Images From College Night 2002

Weekend in NYC Exposes Students to MCC, UN

By Kristine Sensenig
Staff Writer

The United Nations (UN) Security Council passed a resolution Thursday, stating that the economic sanctions on Iraq will be lifted for a 15-week period. If, at the end of this period, the Iraqi government does not fully comply with UN weapons inspections, the resolution states that, “the UN Security Council, will force to act.”

This particular UN Security Council, however, was a simulation consisting of college students attending a three-day seminar in New York City. Eleven of these students were from EMU.

The seminar, entitled “Crisis in World Community: A Breach in Partnership,” is an annual function of Mennonite Central Committee’s (MCC) United Nations Office. Based in Manhattan, New York City, the office works with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in lobbying the UN. It also strives to inform other MCC members and its constituents of UN activities, especially those related to areas within MCC’s focus.

Sophomore Kevin Docherty, who played the role of the United States in the simulation, explained that his instructions told him to get his resolutions passed through the strategy of “ask first, then threaten.”

Sophomores Lindsay Martin and Jessica Byler also represented the United States. They were told to be polite but to not actually listen to the concerns of other member states and to open their proposals to other Security Council members with the line, “It is in your best interest...” The ultimate mission of the United States was to gain the support of the four other permanent members of the Security Council.

“I felt like I had complete control and could get anything I wanted,” Byler commented. “It’s by the U.S. just does what it wants...I realized just how scary the U.S. is...because of this.”

During Security Council operation, NGOs may address the Security Council through an Arria Formula meeting. However, in order to do so, they must gain sponsorship from a Security Council member. Senior Heather Menzie, who played the role of an NGO, commented that, “it was interesting to see how it all played out, and frustrating to see how little of a say NGOs have in what happens.”

Toward the end of the simulation, the United States, along with the United Kingdom, proposed the aforementioned resolution. It was passed with 14 votes in its favor and China abstaining.

“It was scary to feel how much of a ‘game’ it became for us as we manipulated and cajoled other countries to go along with our plan and almost forgot what the actual issues were about,” observed Martin of the simulation.

Karina Derksen, a junior from Bryn Mawr College, explained that the simulation was “really helpful in understanding how the Security Council functions and why a lot of things don’t really get done.”

This was the eighth student seminar conducted by the MCC UN office. Many students came to the conference with at least a general idea of the function of MCC and the UN, but without a clear understanding of how the two are compatible. “Hearing ‘MCC’ and ‘the UN’ in one sentence... is pretty interesting to me. I saw them as generally working toward the same goals and ideals, but coming from quite different paradigms and worldviews,” stated Menzie. “I was really interested in how these two work together and influence each other.”

In reflecting on his experience at the seminar, First-year Justin Shenk said, “It was one of those experiences that changes a person—that transforms. Plus, what person in their right mind wouldn’t try to get off campus for a weekend in the city?”

Cook Speaks on Departure from Pioneer

By Paul Yoder
Staff Writer

Though former Dining Hall Director Ron Cook left EMU and his employer, Pioneer College Catering, without complaint, the real reason for his resignation remains vague.

“The administration asked Pioneer to bring in another director. So Pioneer asked me to transfer and I resigned my position,” said Cook.

Some people were not pleased with the way things were handled.

“Just like each of us has our own performance goals, I think Pioneer has those too,” said Piper. “The decisions aren’t arbitrary.”

Piper does see and anticipate positive change. “We’re trying hard and Pioneer’s trying hard to meet students’ needs and expectations. I noticed The Weather Vane gave [food services] an almost hug,” he said, referring to an issue earlier this fall. “I think that’s pretty high praise for food service.”

Piper identified Dining Hall Director John Luc’s Student Food Service Advisory Committee initiative as an encouraging development. “He’ll accomplish something that hasn’t been accomplished here before,” Piper said. He explained that EMU hasn’t been able to set up a student feedback group in the past.

Cook had worked at EMU since the school first contracted with Pioneer in the Summer of 1997. “When we got the contract I took over the school...I was the only one that stayed there five years,” he said. “Every other food service company was staying there six months to a year.”

Piper said that while the food service company contract falls under his responsibilities, the decision is "very consultative" at EMU.

Cook had worked over 20 years for Pioneer before his resignation. He said he is currently employed elsewhere.