UCA welcomes Arkansas Model UN delegates

Playing the role of delegates, observers, or pages according to their experience level, students are collectively simulating seven committees and councils of the United Nations in addition to the International Court of Justice and the Arab League.

Presiding over the conference is Secretary-General Ryan McCormack of UCA, who is aided by an Undersecretary-General from each of the sponsoring universities: Anatoliy Shatkovskyy of UCA, John Casey of Hendrix, and Bradley McColey of UALR. More information about each student may be found in the "AMUN Profiles" section of the Newsletter.

The UCA Model U.N. Organization hopes that the conference will be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for everyone involved and, as the AMUN website emphasizes, hopes that the conference will also foster "the importance of cooperation in dealing with global problems," a lesson that is applicable to not only international politics but also facets of every conflict.

The AMUN website, www.uca.edu/org/amun, also provides detailed information on this year's schedule of events, committee topics, country assignments, and the secretariat & staff. Information on the AMUN organization itself, parliamentary procedures, and conference rules and guidelines can be found on the website, as well.

Saudi Arabia prompts discourse on religious tolerance

BY KATHY HILL
STAFF REPORTER

In September 2004, United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, designated Saudi Arabia as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act for severe violations of religious freedom. The issue of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia continues to be one of concern in November 2008.

Saudi Arabia sponsored a discussion at the United Nations on religious tolerance on November 13th. World leaders including President Bush; the British prime minister, Gordon Brown; the Israeli president, Shimon Peres; and the heads of seven Arab states attended the meeting.

The two-day session of the General Assembly was a meeting on the "culture of peace."

Human rights groups are criticizing Saudi Arabia for promoting religious tolerance abroad while actively resisting it at home; the government of Saudi Arabia does not even provide protection for the freedom of religion.

Saudi Arabia has a legal system that is not just based on Islam, the official religion, but even requires that all citizens be Muslim. The government also prohibits the public practice of all non-Muslim religions.

More than two million Saudi Shiites face widespread discrimination in worship, education and employment. The Human Rights Watch issued a statement calling on Saudi Arabia to start the fight against religious intolerance at home by ending "systemic religious discrimination."

The 2008 USCIRF report states the U.S. government should take immediate improvements for religious freedom by urging the Saudi
Maternal Death and the Millennium Development Goals

BY ALEX RIOS
STAFF REPORTER

Worldwide, over 200 million women do not have access to contraceptives, partially resulting in an elevated global maternal death rate. Worsening matters, 270 million children have no access to any source of health-care.

These alarming facts were first prominently addressed by Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, executive director for the United Nations Populations Fund, at the 2005 World Summit. This event put into motion an international movement that has since saved over seven million lives a year.

In September 2008 United Nations officials congregated to re-address the Millennium Development Goals, with which, by 2015, world leaders committed to take practical steps toward ending poverty and hunger, providing universal education, promoting gender equality, improving child and maternal health, fighting HIV/AIDS, sustaining the environment, and developing a global partnership with all nations.

As a result of this recent event, an estimated $2 billion is expected to be donated by supporting countries towards the improvement of child and maternal health, a great step towards progressing healthcare in poverty-stricken countries.

In fact, UNFPA executive director, Thoraya Obaid claims that it would only “cost the world $6 billion to stop women dying during childbirth, less than the amount spent in a day-and-a-half on the military.” The positive outcome of this event was perceived as a foreshadowing of a positive future for struggling women and children.

Although the meeting resulted in a large amount of funds being raised for the UNFPA’s goals and alerted much of the world’s leaders about the serious issue of mother and child health, there is still much work to be done about the increasing rates of maternal mortality.

In October of 2008, the Washington Post revivified this pressing issue with an article titled, “A Mother’s Final Look at Life,” which discussed the lack of quality prenatal care accessible to mothers in Sierra Leon. It focused on a young mother who bled to death as a result of not being able to find a medical facility close enough to her, poor education on personal prenatal care, and insufficient use of medical supplies in the hospital in which she was treated. Her story is the unfortunate truth for most mothers in Sierra Leon and similar economically-disinclined countries.

SEE MATERNAL • PAGE 5

“Teacher of the Year” addresses AMUN delegation

BY BRIAN BROUSSARD
EDITOR

The life of Mr. Paul T. Gray, Jr., the keynote speaker for the 2008 AMUN Conference, might at first seem quite homebound: born in Russellville, he spent the first year of his life on the Arkansas Tech campus, and he is now a teacher and Model UN faculty advisor for Russellville High School; Mr. Gray, Russellville, and education seem to inexplicably and inextricably linked.

However, as his most recent major accomplishment – recognition as the Arkansas “Teacher of the Year” (ATOY) for 2008, for which he has a leave-of-absence from Russellville HS – exemplifies, his achievements and travels stretch far beyond his Russellville roots.

Before returning to Arkansas Tech to graduate with a B.A. in History Education and a Masters in Education degree in Social Sciences Education, he served in the Army for four years, most of which was spent in Germany. During his military service, an event occurred that Gray considers his most significant experience abroad.

Recounting this incident and its personal and professional significance, Gray said, “On November 9, 1989, we received word that Egon Krenz, the leader of East Germany, had opened the Berlin Wall. We could not believe it. Just less than one year later (and only a few weeks before I left Germany) on October 3, 1990, Germany reunited.

“My friend and I got up early that day and traveled to Karl Marx Stadt and Plauen, East Germany. We witnessed a celebration of the reunited Germans. We also saw the horrible degradation of years of communist rule the people and infrastructure had endured.”

Most of us learn of the German reunification from textbooks or the History Channel and are still awed by the significance and beauty of the
AMUN Profiles...
SECRETARY-GENERAL
RYAN MCCORMACK

Major: International Relations
Minor: Interdisciplinary Studies (Honors)

Affiliated Organizations: President of MUN Club, President of Japanese club, “Star representative” for the We the People program (a program in which high school students learn about and discuss the constitution and its effects on the U.S.), member of Honors College Laughing Stock

Interests: Reading, video games, studying and speaking Japanese

Future plans: McCormack would like to be a Rhodes Scholar and then go to law school. Afterwards, he would like to get a job in the State Department or as a civil servant.

International Travel: Studied abroad in Japan for one month (summer 2008)

Born in Orlando, Florida, McCormack was acquainted with Japanese at an early age. Because of his father’s position at AT&T, he moved from Florida to Albuquerque, NM to Mount Kisco, NY until finally settling in Jonesboro, AR around the second grade where he eventually attended Valley View HS.

He has participated in Model UN since the tenth grade and has worked his way up from the role of delegate through the ranks of Special Rep to the OAS, applicant to MICJ, Chair of SPECPOL, until becoming Secretary-General this, his Junior, year.

Despite the plethora of positions, McCormack liked being a delegate the most overall because he likes “actually going out there and arguing.” In the role of delegate, students are best able to “work and actively come up with solutions to global issues.”

Increasing McCormack’s interest in international relations was his trip to Japan this past summer. Asakusa, a traditional district in Tokyo, made salient both the significance and curiosity of culture, language, and politics.

ECOSOC to address various globalization issues

BY KAREN ROSS
STAFF REPORTER

This year, as the Economic and Social Council looks to further promote higher standards of living while identifying solutions to international problems, a number of key issues will be brought to its attention. Convening under pressing concerns, ECOSOC will deal with the matters of promoting literacy in the developing world, global trade and maritime policy, and also deforestation and rain forests.

The council will have to assess ways in which to better foster literacy in countries where education levels are low, thus giving imperative attention to nations in the regions of South and West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and sub-Saharan Africa. The reason for action being called specifically upon developing countries is because in most instances, where poverty rates are higher, literacy rates tend to be lower. Illiteracy tends to prevail in low income countries where severe poverty is widespread. In 2004, data reported by countries counted 771 million illiterate adults, with more than 132 million young people still unable to read and write even at a minimum level.

ECOSOC will also be asked to deal with concerns over global trade and maritime policy. In a “Trade and Development Report” in 2005, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) raised concerns about the possible restrictive impact of global imbalances on the economy as a whole and the growth prospects of developing countries in particular. ECOSOC will thus review trends and progress in global trade and give policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective international trade cooperation. The council will also be making recommendations on practical measures and policy options to enhance coherence and to promote global cooperation when it comes to
varying maritime policies among nation-states that have created rifts, as well as cooperation among governments and the shipping industry to improve maritime safety and to prevent marine pollution.

The last issue ECOSOC is slated to address regards deforestation and rain forests. A source for problems as diverse as food scarcity, community displacement, and global warming, in recent years deforestation has become a grave matter of global concern. The growing demand for land, originally designated for crops, animals, and human living, is exponentially climbing, which negatively stimulates the disintegration of forests. The Economic and Social Council will discuss needed alternatives or incentives for nations that are engaging in this damaging act, and also preventative measures also needed to stave off further destruction of forests in the future. Overall, the conservation and sustainable and equitable use of rain forests is an important part of recent recognition by the Council of the importance of sustainable development.

At this year's session, ECOSOC has much important ground to cover in identifying solutions to an array of issues. Facilitating this great task are the 2008 presiding officers: UCA students Daniel Guyton, chair; Emily Simon, co-chair; Paola Hernandez, legal counsel; and Mika Kawashima, legal counsel.

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**AMUN Profiles...**

**UNDERSECRETARY-GENERAL**

**ANATOLIY SHATKOVSKYY**

*Major:* International Studies  
*Minor:* Honors Interdisciplinary Studies & French

**Affiliated Organizations:** President of UCA Young Democrats, Resident Assistant, International Soccer Cup Committee, Organization for Bridging International Societies

**Past Internships:** Full-time intern on Capitol Hill in the office of Congressman Gary L. Ackerman, a member of the International Relations Committee, for six months (2006)  
Summer intern in the Little Rock office of Congressman Vic Snyder

**Future plans:** Graduate work in the field of International Relations and possibly International Law

Born in Cherkasy, a provincial capital in the very heart of Ukraine, Shatkovskyy was raised in the same city through high school, where he attended First City Gymnasium. He was also an exchange student for one academic year when he came to the U.S. to study at Wootton HS in Rockville, Maryland.

The opportunities and enjoyment afforded him during his experience as an exchange student led Shatkovskyy to return to the U.S. to intern in Washington, D.C. This internship helped solidify his interest in international politics and economics.

I'm sure that most of us would have a hard time considering going to school here in Arkansas "studying abroad," but for Shatkovskyy, Conway, Arkansas is rather foreign. His positive experiences in the U.S. prompted his stay, and he began studying International Studies at UCA, where he feels he has been given even more educational and political opportunities.

UCA also provided Shatkovskyy with his first experience in Model UN, and he has actively participated every year since. This being his third year, Shatkovskyy has held the positions of legal counsel, co-chair, and now Undersecretary-General. As enjoyable as the AMUN conferences have been, however, he prefers being able to actually work as a country delegate. He has successfully represented UCA twice at the Midwest Model UN conference in St. Louis.
Congo: issue of security and diplomacy

BY COLTON STIRMAN
STAFF REPORTER

Following a decade of minor flare-ups between the Hutus and the Tutsis and the mass genocide in Rwanda in 1994, these rival tribes are now fighting in the southeastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo. With this in mind the UN Security Council has authorized the use of another 2,785 troops and 300 police, to bring the total UN forces to over 20,000.

Estimates have ranged anywhere from 1,500 to 3,000 civilian deaths a day over the last few weeks with reports on some days going as high as 10,000 according to AP reports. These numbers are based on civilian and soldier deaths, with the vast majority of the deaths being civilian refugees who are starving to death after being displaced from their homes in western Congo.

The conflict in Rwanda never completely quelled but was rather transported across the Rwandan border into Congo. The Rwanda-backed rebel force led by Laurent Nkunda is fighting a combination of government troops and the exiled Rwandan Hutu militia known by its acronym FDLR. As the Tutsis were fighting their way back through the country in recent weeks they have forced nearly 250,000 civilians out of their homes as the government-backed forces raped and pillaged their way through town after town.

It seems by all reports that the Congolese government and their leader Joseph Kabila have been backing the Hutus, mostly in protection of their sovereignty, fearing that Rwanda would invade Congo. Unlike the conflict in the mid-90s there seems to be no good guys in this fight, except for the innocent civilians caught in the middle.

Indeed, the Rebels seem to perpetrating many of the same atrocities that they fought against ten years ago. The conflict is being fought by military powers, with neither holding the moral high ground. Because of this, the solutions to the conflict should be considered outside the realm of choosing sides and rather should be focused within the diplomatic realm.

The relationship between the United States and the U.N. has never been a perfect one, and the situation in the Congo should represent an opportunity for the U.S. to show that it is turning the corner from its recent fascination with the neoconservative agenda that the country had seemingly embraced through its elections of the past decade but have recently rejected.

If in the process of meeting with President Bush, President-elect Obama finds that the President has no willingness to participate in the events in Africa, then he should ask for special permission from the President to be the U.S. envoy for peace talks between Congo and Rwanda in the preceding weeks before Obama takes over as President. The matter is too urgent to wait until the end of January, when thousands more have been killed and displaced from their homes, to begin a true diplomatic peace effort. Both governments are the backbone behind the fighting forces in eastern Congo, and if both governments called for a combined ceasefire, then the conflict would effectively die down.

Amid an atmosphere of globalized politics, Barack Obama challenged Americans in the recent election to an agenda based on change. Well, if we are to see true change in the image of America abroad, the new president must put forth effort that falls outside of the line-items he said must be faced when he comes into office.

The conflict in Congo may not be the most important issue on the President’s platter when he takes office, but it could do the most to start recreating the image of the U.S. all over the world, leading to a more cohesive atmosphere of international politics in which the U.N. and the Security Council may more efficaciously work.

Saudi (cont’d from cover)

government to establish the freedom of worship privately; dissolve the Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice, a police force which enforces Muslim practice; allow foreign clergy to enter the country and carry out private worship services; invite UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to conduct a UN visit to Saudi Arabia; and address the exportation of religious intolerance in education materials in Saudi Arabia and around the world.

In the Human Rights Declaration of the “culture of peace,” the General Assembly called to promote “a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding through dialogue” and support “the initiatives of religious leaders, civil society, and states seeking to entrench the culture of peace, understanding, tolerance, and respect for human rights among the proponents of various faiths, cultures, and civilizations.”

The Minister of State for External Affairs believes the meeting was “a public relations exercise; they want to shed the image that they are the kingdom of intolerance and extremism and xenophobia,” Ahmed said, “The government controls the whole religious establishment, that is the problem. The problem is that the Saudi government doesn’t want to change anything.”

Maternal
(continued from Page 2)

Despite the efforts made by many individuals within the UNFPA and other organizations, the only apt solution to this global problem is the combination of the donation of sufficient funds amounting in the billions and a significant increase in the number of NGOs for humanitarian aid.

Basic healthcare for women and children across the globe is a mandatory need. It can only be made possible when the world decides to put differences aside and develop a sense of compassion for fellow human beings.
event, but Gray was able to hear the news firsthand, see the consequence, and live that moment in history.

It no doubt had a profound effect on his view of history: "I learned that day that geographic borders really can matter. I also learned that systems of government are not simply academic in nature. Systems of government really impact people and their lives."

As if to assure that that impact was positive, Gray later ran and was elected to the Russellville City Council and served for two years. But teaching seems to be Gray's ultimate calling -- "It's just in my blood." And plus, even though he might have an argument for the contrary, one doesn't just get "Teacher of the Year" without reason.

When asked to what he attributes his award, which he declared happens quite often, he turned to the responses of others. Friends and coworkers have told him that he received this honor because he simply loved his job, especially cared for his students, and "got results."

However, even with the perpetual questioning and answering of others, Gray remains unsatisfied with this answer because, as he says, "there are a lot of teachers who do what I do each day."

Ultimately, he contributes the award to luck and claims that humility has been the chief result.

Award aside, it was much easier for Gray to explain his intangible success within the classroom, where he is a teacher of International Relations, AP Human Geography, and Regional Geography and a Model UN faculty advisor.

Essentially, he loves to teach, enjoys learning, and tries to have fun "with the kids": if he doesn't have fun, "then there is no way the kids are going to have fun." He also places emphasis on high goals, increasing standards of performance, and attention to details, the last of which makes "everything else [fall] into place."

And if you just so happen to be sitting there, are worried about your upcoming meeting or the presentation of your resolution, and believe you have too little experience, take comfort in the fact that Gray attended his first Arkansas Model UN conference as a sponsor with only four days notice and preparation.

That was in 1993, he has been coming ever since, and even is now a board member for the United Nations Association of the USA.

Gray's commitment to MUN is due in large part to its own excellence as a teaching model. Because of the fundamental combination of research methods, critical thinking, collaborative writing, and group discussion, among many other aspects, Gray believes that "there really is not a better teaching model than Model UN."

For Gray, the classroom is a temple. When asked about future plans, he stated that he will return to the classroom at the end of his ATOY duties; "I'm not sure if I could do anything else."

In addition to the vast experiences, commitment, and service that he is able to share, we have yet one more reason to be honored and grateful that Mr. Gray has spent his time with us today; tomorrow, as part of the "Teacher of the Year" program, he leaves for a trip to Chile, Argentina, and Antarctica. On behalf of the UCA-MUN Organization, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Gray for his address today and wish him the best of luck throughout his journey.