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colophon

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contributors

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NICK WIEBE

SINGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL BLUES Author Ronald Wright whistles a cautionary tune to International Week gatherers during his opening keynote address.

NEWS BRIEFS

I-WEEK KEYNOTE RONALD WRIGHT WARNS WESTERNERS TO WISEN UP FOR WORLD'S WELL-BEING

Focusing his speech on humanity's need to recognize nature's limitations and our own role in the destruction of our environment, Ronald Wright spoke to a packed Myer Horowitz Monday, as the first keynote speaker of the University of Alberta's 22nd-annual International Week.

Wright, who is author of the award-winning novel, *A Short History of Progress*, urged listeners to stop taking the lives they lead as Westerners for granted.

"If everyone lived like [those in the West] live today, there would not be enough resources to support us," he stated.

To illustrate his position, Wright noted that, of all the great civilizations that have existed until now, ours is the first to use productive, arable land as a construction site for cities. The Egyptians, the Romans and other civilizations chose areas where the land was infertile as sites for their cities. Wright mentioned Edmonton (among other cities such as Calgary and Shanghai) as

an example of our civilization's wasteful use of good land.

During the question period, Wright was asked what we could do as individuals to help decrease the negative impact our culture is having on the environment today. While he admitted that this was a difficult question, his response focused on being environmentally aware and energy-conscious.

And when the discussion turned to overpopulation, Wright suggested that, in order to avoid the cultural catastrophe that would occur if the world were to reach the projected nine billion inhabitants by 2050, innovative birth control programs would need to be introduced.

Wright further pointed to government decisions concerning the Alberta tar sands, which he considers wasteful, and warned that they too could contribute to the future downfall of Western civilization. Instead of subsidizing tar sand development and wasting almost as much energy extracting oil as we get in return, Wright suggested that development of the tar sands be delayed until more efficient means of extraction are invented.

While he avoided apocalyptic interpretations, Wright made it clear that our current use of world resources is

unsustainable, and that a change in global ideology is needed to ensure the survival of our civilization.

Jessica Warren, News Writer

ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK ORGANIZERS HOPE TO BATTLE IGNORANCE

Next week marks the beginning of the annual Islam Awareness Week (IAW) on university campuses across North America.

The aim of the week-long event, which is being organized at the University of Alberta by the Muslim Students' Association, is not only to increase awareness about Islam, but also to discuss the topic of Muslims in Canada. Issues surrounding integration and differences, as well as Islam in a contemporary Canadian setting will be covered.

"There's been a pressure to integrate ... to be Canadian, whatever that means. And there's been a push for that especially since 9/11," MSA President Zacharia al Khatib said. "But we really hope to present Islam as a religion that's applicable to Canadians. People shouldn't be looking at us as something that is foreign or alien or that there's this dichotomy between Christianity and Islam, and they're fundamentally opposed to one another and can't see

eye-to-eye on anything."

Many international issues that are currently affecting Muslim-Canadians such as Canada's role in Afghanistan will also be addressed, al Khatib explained.

IAW will include daily sessions covering topics ranging from the basic tenets of Islam to issues specific to Muslim women. The week will also feature a series of speakers, including Muslim lawyer Faisal Kutty and Muhammed Alshareef discussing the legal issues that surround Muslims and presenting a Muslim-Canadian vision for a better nation.

However, a prevailing theme within IAW is to help Muslim-Canadians accept and embrace their bicultural identity.

"When you give people an understanding that to be Muslim does not mean you're not Canadian ... then they actually feel a sense of empowerment," al Khatib said. "When you can actually stand up and say [that] this is our country, this is our faith and they're not mutually exclusive concepts. Loyalty to one does not mean disloyalty to another. When you can make people understand that, they feel very good about themselves and they don't feel like they have to be hiding in the closet."

Ryan Heise, Online Coordinator

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