

Model U.N. promotes idea sharing

By James Kushlan

Walt Disney's people tell us "It's a small world after all." That's true. With huge advances in travel and communication, we share more of the humanity of our fellow earthlings.

The Model United Nations set for February 24 to 26 here at Capitol Campus will reflect this smallness of our world community. High school students will debate and discuss important issues from every region of the globe.

Students participating in the Model U.N. will go beyond the level of appreciating a good Disney song, though. "Rather than just saying how small the world is becoming, I think the delegates get an awareness that issues which affect other countries also affect the United States, says Clem E.

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President, I.A.A.

Gilpin, Capitol Campus instructor, Afro-American Studies, who began the Model U.N. program here in 1973.

The program is sponsored by the International Affairs Association (IAA) of Capitol Campus, a student group dedicated to fostering understanding of world concerns.

Chris Barrett, President of the IAA, says in sponsoring the Model U.N., "our purpose is to educate ourselves as well as our delegates in international affairs."

The Model U.N. brings students together from about 30 South Central Pennsylvania high schools for a weekend at Capitol. Students, chosen by methods varying with each school, come prepared to represent specific nations participating in sessions similar to those of the real U.N.

Issues, chosen beforehand by the staff, are both regional and global, such as the Iran-Iraq war, and world hunger and population growth. "Basically, we look at what's discussed in the real U.N. when choosing the issues, says Barrett.

In sessions of the four committees comprising the Model U.N. delegates representing various nations address the issues according to established rules of procedure. Staff members moderate the discussion in each of the committees.

Student delegates must prepare themselves for discus-

sion by studying the issues. A brochure on this year's program encourages the delegates to select a country early, and to contact either the embassy in Washington, D.C., or the country's U.N. mission in New York for information. Students are also encouraged to use the U.N. Monthly Chronicle.

The staff for the program must be thoroughly prepared, Barrett says, because they moderate discussion of the

make namecards for each delegate."

When the student delegates arrive, they will stay in Meade Heights and in the dorms, through the cooperation of some of the residents. Meals will be offered at the dining halls. The delegates will even have a dance on Friday evening, with music provided by WNDR, the campus radio station.

But this is not a weekend of partying, Gilpin stresses. "It's a

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Afro-American Studies Instructor

issues, and uphold proper procedures. Members of the staff, not all belonging to the IAA, research periodicals and hold mock sessions. Five members of the staff participated in a college-level Model U.N. program at the university of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, to familiarize them with the issues and procedure. A visit to the Nigerian embassy in Washington, D.C., and to the embassy's information office also aided staff preparation.

"There is a lot of work involved getting ready to host the program," Barrett says, "for example, one night a group met to

tremendous sacrifice for the student delegates to give up an entire weekend for the Model U.N., and to be in conferences for a very long time." The program has its benefits, though.

Paul Sharpe, a senior at Bishop McDevitt High School, Harrisburg, attended last year's program, and will return this year. He sees the Model U.N. as both a learning experience and a "chance to meet people from other high schools, other areas."

Sharpe found it interesting "to see the bureaucracy" even in a small group he participated in.

Andy Arce, a former president of the IAA, is also the father of one of this year's delegates. The participants "get a sense of how issues are interrelated and affect other countries," he says, adding: "If they come away with anything, it's a world cultural overview, a less ethnocentric point of view."

This is consistent with Gilpin's hopes for the Model U.N. "My major concern is that the delegates become interested in international issues not only as American citizens, but also from the perspective of world citizens," says Gilpin.

Along with meeting people and participating, students have the opportunity to earn certificates of merit. These awards are given by the staff to "students who represent their countries well and make contributions to the conference," says Gilpin. All participants receive certificates recognizing their attendance at the Model U.N.

What does the staff get out of the Model U.N.? They are exhausted when the conference is over. "They probably don't want to hear the words 'Model U.N.' mentioned for the next few weeks, but, they will have a sense of major accomplishment," says Gilpin.

