

**Publication:**The Dominion Post;**Date:**Jul 12, 2009;**Section:**Local;**Page Number:**9

## Kids talk politics over lunch

### Delegates meet with students at city library

BY ALEX LANG The Dominion Post

Half a dozen teenagers quizzed and discussed politics with members of the West Virginia House of Delegates during a Saturday afternoon Pizza and Politics session at the Morgantown Public Library.

On Saturday, delegates Bob Beach and Barbara Evans Fleischauer had lunch and talked about various issues with kids aged 12-17.

Evan Lintz, a Morgantown High School junior, attended the event. He said he liked having the opportunity to interact with the delegates and the chance to talk about issues.

"It's great," Lintz said, "because it's good to get involved."

There were three major issues Lintz said he wanted to discuss. He wanted to learn more about the PROMISE scholarship (because he is getting ready to go to college), the digital television transition and environmental issues.

Recycling was one of the most discussed topics at the luncheon, and the children and the delegates talked about adding deposits to cans and bottles. Beach and Fleischauer explained that some delegates won't vote for it because they consider it a tax increase.

They encouraged the kids to start petition drives at their schools to show the state their support for adding deposits on bottles to encourage recycling.

The delegates also took time to explain the PROMISE scholarship. The merit-based scholarship is given to West Virginia students who meet certain academic requirements and attend a higher education institute in the state. They talked about how many more students are meeting the requirements and how that has affected funding.

Before the meeting, Fleischauer said she liked talking to the youngsters, even though they can't vote. She said it's important to hear from all the different groups she represents, not just the voters.

"We represent everyone who lives in the community," Fleischauer said.

Children tend to get lost in the political realm because they don't vote, Fleischauer said. Some politicians can forget about them, but she said this is a mistake because they are the future of the state and the country.

Fleischauer said she likes going to different schools and community events to talk to the youth because it is a great chance for them to learn about politics. It is also a way for her to take the "pulse of the community."

With meetings like Saturday's, Fleischauer said she hopes the youngsters become interested in politics and might run for office in their schools or consider future public service.



Jason DeProspero/The Dominion Post W.Va. delegates Bob Beach (left) and Barbara Evans Fleischauer talk with a group of teenagers during the Pizza and Politics event at the Morgantown Public Library, on Saturday morning.