

ASUN president's visit to Israel enlightening

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Touring the U.S. Embassy, Russell heard presentations from U.S. government officials regarding the process of third-party peace negotiations.

While on tour, Russell said there were many times in the building when she didn't think security measures were strict enough, especially considering the devastating bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on Aug. 7. "The metal detector would go off, and no one would care," Russell said. "They just thought because we were a tour group, everything was fine."

Visiting Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, Russell discussed with other students the strong apathy on that campus over political issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"There are two rights clashing creating one wrong: war," she said. "They say they need to go to war, but I don't think war is ever an answer."

Russell, who was ASUN Human Rights Committee chairwoman last year, said she still has a strong belief in other alternatives to war and in equality for all people.

Russell said her excursion to another country made her aware of possible issues at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and reinforced her support for resolutions on current

issues.

Russell said the American Jewish Committee's goal of eliminating bigotry and promoting tolerance in the United States taught her how to build tolerance among students.

"Yes we have problems upon problems here at UNL, but if people could sit down and discuss matters, things can be solved," she said. "Everyone can and needs to learn to tolerate others."

Other issues Russell discussed with Israeli students included trying to keep tuition low, student representation in student government and lack of student parking on campus.

"It's nice to see parking is not just an American problem," Russell said. "It's universal and not just UNL."

Russell said she is planning to convey to the ASUN Senate a sense of how lucky students are to be living in the United States.

Subtle cultural differences made all the difference in Israel, she said.

"I was fascinated, but very nervous of the machine guns on the streets," she said. "You learn fast to respect and tolerate others and their beliefs."

Russell said students need to realize there are always compromises when conflicts arise.

"We do have a lot of problems in the U.S.," Russell said. "But we are really quite amazing if you just sit and think about it."

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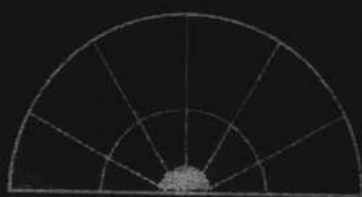
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