

THE GATEWAY

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PHIL HEAD

COCAINE COWBOY Matt Mays thought he was Corey Hart on Friday night with his spiffy shades and suave suit.

Canada-US relations strong: Wilkens

TRISTAN FOLINSBEE
News Staff

The American ambassador to Canada said he was “personally offended” by a question from an audience member at the 2007 Henry Marshall Tory lecture series last Wednesday night at the Telus Centre at the University of Alberta.

The event that precipitated that offence occurred at the end of Ambassador David Wilkins’ talk, when an audience member made reference to the recent trial and execution of Saddam Hussein, and asked Wilkins whether “as a lawyer,” he saw

any similarities between US President George W Bush and the executed dictator. Wilkins didn’t equivocate in his response.

“[Saddam Hussein] was tried. He was tried by his own people, and he was found guilty. And he paid the price for his crime. And for you to mention a dictator, a murderer, in the same sentence as President Bush is really beyond my comprehension, and I’ll tell you, I’m personally offended by it. I can’t understand it. It’s inappropriate, and you and I will just have to disagree on that,” Wilkins said.

That exchange marked the only tension in what was a relatively congenial

discussion. Wilkins, who called his speech “a conversation” with the U of A community, relayed anecdotes of his 19-month term as ambassador, and spent as much time discussing his reaction to Canadian winters as he did discussing trade disputes and passport requirements.

“I remember, it was in July, in the oval office ... the President said, ‘How you holding up with the weather?’ I said, ‘Mr President, the Canadians say it’s the mildest winter they’d ever had—it’s the coldest I’ve ever seen,’” said Wilkins, to polite laughter from the audience.

PLEASE SEE WILKENS ♦ PAGE 4

BOG green lights residence rent rise

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

Armed with 1700 signatures, student representatives urged the University of Alberta’s Board of Governors to vote against a proposed ten per cent increase for campus residences. However, neither the petition nor the fact that the Residence Hall Association had voted against the increase in the fall could defer the motion.

The BoG meeting on 26 January was the final stop prior to the University’s finalization of their 2007/08 budget. Amid talks of escalating deferred maintenance costs and budget sensitivities, the Board empathized with student concerns but, nevertheless, supported the rent increase proposal.

“They raised it? I signed the petition—I thought that would make a difference,” International House resident Tracy Cantin said upon hearing that her rent would soon pass the \$500 mark.

But while living on campus will be pricier as of 1 May, 2007, U of A Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein stressed that the increases are required to address serious concerns.

“We’re not talking about painting walls and putting up new carpets.

We’re talking about critical building systems,” Amrhein said.

During his presentation for the proposed rent hike, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Don Hickey explained that, unlike the rest of U of A infrastructure, the municipal act allows the City of Edmonton to charge property taxes on University residences and commercial operations. And because residences are generally only occupied for eight months, the University faces difficulties in covering the costs.

“They raised it? I signed the petition—I thought that would make a difference.”

TRACY CANTIN,
INTERNATIONAL HOUSE RESIDENT

“The reality in recent years is the fact that the residence operations are running at a deficit as a result of expenses increasing faster than revenues,” Hickey explained.

PLEASE SEE RENT ♦ PAGE 3
ALSO READ FEDIO ON PAGE 5

Wright speaks on progress gone wrong

British writer focused on the downfall of ancient societies, and the dangers to our own civilization

STEFFI ROSSKOPF
News Staff

Being a resident at the University of Alberta’s International House is certainly not without its perks. After current Secretary General of Amnesty International Irene Khan and Canadian diplomat Stephen Lewis in the last year, Ronald Wright was the third distinguished guest to participate in the I-House Exclusive speaker series.

The British author came to I-House on Sunday for an informal discussion with students about his latest bestseller, *A Short History of Progress*, and the challenges facing our civilization today. The event predated his official keynote address yesterday, which opened the U of A’s International Week 2007.

Wright spoke to University officials and international students from over 13 countries, elaborating on

his studies of the “civilizations of the Americas” at the University of Calgary and how they influenced his later work, which focused on the Aztec, Incan and Mayan cultures and their collapse.

“In the case of the Aztec and the Inca, they were finished off by Europeans invading the Americas. Particularly by the diseases that came with the Europeans to which the native people in this Hemisphere didn’t have any resistance to,” he explained.

But in opposition to that point, he also emphasized that the Mayan civilization Mayas collapsed “hundreds of years before Europeans came ... because of something it did to itself.”

Wright shared with his audience this simple fact, noting that he’s concerned that we might be promoting another cultural collapse, this time on a global scale.

PLEASE SEE WRIGHT ♦ PAGE 4

Inside

News	1-4
Opinion	5-7
Sports	8-10
A&E	11-14
Comics	15
Classifieds	16



Saskatche-robbed

The Huskies came to steal two wins from the Pandas, but wound up having their stuff pilfered instead.

SPORTS, PAGE 8



Just like Matt Damon

F-Ray cooks up an ingenious plan to get a free education: not pay for it. That, and just read all the books.

COMICS, PAGE 15