

College Hour touches on conflict

Speakers had a common thread of unity

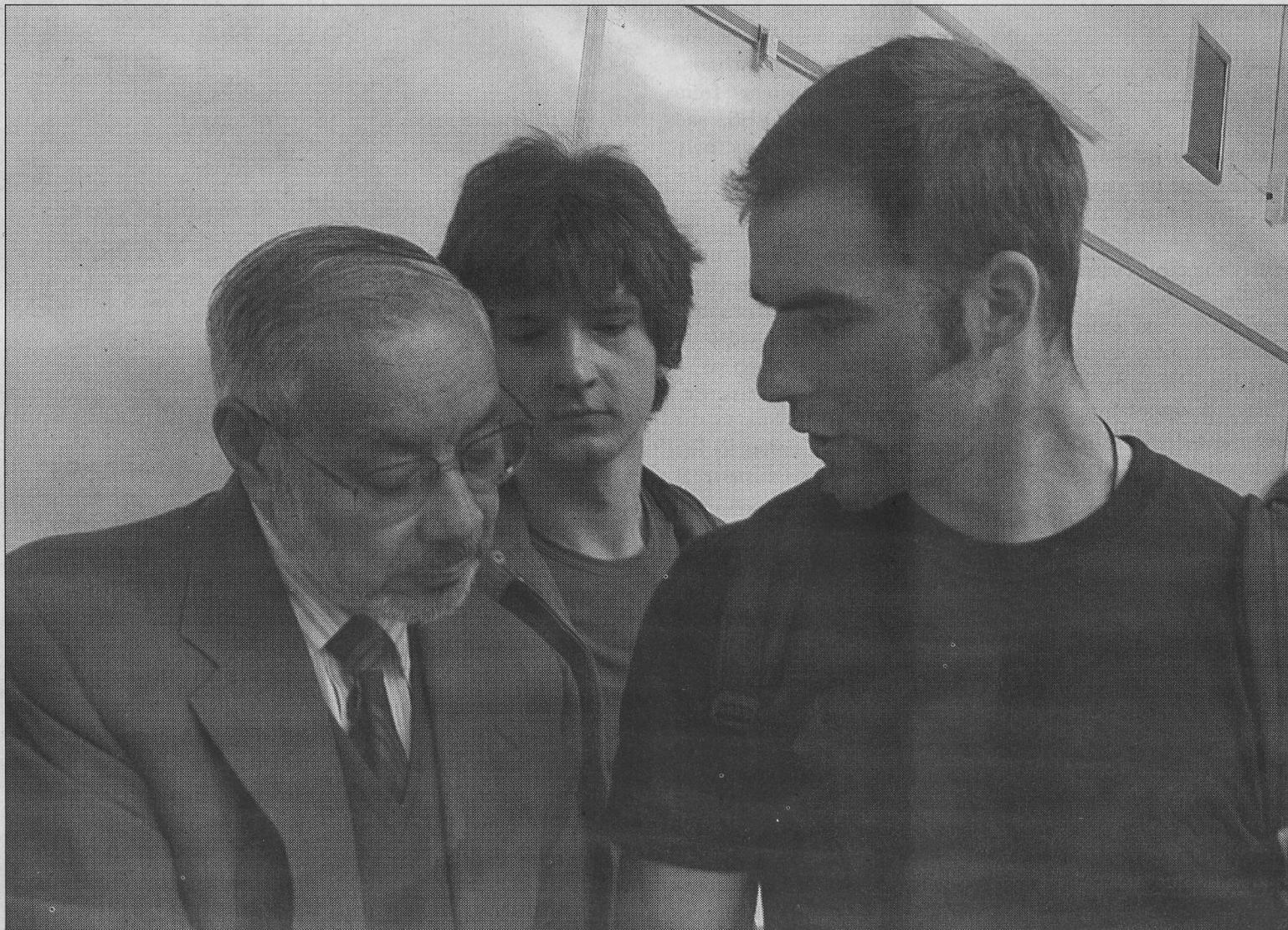
By Kristy Gerlett and Andrew Clementi
Staff Writer and Managing Editor

Aiming to promote understanding and diversity, four religious leaders spoke at last Thursday's College Hour forum.

The forum was convened by faculty member Natasha Breitenbach in response to the recent dialogue and clashes between religious groups on campus.

Due to the ongoing quarrels, the Inter-Club Council president Nancy Dzuiba, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Kathleen Collihan, joined forces with the Peace & Justice Club to form a healthy dialogue between students, staff, and knowledgeable religious teachers.

"We are here today to provide a means for promoting responsible and respectful relations



Current Photo / Josh Clemens

From left, Dr. Metwalli Amer founder of the Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims, Yuriy Popko and Luke Odderstad discuss the theology of the Islamic and Christian Religions after the 'Question of Faith' College Hour on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2007.

a means for promoting responsible and respectful relations among various spiritual, religious, and philosophical traditions on campus," said Dr. Metwalli Amer, founder of the Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims, "We are here to advance the acceptance of the members of ARC community since we all belong to one human race."

The panel consisted of Rabbi David Wechsler-Azen from the Temple Beth Shalom, Hank Kocol from the Atheists and Other Freethinkers, Dexter McNamara from the Interfaith Bureau, and Dr. Amer.

At the forum, the four men each gave a speech expressing

From left, Dr. Metwalli Amer founder of the Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims, Yuriy Popko and Luke Odderstad discuss the theology of the Islamic and Christian Religions after the 'Question of Faith' College Hour on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2007.

their beliefs and their reasoning behind them. The speeches were delivered to a packed audience, the majority of whom identified as being from a Christian background in an informal survey.

Though all the panelists were from different faiths, one underlying theme throughout all the belief systems present was "love your neighbor as yourself" — a proverb usually recognized as a Christian belief, but through this discussion seen to be present in all religions.

"[You're] not a believer until you love others in humanity as

"If you differ with somebody, sit down and talk to them."

— Hank Kocol,

Atheists and Other Freethinkers

you love yourself," Rabbi Wechsler-Azen stated.

All of the speeches were focused on one topic : unity. The topic was especially relevant in light of the recent religious controversies on campus.

"Thank you, American River, for turning a crisis into an opportunity," said Wechsler-Azen.

As to whether the message of unity will be heeded on campus, that's anyone's guess.

"I don't know if it really helped that much, but I guess some people might learn a little," said business major Adam Brown.

"I think all of [the speakers] compromised their faiths ... in order to show that there can be unity in contradicting religions," said Luke Odderstad, treasurer of the former Christian Civilization

Club.

These past weeks, the ongoing religious feuds have gone from signs on campus, to verbal altercations, and even to the Internet. People say they have been hurt and become very angry. But what must be remembered is we are all humans as Dr. Amer stated, "The more understanding [believers are of one another] the more we can coexist."

Kocol may have delivered the clearest message.

"If you differ with somebody, sit down and talk to them," said Kocol.

Editorial

Lower fees don't mean successful students

From first glance, Proposition 92 looks like a wonderful idea. By lowering fees, more people would have access to education.

What many people don't realize is that the cost of school goes beyond tuition. Teresa Wheeler, Campaign Coordinator with No for Proposition 92, stated that Proposition 92 does not address the concerns of most students.

We couldn't agree more.

With such a diverse population attending school, the "true cost of attendance" varies. Students living at home with their parents or another relative who do not have to pay for basic necessities such as housing, food, clothing, and luxuries such as their cell phone will have a lower "true cost of attendance" than a family who

Campus Question: *How do you think lowering unit prices to \$15 will affect students?*



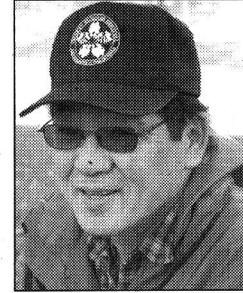
"California already has the cheapest prices for colleges. They are good for the people who have to pay themselves."

—David Estep
Accounting



"I think it's good idea. It will help us a lot."

—Emilia Popescu
Human Services



"That would be nice. Lower is better."

—Joe Itoh
Art New Media



"I think the enrollment would go up if prices go down."

—Lanisha Gray
Undecided

Student responds to Islam critics

Considering that the president of the Christian Civilization Club got a guest columnist spot in your last edition, I felt that it only fair that at least one Muslim stand up and write in to express how they feel about this issue that has caused great controversy within the ARC community.

First of all, yes, I believe in free speech. People have the right to say what they want to say, although along with these rights come responsibility. In this

You cannot make a statement like this without understanding the historical and cultural context of the time. First, marriage as we see it today was not the same as it was in the time of the Prophet. People didn't just marry for love or sexual gratification, people married for status, political reasons, etc.

In the case of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), he married Aisha so she could memorize a number of *hadith*

gions in the world. To find out how diverse Islam is, one only needs to look at *Hajj*, the pilgrimage of able Muslims to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. There, over 3 million people each year from across the globe unite together performing a series of rites and rituals passed down from Prophet Abraham. People from virtually every continent join together as Muslims for this special rite. How does any of this imply racism?

case, the responsibility is to spread your message, whatever it may be, in a decent manner. To dedicate an entire week to defaming the Prophet of another religion is NOT sharing a message in a decent manner.

With all due respect, if Christianity is everything they say it is, let the religion speak for itself. Why dedicate time to defaming other religions? The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never defamed, made fun of, or demeaned any other religion. In that same respect, I will not defame any of the Prophets in the Christian faith, which as mentioned in previous articles, are also revered by Muslims as Prophets. I will, however, clarify two* of the many ignorant and hateful claims that were made by the Christian Civilization Club.

1. *Muhammad was a pedophile because he married Aisha when she was six.*

Correction

In the fifth edition of the ARC Current, the second page featured an editorial cartoon that incorrectly depicted the mission statement of the Christian Civilization Club. The statement in the cartoon is actually ARC's mission statement.

**SARAH
TISDALE**
Guest Columnist



[sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad] in order to narrate them to the people after the Prophet's death. Second, the age of Aisha at marriage is highly debated, with some scholars stating she was as old as 19. Regardless, she was at least 9 and past puberty, when she joined the Prophet's household; thus she was considered an adult woman in the society of that time, similar to standards of adulthood of early Jews and Christians.

In fact, according to the book *The Disappearance of Childhood* by Neil Postman, the Christian Church of the Middle Ages considered the age of accountability, when a person could be tried and even executed (as well as married), to be age seven. When thought of in terms of its historical framework, the act of Prophet Muhammad marrying Aisha was not an act of deviance, but a cultural norm practiced by Jews and Christians alike.

2. *Muhammad was a racist.*

The Qur'an, the revelation from God to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), celebrates diversity as a sign from God (Qur'an 30:22) and also states that there should be no distinction of man based on race or tribe, but rather their righteousness. (Qur'an 49:13).

Islam is one of the most diverse reli-

On a relevant note, as far as respect of Christianity is concerned, this is best demonstrated by a letter from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to the religious leaders of Saint Catherine in Mount Sinai who had sought the protection of the Muslims:

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; ... No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it or carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses ... Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. The Muslims are to fight for them. ... Their churches are declared to be protected. ... No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

I guess the Christian Civilization Club isn't about to put that on a banner, are they? I encourage anyone who sincerely wants to learn about the Prophet Muhammad from the right source to go to <http://whyislam.org>

*Note: In not addressing the other claims, I am in no way avoiding them, nor saying they are true. There's merely not enough space to address all the ridiculous statements that were made.

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Lady Beavers stomp Monterey in opener

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State conference creates leaders

SSCCC hosts chancellor on slate of speakers

By Rosemell Opee
News Editor

Dr. Diane Woodruff, appointed Interim Chancellor of Community Colleges on July 9 by the Board of Governors, says she has not decided if she wants to keep her position permanently. In the meantime, she plans “to improve the success rate especially for [minority] students, [eliminating] the achievement gap.”

The first female to hold the chancellor position stated her uncertain future plans in an interview, following her keynote speech at the Statewide Student

