Hello everyone,

We are approaching the end of the Fall semester, and I am sure all of you must be very stressed due to school and work. It is the exact case with me. But the good thing is that after the successful completion of this semester, you will be one step further toward your goals of either graduation or professional lives. We need to be optimistic as every new day, and every new challenge brings new opportunities.

You can decrease your stress level by getting involved in several entertaining and refreshing activities during the third week of November, which is celebrated as International Education Week across the country. During this week several activities have been planned by the office of International Education. The International Student Union (ISU) is also taking an active part by organizing two events, and this special newsletter edition.

You can read details about all these events including venues, times and dates on the back page of this newsletter.

During this week, I would also encourage you to watch the three international movies that are being presented with the collaboration of the Tallgrass Film Festival Organizers: *The Edge of Heaven* - a narrative film from Germany, Turkey and Italy, *Captain Abu Raed* - a narrative from Jordan, and *Nollywood Babylon* - a Canadian documentary filmed in Nigeria. All will be screened in the CAC theatre. *Nollywood Babylon* is also part of Tallgrass' monthly film series, Tallgrass Third Thursdays and will be shown on November 19th at 7pm. The Co-Director of the movie, Samir Mallal, will be in attendance. These movies are open to the public and WSU students can watch them for free. Read more about these movies on the back page of the newsletter.

There's much more; this newsletter includes some very interesting articles related to the African continent. The first article is presented in one of the native African languages, Rutooro, written by Dr. Daisy Kabagarama. She talks about her experience traveling to, and settling in the USA, from Uganda.

Most of us like listening to music because it helps us to relax but in West Africa music is an integral part of almost everything; without music their rituals, traditions and everything are incomplete. (Continued on Page 3)
African language, is available at the following link.

http://webs.wichita.edu/depttools/depttoolsmemberfiles/isu/Newsletter/Translated%20Articles/LongJourney.pdf

**Religious diversity in Africa**

Religious diversity in Africa was studied by Allahrakha Mohammed Shafik Nizar compared to the southern side, which on the other hand has a large number of Christian devotees. According to World Book Encyclopedia, Islam is the largest religion in Africa followed by Christianity, whereby 45% of the populations are Muslims, 40% are Christians and 15% follow other religious traditions. In the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a group of Muslims escaped persecution in Mecca fleeing into Ethiopia, where King Negus gave them protection, and this was the beginning of Islam in Africa. Along the coastal regions of Africa, Islam was spread by the Berbers, who came into the African borders for the main purpose of trading with the locals there, but eventually settled in and intermarried. In Morocco, the Muslims founded the city of Fes, which then gave refuge to Andalusia Muslims fleeing from rebellion in Cordoba.
Traditions, Rituals and Music in West Africa

West Africa is a land of great cultural and ethnic diversity. Music, as an element of culture, reflects this diversity; however, West African music also has a commonality, which differentiates it from the types of music of other parts of the world. Traditional music is an integral part of West Africans. While those countries are separated by artificial borders created by the colonizers (European countries), West Africans have many beliefs in common and they use music to bring into focus those beliefs and traditions.

To better understand West African rituals one needs to understand their traditions and to understand those traditions you need to understand their beliefs. It is like a circle in which music is the hypothetical beginning point. Because music and Africans' lives are inseparable, traditional music has played an important function in the lives of Western Africans.

People use rituals all around West Africa to perform their daily activities and special events. According to the importance and occurrence of an activity or an event, rituals can be simple or very complex. Some rituals are very simple and people perform them on a daily basis. Those rituals are used to celebrate ceremonies such as birth, initiation, marriage, new chieftdom and good harvest.

To get a better understanding of those rituals imagine the rituals like a tree. Just like trees lose their leaves during a period of the year, but still remain alive, a society can decide to not perform these rituals or postpone them without getting in trouble.

What's would happen when the roots of the trees are cut? Will the tree die? The answer is most likely "yes." Some rituals represent for the society what roots represent for a tree; to be precise they are absolutely necessary for the society. Failure to perform those rituals causes disasters.

Many people cannot understand other cultural practices because they have limited interpretative skills, and their failure to understand makes them reject or not agree with those cultures.

In many African countries people use rituals to communicate with the invisible world and to maintain the societal norm. When they fail to perform these rituals or perform them in an inappropriate way they lose contact of the invisible world. For example, when someone dies, West Africans believe that he/she joins the world of the ancestors, and his/her admission depends on how the society performs the funeral rituals. In case people leave out the funeral details in their hurry, the deceased person has no access to the invisible world, and the soul comes back, harming people. Therefore, in order to communicate with these ancestors, the society must organize ceremonies with songs, dances and sacrifices.

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Interesting Facts about Africa

Africa is comprised of 53 countries and 8 territories. The territories are governed by other countries or taken care of by United Nations. As an emerging economic and political force, Africa is emerging as a continent with immense potential.

In this newsletter there are various articles which talk about several aspects of Africa. Hence it is necessary to mention some very astonishing facts about the continent. We eliminated a lot of amazing facts because of the space constraints.

- Africa is second-largest of the Earth's seven continents, and makes up about 22 per cent of the world's total land area.
- Egypt's capital city, Cairo, is the largest city in Africa with an estimated 17 million residents in the metropolitan area.
- While Africa makes up about 16% of the world’s population, fully one quarter of the world’s languages are spoken in Africa alone. Arabic (in various dialects) is the most common language spoken in Africa with about 170 million speakers, primarily residing in North Africa. In the continent as a whole, there are over 2,000 recognized languages spoken.
- Lake Victoria is the largest lake in Africa, and also the world's second-largest freshwater lake.
- The River Nile is the longest river in Africa, and one of the longest in the world.
- South Africa has a penguin colony, which thrives thanks to the cold Antarctic currents on the west coast near the Cape.
- Madagascar is the home of the world's largest island and the home of some of the world's largest animals. It is also extremely popular, particularly with Europeans.
- Sudan has more Pyramids than Egypt. The 223 pyramids in Sudan are smaller and steeper than their Egyptian counterparts.
- Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with a population of 113 million and with a total area of 967,490 square miles.
- Egypt is the most popular tourist destination in Africa with 10 million visitors a year. The Pyramids have been a prime tourist attraction for the past 2000 years. South Africa came a close second with 9 million visitors in 2007. Morocco and Tunisia is also extremely popular, particularly with Europeans.
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- Not all the people living in Africa are black. There are white people too such as Moroccans, Egyptians and some African Whites.

The Five Fastest Land Animals in Africa

- Cheetah: Can run at an amazing 70 miles per hour.
- Wildebeest: Can reach speeds of 60 miles per hour.
- Lion: Can reach speeds of up to 45 miles per hour.
- Zebra: Can reach speeds of 35 miles per hour.
- Gazelle: Can reach speeds of 30 miles per hour.

Map of Africa

You can find much more interesting facts about Africa on the following link: http://goafrica.about.com/

I would recommend you to visit the website to know more about the culture, traditions, countries and tourism details in Africa. Africa is no longer a dark and this continent has a lot to offer.
On October 3rd, I had the opportunity to witness a unique cultural event. It was the “Harvest Fest,” an event planned and arranged by Dr. Akiki Daisy Kabagarama, Elder Addie Pearson and family, on whose land the occasion took place, and coordinator for Inter-faith Ministries, Mr. Keith Williams.

The Harvest Fest focused on elements of African culture, and its broader purpose was promoting education, cross-cultural understanding, and world peace, explained Dr. Kabagarama.

In the morning from 7-8:30 am, a “prayer breakfast” was held. I, however, arrived at about 11:00 am. There were several tents and tables set up which housed food or displayed artifacts. As I made my way past a tent, I noticed several multi-colored garments lightly rustling in the wind. They were Kaftans, a native dress worn throughout Africa (see picture).

As I approached a table, I met two young ladies willing to discuss the event and their thoughts on African culture. I interviewed Linette from Cameroon, in West-central Africa, and Loveness from Malawi, located in the South-eastern portion of the continent. Both were very friendly and helpful, and provided a lot of information. We discussed a wide range of topics, including food, social interaction, familial relations, and the difficulty of remaining in touch with one’s culture after having lived in the U.S. for several years.

Food was one of the things they said they missed the most about being home, and cooking was discussed as a means of staying in touch with culture and tradition. The atmosphere around us was ideal for discussing culinary custom; the food made available at this event was quite tasty, and some of it was rather unique. I tried some goat, which was quite delicious and was prepared by Dr. Kabagarama’s husband, Dr. Dan Muhwezi. Dr. Daisy herself prepared what was for me the most delicious delicacy: beef sambosas, or as they call them in South Asia, samosas.

One of the first questions I asked Linette and Loveness was “What are some similarities and differences between your home country and the U.S.?”. Most of the differences they pointed out had to do with family and work. For instance, in the home countries of my informants respect for elders in the family and community is very important. This respect is often demonstrated in avoidance of eye-contact with an older person who is speaking. Of course, in general, children are expected to obey parents without argument. As Loveness and Linette discussed, people are also closer and more casual with their neighbors. A couple examples of this are the lack of need to call before visiting a neighbor, and most strikingly, the freedom to discipline one another’s children. They spoke of experiencing less isolation, less restriction on “freedom of association,” and interestingly, less stress. Do we Americans really appear that stressed out? I guess we do get pretty uptight.

What was the most devastating contrast between Cameroon and the U.S.?—they are yet to have fast-food restaurants over there! I don’t know about you, but I think my system could use a break from burgers, fries, and burritos.

What about similarities between here and there? Family is something we all have in common. Although family is still greatly valued here in the U.S., in Africa, as in many world cultures, this is extended beyond the immediate or nuclear family; there, almost everything is family based. Linette told me she tries to meet with friends or family at least once every two weeks, and her parents will visit (and, of course, bring spices for cooking). She explained that because of work and school, remaining in touch with her culture was difficult, but that at least they are aware of this need.

Like in the U.S., people in Africa greatly value education, although they may not always have access to the equipment and resources we take for granted here. They also value hard work. However, my new friends told me that in America everything is about work; in Africa a lot of emphasis is still placed on simply enjoying life. Linette told me “though [they] are poor, [they] never heard of depression in Africa.” This makes me realize that although there are a lot of conveniences here to be thankful for, we should evaluate our priorities.

I also found Dr. Kabagarama willing to give a little bit of her time for reflecting on her American experience. Dr. K. is originally from Uganda, a country in East Africa. We talked about how one’s lifestyle might change as a result of making one’s home in the U.S., something Dr. K. did 27 years ago. She observed that over here we live a fast-paced life; we walk faster, talk faster, etc.

(look for Inter-cultural Dialogue on next page)
Inter-cultural Dialogue (Continued from page 5)

She talked about language as well. Because English has become the international language of business and communication, professionals must learn it very well. Picking up American expressions and idioms is another part of adapting communicatively. Of course at home one can relax and speak one’s mother-language (Dr. K’s first language is a Ugandan tongue called Rutooro). Dr. K. also noted that in America it is acceptable to be older, yet act young. As she explained, one learns to adjust to the social norms here, yet retains the values of one’s own society.

I ended my day there by listening to some traditional gospel music. Traditional American music that is. However, one of Dr. Kabagarama and Dr. Muhwezi’s daughters, who both sang beautifully, sang part of a song in Rutooro.

This representation of some aspects of African culture should be relevant to African students, faculty, and staff, and to anyone with an interest in cultures not his or her own. However, I feel that the cross-cultural interactions and exchange of ideas and perspectives provided by events of this kind, organizations like ISU, and WSU as a whole, should be especially experienced by American students, myself included. I say this because, if we are all going to ride the wave of globalization, the changes it brings should not be one-sided, but rather, a truly mutual exchange.

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Interfest Fall 2009 By Adeline Chai Fang Tanu

The International Student Union (ISU) once again organized a successful Interfest (international food festival) for the fall semester. It was held on October 13 on the Geology Patio. During the two hours, a couple hundred people were in line waiting to get a chance to try various types of exotic food sold by WSU’s international students. Fifteen international student organizations and individuals participated in the festival, using their home country’s food as a medium of cultural exchange with others.

Among those organizational sellers were student associations from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Turkey and Korea as well as the Muslim Student Association, HALO, Asian Student Conference, an Iranian group, and a Malaysian Chinese group.

Most of the participating organizations expressed their enjoyment of this fund raising activity. There were also some individual cooks from India, Paraguay, Slovakia, Vietnam, and Bhutan.

ISU members are thrilled with the festival and are looking forward to the next Interfest in spring 2010.

Adeline Chai Fang Tanu,
Malaysia
Psychology and Strategic Communication

Traditions and Music (from page 3)

Now just think about the dead branches or branches that people cut for one reason or another. The tree can still continue to live but the shape might get changed to some extent. In some cases it’s good for the tree.

With the phenomenon of globalization, many West African are loosing or abandoning their traditions particularly in big cities. I have to admit that African societies are now much better without some traditions that promoted harmful cultural practices in the past such as female circumcision; now in several places this tradition has been abandoned and at other places disliked.

However, in other cases loosing its traditions is like losing its own identity. For example; Africa has long been a continent without a written history and hence griots have played an important role in teaching African history. In the past, they have belonged to the ruling families who sponsored them but now the griots are becoming rarer.

The influence of technology has had an adverse effect on Africa. Young people in big cities have started to renounce their traditions; the effect is prominent because of television programs, rap and online news.

For example, earlier during Ramadan and other traditional holidays girls used to use a henna leaves powder paste to blacken their hands and feet in intricate designs that are particular to their tribe or ethnic group. People listened to traditional music and spend the day together. Today, during Ramadan in Bamako (Mali), Abidjan (Ivory) and in many other cities, girls want to have their hair cut like the girls in the sopras, wear jeans and spend their time in night clubs listening to rap and other modern music.

Traditions, rituals and music are the body, the spirit and the soul of West Africa. From birth, when the newborn is welcomed by a song, to death during which music is used to accompany the deceased into the world of his ancestors. Music and rituals have always and will continue to influence Africans’ traditions.

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Continued from Religious diversity (page 2)

On the East coast of Africa, the Arab mariners had established their territories, since they had been using those regions for trading purposes for many years, for example Zanzibar and Tanzania.

The world’s largest church according to the Guinness Book of World Records is located in Africa, specifically in Nigeria. The name of the church is the Winners’ Chapel situated in the Kaduna State. Christianity spread to Egypt and North Africa in the first century.

The largest Christian community at the time of colonization was seen in Ethiopia during the early 19th century. However, over the next two hundred years there was a rapid expansion of Christianity in Africa. At present, over forty percent of the African population identifies itself as Christian.

The rapid expansion of Christianity was favored by the colonization of Africa by European powers and also by the collaborative relationship between the colonizers and Christian missionaries. The colonizers believed that Africans who converted to Christianity would not oppose European rule, and therefore the colonizers thought of the missionaries as important allies. In the early 19th century, many thousands of Christian missionaries from Europe, North America and West Indies travelled all around the African continent. The European colonizers assisted the missionaries in their work, but the missionaries did not come to Africa because they were invited by the colonizers. The primary objective of these missionaries was to spread the religion through the conversation of as many people as they could reach with their message.

Some believe in the African indigenous religion, which is closely related to the African peoples’ concepts of ethnic identity, language and culture. Their beliefs are not limited to belief in supernatural beings or to ritual acts of worship, but they effect all aspects of life, from farming to hunting, from travel to courtship. Some African religions believe in one supreme God who created the world and all that is in it, while others believe in more than one God. Since there are many languages in Africa, there are many different names for God. In African religious traditions, there are different religious roles, which include priests, rainmakers and healers. Indigenous African Religion continues to be important in many African societies. Although its practices have not changed, they have become influenced by Islam and Christianity.

There is also Hinduism being practiced in Africa, which is the predominant religion practiced in the Indian subcontinent. There is a high population of Indians in Africa. These Indians have now become known as Natives of Africa, since they have spent many generations in Africa. They mainly came into Africa during the pre-colonial era, for the purpose of trading. As a result of the increasing number of tradesman, most of them settled down in Africa, bringing with them their culture and religion.

There are currently indigenous communities in Africa practicing Jewish rituals. Most Jewish communities in Africa bear little resemblance to Jewish communities in Europe or North America, yet their religious practices can be recognized by any Jew.

The existence of all the above discussed religions in Africa has made the continent become a shining star illuminating its rays full of knowledge onto the diverse population that enlightens them and enriches their culture. Africa is therefore not only the cradle of civilization, but also the sculptor of civilization.

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Want to submit an article, an event or comment on the articles? send us an email:
isu@wichita.edu or wajidhassan@yahoo.com

Wichita State University Does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, status as a Vietnam Era Veteran or disability.
Monday, November 16

OPEN HOUSE
Garvey International Center, home of International Education
2:00-5:00 pm, southeast corner of Hillside & 17th Street

THE EDGE OF HEAVEN
directed by Fatih Akin with Hanna Schygulla, Germany/Turkey/Italy 2007
International Film Screening: CAC Theatre, 7:00 pm - 9:15 pm,
No admission fee.
- Winner of twenty-one international awards including
  Best Screenplay at Cannes International Film
  “A beautiful, unexpectedly enrapuring story about a world in transition
  and both the likeness and unbridgeable divide between generations
  and culture.” – Carina Chocano, Los Angeles Times

Tuesday, November 17

CAPTAIN ABU RAED
directed by Amin Matadi, Jordan 2008
International Film Screening: CAC Theatre, 2:00 pm -3:35 pm,
No admission fee.
- Jordan’s submission to 2009 Academy Awards
- Winner of fifteen international awards including World Cinema
  Audience award at Sundance Film Festival
  “Such a whole yet global view of human struggle — the whole world
  viewed through the prism of a single poor neighborhood — is a mark of
  extraordinary promise from this remarkable new filmmaker.”
  — EX. Feeny, The Village Voice

Wednesday, November 18

AROUND THE WORLD AT NOON
Bhatigan Student Center, First Floor Hall, 11:30 am -1:30 pm
Get your passport at the International Student Union table and
then travel around the world to countries represented by WSU’s
international students! Quizzes, games, prizes, & treats!

Thursday, November 19

Tallgrass Third Thursdays presents: Nollywood Babylon
directed by Ben Addelman & Samir Mallal, Canada/Nigeria 2009
SPECIAL GUEST SAMIR MALLAL WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE
International Film Screening: CAC Theatre, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
General Admission: $9; Seniors: $7; Students: FREE
- Nominated for Sundance Film Festival’s Grand Jury Prize for
  World Cinema Documentary - 2009
- The film delves first-hand into Nigeria’s explosive homegrown
  movie industry, where Jesus and voodoo vie for screen time.

  “Both insightful and sweeping, this doc shows how affordable filmmaking
  technology and evangelical Christianity has assisted Nigeria, now the third
  largest producer of movies, to build a fierce film industry that serves a
  largely impoverished and politically unsupported nation.”
  — Box Office Magazine.

Friday, November 20

INTERNATIONAL FACULTY & STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON
Bhatigan Student Center, Regents Room (203), 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Hosted by the International Student Union. An annual event to
recognize the academic and cultural contribution of international
faculty and staff at WSU.

INTERNATIONAL DINNER
Fairmount Towers, northwest corner of Hillside & 21st Street.
4:30 pm - 7:00 pm $7.50 for adults, $4.50 for children.
Open to the community. Halal meat and vegetarian dishes included.
Hosted by Housing and Residence Life, International Education,
Cultural Ambassador Program, & WSU Dining Services.