Greetings from the Editor’s Desk by Deepak Aralumallige

We are delighted to see you again. ISU is getting ready for the Spring semester after a successful Fall 2007. Did you know that November 12th to 16th was International Education Week and ISU actively participated in it?

There were a lot of events organized during this week, which you will read about in the forthcoming special issue of the ISU newsletter.

In this 2nd issue for 2007-2008, you will read about opportunities and techniques of learning a new foreign language. This article is written by Jacob and Andrew who are highly motivated to learn different languages.

Apart from learning foreign languages you will also learn the art of being an alien from Dr. Brigitte Roussel.

Are you curious about some statistics about the international student enrollment at WSU? Read what the OIE has provided us on page 2.

Don’t forget to turn to page 4 to greet our new Executive Committee members. How about some motivating remarks from our President, Aravinthan?

And during this holiday season of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and several other festivities, I wish all of you a successful conclusion to a productive semester.

Let me assure you that even during vacation, ISU continues to work to plan, organize and provide you with activities most beneficial to international students.

Deepak Aralumallige (India) is a graduate student majoring in Math and can be reached at depak@math.wichita.edu

Language Learning Opportunities & Techniques by Jacob and Andrew Goering

Namaste ISU readers. My name is Jacob Goering, I am a sophomore majoring in Anthropology here at WSU. My younger brother Andrew is finishing high school and is likely to become a Shocker next year.

We both would like to discuss our interest in the many languages spoken by WSU students, and our attempts at language learning.

Being a WSU student is a truly global experience! We have met students from Bolivia to Burma, and every-where in between. These encounters have fueled our growing interest in world culture and language.

Before coming to Wichita my brother and I had developed a deep interest in Asian and particularly South Asian cultures. A product of this interest has been our attempt over the last couple of years to learn Hindi, India's national language.

I find it promising to select a language, which belongs to a culture that intrigues or fascinates you.

Learning a second language can be a rewarding adventure, and WSU provides a great environment for choosing a language and getting started.

WSU offers courses ranging from introductory levels to degrees in important and interesting tongues such as Spanish, French, Japanese, Chinese, etc.

However, there is naturally a limit to the variety of languages that the University may offer students.

(Cont. on page 3).
Halloween always makes me think of how most people, whether children or adults, enjoy the playfulness of becoming another person for one night. It’s a mixed feeling: odd and a bit intimidating, but also strangely free and uninhibited.

It reminds me of our first “naïve alien act” we indulge within the first few days of our arrival in a new country: something that circumstances almost dictate never probably to be repeated, once “we know better.”

Such an incident was when I first arrived in New York on my way to Kansas years ago and stayed with a French friend in Manhattan. I naively proposed a bike-ride to China Town for dinner, and then hours later take a short cut home by going through Central Park around 11:30 p.m.

We tend to forget this early playfulness is lost fairly soon once we become seriously “enculturated” by the business of daily life in our new setting: school with how to enroll, class schedules, understanding requirements, regulations, the grading system, relating to peers and various professionals, food, transportation, life styles...in brief, a lot to assimilate quickly.

There is definitely a need to become somewhat assimilated when one is from a different country.

The first meaning of “alien” is a foreigner.

Yet that process is filled with hurdles. Cultural shock does have its funny sides, but it may also linger on in a more serious manner: cultural differences can create misunderstandings, clashes, and quick judgments. All this can bring on feelings of being inadequate, not smart enough, lonely, rejected, a sense of being “incongruous”.

Feeling like a stranger is the second definition of “alien”.

Think of the existentialist novel by Albert Campus, The Stranger(1942), and you’ll get the picture. Reading it, you will understand how one can become a stranger among their own people, while realizing that the others are also the strangers.

However, we are quite adept at adapting, and obstacles have a way to make us stronger. We manage to strike a balance, as we develop a sense of achievement, success, pride, and of belonging. Eventually we begin to feel like a more harmonious “hybrid,” less alien, and our perception of the others is that they are less strange to us as well.

So we begin to feel a deserved confidence on the personal level. But the world out there solicits our attention: political tensions can change the way the adopted culture sees our own. History is called to the rescue to illustrate the bad. The good gets shoved under the rug. We feel the collective tensions, even if we have nothing to do with them. We become sensitive to movies depicting aliens as powerful inhuman invaders, murderers, monsters, and merciless creatures. Our outlook gets sharpened by the awareness that there is a cultural subtext to these portrayals.

Generalizations hit us hard. We may even feel alienated at times. We go home, and we hear similar generalizations made by some of our own people, but we know the truth does not lie in ignorant judgments.

As I decided to look up the term “alienation” in French, I suddenly realized that it contains the sounds of the words “ally” (alié) and “nation” (nation) while it means to feel disconnected from something that was part of us. Therefore, two absolutely opposite images coincide in one word.

(Continued on Page 3)

International Enrollment for Fall 2007 – Based on Fall Semester Report by Office of International Education

New International Enrollment at WSU remains unchanged for Fall 2007.

New International Enrollment at WSU changed marginally at WSU for Fall 2007. While the international new undergraduate enrollment increased by 30.1%, that of graduate enrollment reduced by 31.2% marginally affecting the overall enrollment.

Overall enrollment of international students at WSU however showed an increase of 18.6%. This increase was effected by an increase in undergraduate international student population by 19.7%, although the international enrollment at the graduate level decreased by 1.6%.

The total number of countries represented by new students for Fall 2007 was 56. New undergraduates came from 46 countries (up from 33 last Fall). New graduate students were represented by 17 countries (down from 18 last Fall). When combining new undergraduate and new graduate students, WSU had new students from a total of 56 countries.

(Courtesy: Vincent Altum, OIE)
A note from the President by Visvakumar Aravinthan

I am really excited to pen a few words as the President of the International Student Union. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of you who elected us to serve you.

I take this opportunity to thank Julio Jimenez and Taymur Hallal for their contribution to ISU. They have joined hands with us to make ISU active.

Although it is our duty to work hard to serve you, it is impossible to help this big international community at Wichita State without your help. We welcome your contributions.

Our meeting schedule for the spring semester would be posted online and everyone is welcome to attend these meetings or email us their ideas/concerns.

In a couple of months we will be welcoming our new friends. We are looking for ideas to welcome these new students. If you have any suggestions or want to be a part, please contact as soon as possible.

Once again I would like to thank you all for electing me. Feel free to mail me at vxaravintan@wichita.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

I hope you are enjoying your stay at Wichita and best of luck for rest of the year.

At your service...

Visvakumar (Ara) Aravinthan

The Art of being an Alien....

This discovery lead me to observe that we are actually both “alien” and “ally” of the nation in which we live, and that this tension works as a sort of wheel of fortune that rocks us back and forth between feeling like we belong, and feeling like we don’t.

There is no ultimate resolution of this fertile dynamic. Actually, the same is true of the people who were born here.

This tension is the spice that makes our experience so palatable. It is not only healthy, but also universal, and a most appropriate metaphor for maturity.

We need to remember that, as we grow more knowledgeable, we attach less importance to absolutes, and more to developing sound judgments, whether in school, careers, or life, even if those choices take us away from our comfort zone.

The art of being an alien is a great opportunity to grow and to learn to belong in a new way, by becoming shrewd allies of knowledge, wisdom and independence rather than remaining fervent followers who belong at all costs.

Dr. Bridget Roussel is Associate Professor of French in the Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures, Campus Box 11.

She can be reached at brigitte.roussel@wichita.edu

Language Learning Opportunities & Techniques..........

This is where our international community, books, audio recordings, Internet resources, and your own determination come into play.

Andrew and I have never taken any Hindi courses, and our experience with Hindi has been very spontaneous.

First, we both learned the Hindi script at home using some library books. If your goal is simply to speak, then learning the script is not absolutely necessary. However, being able to recognize the words you have learned in print can be very helpful, and knowledge of the script adds an interesting multidimensional quality to your experience.

After we learned the script, we then began to learn the spoken language using CD’s from the public library, and some that we have purchased.

A lot of people try to remember phrases by reading them in a phrase book, and writing them down. However, your mind will respond much more quickly to words and phrases that you hear repeatedly and then use yourself. This is why I recommend the use of some sort of audio recording.

There are also some helpful programs, which you can purchase from the Internet or at bookstores. These programs will introduce you to a spoken language.

But nothing can replace the experience of being immersed in the language amongst native speakers. This is why the pinnacle of our experience has been learning from our friends on and around the campus.

Learning a foreign language will also make you new friends, who will be thrilled to find that someone from another country would be interested in their mother tongue. And you never know, if you take your study far enough, some day you may just find yourself speaking your new language in the country of its birth!

Jacob P. Goering is a sophomore majoring in Anthropology and can be reached at jangoering@hotmail.com
Meet International Student Union

Visvakumar Aravinthan, President
Aravinthan is from Sri Lanka and is a graduate student majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Grishma Rastogi, Vice President (Events)
Grishma is from Kenya/India and is an undergraduate student in Barton School of Business.

Howard Lakounga, Vice President (Publicity)
Howard is from Cameroon and is an undergraduate majoring in Computer Science.

Schadrac Faton, Treasurer
Schadrac is from Benin and is an undergraduate student in Barton School of Business.

Mbenwoh Asaba, Secretary
Mbenwoh is from Cameroon and is majoring in Pre-Med.

Deepak Aralumallige, Editor
Deepak is from India and is a graduate student, majoring in Applied Mathematics.

Julio Jimenez, Honorary Member
Julio is from Nicaragua and is an undergraduate student majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Taymur Hallal, Honorary Member
Taymur is from Lebanon/Ukraine and is an undergraduate student majoring in Aerospace Engineering.

Dr. Alan J. D’Souza, Staff Advisor
Dr. D’souza is from India and is the Policy Analyst Director for TRIO Programs within the Division of Campus Life & University Relations

Shan Jabara, Staff Advisor
Shan is from the US and is an advisor at the Office of International Education.

ISU would like to thank the Office of International Education for helping ISU in organizing the events during the International Education Week.