbcsl.com>

ACPYL Brings a World Perspective Home

WHO: American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)



WHAT: ACYPL is a non-profit educational exchange organization dedicated to fostering relations between the next generation of political leaders in the United States and their counterparts around the world. Its education programs include international exchanges, foreign policy and democracy conferences and election study programs.

Each year, ACYPL sends young Americans (age 25-40) on political study tours abroad and organizes reciprocal visits to the United States. Participants learn diplomatic skills, engage in dialogue on bilateral issues and forge professional relationships through the unique access they gain to the political leadership of the nation(s) they visit.

Since the organization was founded in 1996, more than 6,000 young leaders from around the world have participated in cultural exchanges. Thirty-eight alumni serve in the U.S. Congress.

WHERE: The exchanges are intensive two-week study programs conducted with ACYPL's counterpart organizations in every region of the world, including Asia and the Pacific Rim, central and eastern Europe, Central America, South America, the Indian subcontinent, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, North Africa and Russia.

MORE INFO: Visit www.acypl.org or call (202) 857-0999.

TIPS: PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL

Time Management: Reduce Stress and Improve Productivity

Effective time management helps you get more done each day, lead a less stressful life, and reclaim much needed “you” time. By managing your time effectively, you can improve your quality of life.

That said, this type of organizational skill does not always come naturally. To get started, choose one of these tips, try it for two to four weeks and see if it helps. If it does, consider adding another one. If not, try a different one.

- **Plan each day.** Planning your day can help you feel more in control of you life. Write a to-do list, putting the most important tasks at the top. Keep a schedule of your daily activities to minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.
- **Prioritize your tasks.** Like many people, you may be spending the majority of your time on a small percentage of your tasks. Prioritizing will ensure you spend your time and energy on those that are truly important to you.
- **Say no to nonessential tasks.** Consider your goals and schedule before agreeing to take on additional work.
- **Delegate.** Take a look at your to-do list and consider what you can eliminate or pass on to someone else.
- **Take the time you need to do a quality job.** Doing work right the first time may take more time upfront, but fixing errors usually result in less time spent making corrections, which takes more time overall.
- **Break large, time-consuming tasks into smaller tasks.** Work on them a few minutes at a time until you get them all done.
- **Practice the 10-minute rule.** Work on a dreaded task for 10 minutes each day. Once you get started, you may find you can finish it.
- **Evaluate how you're spending your time.** Keep a diary of everything you do for three days to determine how you're spending your time. Look for time that can be used more wisely. For example, could you take a bus or train to work and use the commute to catch up on reading? If so, you could free up some time to exercise or spend with family or friends.
- **Get plenty of sleep and exercise.** Improved focus and concentration will help improve your efficiency so that you can complete your work in less time.
- **Take a time management course.** If your employer offers continuing education, take a time management class. If your workplace doesn't have one, find out if a local community college, university or community education program does.
- **Take a break when needed.** Too much stress can derail your attempts at getting organized. When you need a break, take one. Take a walk. Do some quick stretches at your workstation. Take a day of vacation.

Source: MayoClinic.com, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/time-management/WL00048>



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