



YDA Newsletter

YALE DEBATE ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 3, FALL 2008

A Stunning Season in American Parliamentary

The Yale Debate Association began its 2007-08 season wondering how it could repeat the success of its previous year. After winning the North American and National Championships and the prestigious American Parliamentary Debate Association Team-of-the-Year and Speaker-of-the-Year awards, the historic YDA senior class graduated, leaving a major gap in the team's roster. Also lowering the team's expectations was the departure of President Rosa Po (BK '08) for the Hillary Clinton campaign.

The year, however, was strong from beginning to end. The team of Josh Bone (SY '08) and Andrew Rohrbach (TC '09) compiled an 8-0 record en route to victory at Johns Hopkins, the first tournament of the year. Over the rest of the year, Josh and Andrew compiled a 38-2 record and won each of the other four tournaments they entered (including the NYU International Debate



Josh Bone ('08) & Andrew Rohrbach ('09) win Princeton.

Championships). By the end of the season, Josh and Andrew recaptured the Team-of-the-Year award with the second-highest point total in history (behind only a Yale team from 2007).

The team's depth extended far beyond that team, however. Sophomore Grant May (SY '11) earned twelve speaker awards and appeared in elimination rounds at eleven tournaments over the course of the year, gaining a reputation with his partner Habib Moody (ES '11) for their rigorously technical legal and

economic cases. Seniors Jason Blau (MC '08), Lauren Hallett (PC '08), Dave Kasten (JE '08), and Ashali Singham (BK '08) all appeared in late elimination rounds at tournaments.

Despite graduating such a strong senior class once more, the team's depth of success gives the YDA much hope for its 2008-09 season.



Quarterfinalists at Bangkok Worlds 2008.

YDA Crosses New Borders

No longer satisfied by national championships, the Yale Debate Association now regularly competes abroad in international debate styles. The 2007-08 season boasts victories in Canada, the United Kingdom, and even Thailand.

Scarcely a month into the fall term, the YDA advanced into elimination rounds at the renowned Hart House tournament at the University of Toronto.

Dave Kasten ('08) won the tournament's second speaker award, advancing with his partner Erin Miller ('09) to semifinals. The entire tournament is conducted in the British Parliamentary debate style.

One Yale team ventured abroad in November to the Cambridge University Inter-varsity Tournament, where Yale was the defending champion. Steven Kryger ('10) and Grant May ('09) advanced to elimination rounds, and Kryger earned a fifth-place speaker award.



Winning Over the World

In December, the Yale Debate Association traveled to Thailand to participate in the 2008 World Debating Championships, hosted by Assumption University. Five teams and three judges traveled to Bangkok, where they perpetuated the YDA's legacy of debate success abroad.

Jason Blau (MC '08) and Grant May (SY '10) advanced to semifinals, while Josh Bone (SY '08), Andrew Rohrbach (TC '09), Jeff Geels (SY '09), and Haley Nix (SM '09) debated in quarterfinals. All five Yale teams ranked in the top quarter of the tournament, with Yale representing over half of the American teams in elimination rounds.



The YDA also made an impressive showing in speaker awards. Of more than 790 speakers, Josh

At the Worlds tournament in Bangkok, Thailand, the YDA solidified its reputation as a major player in international British Parliamentary debate, advancing three teams to quarterfinals and one of these to semifinals (see following article).

The YDA returned to Canada in the spring to capture a first speaker award at the North American Championship in Ottawa. This award went to Josh Bone ('08), who would become team president in 2008. Competing in a hybrid American-Canadian debate style, two Yale teams advanced to elimination rounds, Kryger and Habib Moody ('10) to quarterfinals and Josh Bone ('08) and Andrew Rohrbach ('09) to octafinals.

placed second and Andrew placed eighth. All ten Yale speakers placed in the top quarter of the tournament.

Yale's Steven Kryger (SM '10) also advanced in the judging competition to judge elimination rounds. YDA alum, Beth O'Connor (SM '03) served as the Chief Adjudicator of the tournament.



Juniors Haley Nix and Jeff Geels in Quarterfinals at Worlds 2008.

In addition to debating, the YDA enjoyed exploring Thailand. The first half of the tournament took place in Bangkok, affording debaters the opportunity to explore the city, from

crowded markets to ornate temples to thrilling boat rides on the river. After hailing in the New Year at a popular Bangkok theme park, the tournament traveled to one of the world's largest beach resorts in Pattaya for the elimination rounds. After the tournament, YDAers set off on their own exciting trips, throughout Thailand and Southeast Asia

Character Profiles: Our Novice Class of 2007-08

Success in 2007-08 was not limited to the team's varsity members, however. The team's novice class earned thirty-five novice speaker awards over the course of the year and nineteen novice team awards (including 10 for first place). Their season ended at Nationals, were Pamela Brown (SY '11) and James Luccarelli (BR '10) won top novice team.

Vidur Sehgal – Vidur, a sophomore in Stiles, studies Economics and International Studies. He began his debate career learning British parliamentary in Dehli, India, but Vidur perfected his American accent making calls for the Yale alumni fund.

Jonathan Eng – Jonathan is one of the rare science majors on the YDA, studying both computer science and mathematics. Hailing from Hacienda Heights, California, Jon is a freshman in Jonathan Edwards College.

Jesi Egan – Jesi is one of the most experienced incoming debaters, with eleven event-years of debate in high school in Lenexa, Kansas. A freshman in Pierson, Jesi claims her tongue is connected to the bottom of her mouth – she is “tongue-tied”.

Nigel Tann – Nigel is from Valdosta, Georgia, by way of a four-year stint in Hawaii. A sophomore in JE, Nigel is studying political science and international studies.

Shayari De Silva – Shayari did six years of debate in her hometown of Columbo, Sri Lanka, despite a professed aversion to public speaking. This freshman in Morse will likely major in one of the social sciences.

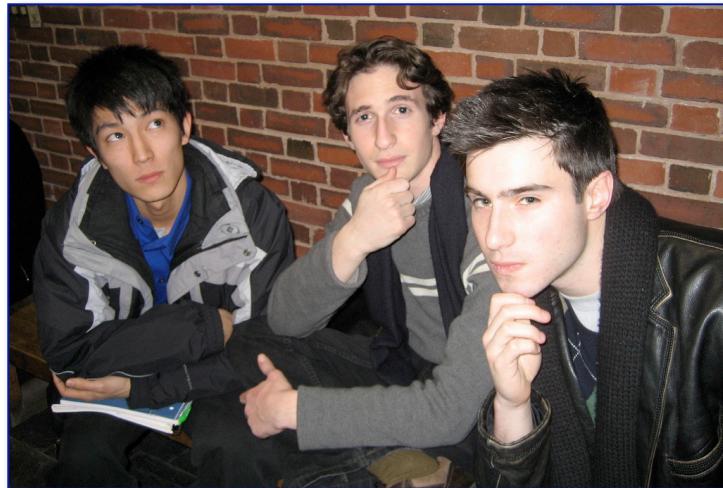
Kristin Briggs – Kristin, a freshman in Trumbull from Parkland, Florida, is a political science major

with experience in extemporaneous speaking. Kristin also appeared on Jeopardy! during her senior year of high school.

Pam Brown – Pam is a political science major in Saybrook College. A freshman, she was a national-circuit Lincoln-Douglas debater in Florida.

Sabrina Ali – Sabrina is a freshman in Stiles. Though undecided on her major, Sabrina did a great deal of Lincoln-Douglas debate in Manhattan.

Kristin Heintz – Kristin is a debater from Southern California with significant experience in Public Forum debate. A freshman in Timothy Dwight, Kristin is an Art History and Political Science double-major.



Tommy Bodeau, - Tommy, a freshman in Saybrook, is a Computer Science and Chinese major. The oldest of four from Minnesota, he did four years of Lincoln-Douglas debate in high school.

James Luccarelli – James, a sophomore in Branford, is one of the highest-achieving Chemistry students at Yale. He did four years of Lincoln-Douglas debate in New York.

Mark Longhurst – Mark, a junior in Morse, is a transfer from the University of Sydney where he did several years of Australian and British Parliamentary debate.

YDA shares debate locally

Osterweis Tournament

This April, 180 high school students showed up on Yale campus to take part in Yale's annual Osterweis High School Debate tournament. The YDA hosts the Osterweis tournament every April for Connecticut high schools.



The tournament is dedicated to the community outreach efforts of former YDA coach, Rollin Osterweis. It is a central part of the team's larger efforts to promote debate in the local community. The theme of this year's tournament was "Freedom in the 21st Century." Its goal was to promote an appreciation for rights of free speech and free expression by challenging students to examine and defend their views on important political and social questions. The four rounds of debate featured a different topic, drawn from contemporary issues.

Students Jason Kaplan and Alyssa Bilinski from Joel Barlow High School won the final round against students from Staples High School. Bilinski also took top speaker.

All of the participants and the YDA are grateful for the tireless efforts of Sabrina Ali (ES '11) and Jonathan Eng (JE '11), who organized the event.

Urban Debate League

The New Haven Urban Debate League, a partner organization of the Yale Debate Association, began its third year in September, under the leadership of President and YDAer Jennifer Wang (ES '10). Habib Moody (ES '10) and Pam Brown (SY '11) also serve on the board. The organization coaches debate teams in New Haven public high schools and hosts regular tournaments on campus.

The Yale Debate Association lends tremendous support in the form of coaches and judges for the monthly tournaments, in addition to welcoming the students to the annual Osterweis tournament. Thanks to their efforts, the UDL is now an established program with many enthusiastic and committed participants at seven schools across the city. This year, the UDL is looking to offer more tournaments, expand into new schools, and foster a community between the various debate teams and among the coaches.

New social face for the YDA

To YDAers, the YDA is more than a team—it's a community. Unsatisfied with merely spending every weekend together, the YDA has increasingly created a tradition of team events outside of tournaments.

Every Thursday night, team members gather for "Office Hours," where debaters discuss case ideas and, more simply, enjoy each other's company.

For big celebrations—after the high school tournament and at the end of the year, for example—the YDA takes all members to a nice dinner at a New Haven restaurant, such as Samurai.



In December, the YDA held its third annual Christmas party. This festive function centers on a cookie decorating activity, in which each participant decorates a gingerbread cookie like another member of the YDA. The results are amusing, to say the least.

Finally, during the 2007-2008 school year, the YDA held a variety of other social events, including a group trip to watch *The Great Debaters*, an ice-skating outing, a Presidential Primaries themed party in which debaters dressed like their favorite drop-out candidates, and an evening of joke debates.

Yale Inter-Varsity Tournament

Late October 2007 brought the second edition of the Yale Inter-Varsity debate tournament which was directed by Haley Nix (SM '09) and Spencer Stackhouse (SY '09) who served as Conveners and Josh Bone (SY '08) who served as the Chief Adjudicator with Jeff Geels (SY '09) as his deputy for the tournament. After an impressive success with the Yale IV's inaugural year, the YDA was excited to again host over one hundred teams from Canada and the US in two days of fierce British Parliamentary debating. Still the only tournament of its kind on the circuit, the Yale IV attracts teams who are looking to get experience in the British Parliamentary style in which the World Championships are conducted. This style features four two-person teams rather than the traditional two two-person teams that are common to North American debating formats.

After two days, five preliminary rounds and an impressive quarterfinals break, four teams remained for the final round. A team from Harvard, Princeton, MIT and the University of Toronto competed for the top position in the tournament with Harvard edging out Toronto to become the second school to win the Yale IV.

The Yale IV has transformed debating within the American Parliamentary Debating Association, the national circuit on which the YDA competes. As a result of their experience with the Yale IV, American teams have become more competitive in international tournaments, like the World Championships, that are conducted in the British style. Furthermore, the YDA itself has been affected by the IV. The tournament has served to help globalize the YDA by putting the team constantly in contact with debaters from around the world. Not only does the YDA host an international tournament, but it competes successfully on the international debating circuit,

both of which have connected the team to the international debating community.

On October 25-6 the YDA will host the third edition of the Yale IV. Conveners Tess Reed (CC '10) and Mark Longhurst (MC '09) and Chief Adjudicator Andrew Rohrbach (TC '09) are busy paving the way for another successful Yale IV. Already, teams from four countries have registered for the tournament. The YDA is excited to again bring people from around the world for a weekend of excellent BP debate.

The Adams Cup reborn!

After years of discussing a plan to revive the defunct Adams Cup tournament, the YDA finally stopped talking and decided to organize the first intra-mural debating competition between Yale's twelve residential colleges for the first time in over a decade. Formerly a prestigious intra-mural competition, the Adams Cup fell out of Yale College life early in the nineties.

Seeing an opportunity to interact more with the undergraduate community, the YDA hosted the Adams Cup last April. With teams from all twelve colleges assembled, the tournament split the colleges into two wheels

and ran a one-day round-robin style tournament. Through three preliminary rounds, judged by members of the YDA, college debate teams would have to rack up the best record in order to debate the final round in front of former Yale College Dean Peter Salovey.

At the end of the tournament, a team from Morse College and Jonathan Edwards College remained, with Dean Salovey, Dean Marichal Gentry and Professor of Philosophy Tamar Gendler ultimately deciding to make Jonathan Edwards College the home of the Adams Cup for the next year. The YDA looks forward to holding this event every year to make debate a true intra-mural competition.



National NFL High School Tournament 2007 Recap:

The YDA hosted its 15 annual High School invitational last September. We hosted 116 schools from 18 states and 1 Canadian province. The tournament featured competition in all major high school forensics events.

Every year, we bring more than 1,500 people to New Haven, including the nation's top debaters, coaches, and schools to Yale's campus, offering them a chance to see Yale through events coordinated with the Admissions Office.

The team expends tremendous amounts of time and energy in organization the tournament. We appoint a six-member organizational staff that starts work in January. We are the largest tournament to be run entirely by students without a full-time paid staff. The tournament is also our principle source



Members of the YDA relax after an exhausting weekend working at the high school tourney.

of income. Last year, we had nearly \$65,000 in revenue and earned over \$35,000.

New Board Profiles:

The current members of the YDA Executive Board, elected in December 2007, are:

President: Andrew Rohrbach. Andrew is a senior from Virginia in Trumbull College majoring in Philosophy and Political Science. In addition to his involvement on the YDA, Andrew serves as President of the American Parliamentary Debate Association. Andrew has been recognized as APDA Team-of-the-Year, the 8th Speaker at the World Championships, and 2nd Speaker at the North American Championships.

Director of Development: Erin Miller. Erin is a senior from Oregon in Saybrook College majoring in Philosophy and Political Science. During her time on the board, Erin has pursued new fundraising options, including our 100th Anniversary event, and increased alumni and administration outreach.

Director of Membership: Haley Nix. Haley Nix is a senior from North Carolina in Silliman College majoring in Political Science and International Studies. This past season, Haley was co-Convener

of the 2007 Yale IV and competed at Worlds, where she advanced to Quarter-Finals. Haley also serves as President of the Urban Debate League, a partner organization of the YDA that promotes debate in New Haven high schools.

Treasurer: Grant May. Grant May is a junior Political Science major in Saybrook College from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Grant has been the top-ranked APDA debater in his class each season, finishing as 5th Speaker of the Year in 2008 and Novice of the Year in 2007. Last year, he was the only underclassman debater in the nation to reach elimination rounds at all three title tournaments, finishing among the top ten teams at the National, North American, and World Championships. Prior to serving on the board, Grant co-directed the YDA's largest-ever High School Tournament.

Tournament Coordinator: Spencer Stackhouse. Spencer is a junior in Saybrook College from Colorado majoring in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Spencer has contributed to organizing almost every tournament the team holds, including his position as co-Convener of the 2007 Yale IV tournament. Spencer has broken at a variety of tournaments, losing to a fellow Yale team the first time he did so.

Centennial Reunion Preview

On October 18, nearly 100 Yale alumni debaters from classes that span six decades will descend upon New Haven for the first YDA reunion. The event celebrates a century of Yale Debate.

The highlight of the reunion will be an intergenerational debate between alumni: Yale law professor Akhil Amar ('80), former presidential speechwriter David Frum ('82), Jake Sullivan ('98), and Tim Willenken ('03).

For earlier alumni, the key attraction may be a tribute luncheon to Professor Rollin G. Osterweis and alumnus Bill Buckley. Osterweis coached the YDA for three decades, from 1946-1979, and dedicated his life to speech education in all forms. Buckley, who graduated in 1950, was a student and friend of Osterweis' and a talented debater.

The schedule also includes three panel discussions by alumni and a closing dinner at Union League.

In preparation for our centennial anniversary, the YDA has installed a history exhibit in the Memorabilia Room of Sterling Memorial Library. The exhibit includes nearly 80 pieces of debate memorabilia from the Yale archives from as far back as the 1930s.

Seniors Update

The YDA class of 2008 now applies their debate skills in diverse fields. Take a few examples:

Josh Bone: Formerly the president of the YDA, Josh is now researching and reading for Judge David Tatel on the D.C. Circuit.

Ashali Singham: A former YDA board member, Ashali is now working in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the public sector consulting firm Public Financial Management.

Lauren Hallett: A former YDA board member, Lauren is now working at a grass research lab in Perth, Australia on a Fulbright scholarship.

Jason Blau: Jason is now in Boulder, Colorado, working for Redstone, a non-profit investment management company.

Dave Kasten: Dave is interning at the Center for Security and International Studies in Washington, DC.



Season 2007-08 Statistics:

APDA tournaments won: 6

APDA finals reached: 8

APDA tournaments attended by at least one member: 28

APDA tournaments at which one or more YDA teams broke: 25

APDA tournament break rate: 89%

Yale BR season record:

Tournaments they needed to secure TOTY: 5

Consecutive years Yale has won TOTY: 2

Yale's International Ranking: 6th (highest of any American team)

Yale teams breaking at Worlds: 3

Yale debaters ranked in the top ten at Worlds: 2

Yale Debaters ranked in the top five on APDA: 2



