Monday, February 24

Alan Weisman -- Countdown: Our Last, Best Hope for a Future on Earth?
Great Hall, Memorial Union -- 8:00 pm

Author and journalist Alan Weisman's bestselling book The World Without Us asked readers to envision how our planet would respond to a loss of the human race. His new book, Countdown: Our Last Best Hope for a Future on Earth? tackles population growth and the challenges it poses for a sustainable human future. The book took him to more than twenty countries, seeking insight into how we could achieve a stable, optimum population and design an economy that allows for prosperity without endless growth. Alan Weisman's reports have been featured in publications ranging from the Atlantic Monthly to Vanity Fair. He is a former contributing editor to the Los Angeles Times Magazine, a senior radio producer for Homelands Productions and teaches international journalism at the University of Arizona.

Friday, March 7

Max Brooks -- 10 Lessons for Surviving a Zombie Attack
Great Hall, Memorial Union -- 11:00 pm

Max Brooks, author of The Zombie Survival Guide, is considered to be one of the world's foremost Zombie experts. He won an Emmy as a writer for Saturday Night Live and is the son of legendary comedian Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft. His other New York Times bestsellers include the graphic novel The Zombie Survival Guide: Recorded Attacks and World War Z, which has now been made into a movie starring Brad Pitt. Even the CDC has embraced this pop culture phenomenon, citing Brooks and the "Zombie Apocalypse" in its call for disaster and survival preparedness. Sponsored by ISU After Dark, the Inter-Residence Hall Association, and the Committee on Lectures (funded by GSB).

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SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Rescuing the World: Ecological Disaster in the Young

Adult Novel
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM – Sun Room, Memorial Union

Panel Discussion: Young adult fiction has always had a tradition of taking its protagonist on adventures in fantastic and unlikely places. However, more and more of these heroes are young women forced to grow up in a world damaged and corrupted by previous generations. These stories are as old as the adventures of the classic type, but in these new fictional worlds created in the past couple of decades, the main characters must navigate ecological and political forces that take into account the mistakes we are making now. These characters—along with their readers—are challenged with the task of rescuing their world before what is left of it is gone forever. This panel will discuss how these themes play out in such books as The Hunger Games, The Eighths, and The Ship Breakers.

Panel Members: Tanvia Rastogi, teen librarian from the Ames Public Library, and Iowa State University students from the Departments of English, Brianna Burke, Donna Niday, Charissa Memefee, and David Zimmerman

Flyway Magazine’s “Home Voices” Reading
3:30 – 4:00 PM – Sun Room, Memorial Union

Join us for a reading of the “Home Voices” Award Winners from Flyway: A Journal of Writing & Environment. The winning pieces were selected by the contest judge, Elizabeth Bradford, the author of Approaching Ice and Interpretive Work.

Lindsay D’Andrea: “Rock Wall, New Hampshire”
Dana Thomann: “Flood Gap”

Originally from southern New Jersey, Lindsay D’Andrea is currently an MFA candidate in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University. Her recent work can be found in The Greensboro Review, Fiddleblack, and IndiGent.

Dana Thomann is the proud daughter of sustainable Iowa farmers. She began a teaching career with Teach for America on the Rosebud Reservation in 2005, and is currently an M.F.A. candidate in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University where she received a full athletic scholarship. She played professional basketball in Europe and Asia before returning to Old Dominion to earn an MFA. Diaz lives in Mohave Valley, Arizona, where she works with the last speakers of Mojave and directs a language revitalization program.

MONDAY, MARCH 31

Natalie Diaz – Language, Poetry, and Resilience
2:30 – 4:30 PM – Sun Room, Memorial Union

Join us for a moderated conversation with poet Natalie Diaz about the process of writing poems, about the place of myth in writing, and about the language revitalization program she directs at Fort Mojave, where she works and teaches with the last Elder speakers of the Mojave language.

“I write hungry sentences,” Natalie Diaz once explained in an interview, because they want more and more lyricism and imagery to satisfy them. “These darkly humorous poems illuminate far corners of the heart, revealing teeth, tails, and more than a few dreams.”

Natalie Diaz is the author of the poetry collection When My Brother Was An Aztec. She is a recipient of the Namrod/Hardman Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, the Narrative Poetry Prize, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship. Diaz is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian community. She earned a BA from Old Dominion University, where she received a full athletic scholarship. She played professional basketball in Europe and Asia before returning to Old Dominion to earn an MFA. Diaz lives in Mohave Valley, Arizona, where she works with the last speakers of Mojave and directs a language revitalization program.

Natalie Diaz and K. L. Cook – Interior Mythologies: Literary Readings & Discussion
8:00 PM – Sun Room, Memorial Union

K. L. Cook is the author of three books of fiction. His most recent book, Love Songs for the Quarantined, won the Spokane Prize for Short Fiction. His novel, The Girl from Chernobyl, won The Willa Award for Contemporary Fiction, and his first book, Last Call, won the inaugural Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Fiction. Cook’s work has appeared in Glimmer Train, One Story, Poesis & Writers, Prairie Schooner, the Harvard Review and other journals. He is an associate professor of English at Iowa State University where he teaches in the MFA Program in Creative Writing and Environment.

Also of Interest

THE 2014 RICHARD THOMPSON MEMORIAL LECTURE
MONDAY, MARCH 31

Walter Echo-Hawk – In the Light of Justice
6:30 PM – Great Hall, Memorial Union

Walter Echo-Hawk is a lawyer, tribal judge, scholar and activist, with legal experience that includes cases involving Native American religious freedom, prisoner rights, water rights, treaty rights, and tribal recognition. A Native American rights attorney since 1973, he was instrumental in the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act Amendments (1994). Echo-Hawk has written extensively about the rise of modern Indian nations. He is the author of In the Courts of the Conqueror: The 10 Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided and, in collaboration with Daniel Scott Keene, The Light of Justice: The Rise of Human Rights in Native America & the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The 2014 Thompson Memorial Lecture.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Informal Conversation with Elizabeth Kolbert
3:00 – 4:00 PM – 212 Ross Hall

Please join us for an informal conversation with journalist and environmental writer Elizabeth Kolbert, about the process of uncovering, researching and writing large environmental stories.

“Over the last half a billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction ever seen. It appears that this one will wipe out the dinosaurs. This time around, the catalyst is us. In The Sixth Extinction, two-time winner of the National Magazine Award and New Yorker writer Elizabeth Kolbert draws on the work of scientists to get to the heart of the debate over global warming. The book was chosen as one of the 100 Notable Books of the Year by The New York Times Book Review. Her new book about the planet’s mass extinctions, The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, weaves history and natural history with reporting in the field. Kolbert has also been the recipient of the National Academy of Sciences Communication Award, a Lannan Writing Fellowship, a Heinz Award, a National Magazine Award, and the Sierra Club’s David R. Brower Award. Kolbert’s stories have also appeared in The New York Times Magazine, Vogue, and Mother Jones, and have been anthologized in The Best American Science and Nature Writing and The Best American Political Writing. Prior to joining the staff of The New Yorker, Kolbert was a political reporter for The New York Times. Part of the Symposium on Wildness, Wilderness & the Environmental Imagination and the World Affairs Series.

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Final Symposium Events