

WESTWORLD



Model U.N. broadens horizons

w Adriana Zalloni
World Editor

Three years ago, a friend of mine tried convincing me to join a club called Model United Nations (U.N.). After much explaining on his part, I finally caved and went to a meeting. Ultimately, that was one of the best decisions I have made in my four years of high school

Back then, to me, Model U.N. was an obscure group of nerds who pretended to argue world issues and concerns. They left for the weekend, debated until their socks fell off, then returned home without achieving the world peace for which they so longed.

However, that all changed when I began attending the meetings. I was lucky enough to get a spot at the Model United Nations Northwestern conference (NUMUN), in the spring of my sophomore year. At the conference, I represented India in the World Health Organization. Almost immediately, I was seduced by the way a conference was run. It was nothing like I expected. Each delegate knew the country (s)he was representing like the back of his/her hand—it was as if each was a human Wikipedia™, except more accurate. We debated issues such as gender equality in healthcare and malaria in African states. In that weekend, I learned more about the world's current events than ever, simply because I had to listen and participate in various conversations. A weekend at Model U.N. works magic with one's knowledge of the current events of the world. Now, when I pick up a newspaper, and there is an article regarding healthcare, I fully understand what it is saying, which ultimately helps me make more intelligent decisions in my life.

This past month, I attended the NUMUN conference again, where I was part of the committee Balance of Power: Kosovo. To be completely honest, before I began my research, I barely knew where Kosovo was. Now, I can articulate its population size, its unemployment rate and its best university. More important, I can inform others about what is going on there, about the struggle with Serbia, about the economy or about the state in which most of Kosovo's citizens reside. In other words, I know what is important.

That conference two years ago changed my life. Every year has been progressively better. As the club continues to grow, more and more people are learning about the current events that affect our day-to-day life. Niles West always had been kind of an underdog at conferences, until recently, when our students have stepped up to the plate to begin receiving awards and recognitions for their outstanding work at the conferences. We work harder than ever to get involved.

To those who have yet to experience Model U.N., I encourage you to get involved. Attend a meeting, talk to a member, do something—anything—to increase your knowledge of the world around us. It is more important than anything because this is here and now; this is our future. It is up to us.

Model U.N. meets Wednesdays after school. Talk to a member or to sponsor Matthew Wiemer if you have any questions. Decorum, delegates!

Bob's Newsstand offers glance of bygone era

w Hira Malik
Around Town Editor

"I want the students and the teachers to come and see what a resource they have less than a mile from campus. This shop connects all types of people because this shop is valuable," Bob Katzman, owner of Bob's Newsstand, said.

Walking into Bob's Newsstand, located at 4906 Oakton in Skokie, is like stepping back in time. Each corner is filled with stack upon stack of newspapers, some of which date back to the 19th Century.

Bob's Newsstand is more than a periodicals store. It is a treasure trove of collectibles. It carries a number of magazines, periodicals and posters of a bygone era.

world."

Although he tried college briefly at the University of Illinois-Chicago, commerce was in his blood.

"Even though I did not want to go to college, for I had a business and was making money, I did go for a year. The following year, I dropped out of college and opened a kosher deli," Katzman said. "Then, a year later, I was drafted, but I was rejected, for I had a previously been diagnosed with a cancer in my mouth."

Cancer has been a constant, if less-than-congenial, companion in Katzman's life.

"I have had 31 operations including reconstruction," Katzman said.

Katzman attempted college again at age 20 at Roosevelt University, then at age 30 at Roosevelt again and then again at



Bob's Newsstand offers newspapers for customers to browse and purchase. Photo by Hira Malik

According to Katzman, he developed an interest in old periodicals after noting how many people saved newspapers after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. This sparked his interest in "famous dead people," he said.

Not only does Katzman run his newsstand, but also he has written and published a series of five autobiographical works that chronicle his interaction with people he has encountered and the situations with which he has dealt.

Katzman began his career at age 15, when he opened his first newsstand in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, a store that thrived for 20 years.

"I left home when I was 14. I had to support myself, for I had been accepted at the University of Chicago Laboratory School. I could go, but I had to pay for it," Katzman said.

To do this, Katzman took matters into his own hands. "The summer before my sophomore year, I opened up a newsstand in Hyde Park and worked seven days a week. It became a chain of five newsstands. We used to sell magazines from all over the

age 54 in 2004, with a goal of acquiring a teaching degree. Each time, he has returned to owning businesses, including an earlier venture in Morton Grove.

"When I opened the first store, Magazine Memories in 1990, there were 20 places like this. The others went out of business and never reopened. The reason why I reopened was because I couldn't get a job at 59 [years of age] anywhere else. That is why I am [in Skokie,]" Katzman said.

Due to the recent economic downturn, Bob's Newsstand has suffered financially.

According to Katzman, "no kids come," even though the newsstand is filled with pure history.

He laments the fact that "teens do not read; the whole concept of reading as entertainment is gone. People think you can go to Wikipedia™ and actually learn something. That is ridiculous; you do not really learn anything," Katzman said.

For more information about Bob's Newsstand, contact (847) 677-9444.

Proposed NCLB changes may allow schools to move to more equitable system

w Hira Malik
Around Town Editor

"[The administration] knows that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) proposal of linking student achievement to teacher evaluation will impact our evaluation model," Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Anne Roloff said. "We are already working on developing a new instrument to address the new state law."

As reported recently in the *New York Times*, President Barack Obama wants to alter the NCLB law by focusing on each individual student. He wants to focus on each student, tracking individual academic growth over time, holding teachers accountable for each student's failure to show progress.

Social studies teacher Joseph Meyer does not find the idea of tying teacher evaluation to a student's failure feasible.

"In some cases, there are children who just won't do the work, and it is not a problem of the teacher. In other cases, there may be a teacher who is not doing enough to help the student," Meyer said. "It is difficult to have a consistent policy for that."

Student activities director Jessica Ogulnik believes that other factors affect a student's progress in school.

"It is a great idea to look at teacher evaluations; however, kids do not just come to school. You cannot just say that a teacher is responsible for a child's success. Kids have outside factors, a home life," Ogulnik said.

The *Times* article noted that changes to the law would include a move away from measuring a school as a whole, a sore point with some districts labeled as "failing" because so-called "disaggregated" groups (English language learners, special education students, etc.) fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

"The one good thing about the law is that it is a little bit less punitive, and it does look at the growth of student achievement. It does not just measure how students do on one test junior year, but on how much they improve their test scores over time. That makes it a little more possible for schools to show that they are effective," Principal Kaine Osburn said.

According to the *Times* article, Obama plans to have failing schools choose from a "turnaround model." This model includes sending students to another school or having the state intervene.

Roloff disagrees with this proposal.

"There is very little data that shows 'turnaround schools' to be effective from an academic standpoint. In fact, data shows that academic achievement does not improve as a result of the turnaround model," Roloff said.

Under the current law, the *Times* article charges, many states began lowering standards to facilitate their students' meeting the law's requirement of having all students being proficient in reading and math.

"Each state was able to set its own standards, and a lot of states lowered their standards to determine proficiency. Other states that had high standards ended up looking like they were failing, which was not true because the relative standards

were very different," Osburn said. "The idea that proficiency is identifiable on a certain test score when no one even agrees on what the standard is in itself wrong."

The *Times* reported that the new NCLB proposal possibly will offer money to states as competitive grants.

"In the current system, there are many unfunded mandates. Any time education can get more money, especially in a climate where there are a number of unfunded mandates, is a good thing," Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague said. "How the money is spent is also a consideration."

Roloff also expressed the belief that funding schools can be a good thing; however, there are concepts to consider when offering grants to schools.

"Money for schools can be used in a number of different ways. Depending on how funds are allocated, programs can be put in place that help students achieve at higher levels. However, money is not the only answer, and I don't believe that it should be the only motivator to improve schools. That said, additional funding can help produce results if it meets a need that cannot be addressed without it," Roloff said.

Roloff added that a positive aspect regarding changes in NCLB is that it is moving to a more "progressive" system, where student progress is measured.

"I do like the fact that we may be moving to more of a progressive system that looks at a school holistically in terms of graduation rates, in terms of extracurriculars, in terms of involvement and in terms of progress over time," Roloff said.

WestWord

Obama administration promotes nuclear reduction

Kathryn Booker
Staff Writer

"If we don't use nuclear weapons, then we are promoting peace in our world," junior Irum Tariq said in response to President Barack Obama's recent shift in nuclear policy. "If you take the first initial step to prevent violence by not using nuclear weapons, it will slowly end throughout the world."

According to the *Washington Post*, Obama issued a new policy on April 6 about nuclear weapons that reflects his desire to "move toward a world without nuclear weapons."

The document, known as the Nuclear Posture Review, includes Obama's pledge to reduce the amount of American weaponry and to encourage a diminution of Russia's nuclear arsenal, to refrain from nuclear testing and to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. This differs from the policy of previous administrations, which indicated America might use nuclear weapons against allied countries in retaliation against a biological or chemical attack. Obama's nuclear policy entails plans of nuclear investments and war-planning for five- 10 years.

The *Post* article reports that currently, the United States and Russia have a combined total of over 20,000 nuclear weapons. The new policy aims to reduce the amount of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenal by 30 percent.

Senior Lauren Shimanovsky expressed support for the reduction of nuclear weapons.

"I agree that the number of nuclear arms in the world should be reduced by an extremely large number," she said. "I don't think there is any place for them in war, if there is an actual place for war in the world."

Social studies teacher Janet Kelsey expressed the opinion that a nuclear-free world is an appropriate goal.

"I wish we would all give up our nuclear weapons, but that is not a reliable position," she noted. "So to start doing so little by little, along with other countries, seems to be the right way to go."

English teacher Tamara Jaffe-Notier concurs that the policy is a "good step forward" and adds that "I think it is a very good idea to enumerate times when it is not acceptable to use nuclear weapons, so I think it is a step in the right direction," she said. "We obviously have to do a lot to curb weapons manufacturing in general, not just nuclear weapons but all weapons."

Shimanovsky also agrees with Obama's policy to avoid using nuclear weapons against allied countries without nuclear weapons.

"I think that [it was] an appropriate decision to say that we won't attack countries with nuclear weapons if they don't have any because it wouldn't be a fair fight," she added.

Conservative critics of Obama's policy believe his decision not to attack countries with nuclear weapons makes America seem weak to other nations. However, several students and teachers expressed the belief that Obama's policy strengthens the U.S.

"I think [the nuclear policy] actually makes us look stronger in a way, because we are showing that we want peace throughout the world," Tariq said. "I think that by not using nuclear weapons, we are being fair to the countries that don't have [them], so it will be a fair war if we were ever to get in a war with another country."

Shimanovsky agrees that the limitation of nuclear weapons shows the country's strength.

"I think that taking a bomb and attempting to wipe out an entire population of people is pretty weak itself," Shimanovsky said.

Kelsey concurs, adding that attention to nuclear policy is well overdue.

"I think [Obama is showing] a sign of strength, [because he



President Barack Obama speaks at the U.S. Nuclear Summit.
Photo courtesy MCT Campus

is] willing to recognize that the accumulation of nuclear weapons has become madness," she offered. "We have enough nuclear weapons to blow the world up 10 times over, [and] to get rid of some of them makes a lot of sense. I am not worried about us being weak."

Senior Theresa Riedler adds that Obama's decision is a positive step toward peace.

"I feel that it is a good policy and that it will help countries come together and have a union, where we don't have to fight with one of the most powerful weapons," she said. "I don't agree that [the policy] makes the United States weak. It makes us want to be with other countries and be safe, [without] wars and fighting."

Junior Sana Haque shares the opinion that the policy has the potential to bring peace in the world, including his effort to include other countries in the pledge.

"It is good that they are decreasing the amount of nuclear weapons they are using, so everything is not as bad, and more people don't die," she said. "I like how he is asking other

countries to do it with our country so the world is not crazy."

Jaffe articulated the economic benefits of reducing the amount of nuclear arsenals.

"[The U.S. and Russia] are probably going to use [the restriction of nuclear weapons] as an opportunity for a kind of economic discipline, to not spend federal money on developing nuclear weapons," she explained. "We will probably see the benefits of it right away, because the government will have a reason to not fund nuclear weapon development programs. [Obama is] trying to find areas to save on his budget, and I think this will probably be one of the areas."

The *Post* reported that several countries in Asia and Europe welcomed the policy, but North Korea and Iran were not included in the pledge to refrain from nuclear attack. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad condemned Obama's plan in a speech before thousands, aired live on state TV.

"Mr. Obama, you are a newcomer [to international politics]. Wait until your sweat dries and get some experience," Ahmadinejad said. "Be careful not to read just any paper put in front of you or repeat any statement recommended."

Sophomore John Jando sees the judgment of Obama's policy a significant problem.

"If all the countries don't sign [the treaty], then it is really not going to do a good job of what he is trying to do," he explained. "If the countries aren't willing to sign it the way it is, he should change a couple things, and then make them sign it, so everybody can be on the same track."

English teacher Dana DesJardins expressed the belief that Obama's policy seems "disingenuous," and he is not "sincere with his policy."

"I want to credit him for the first diplomacy on nuclear issues since the Reagan Era," DesJardins continued. "I would like to imagine that he is sincere. However, they are not disarming, they are rearming."

DesJardins added that the reduction of nuclear weapons is necessary considering the amount the U.S. has currently.

"When you look at the budgetary figures, we actually have more nukes than all the other countries in the world together," she explained. "Even if we got rid of half the stock pile, we would still be able to bring our world into what most people think would be a nuclear winter."

Although there is much criticism, European countries offered their support for the policy according to the *Post*. British Defense Secretary Bob Ainsworth describes the plan as "strong progress," and Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama sees the policy as a step in the right direction.

"This is a first step toward a nuclear-free world," Hatoyama said. "Deterrence is important, but so is reducing nuclear arsenals."

DesJardins feels that nuclear policy is one of the biggest concerns in the world today.

"If you look at our budget, we have actually budgeted more money for nukes than we have in the past," she said. "So [Obama] says build down, but what he really means is replace. I think that [nuclear weapons are] the worst threat facing our world today."

Poland struggles to regain equilibrium after air tragedy

Hira Malik
Around Town Editor

"Poland has fallen into a ditch because of President Lech Kaczynski dying; however, I think they will be able to recover," Polish-American senior Michelle Poskrobko said.

According to the *New York Times*, a plane carrying the president along with a number of government officials crashed April 10 in Western Russia when the plane carrying them missed the airport runway in heavy fog. All 97 passengers and crew on board perished.

The tragedy sent shockwaves throughout West's Polish-American community.

Junior Maggie Check believes that there will be disagreements in Poland during the leadership vacuum; however, order will eventually be restored, she predicts.

"All the government officials died because of the plane crash,

and there will be a number of problems. However, the country will, after time, be able to stand up again despite this traumatic event," Check said.

Science teacher Tina Pauley offered her assessment as well. "I think the country is in a state of disbelief and mourning. People probably just don't know how to respond to such a crisis," Pauley said.

Check added that she hopes that despite the rough time Poland is bound to go through, another election will be held which will hopefully solve the current chaos.

According to Poskrobko, in the future, there may be some chaos during the transition period, when another president is elected.

"People [must get] used to the fact that there is a new president, and [try] to forget about what happened to the old one," Poskrobko said.

Pauley explained the process.

"The people are allowed the opportunity to vote and choose their next leader; however, it will probably be a couple months before Poland will restore order. Elections must be held within 60 days, and then once they have a new president, the process of restoring the government will begin," Pauley said.

Poskrobko said that loyalty to Kaczynski might make the transition difficult.

"People will feel like they are betraying the old president if they follow a new person's orders. Eventually, however, [the citizens of Poland] will learn that [the new leader is] doing what is best for [Poland]," Poskrobko said.

Junior Damian Gorski speculated as to Kaczynski's successor.

"Because the current Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak has stepped in [as leader,] he has a chance to win the election. Also, the late president's brother, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, has a chance to win the election as well," Gorski said.