Greetings from the Editor’s Desk by Cecilia B. Martinez Gomez

As part of the WSU Family, Friends and Alumni Weekend, international students shared a piece of their culture through an international food festival. The International Student Union organized this portion of the SAC carnival with one main idea: to bring flavor from different parts of the globe to the Wichita State community. International students or associations had to prepare a dish from their country. Parents, children, students, faculty and staff enjoyed the atmosphere of diversity and curiosity that each dish brought.

LaNora Lowe, WSU American student, said “It's cool that people from the neighborhood are getting this kind of experience.” “It helps to get away from the school life.”

Irish Gibson, international student from the Philippines, said that studying for her PhD in Chemistry took a lot of time over the last years. “Now that I am about to graduate, it is good to join this kind of activity.” She was surprised when some Americans asked her about specific dishes from her country, “they actually know some of the names,” Gibson said.

After the event, Visvakumar Aravinthan, president of ISU, said that the Interfest was a success. “There are always things to improve, but in general, we got a great turn out.” The opportunity to share a little bit of culture, brought happiness to the international students who gave, and the American people who received.

That is how, we came up with the theme of this edition: traditional celebrations around the world. Once you open this issue, you will get to celebrate a variety of holidays in ways you never imagined.

Candles, ink, grass, flowers and incense are symbols of some of the celebrations in other cultures. Get ready to find new ways to enjoy traditions from your world.

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As an International Student, How Do You... Celebrate YOUR HOLIDAYS IN THE U.S.?

“I usually hang out with my friends from Indonesia. We organize a potluck in an Indonesian family’s house bringing food from my country to share with others.”
Huan Huanlia, Indonesia. Pre Vet.

“This year in July, I celebrated the Independence of Peru with the Peruvian community here in Wichita. We cooked traditional dishes and spent time with friends. I don’t usually celebrate any other Peruvian holiday but I enjoy celebrating U.S. holidays because after some years, I feel they are my own holidays.”
Becky Aller, Peru. International Studies.

“Sometimes I don’t even celebrate holidays from Hong Kong. I think it’s because I don’t have any kind of holiday feeling and because after a while I forget about them if no one reminds me.”
Andy Luk, Hong Kong. Marketing.

If you want to be part of this column, go to our website http://webs.wichita.edu/isu and answer the question.

Diwali (Divali)– Festival of Lights by Supriya Nadkarni

Diwali (Divali) or Deepavali is a festival of lights. Considered as the most important festival of the Hindu calendar, Diwali is also celebrated by Jains and Sikhs. In Sanskrit, ‘Deepa’ means light and ‘Avali’ means row. Deepavali signifies the victory of light over darkness. During this festival, homes are lit with ‘deeps’ (or oil lamps) throughout the day and into the night to ward off evil. The celebration takes place in the months of October or November, which is usually the time of the last month of the lunar calendar.

Diwali, enthusiastically celebrated for five continuous days, hides a meaning of myths, legends and beliefs on each day. The first day is ‘Dhanteras’, celebrated with splendor mainly in western India. The second day is called ‘Narak-Chaturdashi’ or chotti diwali. It signifies the defeat of the demon Na-rakasur by Lord Krishna. The main festival of ‘Diwali’ falls on the third day. It is considered to be the last day of the financial year in traditional Hindu businesses. On this day, people offer prayers, and paint beautiful ‘rangoli’s’, ending it with the bursting of fire crackers in almost every home.

The whole country of India comes together, regardless of faith. In this aspect, Diwali has become the national festival of India.

The fourth day is called ‘Nutan Varsh.’ It sets the start of a new year and most families celebrate by dressing in new clothes, wearing jewelry, visiting family members and business colleagues and exchanging sweets, dry fruits and gifts.

The fifth day is ‘Bhai Dooj’. The name itself denotes the day of the festival. Diwali falls on the absolutely dark night of the new moon (Amavasya) and Dooj comes two days after Diwali.

On this day, sisters apply the ‘teeka’ on their brothers’ forehead and pray for their long life. In return, brothers bless their sisters and promise to protect them from all hardships in life.

Due to India’s varied cultural diversity, there are many manifestations of the Diwali festival. Different religions celebrate this festival for different reasons. Whatever the reason may be, celebrations are done in full magnificence all over India.

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San Juan Ara– Saint John’s Day by Cecilia Crosa

Ink, paper, knife and bananas are some utensils that Paraguayans use for the games on Saint John’s Eve. The tradition says that at midnight, Saint John will tell you the name of your future husband or wife or will answer questions about the years to come. These games are more popular between women, however anyone can perform them.

One of the games consists of thrusting a knife in a banana and leaving it resting the entire night. The next morning, the letters of your future husband’s or wife’s name will be shown in the knife. Another popular game with a similar result consists of putting two or three drops of ink on a piece of paper, fold it twice and place it under your pillow. The next morning you will see the initial of the name of your future husband or wife.

The festivities start usually the week before and last until the week after Saint John’s day. Different country clubs, schools, and community organizations prepare large fairs where they sell traditional food, perform folkloric dances and offer different traditional games.

People’s favorite part of Saint John’s festivity is the traditional and delicious Paraguayan food. Some dishes are mbeju, made of tapioca...
Muslims around the world have two main celebrations. Both celebrations are called Eid. The word Eid is in the Arabic language and means festivity. One of these two events is called Eid Al-Fitr. Fitr means breaking the fast. This particular Eid marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan (the tenth month of the Islamic calendar) in which Muslims fast during the day and break their fast after sunset.

The other Eid is called "Eid Al-Adha". The name means “festival of sacrifice.” It falls on the 10th day of the month of Dui hijja (last month of the Islamic calendar). This Eid occurs right after the pilgrims go to Mecca and conduct Hajj. Muslims celebrate this specific Eid as a remembrance of God’s forgiveness to Ibrahim (Abraham) when he was about to sacrifice his son Ishmael.

Eid celebrations differ from region to region in all Muslim countries. For example, in Saudi Arabia, all men, women, and children are expected to dress in their finest clothing to go to the mosque and pray early in the morning. Traditionally, after the prayer is done, people greet each other giving hugs and asking for forgiveness. Family members gather in one house. They ask each other for forgiveness and give presents to each other. After that, people exchange visits.

Hamed AlOlyani, Saudi Arabia.
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The first thing that most of the students thought about when I requested articles about traditional celebrations was religion. It is important to explain that most of the cultures around the world associate tradition with religion because a lot of them are directly related. Some countries have a dominant religion and base their celebrations on it. Other countries, commemorate only national/patriotic holidays because the population is so religiously diverse that they would have a celebration almost everyday.

For this edition, the students had the freedom to write about any kind of celebration that was popular in their country. Interestingly enough, most of them chose to write religion-related festivities. For that reason, I found it important to recognize all religions in November. I am sure that a lot of us have friends who celebrate different holidays than us. Why not take a look at the following calendar and try to remember the dates that are so important for those who are around us.

Take some time to write them down and when they approach, remember to pass along good wishes to your friends. This simple act can make a difference in their lives.

FROM HTTP://WWW.INTERFAITHCALENDAR.ORG/2008.HTM

Each religious symbol has a significant meaning for entire countries and regions.
On Sept. 25 the State of Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services organized a Cultural Connections Day in their downtown building. The International Student Union served as a liaison between the department and the international students at Wichita State. It was a great opportunity for the Wichita community to interact with some of the world cultures represented at WSU. Each country and its culture or cultures had the opportunity to present information using photographs, artwork, artifacts, laptop slideshows, clothing and dances. Attendees witnessed traditional dances from Thailand and Sri Lanka. It was especially interesting to watch young and old alike make their way around the room, asking questions and hearing all about the diverse customs and lifestyles of Wichita State’s students.

The organization of this event took a lot of effort from ISU members and SRS employees. The idea was to have as many countries as possible to give a broad view of how different and alike cultures around the world are. I had the opportunity to do a project representing the United States. The theme that I felt to be most important was that people from all world’s cultures had collaborated and devoted their lives and dreams to make America great.

In my mind, that was the purpose of the Cultural Diversity Day: to celebrate the many cultures that are important, not just to the world, but also to the fabric of what America was, is, and will be. I hope this is only the beginning of ISU’s participation in such events.

Jacob Goering, United States. Anthropology. jangoering@hotmail.com

Who is who in ISU?

by Cecilia B. Martinez Gomez

Name: Chai-Fang Tan (Adeline)
Country: Malaysia
Languages: Chinese, Malay and English
Major: Psychology
Hobbies: Jogging, playing badminton, drawing, listening to music and playing the guitar.
Why did you join ISU: When I attended my first ISU meeting, I enjoyed myself a lot. At that time, there were only a few of us in the organization and I got elected as the secretary. I knew absolutely nothing about my duties. With the encouragement of our advisors and committee members, I gained confidence and eventually found another vacancy. Today, I am the liaison officer of student organizations. I enjoy meeting new friends and getting to work with other organizations. It is such a great opportunity to work in ISU! I am loving it :).
Final thought: Want to discover your talent? Come join us!

About Malaysia: Malaysia is a country located near the equator. With a tropical climate, Malaysia does not experience four seasonal changes. Malaysia is a multicultural country with three major cultures: Malay, Chinese, and Indian and a number of minority groups. For me, being born in Malaysia is such a good thing as I have the chance to try different kinds of food. Yummy :). Malaysia is an ideal place to learn languages and dialects from other cultures around the world. Besides, it has well-known natural resources like palm oil, rubber, cocoa and pepper. It is really worthy to visit Malaysia! Check out the pictures!
From SAN JUAN Page 2

- Ca starch, cheese and milk; pastel monadi’o, a tapioca starch crust with beef, eggs and some spices and pajagua maskada, made of tapioca starch, beef and milk. All these dishes are fried to perfection.

In addition to food, the fair offers entertainment with unique Saint John’s games. These games are meant to try one’s luck or to guess one’s future. The famous symbol of the Saint John festival is the Judas Kai. Judas Kai is the representation of Judas Iscariot (the one that betrayed Jesus) by a dummy filled with explosives inside. The festival ends when the Judas Kai is lit on fire.

Saint John’s day is one of the most popular Paraguayan festivals. If you have a chance to visit Paraguay around June 24, be sure to join the celebration!!

Cecilia Crosa, Paraguay.

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Flores de Mayo, Queen of Filipino Festivals
by Arvin John Filoteo Cruz

The Philippines, a predominantly Catholic nation, is famous for its fiestas (feasts). Annually, each town celebrates them as a form of veneration to their patron saints on the latter’s feast days.

A special occasion, the month of May is devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary because this month marks the end of the dry season. Rain starts to fall on the Philippine soil and flowers start to bloom. One of the well celebrated festivities is Flores de Mayo (Flowers of May). In the Tagalog region, Flores de Mayo started after the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the publication of Mariano Sevilla’s translation of the “Flowers of Mary or the Beautiful Flowers that in the Meditations During the Whole Month of May are Offered by Devotees to Mary the Holiest” in 1867.

Also, it commemorates the Finding of the Cross by St. Helena, approximately 300 years after Christ’s crucifixion.

Legends say that she handed this cross to her son Constantine who used it as a battle insignia when he defeated the Romans and made Christianity the only religion of his new empire.

Flores de Mayo is the Queen of festivities for two reasons. First, people use flowers to decorate the parish, altars, aisles and offerings to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Second, because it is a time to congregate people as a community and to pray with the rosary while some of the most beautiful town belles participate in a parade of pageantry.

Filipinos dress in costumes representing many characters during the parade. The most important character is Reyna Elena. She is the highlight of the procession. The legendary founder of the true Cross, represented by the small cross she carries, is escorted by her son, Constantine, under a huge canopy of May flowers.

To surprise Filipinos, the chosen Reyna Elena is kept as a secret.

Please see FILIPINO on PAGE 6

做夢也想不到我竟然會包餃子！ by Fai Tai

在美國生活這幾年所得到的收穫超出我的想象。

在香港工作多年，慶祝節日的方式也不外是與家人一起在餐廳、酒家享用一頓豐盛的晚餐；至於傳統節日的應節食品如春節年糕、萝卜糕、端午粽子、中秋月餅等總是購自超市或餅店，誰有閒暇自己動手做？

三年多前來Wichita上大學時已大致做好心理準備在未來數年未必可以嘗到傳統中國食品。春季開學後不久，農曆新年已至，美國朋友邀請我到一位中國朋友家一起慶祝；意想不到的是這位中國朋友一家親自做了許多美味的餃子！中國大陸和香港畢竟有一定程度的文化差異，香港人沒有在春節吃餃子的習慣，然而那年我們卻跟隨中國傳統，享用了無數美味的餃子！

自從認識這位中國朋友一家以後，我學會了自己做餃子。由於Wichita生活不像香港般繁忙，加上此地中國食品供應有限，自己做餃子便成為自然而然的事。

工多藝熟，今年四月在ISU舉辦的InterFest中，共做了二百多件餃子，而且全部售罄！

現在假如有人問我回香港後還會不會自己包餃子，我的答案是：不——在香港購買美味的節日食品實在太方便了，誰有閒暇自己動手做？

Fai Tai, Hong Kong.
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“Jiaozi” is generally called dumpling or pot sticker in the United States.

If you want to read the article ‘I never thought that I could make jiaozi!’ by Fai Tai in English go to our Website http://webs.wichita.edu/depttools/depttoolsmemberfiles/ISU/Fais%20Article.pdf
Days of Dashain—Nepalese Festival by Ashma Bhattachan

Dashain, from the Himalayan country of Nepal, is celebrated during the months of September and early October. It is the longest and most auspicious festival in the Nepalese calendar. The fifteen days of celebration occur during the bright lunar fortnight ending on the day of the full moon.

**DAY 1—Ghatasthapana**
Nepali people make a small rectangular sand block which contains Kalash (holy water) in the center. The bed of sand that surrounds the water is seeded with grains. By the tenth day, seeds will have grown to five or six inches of long yellow grass. The sacred grass is called ‘jamara’. It is bestowed by the elders atop the heads of those younger during the last five days when tika (rice grain mixed with red coloring) is put on.

**DAY 7—Fulpati**
On this day the jamara (yellow grass) is brought from their ancestral royal house in Gorkha and is used by the royal household.

**DAY 8—Maha Asthami**
The fervor of worship and sacrifice to Durga (Hindu Goddess) and Kali (Hindu Goddess) increases. On this day, many orthodox Hindus fast. The night of the eighth day is called ‘kal ratri’, the dark night. Hundreds of goats, sheep and buffaloes are sacrificed at the Mother Goddess temples. The sacrifice is made to make the Gods happy and to get a prosperous year ahead. The meat is then divided into family members and also used to feed the less fortunate people of Nepal.

**DAY 9—Nawami**
The Taleju temple at Hanuman Dhoka (placed in Kathmandu) opens for the public only once a year on this day. Thousands of people go and pay their respects to the Goddess.

**DAY 10—Dashami**
On this day, people from Nepal exchange the tika and jamara from older to younger generations. People visit family members and make the exchange giving and receiving blessings. The importance of Dasain also lies in the fact that on this day, family members from far off come for a visit and to receive tika from the head of the family. The celebration is similar to Christmas here in the United States. This function continues for four days.

After receiving the blessing of goddess Durga, people are ready to work acquiring virtue, power and wealth.

-Happy Dashain-

Ashma Bhattachan, Nepal.
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Plate of Dashain: Tika (red and yellow), Jamara (Grass like) and Dachinna (money given to younger people with blessings).
TALLGRASS
FILM FESTIVAL

Don’t Forget...

Tallgrass Film Festival  October 23-26!
ISU Co-Advisor – Shan Jabara’s picks for International Students:
(Note all films in a foreign language are subtitled in English. Some free tickets are available at the International Office.)

NARRATIVES (fiction)

AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE (Edge of Heaven) GERMANY/ German, Turkish, English.
Friday, Oct. 24, 2:00 PM & Sunday, Oct. 26, 2:15 PM, Warren Old Town Theater
An exquisitely moving yet resolutely unsentimental story of six people whose lives intersect in Germany and Turkey.
When a Turkish septuagenarian hires a prostitute as his live-in lover, their children are sent on a journey of loss, discovery, and love.
http://www.artificial-eye.com/edgeofheaven/main.html

EL BANO DEL PAPE (The Pope’s Toilet) URUGUAY/ Spanish.
Friday, October 24, 6:30 PM, Warren Theater Old Town
The shabby Uruguayan border town of Melo is counting on Pope John Paul II’s 1988 visit to bring some material salvation along with the spiritual variety.
Smalltime smuggler Beto hatches what he thinks will be an easy scheme to build a private washroom for the festivities but soon everyone is praying for relief.
http://www.montevideo.com.uy/banodelpapa/

CAPTAIN ABU RAED JORDAN-USA /Arabic.
Saturday, Oct. 25, 5:00 PM & Sunday, Oct. 26, Noon - Warren Old Town Theater
Abu Raed is an aging airport janitor who has always yearned of seeing the world but has never been able to afford to travel. One day a group of children in his poor neighborhood mistake him for a pilot and beg him to share stories of the world outside of Amman, Jordan. He weaves fantastical stories to offer hope for the children’s sad, and sometimes unchangeable realities, but takes it upon himself to make a difference.

SITA SINGS THE BLUES USA/English
Friday, October 24, 1:30 PM & Saturday, October 25, 2:15 PM, Warren Old Town Theater
Sita is a goddess separated from her beloved Lord and husband, Rama. Nina is an animator whose husband moves to India, then dumps her by email. Three hilarious shadow puppets narrate both ancient tragedy and modern comedy in this beautifully animated interpretation of the Indian epic Ramayana. Set to the 1920s jazz vocals of Annette Hanshaw, it's The Greatest Break-Up Story Ever Told. “A striking blend of animation styles, a nostalgic and moving soundtrack, comedic story telling and heartfelt parallel stories, as well a great introduction to Indian classical literature and folklore.
http://www.sitasingstheblues.com/

TROPA DE ELITE (Elite Squad) BRAZIL/ Portuguese.
Friday, October 24, 9:30 PM, Warren Old Town Theater
Award winning film and one of Brazil’s most controversial, it is a searing look at the corruption of the special police force in the volatile slums of Rio. As one cop desperately tries to get out, two naive recruits see if they have what it takes to get in. Directed by José Padilha, (BUS 174 fame) Based on the true accounts from one of the writer’s 19 years as a military police officer and captain.
http://www.tropadeeliteofilme.com.br/

DOCUMENTARIES

FRONTRUNNER USA (Set in Afghanistan) English/Dari/Pashtu
Friday, October 24, 4:00 PM & Saturday, October 25, 2:30 PM, Warren Old Town Theater
Setting: Afghanistan’s first democratic election—ever. In the aftermath of 9/11, America’s military might has set the stage. But who will determine the fate of democracy in Afghanistan? “Vote for the mother,” Dr. Massouda Jalal shouts to the crowd. The heroic story of this medical doctor and mother of three. As a children’s advocate, she defied the murderous Taliban regime. Now, she boldly runs for president -- the only woman in a field of 17 candidates. In a dramatic turn of events, she holds the fate of the country’s first presidential election in her own hands. Amidst death threats and bomb attacks, Jalal doggedly campaigns from the back of a taxi, in mosques, in homes, in busy markets and in the streets. Her courage shows that it’s the dangerous work done by ordinary Afghans-women and men-that will determine the fate of a newly born democracy.
http://www.frontrunnermovie.com

HOLLYWOOD CHINESE USA/English;
Friday, October 24, 4:30 PM, & Sunday, October 26, 9:15 AM Warren Old Town Theater
This is a film that any film or history buff will go wild over! A look at American cinema through the lens of the Chinese-American experience, and through films from an industry that was often uninformed about race issues, but at times paradoxically receptive. A comprehensive visual and cultural history of the Chinese in American feature films, from the early 1900s up to present day. Stories of some of cinema’s most accomplished artists are combined with film clips and archival graphics to examine how the Chinese have been represented in Hollywood.

KASSIM THE DREAM USA/ English
Saturday, October 25, 12:00 PM & Sunday, Oct. 26, 9:00 AM Warren Old Town Theater
This film captures the conflicts and conquests that mark Kassim Ouma’s history, from a Uganda devastated by civil war to Ouma’s 1998 defection to the United States; from his arrival at Virginia’s Arlington Boxing Club to his triumph as the 2004 IBF World Junior Light Middleweight Champion. We see not only the life and routine of a champion boxer but also an anxious young man returning to his African homeland and discovering what has become of the country and family he once knew. A truly intimate portrait of Ouma, documenting his passions, tragedies, victories and emotional and geographic journeys. By showing us a world-class boxer with his guard down, we are reminded that at the core of great stories lies greater humanity.
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For details contact: Adi Uly (isu@wichita.edu)

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But for international students, there are such things as free pool, free bowling and free popcorn.

October 29, 2008 (Wed) 5-8 P.M.

For details contact: Adi (isu@wichita.edu) or Ritu (rxgurung@wichita.edu)
Jointly organized by International Students Union (ISU) And Nepalese Student Association (NSA)