

Students organize to support Refugee Week

By MONICA JAMOUNEAU
News Editor

Students from all over campus gathered together last week to attend various events associated with refugee week, which ran from Nov. 26 - Dec. 1. Among the organizers were Dean Rusk SAC, STAND (www.stand-now.org) and the Davidson Women's Committee (DWC).

The week of awareness began with a table set up in the Union by the DWC and Dean Rusk SAC. Students urged their peers to write letters to their representatives letting them know that the students support Iraqi refugees. It was a week-long effort.

The DWC also led a drive for toiletry and household items for the Refugee Resettlement Program through Catholic Social Services (CSS), a refugee resettlement agency in Charlotte.

Tuesday morning, Mary Jane Bruton, the Community Relations Coordinator for the Refugee Resettlement Office at CSS, spoke to students about the little-known phenomenon of international refugees living right here in the greater Charlotte area.

She emphasized the distinction between refugees, who are forced to leave their native countries unwillingly, and immigrants, who leave willingly.

The United Nations determines which peoples are official refugees and therefore allowed to move freely across borders. In Charlotte, there are currently many Vietnamese refugees, who were forced to move numerous times before they came to America and were resettled here by the CSS. They lived in refugee camps for a long time, where the sanitation was questionable and food scarce.

After 9/11, the interview process for refugees became much more difficult. The cap for refugees entering the U.S. is 70,000 per year, although usually only 45,000 people actually arrive and are resettled.

People like Somalis, who come to the U.S. from particularly primitive living conditions, suddenly make a 200-year technological leap. They learn to use luxuries like faucets, doorknobs and flushing toilets.

There is an adjustment period in which the refugees begin to learn English, have cultural lessons and enroll their children in local schools. On staff at CSS are employment

specialists who help place the refugees in appropriate jobs. CSS also provides translators and interpretation services to the new employers, promoting the hiring of these refugees.

After six months, the case folders are closed, and the refugees are expected to function successfully on their own in the U.S. The employment agency, however, remains permanently open to them.

CSS relies on donations and volunteers. The community donates food, furniture and money, and CSS organizes it all for the specific newcomers.

The agency resettles roughly 350 refugees each year. CSS has no control or knowledge of what ethnicity or race the refugees will be; the individuals are selected by the U.S. Department of State. Many are not Christian, many fewer Catholic, and religious preference does not matter or affect placement at all.

After five years of living in America, the refugees may apply for citizenship.

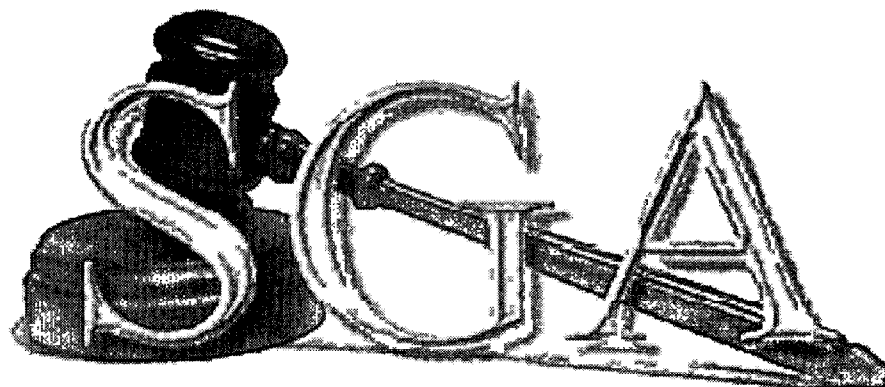
On Thursday night, students in the 900 Room viewed "The Devil Came on Horseback," a critically acclaimed, award-winning documentary on the Janjaweed and the situation in Darfur. STAND and Dean Rusk held the event.

At Friday's Tea Time, sponsored by Dean Rusk SAC, students discussed "Iraq's Forgotten Victims: Refugees in and outside the country," and student refugees from Bosnia and Afghanistan shared their experiences.

On Friday and Saturday nights, the DWC produced a dramatic reading of "Necessary Targets," a play by Eve Ensler, author of "The Vagina Monologues." Theatre Fellow Glynnis O'Donoghue '07 directed the play, which followed the literal and emotional travel of two American mental care specialists to Bosnia, where they came into contact with five female Bosnian refugees.

"Necessary Targets" is about women Ensler met when she visited Bosnia.

Briana Hunter '08, Lucy Flournoy '11, Vy Drouin-Le '10, Ayesha Omer '10, Desiree Domo '09, Elinor Landess '10 and Jenny Estill '10 made up the cast of talented students who explored the struggle of women during wartime. The production also raised money and awareness for CSS's work in Charlotte.



SGA discusses DCB, professor award and annual waste audit

By MONICA JAMOUNEAU
News Editor

Last Thursday, the Student Government Association (SGA) discussed the new Diversity Coordinating Board (DCB), a new award for professors and the annual waste audit at its weekly meeting in Chambers.

Jordan Wall '10 began the meeting by addressing concerns with the DCB Bylaws.

DCB has met with Assistant Dean of Students Ernest Jeffries, President Tom Ross, Dean of Students Tom Shandley and Dean of Faculty Clark Ross.

There will be two DCB events: the DCB Ball, much like Warner's Red and Black Ball, in which students wear outfits representing their culture. DCB petitioned for 3,000 dollars for the ball.

"We're not trying to overshadow anyone," Wall said. "[ATC] will not provide funding for any organization."

"One of the main things I had a concern with is that Section A, policy board is diverse students," Chris Burton '08, President of SGA, said. "Language such as 'diverse students' doesn't sound inclusive of the whole campus. I feel as if that phrasing would impede the ability to affect the whole campus."

Wall agreed and said, "Trying to come up with a system to define diversity is difficult. By saying 'diverse' in some fashion or way, every student is diverse."

The discussion of DCB was tabled until next week's meeting.

SGA also voted on a new award for faculty called the Pre-Major Advisor Award.

Whitney White '08 said, "Last week I spoke about the situation with advisors, and a lot of professors feel as if they are underappreciated. They suggested this award. We,

the academic policy committee, feel as if this is a great idea. We are hoping that professors will work hard toward this."

The award, voted on by all students, is still in its formative stages, and White told SGA that its approval is up to the discretion President Ross.

Burton advised that SGA still needs to determine the logistics of the award before it can be voted upon. SGA did, however, give approval for the Pre-Major Advisor Award to move onto its next stage of development.

SGA also reported on the success of the waste audit, which occurred this past weekend.

Photographs of the event will be posted on the College website. Much of the recyclable materials pulled out of the garbage were bottles and brown laundry paper.

In addition, soon students will begin to see water signs near showers and sinks around campus. The signs, paid for by the Residence Life Office (RLO), represent an initiative to reduce the amount of water used.

White also advised SGA that the environmental studies concentration will go to the faculty for approval on Tuesday. If it passes, there are some seniors who could be eligible to participate in the concentration.

She also introduced a possible new initiative involving mid-course evaluations, designed to add to but not replace end of course evaluations.

Burton ended the meeting by asking students to respect each other and fellow spectators at future men's basketball games.

"Everyone got a chance to see Dean Shandley's second email," Burton said. "Grammatical errors aside, the message was clear. Let's make sure that we're never impeding on anyone's ability to enjoy the game. Just take it easy."

Write for News!

Please.

Think about it....

Contact Alissa Curran or

Chris Moore at

alcurran or cimoore.

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