UNB Debating Union competes in Ireland

by Clark Graves

The sky was grey that 31st of December, as the University of New Brunswick debating teams arrived in Dublin. Many long hours of travel, aggravating Irish folk songs and other hardships were endured so that these brave individuals could compete against the world's best, in the 12th Annual World Debating Championships that were being held at Trinity College.

The U.N.B. A Team, was comprised of veteran Kapil "the knife" Kamara and Vish "The Bulldog" Nandlall. The U.N.B. B Team contained Clark "The Grave One" graves and Jennifer "the Wild Rover" Legere. The union also sent their most esteemed executive, the Defender of the Duck, Jennifer "lawgiver" Lawson, to serve as adjudicator and moral supporter.

When the day of debating arrived, spirits were high and the presence of the duck invigorated the competitors. Their pens and vocabularies ready, they begun. And so the battle went, for three days. The final night of preliminaries, the finalists were announced. The linguistic gladiators strode proudly into the chambers in which the news would be announced, feeling wiser, stronger and slightly dragged out from the experience. Then the news came, the only member of the U.N.B. Union to break into the finals was Jennifer Lawson, making it all the way to the quarter finals.

Though the U.N.B. teams did not break into the top 32, they are confident that the A team are positioned at least in the top 50 of the 140 teams competing. They are also hoping that the results will be received very soon.

Not advancing to the final rounds left the team with some time, so when not watching a final round, they explored Dublin with their new found friends. Many occasions were planned by the Trinity Committee such as the visit to the Mansion House to visit the Lord Mayor. Their guides proved to be excellent teachers of Irish history, and are thanked greatly.

On January 6th the finalists were announced at the Championship Ball/Banquet, Duncan from Strathclyde providing the entertainment. The final four teams were Sydney A, Sydney B, A.N.U. and Glasgow.

The final round was held the next night at the National Concert Hall. After eight excellent speeches from the competitors and a few from the floor, a winner was decided. Glasgow had taken the prize, this being their third time.

After the farewell (eviction) party was held at the Burlington Hotel and all the goodbyes completed (including honorary Duckships. Don't ask), the team headed to Maynooth, a small town outside of Dublin. Many thanks to Brian for accommodations and the very interesting tour of the University. After two days in Maynooth the team was back on the road home and although they would miss the local song and drink, and especially their friends, it felt good to be home. It is hoped that all the good friends from Ireland will come to U.N.B., if only to learn to drink a Canadian beer.

The U.N.B. debating Union would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making it possible to compete: AirCanada; President Robin Armstrong; The Dean of Students; The Alumni Association; The College Hill Social Club; The House of Tara; Shirley Dysart; The Irish Canadian Cultural Association of St. John; The Irish Canadian Cultural Association of Fredericton; The Irish Canadian Cultural Association of New Brunswick; The Knights of Columbus; Mr. Hugh Fitzpatrick.



Shown are four of the debators who competed in Ireland. Back row: Jennifer Lawson and Clark Graves. Front row: Jennifer Legere and Kapil Kamra. Dave Smith photo

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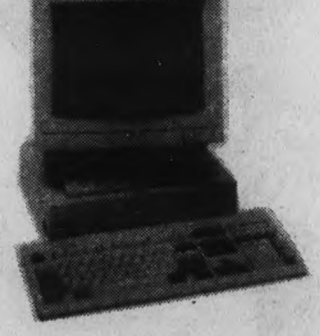
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