

The State News

Food TV keeps viewers hungry for more

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MSU'S GREAT DEBATE

Students face off to share candidates' views for 2008 presidential election

By Kelly House
THE STATE NEWS

The presidential debates may be over, but if last night's student debate was any indication, students are far from done arguing about the candidates' platforms.

More than 60 students gathered in the Wonders Hall Kiva last night to hear representatives from three campus political groups defend their presidential candidates.

Debaters from MSU Democrats, MSU College Republicans and Students for Nader represented the views of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, Republican candidate John McCain and Natural Law Party candidate Ralph Nader. Audience members were treated to a mixture of politics, entertainment and a few laughs as the debaters traded viewpoints and the occasional jab at their opponents.

Most of the laughs were garnered by the Students for Nader representatives, who referred to Obama and McCain as "McBama," saying their policies were too similar to tell apart.

"We're looking at two wings of the American corporate government voting against the American people," said Nader debater and international relations senior Shane Dicks.

The debate was moderated by James Madison College assistant professor Ben Kleinerman.

One of the most heated topics of discussion between the student Republicans and Democrats was how to fix America's failing public schools.

The Republicans advocated more emphasis on reading, writing, math, merit-based pay for teachers and school of choice vouchers.

"They have to cut the fat, get better or get out," said MSU College Republicans spokesman Louie Glinzak.

Obama supporters disagreed, saying vouchers are ineffective and slashing budgets will lead to more failure.

"All I heard from the McCain campaign is if it doesn't work, just cut it," MSU Democrats President Georg Schuttler said. "What are we gonna do? Just fire a bunch of teachers?"

International relations senior Alyssa Roland, who organized the event for the James Madison College Student Senate, said while the debate won't have a significant effect on voters' deci-



JASON CHIOU/THE STATE NEWS

International relations senior and Students for Nader member Shane Dicks addresses issues about health care reform on a panel of eight students supporting presidential candidates Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., Ralph Nader and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., on Wednesday night at Wonders Hall Kiva. This was the first time a students-only debate about the presidential race was hosted on campus this year.

sions Nov. 4, it helped get students involved in the political process.

"It's just more easily digested," she said. "If you don't understand an issue, you can follow up with a question instead of listening to the debate from the actual presidential candidates (on TV)."

The teams spent the days before the debate preparing answers to a list of possible questions on the usual campaign season topics: the war in Iraq, the economy, the environment and educa-

tion, among others. Most of their remarks were reiterations of statements the presidential candidates have made on the campaign trail, but there were a few gleams of improvisation.

After Kleinerman posed a question, the debaters were each given three minutes to respond, followed by a minute for rebuttal. During the final half hour, the format changed to a town hall discussion during which audience members posed questions.

Roland said the Student

Senate, which has organized several on-campus debates this year, has seen an increase in student interest in politics this election season.

"There's more of a drive for students to become involved in these campaigns," she said. "The interest is there, and it's going to keep growing."

This was the first time a third party took part in the debates. Roland said she asked representatives from Students for Nader to participate after

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UNIVERSITY

Some student voters still unsure of trustees' role

By Justin Harris
THE STATE NEWS

Sophie Vick said she's not exactly sure what the MSU Board of Trustees does.

While the philosophy graduate student knows the board deals with the university's budget and tuition, the faces and personalities that make up the governing body are unknown to her.

And with two spots on the board up for grabs in two weeks, she's even more uncertain about who to vote for.

"I've been looking into (who's running for the board) on my own but nobody has said anything about it around here," she said. "I wish that there were some sort of materials distributed on campus about who they are."

Many MSU students are unsure of who's on the board and who to vote for on Election Day. In addition, some students don't know what goes on in the monthly board meetings.

Trustee Melanie Foster said awareness of the board is crucial because of the decisions it's in charge of — tuition,

budget, faculty appointments and the hiring of the president.

"I wouldn't just say student awareness, I'd make it broader and say public awareness," Foster said. "This always becomes more profound when you're in an election year."

Foster and fellow trustee Don Nugent agreed the board likes opportunities to speak with student organizations and attend events on campus. Nugent said accepting invitations from student groups is a great way to be more visible to the average MSU student.

"There are several board members that make a conscious effort to try to fulfill as many of the invitations as they can," Nugent said. "Obviously, you can't get to them all. But it is important that we have a good relationship between the students and the board."

While the Board of Trustees election is statewide, Democratic candidate Dianne Byrum said using a variety of advertising near MSU is essential to gaining support. Byrum said she's done sever-

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MUSIC

FORMER MSU PROFESSOR TO PERFORM IN ORCHESTRA

By Kara Paliokas
THE STATE NEWS

Legendary local pianist Ralph Votapek will join the MSU Symphony Orchestra Saturday to commemorate his decades of performance and teaching at MSU.

Votapek retired four years ago, after 36 years of teaching at MSU. Although he is no longer teaching, Votapek, 60, still is a familiar face around campus because of his periodic performances. He will be performing Saturday in Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall. He will be featured on the songs "Nights in the Gardens of Spain" by De Falla and "Symphony No. 2: The Age of Anxiety" by Bernstein.

Violin performance doctoral student Ji Hyun Kim said she is sure the show will play to a packed house on Saturday. Faculty members have been coming to rehearsals just to see Votapek.

"It's amazing for anyone to have a long career just doing one thing you really love and you're really good at it," she

said. "It's inspiring to all the young kids and for myself too. Hopefully I'll be like that at some point."

In celebration of Votapek's 40 years of performances around campus and in the community, MSU Symphony Orchestra conductor Leon Gregorian said he suggested that Votapek join the orchestra as a soloist for the program.

Votapek's material includes "very difficult works, but the orchestra is a superb orchestra, and the soloist is a remarkable pianist, so when you put them together, it should be a great concert," Gregorian said.

Gregorian has known Votapek since 1977 and he said Votapek is extremely musical with incredible technique. He said Votapek is a great collaborator and that he has enjoyed working with him.

"I always look forward to the concerts, but this one is very special because Mr. Votapek happens also to be a dear friend," he said. "Anytime I

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ELECTION

Experts advise viewers to examine what they see and hear about the candidates, page 3A

MEN'S SOCCER

Spartans defeat Cincinnati 2-0 Wednesday, page 6A

Weather

Partly cloudy

High 58° | Low 35°

Three-day forecast, page 2A

BASKETBALL

Women's hoops team vies for better season, trip to Big Dance

By Sean Ely
THE STATE NEWS

Ever since that fateful day when the MSU women's basketball team found out it wasn't headed to the Big Dance, it's wanted to prove to the nation that a mistake was made.

The Spartans, who finished 23-14 overall, felt they deserved to be in the 2008 NCAA Tournament.

And this season, they'll stop at nothing to prove to everyone that's where they belong when the regular season is all said and done — not just in the WNIT, where they advanced to the finals before falling to Marquette, 81-66.

"We really feel like we

belonged in (the tournament) and I'm still frustrated that we weren't," head coach Suzy Merchant said Wednesday at MSU Media Day. "If you lose the game, you're done for the year. So our kids did a good job of putting together some back-to-back games to stay alive (in the WNIT)."

For senior guard Mia Johnson, it's not even as simple as just calling it a chip on her shoulder.

"We know where we're at and where we're going to be at the end of the season," said Johnson, who averaged 4.1 points last season. "Now, we have to go and prove to the people that

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From left to right, junior center Lauren Aitch, junior center Allyssa DeHaan and junior forward Aisha Jefferson are expected to be this season's starting frontcourt.

NICHOLE HOERNER/THE STATE NEWS