

# Everyone has the ability to be a revolutionary: Cullis-Suzuki

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News Staff

Speaking to a small, attentive audience at the Myer Horowitz Theatre on Tuesday, Severn Cullis-Suzuki—the daughter of television personality and environmental activist David Suzuki—opened the Revolutionary Speakers Series' first lecture of the year by asking a simple question: "Who is the revolutionary?"

"It's not a matter of *can* [we] change the world, it's a matter of *how* we want to change the world," Cullis-Suzuki said.

Cullis-Suzuki began by talking about her own multicultural heritage and how the experience of the Second World War forever changed and shaped the lives of her parents and grandparents.

"My Japanese-Canadian father was a victim of prejudice during the war, as he and his family were interned and imprisoned in camps in interior BC. It definitely had a huge impact on who he is; he's always proud to stand up against prejudice and injustice," Cullis-Suzuki said.

"One thing I've always been taught [is] you have to standup for what you believe," said Cullis-Suzuki, who has followed in her father's footsteps by becoming involved in environmental advocacy.

Her motivation to work in that direction was sparked when she embarked on a trip to the Amazon at the age of eight-years-old.

"I just felt that [the destruction of the Amazon] was wrong. It was so unbelievable that this incredible world that I had just discovered was being destroyed," Cullis-Suzuki said, as she recalled the life-changing experience of flying over the Amazonian jungle.

The experience led Cullis-Suzuki to found a club with her classmates—the Environmental Children's Organization, or ECO. Later, the group fundraised enough money to go to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro—where Cullis-Suzuki delivered a speech that garnered her a standing ovation.

"I told them that I was twelve and that I had already witnessed



NICK WIEBE

**SMALL STEPS HELP** Cullis-Suzuki brings her message to the Myer Horowitz.

some pretty scary effects on my future—and that it worried me. And that before their goal as politicians, as professionals, as businessmen, as businesswomen—their first responsibility were [as] parents," Cullis-Suzuki said.

Later, Cullis-Suzuki discussed the environmental issues that she believes are of great concern, including the decline in biodiversity and the shrinking "ethno-sphere"—a topic discussed by previous Revolutionary Speaker Wade Davis.

"The ethno-sphere is the global sum of human thought, institutions, culture, stories and language about our planet. This is shrinking as the global population urbanizes and as we move everyone into a monetary economy," said Cullis-Suzuki, who noted that the industrialization of farming and economic globalization has limited the variety of crops species that farmers can grow and limited the diversity of shopping choices worldwide.

With this in mind, Cullis-Suzuki gave examples of how we can become revolutionary individuals in our own everyday lives. She denounced the unnecessarily excessive use of disposable coffee cups, drinking bottled water, and the controversial child-labour production of cocoa.

"Coffee cups are an example of pretty much the subconscious culture of waste, [with bottled] water we're talking about the commoditization of a human right, [and] chocolate is a luxury item that connects us directly to human abuses. These are very small decisions that we make every day, but they do have consequences," said Cullis-Suzuki, who encouraged people to stick to reusable coffee mugs, avoid drinking bottled water, and eat fair-trade chocolate.

"I think that the general revolution that we have to begin is to discover how we're connected to the world. We're connected to the ecology and the web of communities around us," she affirmed.

## Admin on-board for U-Pass

U-PASS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Originally it was thought that we'd just put the buses on the university and college routes, [but] now we're putting the buses on all the routes," Stolte said, stating this would allow those not privy to the U-Pass to also reap some of its benefits.

"It's a trial. It has to serve the test of time and we're going to do that over the next few years—we'll be monitoring it on a semester basis," Stolte said.

A SU referendum on the U-Pass will take place, during general SU elections, the first week of March 2007. However, an additional agreement to be reached between U of A students and the Administration will see a further subsidy bring the U-Pass to an even more affordable level.

"Negotiations with the University have been [discussing] their commitment to bring the number down to

between \$70–\$80," Power explained, stating survey data previous to the 2004 referendum had shown that price range to be within the affordable level that students would accept at the polls.

U of A Administration previously directed all U-Pass inquiries to the SU; however, Don Hickey, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations), now confirmed the University is indeed negotiating a further subsidy with students and said at the TPW meeting he was there to "support the students."

"[The agreement between the University and the students is] going to be finalized in the next one or two weeks," Hickey said, adding that the Administration had previously remained silent on the issue because they felt the funding gap between what the students had agreed to pay and what the City would pay was too great.

"There were a lot of unknowns at that time, and the gap of where the City thought things should be and where the students thought things should be—it was just a little too much of a gap," Hickey explained.

But according to SU VP (External) Dave Cournoyer, the length of the U-Pass negotiations have been more of an issue than the price itself.

"We haven't received any negative reaction from students in terms of the price, if there's been any criticism it's been that it's taken the City, the University and the Students' Union so long to get a U-Pass," Cournoyer said.

A U-Pass has already been introduced to some degree at other Canadian universities, including the University of Calgary, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and Dalhousie University, and an online vote on 17–19 October will determine if the University of Lethbridge also adopts a U-Pass.

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