

UNIVERSITY

Director relives his gulf experience

By Lisa Millegan
Emerald Reporter

President Bush made the right decision when he ordered American troops into Saudi Arabia, said William Walker, assistant director of the University's Yamada Language Center.

"If (Saddam) Hussein would have taken over (Saudi Arabia), we would be in a depression now, much worse than the one in the 1920's."

Walker didn't arrive at his opinion after carefully monitoring news reports. He was living in Saudi Arabia when Iraq invaded Kuwait last summer.

Walker came to the Yamada Center after working for two years at an all-male university in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, where he taught English and served as a computer lab manager for the school's foreign language department.

He said Bush had no choice but to send troops to the Persian Gulf — America's economic welfare depended on it.

"The issue was oil," he said. "We shouldn't be dependent on Arab oil but we are." American soldiers in the Persian Gulf were simply "defending America's sacred right to a higher standard of living."

America's wisest choice now to avoid a future crisis is to look for alternative energy sources, he said, as the cost of oil goes far beyond the cost at the pump.

Walker recalls his disbelief when he first heard about Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait from a friend. He had trouble finding a radio station that discussed the crisis. The only source he found with immediate reports of the invasion was the BBC.

When Saudi television broadcasters finally began reporting the invasion, he said, they referred to the war only as "the situation in the gulf."

In the days following the invasion, Walker said he was uncertain about what was happening.

He talks about panicking one afternoon over the closure of the Dhahran International Airport. Radio and television broadcasts carried no news about the closure. Later, he found out the airport was temporarily closed in preparation to receive American cargo jets.

Shortly after the war began, the American consulate told all American women and children to leave the country. Walker wasn't able to leave until four weeks after the invasion because he had problems resigning from his job.

He said the university system in Saudi Arabia is very different from the system in the United States, because Saudi students are actually paid to attend col-



Photo by Mark Ylen
William Walker, assistant director of the University's Yamada Language Center, got a different perspective of the gulf war while teaching in Saudi Arabia.

lege. Saudis who can pass what Walker called a "minimal" test can receive \$266 a month to go to class, in addition to free tuition, free books and free room and board.

The cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are extreme, Walker said. Saudi Arabia is a religious state — the country's laws reflect the tenets of Islam.

Visiting Christians to the country are treated politely but are regarded as infidels. Jews are not allowed to enter the country. No religious services except Islamic ones are permitted in Saudi Arabia.

Medieval tournament to happen Saturday

EVENTS

Medieval Tournament is an event of costumes, singing, juggling and handicrafts sponsored by the Students for Creative Anachronism. The event will take place on the EMU east lawn from 1 to 6 p.m. on Saturday. For more information call 345-9643.

Movie Night sponsored by and taking place in the Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St., at 8 tonight.

RELIGION

Bahai Campus Association meets tonight at 6:30 in the Bahai Center, 1458 Alder St.

Roundtable Discussion: "The Second Coming of Christ" meets in the EMU Skylight Refectory at 12:30 p.m. today.

Active Christians Taking a Stand meets at 7 tonight in Room 146 Straub Hall for worship, Bible study and fellowship.

Young Adult Group meets Sunday night at 8:30 in the Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St. to discuss "God in our Work." For more information call John Trentalange 485-2969.

Weekend Masses in the Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St., on Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Service of the Holy Communion, led by Rev. Janet Cromwell, will take place today from 12 to 12:30 p.m. at the Wesley Center, 1236 Kincaid St. This event is sponsored by the United Methodist Ministry.

MISCELLANEOUS

Campaign Social with Jennifer Bills/Josonja Watson, ASUO executive candidates, takes place in the Koinonia Center, across from PLC, tonight from 6 to 8 p.m. This event is sponsored by the Students for Jennifer Bills.

Alpha Lambda Delta's and Phi Eta Sigma's last day to turn in forms and checks to join the ALD/PES Freshmen National Honor Societies. Turn in information in Room 364 Oregon Hall by 5 p.m.

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