

Week emphasizes Middle Eastern culture

Groups aim to highlight diversity

BY ANDREW RYAN COSGROVE
STAFF WRITER

On Monday, UNC's first official weeklong celebration of Middle Eastern culture and diversity began.

Middle East Week kicked off with a viewing of the Disney version of "Aladdin," followed by a discussion about stereotypes found in the movie.

The week's organizers said they hope students continue discussion throughout the week, learning about cultures they might not have much knowledge about.

"I think people tend to associate with people that have similar interests, backgrounds and experiences, and we need to be intentional in looking out for and learning from other people's experiences," said Terri Phoenix, director of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer-identified Center.

"Middle East Week provides a wonderful opportunity to do that."

Organizers also said they hope the week breaks down existing stereotypes surrounding the region.

"We want to show people how we view the Middle East as Middle Easterners in order to break down stereotypes that are perpetuated by

outsiders," said Reem Semaan, Arab Student Organization co-president.

During the week, all of the proceeds made will go toward developing a Middle East Fellowship, which is under consideration.

The fellowship will fund a summer project for students to travel to a Middle Eastern country and work on a service or research project.

The group's goal is to increase understanding of the Middle East by providing first-hand experiences aimed at benefiting the local community through service projects.

But organizers of the week said peace has to start at home. "We don't have peace in the Middle East, but we can have peace on campus and that can spread beyond the borders of the campus," said Veronica Grant, vice president of Jewish programming at N.C. Hillel.

And in addition to discussing stereotypes and supporting the fellowship, the groups that organized the week have come together to raise awareness about the diversity of the Middle East.

The week's sponsors include The Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, N.C. Hillel and the

LGBTQ Center.

The events are hosted by several groups, including the Middle East Student Forum, Persian Cultural Society, Arab Student Organization and N.C. Hillel.

Grant said the variety of student groups hosting the week illustrates the diversity the week is trying to promote.

And Anna Mansour, co-president of Arab Student Organization,

Event schedule:

Tuesday: Hummus with a side of Chips Show

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Hamilton 100

Wednesday: Defining the Middle East, featuring Ambassador Hesham Yousef

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: FedEx Global Education Center

Thursday: Middle Eastern Food Night

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location: Connor Lobby

Friday: Middle East Shabbat: Service & Dinner

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: N.C. Hillel

"We are trying to convey to people that the Middle East is a diverse region culturally, linguistically and religiously."

SARA AGHAJANIAN, PRESIDENT OF MIDDLE EAST STUDENT FORUM

agreed, adding that the issues in the Middle East do not have to become problems at UNC.

"It shows us that even though there are so many problems abroad, that doesn't mean we have to reflect them here," she said.

This week's events are meant to focus mostly on the cultural aspects and not the ongoing armed conflicts in the region.

"We are trying to convey to people that the Middle East is a diverse region culturally, linguistically and

religiously," said Sara Aghajanian, president of the Middle East Student Forum.

And officials at the LGBTQ Center said that students also will learn more about sexual minorities through different cultures.

"That's something that hasn't been talked about a lot in times past," Phoenix said. "So I hope this week brings up some discussion points."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

National and World News

FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Clinton argues for including all votes

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Hillary Clinton accused Barack Obama and his allies of trying to stop people from voting as some of his backers have called on her to drop out of the primary race. Obama's campaign rejected the charge as "laughable." Clinton suggested Obama and his supporters wanted to keep those states from playing a role in selecting the presidential nominee.

She told her take on it to CBS affiliate KTVQ in Billings, Mont. "They don't want people to keep voting."

Female senator to give Obama boost

LANCASTER, Pa. (AP) — Barack Obama secured the backing of a second female senator on Monday, as some raised expectations for her rival in the upcoming Pennsylvania primary.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, who recently voiced concerns about the rancorous tone of the Democratic primary, said she was forced to choose because she found remaining uncommitted difficult.

Each candidate has the backing of 13 senators who are super-delegates to the convention.

Al-Sadr truce calms violence in Iraq but shakes up U.S.-backed leadership

BAGHDAD (AP) — Rockets fell on the Green Zone and random machine gun fire rang out Monday in the southern city of Basra as Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr sought to rein in his militia after a week of battles that claimed about 400 lives.

The peace deal between al-Sadr and Iraqi government forces — said to have been brokered in Iran — calmed the violence but left the cleric's Mahdi Army intact and Iraq's U.S.-backed prime minister politically battered and humbled within his own Shiite power base.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had promised to crush the militias that have effectively ruled Basra for nearly three years. The U.S. military launched air strikes in the city to back the Iraqi effort.

But the ferocious response by the Mahdi Army, including rocket fire on the U.S.-controlled Green Zone and attacks throughout the Shiite south, caught the government by surprise and sent officials scrambling for a way out of the crisis. The confrontation shows that Al-Sadr remains a powerful force.

Charges brought in 1998 bombing

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A Guantanamo detainee who allegedly helped plan the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania that killed 11 people was charged Monday with war crimes.

Ahmed Kalfan Ghailani also allegedly purchased and transported the explosives used in the attack and scouted the embassy with a suicide bomber.

Al-Qaida's twin suicide truck-bomb attacks on the embassies in Tanzania and Kenya on Aug. 7, 1998 killed more than 220 people, including 12 Americans, and injured more than 4,000.

Bush, Putin could reach arms deal

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — The White House raised hopes Monday of achieving a breakthrough agreement to resolve bitter differences with Moscow over missile defenses in Europe when President Bush meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin this weekend.

Bush's national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, said no deal was in hand yet but the two leaders could nail it down Sunday.

"We may. We're hopeful," he said. It will be the last meeting between the two men before Putin steps away from the Russian presidency.

An Evening with Junot Diaz

April 1, 2008
Gerrard Hall - 6pm

presented by CUAB

The Brief
Wondrous Life
of Oscar Wao
Junot Diaz

Author of "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award & name Best Book of 2007 by New York Magazine

Diaz is a Dominican-American author who focuses on the immigrant experience



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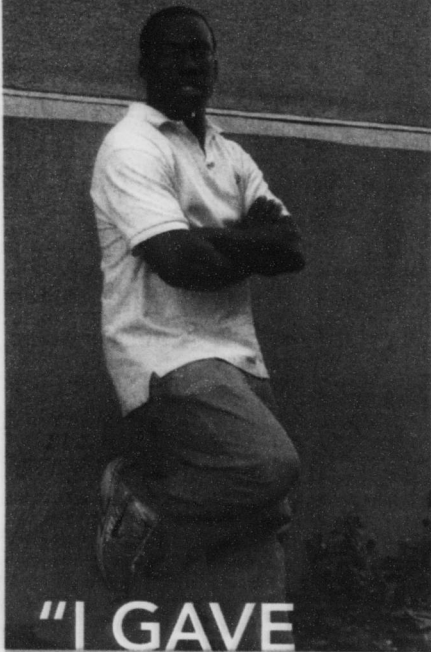
If we reach our goal of 30.5% class participation (1,151 donors), an anonymous donor will give \$25,000 to CFK. Also, if you choose to give to CFK, David '69 and Becky Pardue will match your gift \$1 for \$1 up to \$25,000.

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All donors will receive a Class of 2008 decal. Donors of \$20.00 or more will also receive a Tar Heel lapel pin to wear on their graduation robes. These gifts are exclusively available through the 2008 Senior Campaign for Carolina.

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The General Alumni Association is pleased to present our 2008-09 Student Membership leaders:

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