After milling about in the lobby, all the delegates were called in for the introduction of the rules, regulations, and leaders of this weekend’s Model United Nations conference. Nerves rising with anticipation, the new delegates entered the assembly to be combined with old, wise delegates of the past years. New acquaintances were made and old friends rediscovered in the rush of the opening ceremonies.

First the many presidents, vice-presidents, liaisons, and editors were introduced to the general assembly of nations. “Who are these people?” many new delegates pondered as intimidating leaders entered into the hall. Soon, the many jobs involved in Model United Nations were revealed amongst the introduction announcements.

Then the President of General Assembly, Anita Mathews, took the stage. She announced that the General Assembly attempts to pass resolutions but can take no immediate action, but instead must be sent to the Security Council. She noted that name tags and bus boarding passes were of great importance if you want to go to lunch and dinner. The new delegates learned from Lindsey Shepard, the President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), that the ICJ prevents warfare through compromise. She also announced that pizza can be ordered up to seven o’clock at the Info Desk for the price of eight dollars. Elizabeth Kidd and Sam Bouck, the press editors, spoke in the beginning ceremonies as well. They gave a brief overview of the Press Corps and their presentations to the delegates over the weekend. From news broadcasts to many editions of the newspaper, the delegates are informed about the many different aspects of the press at Model United Nations this weekend. The Security Council, announced by Robert Lumley, is perfectly capable of taking action, but they cannot impose sanctions.

See CEREMONY p. 4
Trying to imagine a world without nuclear power is hard for today’s generation. It is discussed on primetime news and newspapers headlines more than any other subject or political issue. Much of the fuss is due to one controversial country that many believe is attempting to harness nuclear power to create weapons “of mass destruction.” Many have the general concepts of the current events involving Iran and nuclear power but are still missing some fundamental facts that truly develop the issue. Iran’s history with nuclear ambitions has lead to strained relations global. The Iranian Nuclear Program was launched in the 1950’s in cooperation with the United States to further the “Atoms for Peace” program. This effort came to a stand-still when in 1979 it was temporarily banned by the Iranian Government. It later, however, picked up momentum again only this time they shied away from U.S. aid and involvement. These events led to the contemporaneous efforts that Iran is making to further Nuclear Technology. Today Iran has an ample amount of nuclear development sites. They include multiple research facilities, a uranium mine, a nuclear reactor, and uranium processing facilities. Despite an onslaught of accusations by countries worldwide, Iran denies that these facilities are for war development, but for nuclear energy to power their country. Many countries still have their concerns due to Iran’s recent controversy with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA was denied entrance into some of Iran’s enrichment facilities, which led to the Security Council imposing a series of sanctions on Iran in December of 2006. Their continual noncompliance has led to the Security Council’s expansion of sanctions during March of 2007. With these suspicious actions and the oil crisis, global relations with Iran have become tricky. Countries such as the United States, Britain, France, and Israel are openly opposed to Iran’s enrichment program and wish to expand sanctions on Iran; their concerns have only been whetted by the Iranian President, Ahmadinejad’s statements concerning Israel. He has given speeches in which he had stated that he plans to, “Wipe Israel off the map.” These statements have been internationally frowned upon and have also been thought of as a nuclear threat given Iran’s current situation. Much of this would be overlooked if oil was not involved. For this reason, some countries have not taken a side on the matter. Russia and China have already refused to sign off on more enrichment sanctions. A few weeks ago that Russia’s President, Putin, visited Iran to meet with President Ahmadinejad to discuss the two countries’ relations. After having met, Russia still remains strong in their convictions against further sanctions, yet will not openly support Iran. Although many countries have opposed Iran and others remain indifferent, there are those who have stood by Iran’s side through these hard times. Countries such as North Korea, Venezuela, and Syria boldly express their support of Iran and its nuclear enrichment program. When it comes down to it, Iran’s global relations are based on its nuclear development and the world’s need for oil. While Iran is trying to harness nuclear power, it is also funding terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. This combination of efforts worries most of the world, because many believe that when Iran develops nuclear power they might share it with the two terrorist organizations. However, some have purposefully overlooked this and remain steadfast to Iran. There are also others who are on the fence about the situation. It is very clear though that all of these final verdicts will have nuclear enrichment and the need for oil incorporated into their decisions. Nonetheless, the world runs on oil which means Iran’s nuclear programs will be under the watchful eye of the United Nations and countries such as the United States and Britain, who are pushing for a third round of sanctions. It is becoming more probable that there will be a military confrontation between the United States and Iran. Only time will tell if it will indeed end in confrontation or through diplomacy.
In the Southeast Asian country of Bangladesh a Tropical Cyclone called Sidr tore through towns and villages early this morning. The cyclone was reported to have killed at least 242 people. Because communication is down, the exact number of casualties is unclear and continues to rise. As of the most recent reports from the United News of Bangladesh, at least 1,100 people have died. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated today that at least 1,000 fishermen are missing.

More than 3.2 million people evacuated to highlands or shelters before the storm hit, but some were not so lucky. The cyclone came from the Bay of Bengal, crossing the Khulna-Barisal coast on Thursday at 9:30 p.m. with 155 mph winds and rain. Along the coast, Sidr registered as a category 4 hurricane, destroying more than 20,000 homes. The districts of Bangladesh with the most damage were Patuakhali, Barguna and Jhalakathi.

It then went through Bangladesh’s capital of Dhaka during the night. Even though the storm has already passed through Bangladesh, devastation could continue as rainfall from the mountains could swell rivers and surge already flooded areas.

Now, after the storm, people have been assessing the damage and starting to distribute aid. The World Food Program is providing food rations to 400,000 people. John Holmes, the United Nations’ coordinator of emergency relief, said the UN is willing to make several million dollars available to Bangladesh’s government from its emergency relief fund. Also, the United States’ Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, will send Navy vessels with 3,500 marines to the region to aid in recovery efforts.

The fast-paced lifestyle in the country’s capital has almost come to a halt: Dhaka’s airport is closed, river ferries are not running, roads are blocked, and electricity is lacking throughout the country. Over 40,000 policemen, soldiers, coastguards and health workers have been deployed along the coast.

This cyclone is nothing new for residents in Bangladesh and some parts of India. In 1970, the devastating Cyclone Bhola went through Bangladesh and then East Pakistan, killing 500,000 people. Then again in 1991, a cyclone killed at least 140,000 people. Since these storms, the affected countries have stepped up their storm preparations.

Luckily, Sidr did not devastate India, passing over West Bengal without causing damage. India took measures to protect its people; more than 30,000 people were evacuated before the storm hit. Sadly, this devastation follows the August floodings of India, Nepal and Bangladesh that The United Nations called “the worst flooding in living memory.”

See ASIA p. 4
During an interview with the delegates representing Bangladesh at Model United Nations, they said, “This only adds to the turmoil we are already in. Not only do we have a deprivation of clean water, now we have this flood water that we can’t use because it produces water-borne diseases and leaves people on the streets.”

Earthquake Rocks Indonesia…Again.
Emily Sullivan

At 9AM central time Friday morning, a 4.9 magnitude earthquake shook the south of Java in Indonesia. There have been many earthquakes all over Indonesia over the years, and every time, locals fear that the earthquakes are going to cause another destructing tsunami.

Indonesia is the world’s largest archipelago with a population of 235 million people. It is prone to seismic upheaval because of its location on the “Ring of Fire,” an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin. But how should locals prepare for the possibility of such a destructive event? Sadly, most of the locals in the country of Indonesia cannot afford to even live in a shack as it is now. Therefore, how could they start over from scratch?

What can the world do to help? Many relief foundations have been created to raise funds to help those in need that can’t afford to rebuild themselves. However, they really need volunteers to come in and help. They have suffered through too many devastating events, and the last thing they need is another one. Disappointingly, the chances are that many more of these tragedies happen in the future.

This past, October, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake was recorded. Whenever a tragedy like this occurs, the UN and other nations do all that they can to help struggling countries, such as Indonesia, repair the damage of the wrath of Mother Nature.

Imagine yourself a school. For most some of us, it isn’t all that bad. But what if you were taking a test and all of a sudden you heard screaming and teachers were yelling at you, telling you to run. Leave everything behind. Just get out of the building. Not quite an easy fire drill that gets you out of class is it?

Lebanon has had countless stories, such as the previous situation over the years. For the locals living in Lebanon now, those feelings of fear have resurfaced. Lebanon is full of car bombs, threats, and conspiracies, all of which are not unfamiliar to this country.

Over the years, there has not been much peace in Lebanon. War is something too familiar to the citizens of the country, and only for a couple of years has there actually been peace. How would you feel living in a place of so much violence, never having the comfort of knowing that you are safe?

The government of Lebanon crumbles as I type this, and has been in this same degrading state for several years as the leaders of
Fleeing Out Of Fear
by Emily Sullivan, quotes provided by CNN.com

Picture yourself sitting on the couch watching television, playing Halo 3, or playing basketball outside in your driveway. You are living your life as best as you can, without boredom, when suddenly, you hear gunshots. A fleet of trucks filled with 15 men yelling and screaming with guns are coming your way, and fast. What do you do? Run? Hide? It’s hard to truly place yourself in that situation.

In Congo on Tuesday, however, that was their reality. Tens of thousands of the Congolese fled due to an attack by rebel troops. They had to abandon their homes, possessions, and everything that they have worked for for their entire lives. They have been left without insurance or money. UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond stated, “They have been living in extremely difficult conditions anyway. Now they have nothing but what they can carry.” It was reported by the U.N. High Commissioner that this camp in particular was looted by the rebels and that the “internally displaced persons” fled.

A stretch of 10 miles was flooded with Congolese refugees and local residents fleeing from fighting. Not only was it difficult because they were running for their lives, but they had to trudge through torrential rain the entire time. According to Redmond, the refugees are in poor health and need water. They need assistance now. They are becoming weaker by the second.

The UNHCR is trying to identify the culprits of the attack and have a couple of suspect groups. “We cannot rule out the [Rwandan rebels],” spokesman Col. Pierre Cherayron was quoted as saying. In this attack alone, 30,000 refugees fled from their camps. The UNHCR said 375,000 Congolese in North Kivu province have been forced from their homes in the past year. In the past two months alone, 160,000 have fled their homes amid the fighting between renegade troops and government forces, the agency said.

How can these horrific attacks by rebel troops be stopped? There have been countless attempts to end this one-sided war with the innocent. The most recent effort to try to end these attacks was made by Congolese President, Joseph Kabila. He has tried to gain a cease-fire with the rebels in the area under Nkunda, but fighting continues as hard-liners among the rebels and in the government have blocked reconciliation efforts.

Not only are these attacks happening in Congo, even more are happening in countries such as Rwanda and Uganda. The government is trying its hardest to do something to hunt down the rebels in charge of the crimes, but it is especially difficult to find one specific group since there are so many rebel troops. The bitter sweet truth is that though their government has caught and punished many rebel groups already, there are still many more out in the country raiding any camp or village in their path. The International Crisis Group, an nongovernmental organization looking for solutions to conflicts, are working hard as we speak to do their job and find more ways to at least place road blocks in their way.

Lebanon provide little aid. In his last act as president, Amin Gemayel named fellow Christian and Army Chief Michel Aoun as prime minister. This move shattered the convention that a Muslim holds the prime minister position. Therefore, Muslims refused to serve in the Cabinet and the country ended up with two governments. Aoun famously declared, “I am prime minister and six ministers in one.” These words left a hurting country.

Aoun tried to create a “War of Liberation” and a “War of Elimination” in order to right wrongs, both of which have crashed and burned- not exactly a light of hope. Even though those ideas were supposed to help the country, it only led to more chaos. Hundred of people have been killed, children orphaned, and parents are left to bury their infants.

It almost seems to the locals that this type of thing will never end. But the agreement that ended the civil war was more a truce than a real settlement and was overseen by a “pax Syriana.” As anti-Syrian sentiment grew, so did political tensions.

Lebanon is bleeding. They have more enemies than allies at this point, giving the country no hope for the future. Will the madness ever cease? Will there ever be peace in Lebanon?

Information provided by CNN

CHAOS from p. 4
As most of the returning delegates know, Carlos Delgado, the student from Columbia, is with us again this year. All of those fines from being out of order, chewing gum, and cell phones went to help Carlos come back this year to Model United Nations. In order to fully understand his situation and where the fine money is going again this year, here is Carlos’ story:

Carlos Andrés Delgado was born in 1991 in the city of Ibagué Tolima. He and his mother were faced with many difficult situations, and they were left with hardly any money at all. His mother had to work hard to support herself, her child Carlos, and her abusive husband. Carlos’ father took all of her money and beat her so badly that she lost her eye. After this his mother decided to leave him, and they had nowhere to sleep but the streets. Carlos thanks God that he and his mother made it through this horrible time alive.

He and his mother met a gracious family that bought him a roof to put over their heads and a job for his mother. He remembers specifically the celebration of his third birthday, which was an especially happy time for him. After a long time living with this family, he and his mother moved to another neighborhood. He considered this to be a new start to his life. At the age of eight he began working in a cemetery, where he carried water, cleaned the tombstones, and made flower decorations. His work helped sustain him and his mother in their new home.

A little time after arriving at his new neighborhood, he was given the opportunity to participate in the YMCA. The people of the YMCA became the family he never had: his mother doesn’t have a family so he has never had any aunts, uncles, grandparents, or cousins. The people of the YMCA have not only shown the way for him, but also given him love and possibilities for a promising future. They welcomed him with open arms. They have taught him to live life in a different way. They gave him a very beautiful gift: the ability to be a part of the group of kids that participate in Plan Padrino.

They moved to an area by the river, and, unfortunately, when the river rose, the rushing water took their house with it. They were forced to live on the streets. He will be eternally grateful for the financial help you, as delegates from Model UN, give him and his mother.

For many of you, this story is a familiar one, but he wants to tell you what has happened since last year. After receiving economic help from us, he had the opportunity to live in a neighborhood without the problem of delinquents. His mother got a job at the transportation terminal, where she was given health care and a steady salary. Now his sister has the opportunity to live with her teacher, who can give her security and knowledge. She is still living in the same city and Carlos can speak with her often. His little brother Jonathan is starting kindergarten. Carlos is now going to a high school that is benefiting him not only educationally, but also relationally. Carlos is hopeful of his promising future. He sees himself as a hardworking and responsible person, having reached his educational goals. He wants to be fluent in English and French because in his future he wants to be a person of aspirations. He has seen many people rise up from poverty, and with humility reach the top. He will be a competent professional in order to provide for his family.

He realizes he is just beginning his life, but it is going well: he has followed his goals. He would like to thank his mother, who has been responsible. She is his ultimate role model. Finally, he would like to thanks his mother, the YMCA, and Plan Padrino for giving him the strength to fight for the power to better his own life and the life of his family.