

UNB CLUBS... CAN OFFER A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE

The UNB Debating Team Travels to Scotland.....

On the twenty-sixth of December, 1989, five University of New Brunswick students left Fredericton to attend the X World Universities Debating Championships at the University of Glasgow in Glasgow, Scotland. All five individuals are members of the UNB Debating Union. Competing as UNB team A was Derek Dunnett and Kapil Kamra, while UNB team B was composed of Kevin Bourque and Jason Burns. James Gill attended as a judge. This tournament was the largest debating tournament ever. Approximately four hundred competitors attended from eighteen different countries and representing five different continents.

The style of debate used was the British Parliamentary Style. In British Parliamentary Style, four teams of two people each are competing in a debate at a single time. The four teams compose the Opening Proposition (whose job it is to oppose the opening proposition's plan), the Closing Proposition (whose job it is to further the plan of the opening proposition) and the Closing Opposition (whose job it is to oppose the plan of the closing proposition). There were nine preliminary rounds from which the top thirty-two teams with the best ranking would be selected. These thirty-two teams would continue on to single elimination rounds from which the victors would emerge. All of the rounds were impromptu, that is to say, the resolution would be given fifteen minutes before the commencement of the debate. All speeches were a maximum of seven minutes. The judging criteria consisted of six different categories, they were, relevance, refutation, analysis, evidence, delivery, teamwork and participation.

On the twenty-seventh of December, the students settled into Queen Margaret Hall, the Glasgow University residence in which they would be staying. This was a free day. The UNB teams and judge toured around Glasgow that day.

The next day, the majority of the rest of the competitors arrived. That night, the opening ceremonies were held in Bute Hall. This was to be the location of the final rounds as well. A social was held afterwards at the Glasgow University Union.

The twenty-ninth of December marked the day when competition was to begin. The resolution was "There is no such thing as society, only the individuals within it," a quote by Margaret Thatcher. UNB team A was the closing proposition. In the other three positions respectively were St. Andrew's college team B (from Scotland), Melbourne team B (from Australia) and a Dummy team from Glasgow itself. The arguments presented were that societies can not perceive things, only individuals can, as a result, to please a society, the individuals within it must be pleased. As a result, societies must be seen as a group of individuals. Since no score sheets have been returned (they are in the mail) the best that can be said is that we were pleased that we were competitive. UNB team B was closing opposition.

Their opponents were respectively, University College, Wales (from England), Bates College B (from USA) and University of Haifa (from Israel). The term society was defined as a body of people working for one single end. They pointed out that groups such as the Red Cross, Unicef, Band Aid, Jesuit Priests, two people having sex and the proposition itself were examples of bodies of people who were working together for a common end. As a result, societies exist and the individuals within it make up these societies. UNB team B were very pleased with the round.

After a break, round two commenced. The resolution was "This house would appeal the second amendment to the US Constitution-The right to bear arms." UNB team B were the opening proposition. Their opponents were respectively, Royal Military College (from Ontario), Oxford Union Society B (from England) and Yale B (from USA). This debate boiled down to the concept that the right should be made a privilege under the conditions that the incumbent was mentally sane and had no criminal record. The UNB team pointed out that these conditions already exist and as a result the amendment should stand. This round was probably the greatest learning experience for UNB team B. UNB team argued that when the fundamental rights that are guaranteed in the constitution become questioned, the validity of every other right comes under question as well and this should not be subjected to the American people. As an example, they pointed out that the right of free speech may also hurt people but the American people would never dream of losing it. They also pointed out that a black market, one much more deadly than drug trade, would begin to flourish. As a result, the second amendment should not be appealed.

The third round also took place that day. The resolution was "Cogito ergo sum, but it doesn't make the trains run on time." This, when translated means: I think therefore I am, but it doesn't make the trains run on time. UNB team A was the opening proposition while their proposition was Gettysburg College (from USA), Australia National University and Columbia University (from USA). The UNB team said that the statement itself represented the two main fields that students are choosing when they embark upon a career. That being the artistic/philosophic fields and the scientific/engineering fields. Since the scientific fields prepare people to tackle practical problems, students should be encouraged to engage upon this type of study. This was a great learning experience for this UNB team. UNB team B was closing proposition and their opponents were Boston Law B (from USA), Smith College (from USA) and Leiden (from Holland). Boston Law took this resolution at face value. UNB counter-argued each argument presented by the opposition valiantly.

That evening was an evening of traditional Scottish entertainment.

The fourth round of debate was on the thirtieth of December. The resolution was "We have reached the end of history." UNB team B was the closing opposition. Their opponents were the American College of Greece B, University of Calgary and Dhaka University B (from Bangladesh). UNB team A was also the closing opposition. Their opponents were the University of British Columbia, the University of Ottawa B and Sacred Heart University B (from USA). In both of the rounds,

the proposition stated that no more change will occur, only a series of modifications. As a result, man has stopped evolving. UNB was pleased with their performance.

After a break, round five proceeded. The resolution was "Sanctions Work!" UNB team A was the opening proposition. Their opponents were the University of Guelph, University of Texas at Austin and Wellesly College B (from USA). UNB focused the debate to the concept that unified sanctions will always work. UNB did very well this round. UNB team B was the opening opposition. Their opponents were Sacred Heart B (from USA), University of Calgary and the University of Papua New Guinea. This round went very well for the UNB team.

The sixth preliminary round of debate followed. The resolution was "God is dead and social workers have taken his place." UNB team B was the opening proposition. Their opponents were Rhode Island B, Bryn Mawr/Haverford (from USA) and Huron College (from Ontario). The debate was boisterous but UNB held up well under the pressure. UNB team A was the closing proposition. Glendon College (from Toronto), Saint Laurence College (from USA) and Wellesly College B (from USA) were opposing. This was definitely one of the best rounds for UNB team A.

On the evening of December 30, 1989, Trinity College, Dublin hosted a party to advertise the fact that they wanted to host the World's in 1992.

On the thirty-first of December, 1989 the seventh round commenced. "The art of being a good lover is knowing when to leave," was the resolution. The two UNB teams were against each other in this round. UNB team A was the closing opposition while the UNB team B was the closing proposition. University of Dhaka (from Bangladesh) was the opening proposition and the Technion University (from Israel) was the opening opposition. This debate was boiled down to the concept that the art of being a good lover is playing hard to get. Both UNB teams did well and had fun in this humorous round of debate.

Round eight was next. The resolution was "The environment is more important than economic growth." UNB team A was the opening proposition. Their opponents were Lehigh University (from USA), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and St. Laurence A (from USA). This was probably the closest round that UNB team A had. The calibre of debate was probably the highest that UNB had seen. UNB team B was the opening proposition as well. Their opponents were the University of Haifa (from Israel), Sacred Heart A (from USA) and Brunel University B (from England). The team from Israel made the best speech presented. UNB came a close second.

The ninth and final preliminary round was held next. The resolution was "No community has the right to force another to be civilized." UNB team B was the opening proposition. Their opponents were Canterbury (from New Zealand), Royal Military College B (from Ontario) and Bryn Mawr/Haverford (from USA). UNB defined the resolution as "No government should have the right to censor the type of music one listens to." UNB did very well during this round and were supported well by New Zealand. UNB team A was the closing proposition. The opening and closing proposition were Reading University (from Britain) and Glendon College B (from Toronto) respectively. The opening proposition was Liverpool University A (from Britain). Since this was the last preliminary round of the tournament, the opening proposition took this resolution very humorously. The UNB team did very well and apparently won the round (as discovered through discussions with the judges). That evening was a Scottish Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) celebration. A very good time was had by all.

The next day, January 1, 1990, was free rest day. That evening was the International Quiz Competition. This was, effectively, a trivia competition with teams from all over the world. The four member team from the University of New Brunswick, consisting of Kevin Bourque, Jason Burns, James Gill and Kapil Kamra, won this competition when the team with the highest points was disqualified due to cheating (UNB had the second highest points). Although this was a very small part of the Debating tournament, UNB should be proud of this achievement. The members of the team each won a one pint tankard with the Glasgow University Union logo on it. After this competition was a variety show with acts from the competitors themselves.

Although UNB did not make it to the elimination rounds, valuable experience was brought back to the UNB Debating Union. It is hoped that with this experience, UNB will begin to flourish on the Atlantic, National and International debating circuit. The winner of the tournament was Yale University A with Australian teams coming in second, third and fourth places.

The remainder of the time at the tournament was spent watching the elimination rounds and seeing a bit of England and Scotland. Next year's World Debating Championships will be held at the University of Toronto and UNB expects to attend. All those interested in debating are asked to call Kapil Kamra at 457-0040 for more information.

Special thanks must be given to the sponsors of the UNB Debating Union's World's teams. They are as follows: The UNB Alumni Association, the UNB Student Union, The College Hill Social Club, The Britannia Company, Tim Horton's Donuts, Ross Ventures, Goliger's Travels, Cherry's Travels, Levine's Ltd., the New Brunswick Department of Advanced Education and Training, the UNB Dean of Students, Air Canada and Air Nova. Special thanks must also be given to Susan Montague at the UNB Development Office and its staff for their support. Without the support of these sponsors, UNB could not have been represented at the X World Universities Debating Championships!

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Photos clockwise from above: Kevin & Derek inside the Castle of Edinburgh; Edinburgh: The cannons and barracks at Edinburgh Castle; Kapil Kamra with competitors and organizers from Texas, Halifax and Glasgow. Center photo: (from left) Jason Burns, Kevin Bourque, Kapil Kamra, Derek Dunnett, The UNB Debating Team.

