

Brevard College student Radosav Babic gives a first hand report on the lessons he learned while on BC's mission trip to Cambodia.



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Surveys will go out next week to measure student support for a proposed Tobacco-Free Campus Plan.



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Information on what has been happening outside the gates.



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Ever listen to "I'll Be" on the radio and wonder what happened to Edwin McCain. We tell you.



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Human rights activist comes to campus

by Zack Harding
Arts & Life Editor

Emotional voices and touchy issues were key themes in the semester's 2nd LINC event, and the audience was left with much to think about

Last Week on Friday April the 3rd, human rights activist and author Robin Kirk spoke in the Myers Dining Hall, and the presentation sparked some poignant opinions on the ideas of oppression, torture, and the abuse of governmental power.

Kirk, who is the author the much-praised book *More Terrible Than Death - Massacres, Drugs, and America's War in Colombia*, is also the coordinator of the Duke Human Rights Initiative. Her goal for the presentation was to ask "what we can do to restore a respect for human rights in the world."

"In my view right now, we are in a human rights crisis in the world," Kirk said. To stress her point she told the audience a bit about her background and how she stared as a reporter in Peru during the early 80's. The country was in the middle of a civil war at the time, and the various abuses of human rights she witnessed stirred her to action.

In her opinion the United States shifted from a "great protector" of human rights to a "pioneer in human rights abuse," with the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Though there are terrorist attacks all over the world, she said, "In the United States we treat 9/11 as an exception." She said that the U.S. government uses the attacks as an example of why they should be able to get away

with human rights abuses like water boarding an psychological torture methods.

In the weeks following September 11, 2001, Kirk said that she was "shocked by

how quick Americans jettisoned the idea of human rights" in lieu of what they believed was protection from terrorist agencies. This attitude was vastly different than what Americans expressed in the



Gulf War, she said, saying that the U.S. government did not use any policies of torture in that war.

Kirk spoke about the idea that torture has proved ineffective, and that the American public has been tricked into believing in the necessity of it. She said that common arguments for torture, such as the ticking time-bomb scenario, "never happen."

"Our Military is doing an excellent job," Kirk said, pointing out the root cause of human rights violations. "The problem is our government. The problem is the Bush Administration, and the problem is the C.I.A."

Several audience members contributed a good deal to the dialogue. One student spoke about the question of whether military forces can be seen as liberators or dominators, expressing that she felt that they always tended toward the latter.

Kirk closed the night by making a plea for students to get involved. "I think our government thinks they can get away with this stuff because they think that we don't give a damn."