

Model UN prepares Hillies for solving world problems

By Paul Tennant

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HAVERHILL — If Haverhill High School teacher Zachary Simmons has his way, the American Foreign Service of the future will have a heavy Hillie hue.

Simmons took 23 students — "the most we've ever brought" — to the National High School Model United Nations in New York.

When they arrived, four Haverhill High alumni were working on the Model UN staff. Rami Jacobson was an administrative assistant; Kara Kimball headed UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization); Ileana Adamez was undersecretary general of the administrative staff; and Ryan Burke was the conference director.

Among the Haverhill High students who attended was sophomore Joe Sherlock, who was recently elected vice president of his class for next year. Simmons urged him to sign up for the Hillies' Model UN team.

"Mr. Simmons said, 'You're going to be great at this,' but I had no idea what I was doing," Sherlock said. He was assigned to take the role of terrorism expert and also represent Vietnam.

After arriving at the Hilton, Sherlock found out he wasn't going to be representing Vietnam after all, but he still functioned as an expert on terrorism. The main challenge for delegates in formulating a policy on terrorism was to "respect the sovereignty of nations but be effective," he said.

The delegates on the Counterterrorism Committee actually planned a covert action, but it was leaked to the media, Sherlock said. He put the blame on a student portraying a delegate from



Figure 1Eagle-Tribune. Haverhill: Zachary Simmons, right, the Haverhill High School Model U.N. advisor, talks about the club's history and accomplishments with two members, Alison Kimball, a junior, left, and Ileana Adamez, who graduated from HHS in 2006 and just graduated from University of Massachusetts-Boston. | Allegra Boverman, Staff Photographer (Photo by Allegra Boverman/Staff photo)

Bulgaria – definitely not a Hillie, because the Haverhill team took the roles of Vietnam, Uganda and the Solomon Islands.

Sherlock said the Model UN experience teaches teenagers about the work that goes into finding solutions to world problems. It was also his first trip to New York City, he noted.

"I'm leaning somewhere in that direction," he said when asked if he aspires to work in international relations. He enjoys politics and history and said he hopes to work as a staff member at the Model UN when he attends college.

Regarding the effectiveness of the real United Nations, he said, "It's a voice of reason in the international community."

Does Sherlock think his generation will do a better job of keeping the world safe and putting an end to war?

"I hope that we learn from history and realize that what didn't work one time won't work next time," he said. "The Model UN experience helps us strive to make the world a better place through diplomacy."

About 3,000 students from the United States as well as other countries, including Norway, Sweden, France and some South American nations, attended the Model UN. They also toured the actual United Nations. Simmons said it was "huge" that four Haverhill High alums served on the staff of the event.

Burke, a 2006 Haverhill High graduate who recently earned his degree in economics and international business from the University of South Carolina, made several speeches to the large audience in his role as conference director. He now attends the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., and aspires to work in a public policy role someday.

If there was ever a Hillie who was serious about making the world a better place, it has to be Adamez, who also graduated from Haverhill High in 2006. She recently graduated from University of Massachusetts at Boston, where she majored in political science, with a concentration in international relations. She also earned a minor in French and boasts fluency in that tongue as well as Spanish.

Now she's setting her sights on nursing school because she wants to help people in a more "hands-on" way, she said.

Kara Kimball, soon to graduate from Bates College with a degree in women's and gender studies, called Model UN "a great opportunity for students to become aware of current global events." At the Model UN in New York, Kimball, yet another Haverhill High 2006 alum, helped lead the debate on Sri Lanka, which has seen more than 20 years of civil war between the Tamils and Sinhalese.