

# Amnesty International holds conference on campus

*Events focus on cultural relativism, international human rights*

By Travis Langdon  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

Cultural relativism was the theme for the 1998 Amnesty International State Conference, held Feb. 20-21 in the Benson University Center. Workshops and speeches were among the weekend's events, which marked the first time this university hosted the state conference.

Several internationally recognized human-rights activists attended the conference, some of whom delivered speeches based on life experiences.

One of these activists, journalist Allan Nairn, was the keynote speaker for the event.

The recipient of numerous awards for his coverage of U.S. foreign policy and his work for human rights, Nairn began the conference with a moving speech about the atrocities he witnessed in East Timor in 1991.

In East Timor, Nairn was exposed to a massacre in which the Indonesian Army killed over 271 unarmed citizens. Nairn addressed his experiences in his speech and further discussed them at a workshop he offered about Latin America and U.S. foreign policy.

"(Nairn) saw all of these people from East Timor being slaughtered, and he was almost killed by the Indonesian Army. He told us about his experiences, and it was astounding how much of an effect he had on people," said sophomore Dipti Singh, the president of the university's chapter.

"(At the workshop), one of the people there burst out crying and others became very angry. But it was great, because it was a catharsis of sorts. It's nice for people to come together, and realize that they're not alone," Singh added.

Other speakers at the event included Fred

Milano, from the department of sociology at Appalachian State University, and Jennie Burnet, a member of Amnesty International USA's board of directors. In his workshop titled "The Sociology of War and War Crimes," Milano, a veteran of the Vietnam War, addressed such issues as why people choose to go to war.

Burnet, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discussed the social and political climate historically present in Rwanda. Her workshop shed light on the issue of genocide in this nation and what Americans can do about it.

With the convention having been reasonably well attended, the university's chapter, which began substantial expansion only last semester, expects its growth to continue.

"We were asked to hold the conference by Nestor Lopez, who is the regional director of the North Carolina Amnesty International program. We had been in contact with him prior to the conference, but we've started to have a relationship through the whole process. Hopefully, that will continue as we try to get bigger," said sophomore Anne LeBlanc, the vice president of the university's chapter.

The conference offered discussions based around such issues as the death penalty, Central American refugees and the alleviation of the suffering present in the world.

A personal account was also given by Elmoiz Abunura, a professor of political sciences at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

A political refugee from Sudan, Abunura lived for a while in Iraq and survived imprisonment.

"(Abunura) is what is called a 'prisoner of conscience,' which is a person who has been subjected to brutality because of his race, creed or things like that. ... He spoke

a lot about police brutality and the political situation in Sudan," Singh said.

The conference also allowed participants to observe each other's creative output and interpretations of cultural traditions.

The university's Amnesty International members performed an Indian dance, and students from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics played and sang a song.

Following these performances was an open-microphone event in which participants read their original poetry. The convention also hosted Glass, a band from Chapel Hill, Feb. 21. Participants agreed that the social atmosphere was a nice break from the intense discussion that occupied the day and a chance to make contacts with the other North Carolina programs.

"It was very nice for this whole concept of solidarity. We exchanged numbers and promised to keep in touch and campaign together in the future," Singh said.

Overall, the university's Amnesty International chapter considered the convention a success. Executive members of the program gathered ideas from the events that they hope to incorporate into their agenda.

"I think the conference went really well, and we learned a lot about what we want to try to do in the future. What we're going to do now, before each of our meetings, is pick a country, and have someone come prepared to speak and answer questions about it," Singh said.

"We want to make the meetings more discussion-oriented, show more videos and make them more interactive, rather than just talking about upcoming events. We want business to only be about 10 percent of our meeting time," Singh said.



Students from the North Carolina School of Science and Math perform Feb. 21 as part of the Amnesty International conference.

Dave Frisvold/Old Gold and Black

## Web to unite university, community

By Sarah Rackley  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

The university is helping to improve communication in Winston-Salem by its involvement in the development of Winston-Net, a project to create a home page for Winston-Salem that will link schools, government and colleges and improve Internet access to many of these non-profit organizations.

Both the undergraduate school and the Wake Forest University School of Medicine are leaders in this project.

"Our role has been that of facilitator and proponent of Winston-Net in the community," said Jay Dominick, the assistant vice president for information systems.

Winston-Net will foster communication and allow schools and government to share resources.

A community calendar will be a main feature that will help coordinate activities in a way not currently

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Jay Dominick

Assistant vice president for information systems

possible. Faster Internet connections are also in the works for schools, libraries and government offices to improve communication for those without Internet connections in their homes.

The project is based on the successful integration of technology into learning and communication at the university and on experiences of other communities with similar programs.

"Our hope is some of the benefits we see here (at the university) in terms of communication, if nothing else, can translate into benefits for the city," said Dominick. "Two years ago, there would have been very little interest in such a project. Now the popularity of the Web and the ease of its usage is working in our favor."

Dominick sees Winston-Net as an important step for the future of Winston-Salem, a city based on the now-threatened tobacco industry. Preparing Winston-Salem for the integration of technology into community life is an important long-term investment.

This project will be funded by federal grant money, legislative money and possibly user fees paid by those who connect to the service, Dominick said.

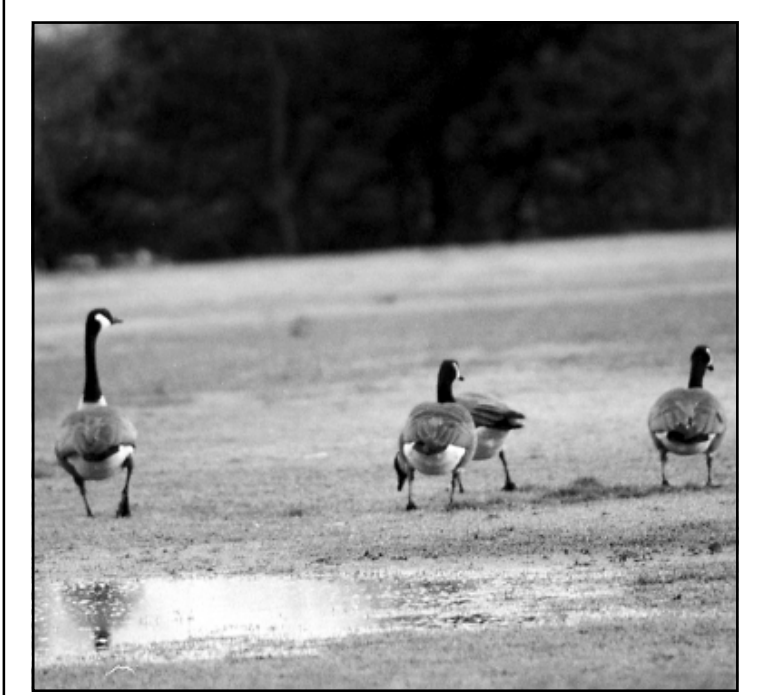
In conjunction with the Winston-Net project, the university is helping to increase the Internet connections in the community by selling

two-year-old ThinkPads to local schools. Thirty ThinkPads are currently in a computer lab where junior high students can use the Internet for research at Cook Middle School. Another feature of the plans for Winston-Net is the use of video conferencing between members of Winston-Net. For example, a surgeon at Bowman Gray performing surgery could teach a high-school class.

Dominick emphasized the importance of the success of the Plan for the Class of 2000 in the university's involvement in the project.

The improvements in communication on campus have shown what is possible in the community, he said.

"It is a continuing process based on what we have learned here about how important technology is in the learning process," said Dominick. "If we put something useful in it, people will use it in numbers greater than we anticipate."



Noel Fox/Old Gold and Black

### I can see clearly now

After the rain that plagued the area in recent days, these Canadian geese take the opportunity to sronge for food on Poteat Field. Everyone, including the animals, is looking forward to spring.

## BRIEFLY

Campus organizations may have their announcements listed by sending e-mail to [news@ogb.wfu.edu](mailto:news@ogb.wfu.edu), faxing to Ext. 4561 or writing to P.O. Box 7569. The deadline for inclusion in each week's paper is 5 p.m. Monday.

### InterVarsity's annual servant fundraiser

The Interservice Christian Fellowship will host its annual servant auction beginning at 6 p.m. February 27 in the Green Room of Reynolda Hall.

Students will auction off their own unique talents in order to raise money for students going on Christian missions this summer. Student auctioneers will auction off services as car washes, dance lessons or blind dates.

Money raised by the auction will be divided, based on individual need, among students planning to serve with Christian missions both domestic and abroad.

Last year the event raised over \$400 for students going to Russia, Africa and India.

### Grants for travel and international studies

Applications for the Spires Travel Grants, the Scales International Studies Scholarship and the Tillet Scholarship for study in Eastern Europe are available in the office of international studies, Carswell 027. The scholarships will cover sum-

mer and fall 1998 programs. The deadline is March 16.

### Meeting scheduled for new Christian sorority

Students interested in Phi Beta Chi sorority, a sorority with a Christian emphasis, are invited to attend an informational meeting at 2 p.m. Feb. 28 in Wingate 209.

For more information, call sophomores Emilee Simmons and Jennifer Bishop at Ext. 6767.

### Philomathesians lunch lecture series continue

The Philomathesian Society's lunch lecture series continues at 11 a.m. every Tuesday. The society invites everyone to come March 3 to hear Daniel Kim-Shapiro, an assistant professor of physics, discuss his experience in the Peace Corps. The discussion will be in the upper dining area of the Pit.

### Women's studies dept. presents Mendelssohn

The department of women's stud-

ies will present an afternoon of music featuring Katharine Boyes, an instructor of music, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. March 3 in the Benson University Center Gallery, located on the fourth floor.

Boyes' lecture, titled "Fanny Mendelssohn: A New Romantic," will focus on the life and works of Fanny Mendelssohn, a German composer and pianist.

### Safe Break '98 features police and safety tips

University Police will sponsor Safe Break '98 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 4 on the Benson University Center patio.

The purpose of the event is to provide students with safety advice for spring break. Students will have the opportunity to meet law enforcement officers in a positive setting.

Members of the North Carolina Highway Safety Program, the Forsyth County Sheriff Department and the Winston-Salem Police Department will make presentations.

Among the guests will be bomb dogs and police officers on horseback and motorcycles. For more information, call Donna Horosko, the university prevention specialist, at Ext. 4332.

### Classical studies has scholarship for travel

The department of classical languages invites applications for the William Royall Scholarship, established in 1991 by a gift from the family and friends of William Royall and his son, William B. Royall.

The scholarship provides an award of \$500 for excellence in classical studies, with preference given to students who plan to travel abroad to classical sites.

William Royall came to the university in 1859 as a professor of classical languages and later was the first full-time professor of English.

His son was a professor of Greek at the university for 62 years until his death in 1928.

Application forms, which are due March 6, are available in the department of classical languages, Tribble B6.

### Applications for Hearn scholarship available

Applications for the Thomas K. Hearn Jr. Scholarships for Excellence in Leadership and Service are available in the Office of Volunteer

Services in Benson 345, the Information Desk in the Benson University Center and the provost's office, Reynolda 204.

Rising seniors who have demonstrated leadership and service to the university and have at least a 2.75 grade point average are eligible to apply.

Applications should be submitted before 5 p.m. March 16 in the provost's office or mailed to Box 7328.

### International relations scholarships offered

Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship applications are now available. Both the Academic-Year Ambassadorial Scholarship and the Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarship are intended to improve international understanding and foster positive relations among people of different countries.

The academic-year scholarship is for one year (1999-2000) in an academic setting, and the cultural scholarship is for three months of intensive language training and cultural immersion.

Applicants should call Susan Faust, an assistant to the senior vice president, for additional information.

Students are ineligible if they, their parents or their grandparents are Rotarians. Applications are due March 20.

### Field School goes to Roatan this summer

The Overseas Research Center will conduct its summer Ethnographic Field School on the tropical West Indian island of Roatan this May 19 through June 9.

Students will have the opportunity to conduct independent research and gain experience in many aspects of cross-cultural study.

Those interested should contact David Evans, a professor of anthropology, at Ext. 5276 or senior Kevin O'Brien at Ext. 6352.

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