Greetings from the Editor’s Desk by Deepak Aralumallige

Hello everybody, International Student Union (ISU) is coming back to work again with a new executive committee. The fall semester has started and ISU promises fun activities for this academic year.

Our main goal at ISU is to collaborate with various international student organizations on campus and coordinate activities that educate and entertain the international community at WSU. Also, we would like to expose diverse cultural values of the International community to the WSU population at large. This is one of the objectives of this newsletter.

In this 1st edition for 2007-2008, you will read about the differences between Bangkok and Wichita as explained by Arm, and a practical guideline of how to lead a successful semester by Dr. Tran.

We would also like to challenge your mind with some proverbs from “el Rio de la Plata” (Uruguay and Argentina).

How about taking a break from classes and learning some self-defense through kickboxing. Read Ray’s article about the same.

Learn about Benin form Schadrac Fatou and find out how this little country has influenced the world.

Please take a moment to visit our webpage at http://webs.wichita.edu/ISU, which is frequently updated. I would especially recommend the forum page where you could find new opportunities and offer your resources and ideas for international students.

Don’t forget to send in your comments, concerns, likes and dislikes to ISU@wichita.edu.

If you like to share your thoughts and views, please send us your articles, we will be more than happy to publish them.

Deepak Aralumallige (India) is a graduate student majoring in Math.

ISU Elections 2007-2008

Bangkok to Wichita: A-Long Way? by Arm

When my friends ask me “what is common between Wichita and Bangkok?” I jokingly say: “that I have lived in both places.” The two cities, almost half globe apart, are two different entities, and yet I find that a comparison between the two is not only interesting, but also worthwhile.

Bangkok, being the largest city in Thailand, is like any big metropolitan area with a thriving population of more than 10 million. Compared to Wichita, it is extremely dense in population. This also accounts for the number of traffic-jams making travel more time consuming and at times stressful.

Tell me the last time you experienced a traffic-jam in Wichita! However, I wish Wichita had the kind of public transportation system Bangkok has.

Bangkok visitors should use its buses, sky-trains and in-land boats: the best way to interact and learn about the city.

(Cont. on page 3).
The First Page of a New Book *By Dr. Anh Tran*

The Fall semester has now begun. You may be a new or an old pedestrian on the campus. Either way, in every step you are carrying a renewed, refreshed, and revitalized feeling for a new start.

It is like you have just entered the first page of a new book. The new page will set a desired tone for your whole book of academic pursuit. Approach it with readiness.

In one way or another, a lot of preparation has taken place before your first day at school: (1) making the decision of leaving your beloved ones and your home country for a while; (2) Financial Planning, and (3) cultural adaptation for a new life in a new country.

You made a good choice to earn your education at WSU. Here the faculty, administrators, and staff work together with you to make this institution "a stimulating and fun place dedicated to teaching, scholarship, and public service."

Located in the largest city of Kansas, and with more than 170 student organizations, WSU will provide you with great opportunities.

All contextual factors seem ready to foster your studies at WSU. Hope that culture shock will not be an issue. The following suggestions may help make your life easy and your studies a success:

1. **Start at the beginning**: Make your class work a priority, and take time to complete your course assignments, because earning an education is the primary reason why you came here.

2. **Feel free to ask**: Instructors and staff, members of student organizations, and your friends are always good people to ask for help. And

3. **Establish a time-line**: Set-up a timeline for your plans and projects, and continuously focus your efforts on accomplishing them.

Usually, foreign-born students feel uncomfortable in a new situation, especially with their English. But let me tell you a story:

A dog, a cat and a mouse lived in the same house. One day the mouse suddenly realized that the cat was ready to pounce on him. The mouse was scared, but quick enough to utter a loud bark. The cat ran away since he thought the dog was chasing him!

See! As a foreigner, you may speak English with an accent, but you are the bilingual mouse (OK, not the mouse, at least the bilingual person). The moral here is not to scare other people, but to realize your potentials and strength.

As international students, your linguistic and ethnic backgrounds are valuable contributions to the American mosaic. So be proud of yourself and think in a positive way.

I am currently reading *The generative Society* by Aubin, McAdams & Kim, and *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* by Gollnick & Chinn. One sentence that haunts my mind here is:

"Underneath the torn shirt on a refugee’s back rests an authentic thread that enriches the fabric for the flag of thirteen stripes and fifty stars waving in the breeze of democracy."

You have just opened a new page in the book of your life. Enjoy writing the chapters of your book with exciting adventures at WSU.

**Dr. Anh Tran (Vietnam) is Asst. Prof. in the Curriculum & Instruction Dept., College of Ed. She can be reached at Ext. 6934, Campus Box # 28.**

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**Worldly Wise - Some Proverbs from South American Continent**

- To hard bread, acute tooth (Put extra effort to overcome adversity).
- Do not spit to the sky (it may come back to you). (What goes around, comes around.
- Dogs that bark, don’t bite (People that threaten, don’t do much).
- Yes that don’t see, heart that doesn’t feel (What you don’t know can’t hurt much).
- To good understander, few words are needed (No need to explain much to an intelligent person).
- Good charity begins at home. (First comes the home, then the rest).
Kicking Your Way to Self-Defense By Ray Preszler

Kick boxing as a martial arts form originated in the island of Muay Thai (Thailand) about 200 years ago. Although most people may consider it simply as a combination of kicking and boxing, basically its philosophy is to combine the use of both the limbs for self defense.

Although a form of martial arts, kick boxing can be also used for increasing aerobic endurance. Those who train for kick boxing have acknowledged it as an excellent cardio exercise form.

The advantage of kick boxing over other martial art forms like karate and ju-jitsu is that for most times, kick boxing can be customized to a person’s strengths and weaknesses. Also, since it does not consist of any joint manipulations or nerve strikes (a strike that can cause a limb damage), it is a relative safe form of martial arts.

Kick boxing has several advantages. As an exercise form, it increases your awareness of space, time, adaptation, and helps with stretch reflexes.

In real-life situations, it helps prevent physical injury by using correct blocks, body positioning, and not being stuck to one style or form. It helps in self-defense by causing pain, but not irrevocable damage to the opponent.

Gender differences can be used by kick-boxers to their advantage in different situations.

Ray started learning kick boxing under an Australian instructor 9 years ago. His present instructor is an American who learned it under a Thai instructor.

Ray offers free kick-boxing classes for beginners every Saturday 12.00 to 1.00 p.m. at the studio room (near the weight training room) at the Heskett Center.

Shaunda Jones (U.S.), Business Senior and Computer Science staff, who diligently attends these sessions finds it both enjoyable and helpful. “I wish more female students at WSU would avail of this opportunity,” Jones said.

Nuwan David (Sri Lanka), from the Intensive English Program also finds the training helpful. David is himself an athlete for high jumping and finds kick-boxing helpful in stretching his limbs.

All WSU students are welcome to attend this free class. However, the instructor will use his discretion in deciding what sort of training to be provided based on the individual’s physical condition. Although from Thailand, kick-boxing has made its mark in the U.S. For Ray, this is a testimony of how the U.S. has become a melting pot of not just people and cultures, but also art and exercise. “I love teaching kick-boxing to internationals” says Ray, “My forefathers were internationals too.”

Ray Preszler (Minneapolis, U.S.) is graduate student in Exercise Science and can be reached at rjspeszler@wichita.edu

Bangkok to Wichita....

The weather in Bangkok is hot and humid. We have 3 seasons: summer, rains and winter. Yes! It rains heavily in Thailand, and NO, we do not get snow in winter. While the summers can be as hot as 100°F, the winters are about 70°F. Guess which is the right season to visit the city?

Now, if you did miscalculate and found yourself in the city during summer, don’t panic about the heat. The city will be celebrating the cool festival “Songkran Day.” On this day you can legally pour water on anyone in Thailand, and unlike most Wichitans who would modestly greet you, Thai people can get really physical here. They just want you to enjoy the festival with a happy mind and a wet body.

Besides Thai, English is extensively spoken in Bangkok, so you won’t be at loss for words.

Like Wichita, Bangkok abounds with many places for worship, though not churches, but the Buddhist sanctuaries. The people in Thailand are conservative and display traditional family values.

Wichita and Bangkok may have many differences, but what is common between the two is the human spirit and the ability to help each other. Just as Wichitans have been welcoming to international students and visitors, let me assure that anyone who visits Bangkok will find the same hospitality.

Wichita and Bangkok may have many differences, but what is common is the human spirit and the ability to help each other.

Wichita to Bangkok may be a long way, but isn’t it beautiful to see how Thai and Wichitans get along?

Yuttannt Suwansiri (Arm) from Thailand is a sophomore in Aerospace Engineering. He is also the Vice-President of Thai Student Assoc. and can be reached at ysu-wansiri@yahoo.com
Republic of Benin (West Africa) by Schadrac Faton

Location: Benin (formerly known as Dahomey), in Western Africa, borders Togo to the west, Nigeria to the east and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north; and a short coastline to the south.

Politics: The capital is Porto Novo, but the seat of government is Cotonou. Through its French colonial history associated with slave-trade, and ethnic strife, Benin has today evolved as a model Presidential form of democracy.

Climate: The climate in Benin is hot and humid with relatively little rain compared to other West African countries, although there are two rainy seasons (April-July and September-November). In the winter the dust winds of the harmattan can make the nights rather cold.

Economy: The economy of Benin remains underdeveloped and dependent on subsistence agriculture, cotton production, and regional trade.

Demographics: There are several dozen ethnolinguistic groups in Benin, representing three of Africa's language families: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, and Afroasiatic.

Religion: Indigenous religions are followed by a majority of the people. They include local animistic religions in the Atakora and Vodun among the Yoruba and Tado peoples. The principal introduced religions are Islam, and Christianity, although most Christians, however, continue to hold Vodun beliefs. It is believed that Vodun (or “Voodoo”, as it is commonly known) originated in Benin and was introduced to the Americas by slaves taken the Slave Coast in Benin.

Education: Local languages are used as the languages of instruction in elementary schools, with French only introduced after several years.

Known Faces: Academy award-nominated Djimon Hounsou (Gladiator, Amistad, & Blood Diamond, fame) is originally a Beninese actor, dancer and fashion model. Four time Grammy nominee singer Angélique Kidjo who is an international goodwill ambassador for UNICEF is also Beninese.

Schadrac Faton (Benin) is an undergraduate student of Intl. Business at the Barton School of Business, & can be reached at sfaton22@hotmail.com

ISU would like to thank Visvakumar Aravinthan for his hard work in launching and maintaining the ISU website. Aravinthan is running for a position with ISU and will continue helping ISU with its website.

Visit us at http://webs.wichita.edu/isu

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.

Don’t Forget...

TRIP to the Movies

The International Education Office at the Garvey Center has organized a trip to the movies for International students on Saturday, Sept. 29th 2007. For more details contact the Office of International Education at 316-978-3232 or pick up a flyer from their office.

Conversation Class Speakers

Phil Ladwig & Patricia Phillips (from LAS Advising) conduct Conversation Classes for non-native speakers. This non-credit class provides speakers a comfortable place to practice their English skills. The three rules of this class are:

- Fun, Food & Friendship. This is no fee for this class and it meets each Thursday from 2:30 p.m. to 3:25 p.m., in the conference room of 115 Grace Wilkie Hall. For details contact Phil Ladwig or Patricia Phillips @ 978-3700.
- AHNISNA

Association of Hindu Students in America (AHINSA) invites students to give a talk on any subject - cultural, religious, educational, or informative which would be of interest to the student community. The presentation may be done in any manner that the speaker feels comfortable with.

AHINSA will entertain the speaker to dinner or lunch and, also, give a certificate of recognition. Contact Arijit at 648 9341 or at banerjee@math.wichita.edu to schedule a talk or for any questions.

Safe Driving Course

Dr. Prem Bajaj (AARP) will conduct safe driving course on 18th and 19th of October 2007 form 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. For more details contact Dr. Bajaj at 683-3060 or at prem.baja@sbcglobal.net.

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