

A great debate

Event features top students from ivy league colleges

Robert Kotyk, Staff

Verbal sparring was the main event last Sunday, when eight of North America's leading young rhetoricians took to the stage at the Centennial Concert Hall for an evening of heated debate.

Called "The Great Debate," the evening was a fundraiser for the Gray Academy of Jewish Education and featured debate teams from Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and Yale.

The rounds of argumentation centred around two topics. The first debate, consisting of teams from Harvard and Princeton, argued the question "Is the War on Terrorism a War on Islam?" The second, with teams from Stanford and Yale, argued over the question of whether or not Canada should adopt a two-tier health-care policy.

Each topic was assigned beforehand, so that the debaters do not necessarily agree with their side of the resolution.

Presiding over the affair was University of Manitoba law professor Jack London, who joked early on that the debate was one of the few well-attended events in Winnipeg "without door prizes or a bingo game going on."

Once the debate began, how-

ever, the audience could not help but try to listen intently to the lightning-fast pace of the arguments.

The team from Harvard, given the role of the government in favour of the resolution, argued that the source of terrorism is religious extremism.

"The only way to win the war on terror . . . is by defeating radical forms of Islam," said Patrick Nichols, the prime minister of the mock parliament, "and by promoting moderate leaders."

The teams from Stanford, in the role of government, and Yale, in the role of the opposition, debated the second topic, which focused on health care in Canada.

The government, led by former Winnipegger Michael Kives, argued in favour of adopting a two-tier health care system.

"We don't want to adopt an American style of health care," said Kives. "We do not want there just to be a private system. What we do want to use is a private system to benefit the health-care system that we already have in place."

The judges for the debate observed from the front of the hall, and consisted of Senator Mira Spivak, Dr. Eموke Szathmary, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Manitoba, Gerald

Flood of the *Winnipeg Free Press* and radio and television personality Charles Adler.

The winners were decided based on their ideas, how well they handled questions from the opposing team, as well as their style of delivery. The opposition, led by Princeton's David Silverman, won the first debate and the government, led by Kives, won the second. An award was then given to Kives for giving the best performance throughout the event.

After the event, the Concert Hall's lobby was abuzz with more arguing, as the audience picked up where the debaters left off.

"It was very thought-provoking," said Ian Schillberg, a third-year economics student at the University of Manitoba. "It's a good exchange. It's a good way to get ideas out even if they're not your ideas. Like, 'let's look at each side of the story.'"

Dr. Szathmary, one of the judges of the event, said that though she enjoyed all of the speakers, the winners of the evening were not difficult to determine.

"There were no differences [between the judges] worth speaking about," she said. "It was a clear winner all the way."



The Oak Room will soon be the site of a new lab for English as a Second Language students.

PHOTO: Susan Blight

Taché Hall to be renovated

Construction of new lab expected for next year

Elliott Brown, Volunteer Staff

concerns.

Plans are being made to renovate the auditorium portion of the Taché residence. The proposed project would see the installation of classroom and computer facilities on the second level of the building, known as the "Oak Room," to create a language lab for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Built in 1911, the Oak Room served as the residence cafeteria until it was replaced by Pembina Hall, and has since been vacant.

Although the possibility of renovating the Oak Room has been under discussion for many years, this is the closest any plan has come to implementation. According to Dr. David Morphy, vice-provost for student affairs, "The creation of a language lab for our ESL program has been under discussion for many years and we are just now moving into a position to be able to fund it."

It is hoped that the renovations can begin in January 2005, although no firm date has been selected because the project has not yet been formally approved. The likely cost of the project is also uncertain. Dr. Morphy noted, "Funding is coming from revenue earned through our ESL Program. We are in the process of costing the project and are unable to comment further."

The ESL program is offered by the department of English language studies, part of the faculty of continuing education, and is intended to help students in the program improve their English skills. Currently, classroom facilities around campus are used for the ESL program.

Although he is supportive of the project, Dan Stepanik, president of the Resident Student Association Council (RSAC), noted that residents might have some

"It's a good thing that it will get renovated, but we just want . . . to make sure we have space for social functions," he said. "We want [the facilities] to be available to resident students if it's going to be in residence . . . and it has to be secure."

So far, RSAC has been told, and Dr. Morphy has confirmed, that the computer facilities and study space will be open to resident students after 4:30 p.m., and that the facilities will be properly secured. This would supplement the existing computer room on the fourth floor of East Taché and the study spaces available in the basement and top levels of the Mary Speechly residence.

The Taché residence is divided into three sections. The east and west wings, where the resident students live, flank the central building, which contains the first floor student lounge, the second floor Oak Room, the third floor auditorium, and the fourth floor auditorium balcony. The renovations will not affect the first floor passage or "Club Condo," the student lounge.

The Oak Room is used by residents to travel between the wings, and most recently for various social functions. In the past, these events have typically been held in the third floor auditorium. However, the discovery of asbestos in the auditorium three years ago necessitated the relocation of these events, and the Oak Room was selected as a substitute venue. Residence socials have also occasionally been held in the Multi-Purpose Room of University Centre.

Although the asbestos on the third level has been removed, the facility cannot be used until it has undergone a health and safety inspection. Asbestos has also been found in the utility tunnels that run beneath the Taché residence and the Tier building.

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