

Secondary students hone a variety of skills at model UN

by **Herb Garbutt**
Oakville Beaver Staff

Rose Gulati, the delegate for South Korea, is lobbying hard to gain the support of the Palestinian and Kenyan delegates.

“(North Korea) will do whatever they need to do to keep themselves in power,” the Grade 10 student at Burlington’s Dr. Frank Hayden Secondary says.

“The (United) States entered Iraq; Ferguson. Everyone has their problems,” counters Russian delegate Irene Byun.

The two sides are trying to gain supporters for the countering resolutions they are about to put forward with regard to food and financial aid for North Korea at the recent Halton Model United Nations at Loyola Catholic Secondary.

Model UNs are a simulation of the global organization where students use public speaking, debating, critical thinking and research skills to learn about diplomacy and international relations. Students are presented with a topic or scenario they must work through to create a resolution, while gaining support of other countries’ delegates.

“Your voice will be heard,” Gulati says.

“The U.S. crushes everyone,” Byun, a Grade 12 Abbey Park student, shoots back.

In the end, Byun wins over both delegates, even if she needs to slightly lead one, arm-in-arm, back to her group.

Gulati reports back to her group, conveying the bad news. The



White Oaks Secondary School student Julia Mogus (seated) and Rhea Thakore from Abbey Park High School work on a resolution that was presented at the Model UN last Tuesday morning at Loyola Catholic S.S.

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good news is they have Mexico.

That’s where Ethan Curry, the delegate for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), begins his effort to recruit supporters just minutes into the break from a 90-minute long assault on his country’s human rights record.

Curry chose which country he would represent knowing he would be unpopular. “I love playing devil’s advocate,” he says.

The Grade 11 Iroquois Ridge student is as surprised as anyone with how things have developed, though. With the two latest delegates on board, his side actually has majority support.

“I’m blown away,” he says. “I thought I’d have Russia and China and it would be us against the world.”

On the other side of the room, Julia Mogus is working on the opposing side’s resolution. Like Curry, Mogus chose her country, but that’s not always the case.

“It’s very different when you’re put into a position where you don’t get to choose,” says the Grade 12 White Oaks student. “Either way, you have to research your country and its position and be ready to justify your stance.”

Mogus, the delegate of France, is one of the most vocal opponents, arguing that before providing aid to North Korea, it must let the UN investigate human rights complaints and ensure that any aid is reaching the people who need it.

Curry counters the alleged human rights violations are “nothing more than Western propaganda.” He faced a unique challenge

see **Students on p.32**



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