



M SAIC



SPRING 2010



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Student Affairs**

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DEAR MOSAIC READERS,



Finally spring has come, and it is time for another edition of MOSAIC. We hope that you have been enjoying the magazine following some changes in the format of the publication.

MOSAIC started out as a newsletter from the Office of International Student Affairs (OISA). The publication was named MOSAIC in the fall of 2008, and transitioned to a magazine format last fall.

The word MOSAIC refers to: *art that is created by arranging many small pieces, such as glass or stones, into a collage.* Our publication celebrates the beauty of a diverse campus and world, with a particular focus on the unique gifts and perspectives that international and US global nomad students bring to Grinnell's MOSAIC.

As editor, I would like to dedicate the Spring 2010 edition to focus on internationalism of the College. Though only one of the many ways this place is 'international', about 13% of Grinnell's current student body is comprised of students from abroad. This is an impressive statistic when compared to other colleges and universities. It tells me that Grinnell College is invested in educating future world leaders. I see international students to be hard working and actively involved individuals, adding new flavors and perspectives to the campus community. In my hope that the College will continue to value diversity and internationalism, I present my final edition as editor.

I open this spring's publication with attention to world events, and then narrow the focus to Grinnell more specifically. Our writers present the experiences of international students and host families as well as opportunities for you to be involved in strengthening internationalism at the college. I greatly hope that you enjoy this edition and wish you the best in the remaining semester(s) at Grinnell College.

Sincerely,
MQ Park '10, Editor



We are always grateful for the ongoing support of this publication from students, host families, faculty, staff, and SPARC.



Photo of Grinnell landscape by Solomon Akesseh '11

CONGRATULATIONS SENIORS!

Saida Ayupova
Salman Chowdhury
Imran Kabir
Zao Li
Min Kyu Park
Misato Sawada
Jingni Xie

Gizeh Becerra Becerra
Karuna Giri
Hak Jo Kim
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Ernest Boateng-Abebbresse
Angelica Isa Adaniya
Snehal Kumar
Jiabei Pan
Sakshi Saigal
Wasimon Tosuratana
Yiqian Zhang



FILIPPOS WINS THE WATSON FELLOWSHIP

Filippos Rodger Tsakiris has been awarded a prestigious Watson Fellowship for one year of independent study and travel abroad. He is a physics major from Chios Island, Greece, with an environmental studies concentration. Filippos is one of only 40 students nationwide to receive the \$25,000 fellowship from the Thomas J. Watson Foundation.



“I have chosen my destinations (island communities of the Western Isles of the UK, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and the Maldives) to provide all of the needed pieces of information to compile a holistic sustainable solution applicable to my home island. I hope that I will be able to bring fresh ideas to my hosts from my physics and environmental science background as they teach me about the particular challenges they face.”
-Filippos R. Tsakiris

www.grinnell.edu/news/releases/filippos-tsakiris-10-awarded-prestigious-watson-fellowship

We asked senior international students to ‘recognize three members of the faculty, staff or local community who helped make their time at Grinnell more positive.’ Here are the results—THANK YOU to ALL who make a positive impact on student life!

Sara & Gerald Adams
Lyle Bauman
Lindsay Conner
Karla Erickson
Dixie Hansen
The Keuhl Family
Jennifer McAlexander
Gemma Sala
Brenda Strong

Janet Alexander
Keith Brouhle
Janet Davis
Brad Graham
Donna Hoeksema
Jacque Kirby
Barbara Norman
Mark Schneider
Mr. & Mrs. Sundell

Hanna Armstrong
Sondi Burnell
Melinda Drees
Robert Grey
Kathy Jacobson
Charles Lindgren
Nancy Rempel-Clower
Karen Shuman
The Toeun Family

Sigmund Barber
Karen Cochran
Karen Edwards
Kamal Hammouda
Phil Jones and Tara Shukla
Tiffany Menard
David Romano
Laura Sinnett

BEST WISHES to our Language Assistants: Sonia Agudin, Joeran Krusch, Magali Lermigeaux, Anastasia Selemeneva, and Khaoula Zaatour; and our Japan Study Exchange Student: Shunji Ukai!
We appreciate your contributions to campus during the 2009-2010 academic year!

THANK YOU and BEST WISHES to Eric Vos— for his excellent work in the OISA. Eric supported a variety of efforts, especially working with the ISO Cabinet and the International Speakers Bureau. Eric will leave Grinnell to join his fiancé in Vermont.
We will miss him, but we certainly wish him the best!



HAITI'S EARTHQUAKE—HOW YOU CAN HELP

By Phyllis Van Es

Phyllis Van Es is the host mom of MQ Park '10. She was in Haiti during the time of the earthquake and has been helping the victims of the disaster ever since. The earthquake that struck Haiti had a magnitude of 7.0M_w, leaving more than 230,000 dead, 300,000 injured, and 1,000,000 homeless.



An elementary school--most of the children and teachers got out, but those trapped in the lower right rubble could not be reached, unburied, or rescued and died crying out for help.



Packing the truck with medical supplies headed to Port au Prince. A doctor, 3 nurses, one pharmacist, and a security staff who had family missing rode in the back with the supplies for 8 hours on bumpy roads.

On January 11, I arrived in Port au Prince, Haiti with a short-term missions group. Then we flew (about 80-90 miles) to the north edge of Haiti to help NWHCM (Northwest Haiti Christian Mission) in St. Louis du Nord. We had no idea what was to come in the next few days! Approximately 24 hours after our arrival, we were helping to distribute “Meals on Heels” in the slums near the seashore (just down the hill from the mission compound). Then suddenly, I felt terribly dizzy. Within seconds, the earth rolled in waves under my feet and I ‘squared’ my feet directly under my shoulders to avoid falling down. After 15-20 seconds, the realization hit us – we had just experienced our first earthquake! Since we felt such force 100 miles from the epicenter, we could not even imagine the devastation in the center of the quake. That thought just did not sink in—we had no access to computers or TV to catch the news. The assistant director of our group had limited access but fortunately carried a satellite phone. Her husband was in Port au Prince, and CNN and the Weather Channel were in contact with her. Almost no one else had contact to survivors in the capital for the first several hours.

We jumped into action the following morning: we packed medical supplies, repackaged medications, carried mattresses and whatever NWHCM possessed that could help people in Port au Prince. We saw God Almighty’s hand of provision and protection (and miraculous findings, ‘meetings’ and survivals) over and over in the two weeks that followed. Fortunately, my “Haitian son” Gesner (whom I had met in 2007) had survived the earthquake – he was very blessed to have left his pre-med classroom just before the disaster struck. Thousands of others were not so fortunate. The scene was so horrific: people were wandering around Port au Prince for days searching for food, missing family members, and shelter.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, the reader, that Haiti needs everything, because so much has been damaged. However, freight is slow and expensive so sending items has not been cost-effective. So please donate money whenever possible through mission groups and plug your aid directly into Haiti’s economy. Some that I can recommend are: Lifeline Christian Missions, NWHCM, Samaritan’s Purse, Living Water, Compassion International, and World Vision. You can definitely check their accountability; personally, I prefer those who spend less than 10-15% of their budget on administration.

If anyone is interested, I look forward to showing you my slides and telling the stories of my experience. Please call me at 641-236-7649, and feel free to leave a message. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to return to Haiti this coming July.

WORLD CUP 2010—WHAT IT MEANS TO AFRICA

By Cyril Afeku '13

The shrill sound of the vuvuzelas (stadium horn) proudly announces the return of the prodigal son. The rhythmic beat of the Ingoma drums from Burundi and the Fontomfrom from Ghana are drowned by the shuffling of feet of everyone runs to catch a glimpse of this son—whose coming, according to prophesies, will lift up the spirit of the people! The entire continent hurries to complete the finishing touches in order to welcome its prodigal son, the World Cup, back home. For two months, the world's media spotlight will focus on this beautiful game being played in the exciting atmosphere where it was intended to be played.

Despite the obvious preparations made by the South African Football Association (S.A.F.A.), and the vote of confidence given by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) and its president, Sepp Blatter, some still question Africa's 'readiness' to host the world cup. The answer is quite simple: A loud, resounding YES!! If there is one religion that unites the whole of Africa, it is football. Show me an African who doesn't remember the jubilant celebrations as his/her favorite team won cup competitions! Who among us can forget the sickening feeling as we watched our team lose to a referee mistake or a stroke of misfortune? From the day you are born, you live, breathe, eat and drink football. This may be hard for others to understand, but just imagine an entire nation coming to a standstill, holding its collective breath as the penalty is taken. In that brief moment, when the penalty is converted, the feeling of pure undiluted joy is shared by all. How does one explain a feeling that causes people to run into their neighbor's home and hug them; that brings strangers into the streets, shouting for joy; or that causes all drivers to honk their horns in unison as if conducted by an invisible conductor? Everyone, for that brief moment, believes that dreams CAN come true. Football is more than a game for us, it's a way of life—and its devoted followers welcome it back to its sacred shrine which has been built piece by piece over time.

If you have never been to Africa, you couldn't choose a better time to visit. The World Cup will light the continent on fire and the infectious mood will impact most die-hard skeptics. Africa isn't planning to host the World Cup as other countries have, rather it intends to host the World Cup as it was meant to be - the ultimate glorification, respect, and enthusiasm accorded to the most beautiful game ever played. Long after the final whistle is blown in the World Cup finals, the vuvuzelas will continue to remind everyone that the prodigal son has returned, and we welcomed him home with open arms!



Zakumi, the mascot for the 2010 World Cup



The 19th FIFA World Cup will take place from June 11 to July 11, 2010.



People celebrate as the host country for the 2010 World Cup is assigned to South Africa.

UNITED WORLD COLLEGE (UWC)

Grinnell currently enrolls 14 students who attended UWC schools: *Mario Hernandez; Bhoomika Partap; Bozo Susac; Marina Musa; Sambit Behera; Syeda Sadeque; Da Cui; Zimin Xu; Jose Achio Mendez; Xin Olivia Wen; Sunghyun Yoo; Chinar Verma; Raghav Malik; and Paulina Panek.* Learn more at <http://www.uwc.org/>.

By Chinar Verma '13

The United World Colleges (UWC) are an educational NGO that aims to bring students together from all over the world for the final two years of their high school education. The student body of a UWC is composed of 16-19 year-olds from at least 70 different countries. These students are selected with the help of a 'National Committee' who help screen candidates and match each student to his/her ideal UWC.

The first UWC was founded in Llantwit, Major in Wales during the peak of the Cold War. The founder, Kurt Hann, believed that "much could be done to overcome religious, cultural and racial misunderstanding and avoid conflict if young people from all over the world could be brought together." Today, the UWC board of trustees is composed of several influential people such as Queen Noor of Jordan (President) and Nelson Mandela (Honorary President).

There are 13 UWC schools around the world, one on each continent:

- Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa (**Swaziland**)
- Simón Bolívar UWC of Agriculture (**Venezuela**)
- Li Po Chun UWC of Hong Kong (**China**)
- Mahindra UWC of India (**India**)
- UWC South East Asia (**Singapore**)
- UWC of the Adriatic (**Italy**)
- UWC of the Atlantic (**United Kingdom**)
- UWC Maastricht (**the Netherlands**)
- UWC in Mostar (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**)
- Red Cross Nordic UWC (**Norway**)
- Lester B Pearson UWC of the Pacific (**Canada**)
- UWC USA (**United States of America**)
- UWC Costa Rica (**Costa Rica**)

With the exception of the UWC of South East Asia (Singapore), all of the UWCs are residential colleges that require all students to live on-campus. In addition, all of the UWCs follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and also combine the unique aspects of a UWC education to form what is called the "UWC diploma."

At UWC schools, extra-curricular activities are a crucial part of everyday life. Each UWC-er is required to commit to at least 240 hours of co-curricular activities during the two years at the college. Social consciousness is also one of the values endorsed by UWC and students often engage with the local community. The mixture of a demanding education with interactive community-building helps students prepare for their undergraduate studies.



"The striking thing about UWC is that they embrace the entire world across all divides of race, history, culture, wealth, religion, economic status and political belief: they are unique and they are conscious of their responsibilities."

- Nelson Mandela, Honorary President



Chinar Verma '13 playing basketball with her friends in Mahindra UWC in 2007



RACIAL HARMONIES AT GRINNELL

By Colin Jian Ming Wee '12

CULTURE IN CONTRAST: CHINA & US

By Tianxiang (Albert) Liu '13 and Xin (Olivia) Wen '13



Olivia and Albert presented at the Mayflower Lyceum program in February. Albert played his traditional Chinese instrument—the Erhu

Chinese culture is different from that of the US in many ways. These two societies share disparate dressing customs, envision and practice different education systems, hold divergent views towards marriage, and view art from different angles. The fundamental distinction of these two cultures lies within different value systems. We think that Chinese culture emphasizes more on results, while the West puts more value on processes.

This difference in cultures can be traced back to the history of social structures of the respective regions. Chinese culture was developed on the plains of eastern Asia. Though ruled by different emperors throughout history, the entire nation remained in one enormous piece. Greatly influenced by the ruling class, we tend to share a unified opinion and seldom have disagreements. However, things are quite different in the Western society. Europe, for instance, is composed of dozens of small countries and their relatively small territories and limited resources do not give them the option of self-sustainment. Thus, the Europeans constantly reach out and fill their lives with various interactions with people from other nations who may share totally different, sometimes opposing viewpoints. Moreover, the United States is an immigrant nation, which needless to say is also saturated with various interactions, diverse perspectives and competition. This interaction of different ideas and opinions has shaped the outline of Western culture.

Because of this foundation built on diversity, the West tends to focus more on individuals and their own perspectives. The Western society has a larger “pool” of options to reach a certain point. In choosing one route over another, the people tend to pay close

attention to each process. On the contrary, the Chinese historical background qualifies the requisitions of a union of ideas. Dominated by the elites, we established the habit of sharing a common value system. Thus, through time, pursuing a synchronization of opinions gradually penetrated into the core of the Chinese culture. In the end, our culture began to emphasize more on the final results.

In conclusion, because of the rich diversity of opinions in the Western culture, people have more routes to reach a solution. On the other hand, the Chinese people often consider a single way to solve a case. This difference ultimately manifested the divergent value systems between the Chinese and the West.

Culture in and everyday context... Underlying cultural values of Western ‘individualism’ vs. Eastern ‘collectivism’ play out in simple ways. In the US, for example, envelopes are addressed flowing from the specific to the general (road to city) and the individual name precedes the family name. In China, the format is general to specific (city to road), and the family name precedes the individual name:

Jane Doe
125 Pine Ave
Jordan Creek, AZ 53465



Mrs. Bethany Lance
44 Jade, Bldg Q, Apt. 5
New York, New York 10012



Shanghai, 50 Hunan Road, Apt. A, Building B, Room 90



Wang Peng

Beijing, Jiantai Road, Education Center, Room 20A



ON A FIRST NAME BASIS?

By Liyan Chen '12

The professor-student relationship at Grinnell surprised me on my first day of school. I remember clearly the first thing Professor Ellen Mease “taught” me. When I called her “Professor Mease” she replied, “Please call me Ellen.” I was surprised by her announcement. While I have had very positive experiences learning from instructors in China, I couldn’t quite imagine myself calling a professor by his or her first name. At the end of the semester, Ellen invited all of us to her house and cooked us a big meal for our final review session. We listened to her talking about our final exam, while eating the delicious pasta that she made. Now when I see Ellen, she greets me warmly with a kiss me on my cheek. I have grown to appreciate this relaxing professor-student relationship.

At Grinnell, professors and students play an equally important role in academic conversations. I get the chance to discuss profound questions with world-leading scholars like Professor Alan Schrift, a distinguished philosopher who studies Nietzsche and twentieth century French philosophy. When I took *Intro to Philosophy* and *19th Century Continental Philosophy*, students would stay for some time after class to discuss Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche with Professor Schrift. He was patient and excited to discuss even the simplest questions in philosophy. He sometimes joked, “You know, Socrates was accused of ‘corrupting the youth’ and was sentenced to death.” If you didn’t know about his impressive scholarly background, you might just think of him as a nice man who loves to discuss philosophy with young people - just like Socrates!

The close relationship between professors and students at Grinnell has helped me to overcome challenges both inside and outside of classroom. Professor Sarah Purcell, my history major advisor, is a great mentor for both my history study and my other academic and career interests. When I took her *American History* class, I was nervous to study the subject with American peers. She always encouraged me to talk in class and to ask questions after class. As the director of Rosenfield Program, she is busy with teaching and organizing events, however, she always makes time to see me if I have questions. She once had an appointment with me while eating a sandwich for lunch! Sarah also helps me with my other academic and career interests. Since I am interested in public affairs and human right issues, she introduced me to many great Rosenfield speakers. For me, Sarah is not only my academic advisor, but also my mentor for life.



Liyan Chen and her advisor, Dr. Sarah Purcell

As a student from China, I am always amazed by the equal and intimate professor-student relationship at Grinnell. Even though all the professors have great achievements, they are always approachable and helpful. My professors have created a relaxing environment for me to overcome the academic challenges and to explore my academic and career interests. I love my wonderful professors and thank them for teaching me knowledge and for enlightening my life.

Did you know...

- Ketchup originated in China as pickled fish sauce called ke-tsiap.
- The Great Wall runs for 4,500 miles across North China.
- Twenty percent of China’s plants are used in medicine.
- Mandarin is the world’s most spoken language (over 870 million).
- 34 children are born every minute in China.
- The story of Mulan had been told in China for almost 1,500 years.
- The story of Cinderella originated in China around AD 860
- China is the world’s largest apple producer, followed by the U.S.
- Ice cream was invented in China around 2000BC.
- Paper was invented in China in 105 AD. It was a closely guarded secret and didn’t reach Europe until the 8th century.
- 700,000 engineers graduate annually from schools in China.
- China has only about 200 different family names.
- China has about 30 million Muslims.
- China invented the first kites and they were used in wars.
- There are about 40,000 characters in Chinese language; An Adult is only expected to know 5,000 of them!
- Tian’anmen Square is the largest public plaza in the world.

<http://simbako.wordpress.com/2008/05/21/china-funny-facts-and-fun-trivia/>

GRINNELL IS MY SECOND HOME

By Wanjie (Wendy) Ren '13

Grinnell is my second home. I first came as a freshman exchange student at Grinnell High School in 2005. Coming all the way from China, I honestly did not know what to expect from this small town. In the end, it turned out to be a place that has changed the course of my life.

I became strongly attached to this place, which is why I came back here for college. Because of the friendly people here, I seldom felt lonely. Strangers greet each other warmly on the sidewalks, turning a windy morning into a sunny afternoon. Shoppers chat in grocery stores about their experiences in exotic countries; passersby help drivers who are trapped in the freezing Iowan winter. These kinds of positive aspects of the Grinnell community inspired me to return.

This past winter break, my friends and I walked to do some grocery shopping. We made it to the store, but the weather gave us no mercy for our return trip. We were initially excited about the prospect of cooking our own dinner, but our enthusiasm began to wear down by each stroke of icy wind. Soon, we were half-frozen in the cold with large bags of goods. It was at this point that a friendly couple passed by and offered us a ride back to campus. Their timing was perfect.

Four days later, I got an email saying that Christmas treats would be delivered to my room. I was confused and surprised to learn that the treat package was sent by the same couple who had given us the ride! It turned out that this family was a Host Family—and had called the OISA to get my contact information! They dropped off chocolate chip cookies, ‘puppy chow’, and other home-baked treats to be shared with other students who were here for the break, too. The winter was brutal, but hospitality like that brings me strength and warmth!

Changes happen in the world all the time, but in Grinnell one thing will certainly stay the same—hospitality of Grinnellians towards others will brighten up this small town in the middle of the cornfield. Grinnell is truly my second home, and I hope that you will be able to experience similar care from such a welcoming and warm community.



Wendy transitions from the mountains to the plains.

AN EXCHANGE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

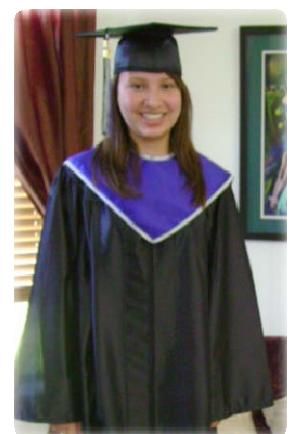
By Meriem Trabelsi '13

When I was a kid, I used to watch American shows and dream about being part of them. I know it is bizarre to say this, but my biggest wish back then was to have a locker in an American high school’s hallway. When I was sixteen, the opportunity to finally live that dream became a reality. I was accepted in the Youth Exchange and Study program (YES!). When I left Tunisia in August 2006, I thought that I was well prepared to deal with what was to come. I believed that I had enough pre-departure orientations and workshops to be ready. But the first thing I learned was that one is never prepared enough.

No orientation can substitute for life experience. The first month was the “honeymoon” period. I was happy with my beautiful new Florida house and family. More importantly, I had a locker! My honeymoon never seemed to end. Clearly, being away from my family and my country was more painful than I ever thought was possible, but the experiences I lived were worth it.

Three years and two graduations later, I find myself at Grinnell College. I thought that since I had already been through a similar experience at a younger age, this time would be easier. The next lesson I learned was to stop having expectations.

My honeymoon hasn’t ended. I am still constantly learning about life in America, and College life in particular.



Meriem’s high school commencement

FROM JAPAN, TO GRINNELL, TO JAMAICA

By Kobei Takatsuka '13

This winter break, I got to experience a real change by going to Jamaica and staying with my College roommate, David Garwood, at his home. While I found some instances of cultural difference that surprised me, overall my vacation was great and memorable. Away from the Iowan subzero temperature, we really enjoyed the warm Jamaican sun.

I went to the most beautiful beaches with white sand and sky-blue seas. The shore was only 20 minutes away from David's home by taxi. One thing that surprised me in Jamaica was that taxis stopped for us even when other customers were inside the car. Sometimes four people had to squeeze into the back seat (really designed for three). I have never shared a taxi with a stranger before, in the U.S. or Japan. I was shocked at first, but came to accept this practice as part of Jamaican experience and a memorable part of my trip.

I also had the chance to enjoy "real" Jamaican food, which David and his mom served me. I cannot name all of them, but they included dishes such as curry goat, curry chicken, jerk chicken, ackee and salt fish, cow feet, yam, and dumplings. They tasted completely new to me, and I savored every bite and emptied every dish.

Cliff jumping was also a new and exciting experience for me. Jumping off a cliff comparable to height of the JRC can be intimidating, but the feeling of adrenaline coursing through my veins as I clashed with the crystal blue waters was unlike anything I've ever imagined. After subsequent jumps, I began to enjoy the excitement of this "extreme sport."

Before I entered Grinnell College, I had never imagined I would visit Jamaica for winter break - or for that matter even share a room with a Jamaican! To be honest, when I was told that my roommate was going to be Jamaican, I was a bit nervous. However, David and I have become best friends who can talk about anything together. This is because we have opened ourselves up to and respected the different cultural values we hold. I am thankful to Grinnell for the opportunity to experience cultural diversity as part of my everyday life.



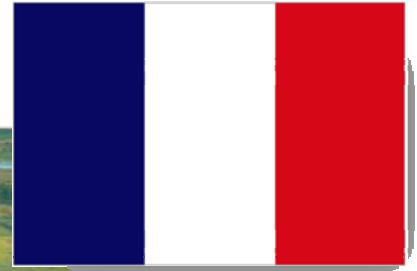
David Garwood '13 (left) and roommate Kobei Takatsuka '13 (right) at the beach.



A beautiful sunset at the Jamaican shore.

BONJOUR DE FRANCE!

For more information on Off-Campus Study, visit Macy House on Park Street.



Abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel (Manche)
 Prouesse de l'architecture monastique du Moyen Âge, l'abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel est l'un des sites les plus extraordinaires du patrimoine mondial.
 À gauche : le Mont et les herbiers à marée haute, chemin d'eau.
 Au centre : vue aérienne.
 À droite : Saint Michel surmontant le dragon, statue en cuivre repoussé doré par Frémiet, 1897.

LETTRE
 LA POSTE 42229
 FRANCE

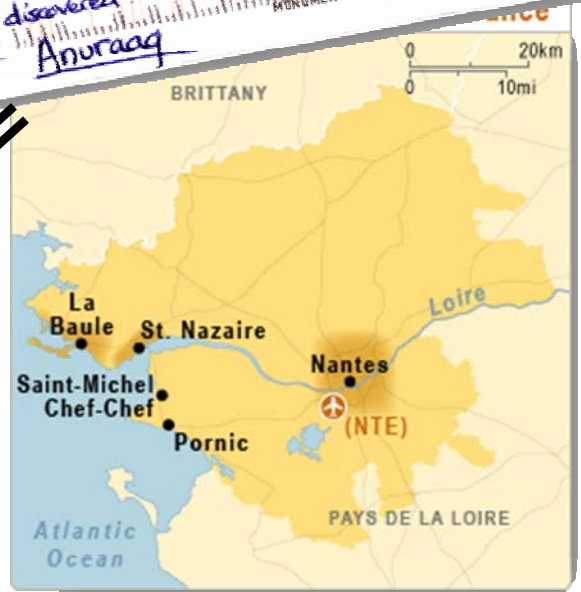
FRANCE
 Monde 20g

01-03-10

Dear MOSAIC Readers,
 I hope this postcard finds you all well. I'm currently studying abroad this semester in Nantes, France. The city is beautiful and this experience has given me an authentic insight into French culture. Communicating with native speakers has also helped me improve my French a lot! I'm thoroughly enjoying every aspect of French life - the food, the culture, the classes, and I highly recommend studying abroad. It has broadened my outlook and made me realise that there's a whole world out there waiting to be discovered. Take Care!
 Anuraag

GRINELL COLLEGE, JRC 310
 1115 8th AVE. GRINELL, IA
 50112 USA

ÉDITIONS DU PATRIMOINE
 CENTRES DES MONUMENTS NATIONAUX
 700046713050



This is the second year that Grinnell has hosted a student through the Iraqi Student Project (ISP). ISP is a grassroots initiative through which promising college bound students are linked with higher education opportunities in the USA. It is ISP's goal to "make undergraduate education possible for qualified students who were studying in Iraq, are unable to continue their education because of the violence, and intend to return and contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq." Today ISP students are enrolled at 30 institutions across the USA, including Grinnell College. In addition, this spring ISP announced the hire of Nancy Maly, Grinnell's former Director of Admissions, who now serves as the ISP US Director. You can learn more about the ISP at: <http://iraqistudentproject.org/>

MY IRAQ, MY HOME

from Ahmed Al-Khafaji, '13 and Karen Edwards, OISA

"Was it scary growing up in Baghdad?" my roommate asked. "Are you a Muslim?" my host father wondered. "How did you find out about this place?" my calculus professor asked. "How can you be white and come from Iraq?" a hall mate wanted to know. Everyone wanted to know what it is like to be an Iraqi, to have lived through the era of Saddam Hussein and the American intervention, but there is a lot more that people do not know about me.

Iraq is a place filled with pain – but I love my home dearly. Iraq, for me, is not only about the struggles. It is where most of the people that I care about live, where the food makes my mouth water, and the music touches my emotions – happy and sad.

I miss my mother; her eyes, her kind heart, and her unconditional love. I miss my brother who is now a student in Russia. We used to talk often, and now we cannot. The internet just isn't the same as talking in person. I miss my cousins Noor (11), Fatima (9), and Mariem (3). Children see the good in life. We played football (soccer) together, made up crazy stories, and joked around. Now, our lives are separated by an ocean.



Ahmed Al-Khafaji '13

In this cold grey Iowa winter, I miss the Iraqi sun – even though it can give you a headache and sunburn. In some ways, I even miss the electric and water outages, because here I can too easily forget to appreciate these everyday luxuries.

I have to admit, transition to America has been difficult. I had a rough start academically and socially. I also lost my first tennis match, something I love a lot. I struggled to relax, even when I slept. But the support network here has always given me confidence and help. My RLC supported me a lot. My advisor has been considerate and she always listens to my thoughts. Other professors have been there for me too. I attend Friday Prayer on occasion and appreciate Kamal. I have also made a lot of friends here – the list is long. I have the support through the OISA, a family in Chicago (the Sents), and I am in close contact with the ISP Coordinators in Damascus and here in Grinnell. Among my favorite people here are my supervisors in the dining hall. They bring me up when I am down. It is this network that allowed me to adapt to a new life.

Finally things are warming up here in Grinnell. I am not sure what I'll do this summer, but I would love to go home. My mother is already saving food in the freezer for me to enjoy on my visit. Unfortunately, our program discourages us from traveling outside the US, so my visit back home may not happen. Visa renewal is hard, and I just can't risk my future.

Overall, I do not regret coming to Grinnell College. It is a privilege to be here and I am grateful to the College and to the Iraqi Student Project. The experience is building my character and teaching me to rely on myself. The more challenges you face, the stronger you become in the end.



The Iraqi flag has changed a number of times, since The Kingdom of Iraq was established in 1921. This most current version was adopted in 2008. The Arabic script reads 'Allahu Akbar' translated as 'God is Great'

A UNIQUE HOST FAMILY CONNECTION

The Pederson family went all out this year—hosting a Russian high school exchange student in their home, AND connecting with the College’s Russian Language Assistant. The friendship was beneficial to all.

THE PEDERSON PERSPECTIVE

By Anne Pederson, host mom

The Russians are Coming, The Russians are Coming! Who would’ve thought that hilarious movie I loved years ago would perfectly describe my life last fall. In August, we were blessed with news that we would be adding two Russian daughters to our family! We got home from our summer vacation on August 17th, just in time to welcome Katya and Anastasia on August 18th! Eric and I each had two foreign exchange students who came to live with our families when we were young. Each of us also had siblings who were foreign exchange students. When the opportunity to give back presented itself, we jumped right into it.

This has been a wonderful school year! Our whole family has been able to teach and learn with every event we encounter. Katya turned 16 years old 2 weeks after arriving here. We treated her to an American birthday celebration, while she enlightened us on how they celebrate birthdays in Russia. We had a traditional Thanksgiving meal where Katya and Anastasia learned what it meant “pig out.” We also learned that while in the US it is typically Christian children are visited by Santa, in Russia, the same character is called Father Frost and he visits all Russian children on New Year’s Eve. We just loved that! Wouldn’t that be a wonderful change for ALL the children in the United States?

Now spring break is approaching and we’ll be taking a trip to, we hope, sunny Florida. We are planning to drive so Katya will get to have a real Griswold family vacation experience. Hopefully the parks won’t be closed for repairs. Anastasia and Khaoula, our Tunisian daughter, will fly down to join us as well. We are excited and look forward to making even more wonderful family memories with our beautiful, multicultural family!

ANASTASIA’S PERSPECTIVE

By Anastasia Selemeneva, Russian Language Assistant 2009-10



*The Pederson children enjoy the Iowa State Fair
(from left) Katya, Anastasia, Sam and Jordan.*

When I found out that I was going to spend a year in Iowa, I was honestly a bit skeptical. All I knew about Iowa was: cornfields, cornfields and more cornfields. “What am I going to do there in the middle of nowhere?” or so I thought. My two predecessors at Grinnell, also Russian Fulbrighters (Julia and Vera) were a great comfort. They shared their perspective about what Iowa has to offer - a top quality academic experience, the beautiful night sky, and especially very friendly people. I have grown to love this place, this ‘middle of everywhere.’ My host parents, Anne and Eric, are among the best people I have ever met. They have done so much to make my stay here more enjoyable and I am really grateful to them.

When I was learning English as a child we read about American culture and traditions. We read about Thanksgiving as a holiday, so I have always wanted to see how American families celebrate it. This year I was able to participate in the Pederson’s family get-together on Thanksgiving. We had turkey and all kinds of food, and of course I was stuffed -

just as my host brother Sam had promised. I am a family person by nature, so being around such a kind and loving American family has been more than great. I am much less homesick when I am around them.

Anne and Eric are also hosting a high school student Katya, who is also from Russia. When I first met her she told me “I don’t understand anything!” Now, nearly six months later, Katya speaks fluent English and has grown and learned a lot from our host family experience in the USA. Of course, I also hope that Katya and I taught the Pederson family a little bit about our language and culture. If they are coming to Russia one day, I will be more than happy to host them too!

KATYA'S PERSPECTIVE

By Katya Ayvasova, an exchange student at Grinnell-Newburg Schools

Six months ago my life turned upside down. I left my parents and friends and arrived in a new country. I met my new American family, the Pedersons. Soon, I became a part of a big, united and wonderful family for the entire year!



Katya (second to the left) enjoys the fall leaves with her host siblings:
(from the left) Christopher, Katya, Sam & Jordan

Since I arrived, I have learned about American people, American food, how to dress appropriately for different occasions and how to organize my daily life plan ahead. I have

learned to be patient, to take responsibility for my actions, to face life with a smile, to respect others and to think about their opinions as well. There are many things from my life in America that I will never forget. I especially liked Christmas, when the entire family gathered near the tree wearing pajamas. We talked, gave thanks to God for each other, read stories and drank eggnog. That memory will stay with me forever.

Thanks to my family I also met two students from Grinnell College, Anastasia (from Russia) and Khaoula (from Tunisia). They are our 'host sisters' and are role models for me. Perhaps I can study in the United States for college! They gave me courage to continue my way and not to give up. Since we three are all away from 'home' it is very helpful to communicate with them. After winter break, Anastasia came to our house with a present – a bag of Russian candy! I was so grateful. It made me think of home.

I am glad that the Pedersons were not afraid to host an exchange student. Six months is not a short period of time. This has been an amazing experience and it has changed all of us. Last week on the way to church, I was not wearing my coat. Jordan, my host sister, noticed it right away and remarked "You aren't wearing a coat? Katya, you are becoming a Pederson!" Yes, I thought, exactly - *I am* becoming a Russian Pederson.

JENNIFER MCALEXANDER JOINS 'THE TEAM'



Monica St. Angelo, Jennifer McAlexander, Dixie Hansen

Jennifer McAlexander will join Dixie Hansen and Monica St. Angelo, as Volunteer Coordinators of the Host Family Program. Jennifer replaces Sue Ramsey, as she rotates off the team. We miss Sue, and hopes that she and Rick will stay involved regardless - but we are also pleased to gain Jennifer's involvement! Jen and her husband, Kevin, have three children: Isaiah, Parker, and Ella. Jen volunteers for Central Iowa Christian School and church ministry activities, and she works part-time at Carroll's Pumpkin Farm, Mary Kay, Stan Laverman CPA, and Campus Safety & Security. McAlexanders host Sneha Saigal '12.

Volunteer Coordinators support the program by recruiting new families, offering critical feedback on our printed materials and program correspondence, and sharing their creative ideas and time to help make the program stronger. Host families are welcome to contact Dixie, Monica or Jennifer (in addition to the OISA) with advice, suggestions or questions.

A.L.S.O. BRINGS HINDI TO THE CLASSROOM!

By Gayatri Jayal '11

In India, English has become the language of success. People in small village towns believe English to be their ticket to the big cities, many if not most colleges and universities both public and private use English as the medium of teaching, and Bollywood movies frequently have a smattering of English phrases that need no subtitles as it is taken for granted that the entire audience will understand. Shift to Grinnell College, Iowa this fall semester where the first Hindi class ever has been introduced into the ALSO program on the initiative of a student. Why, I wondered when I first heard of this, would students want to learn a language when they could get by well enough without it? Tutoring Hindi this semester has given me some perspective while trying to find the answer to my question.

The Alternative Language Study Option (ALSO) language program is essentially a self-study language program designed to enrich the students' major and liberal arts education through language skills that are not otherwise offered in Grinnell's curriculum. In the program, the college provides the books, a tutor and an examiner, but not a professor. The students are expected to read and learn from the textbooks and CDs.

My role as a tutor entails that I meet with my class of five Grinnell College students three times a week, and help them to write and read the script, practice speaking and generally be there to answer any questions they might have. As Hindi has a unique and significantly complicated script, we started out slowly at the beginning of the semester, and with the help of the head of the ALSO program Professor Dan Gross, figured out a way to make progress without overwhelming ourselves. Half of the semester is over, and now my amazingly enthusiastic students can not only read and write complicated words, but can actually form sentences in a script they had no experience with before this! Answering their questions such as "What would you say in this situation?" made me think more deeply about the language than I have in years. While giving me a new appreciation for my own language, it made me realize that although on the surface of things, English has become or will one day become an every-day language for many in India, Hindi is still currently the language that North India functions on. If more people from different parts of the world such as my students begin to learn Hindi, it could well remain that solid base language.



Hindi students practicing in the A.L.S.O. program
(from the left) Anna-Lisa Bowans, Sara Kittleson,
Addy Najera and Caroline Bailey.

This semester, the ALSO program is offering Hindi, Czech, and Italian. For more information, contact Dan Gross.

MY NAME IS BRENDA
मेरा नाम ब्रेनडा है।
[MERA NAAM BRENDA HAI]

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS BUREAU *IN ACTION*

By Eric Vos

The International Speakers Bureau (ISB) has had a successful year!

ISB provides opportunities for local schools, civic organizations and other venues on and off campus to experience cultural learning by hearing from individuals from the College's diverse student body. Our student speakers also benefit from the opportunity to interact with the local community, build their public presentation skills and share their love of home!

ISB speakers are not professional lecturers. They are students with unique perspectives and personal stories to tell. No individual can fully represent their nation and all the complexity therein—but they can represent their own lives and their own worldview. They are experts in that regard! ISB provides a platform for their engagement with the local community.

This year, ISB has partnered with a broad array of venues. In some cases, we simply 'link' organizers with students over email. Other times we are able to work closely with the students and the host – to collaborate directly on program planning. This year, over 35 students from all regions of the world (US and abroad) have participated in ISB.

One of our favorite venues for ISB has been the Mayflower Community's Lyceum Program. For one visit there, Xin "Olivia" Wen '13 and Tianxiang "Albert" Liu '13 presented a cultural comparison of their home China with that of the West. Their elaborate PowerPoint presentation was followed by musical performances with Albert on a traditional Chinese Erhu and Olivia on flute. Philip Kintner, professor emeritus and coordinator of Lyceum, was delighted. "The students' efforts were greatly appreciated. The audience was impressed by their efforts." Lyceum also hosted Rachel Hitchins '13, in a more recent program. Rachel shared her love for her home of Jamaica. Rachel discovered the 'generation gap' first hand when she introduced Bob Marley to an audience who didn't know him very well. They could, in turn, introduce Rachel to Harry Belefonte - also of Jamaican heritage but popular in an earlier time. Olivia, Albert and Rachel enjoyed the chance to share their sense of home with a willing audience, and they also enjoyed the chance to get to know Grinnell's elderly community better.

Venues that ISB has collaborated with, several on more than one occasion, include: The Grinnell Lions Club; Grinnell Optimists Club; Drake Community Library Saturday Spotlight; Grinnell Regional Hospital Seed Program; Mayflower Community Lyceum Program; Area Girl Scouts; Grinnell College Preschool; and Grinnell-Newburg Schools.

Programs still on the calendar for this spring include Global Village, a large event held at Grinnell-Newburg High School (April 9th); Arab Story Hour at Drake Community Library (April 17th); Lunch Bunch programs at the Middle School; and a Greek Adventure Hour at Davis Elementary School.



www.grinnell.edu/offices/studentaffairs/oisa/isb

DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH

By MQ Park '10



Students enjoying themselves with international games and tea.

Not alcohol, but tea. On February 9th the OISA and ISO collaborated to participate in the *Health and Wellness Fair* in the JRC. Students prepared and served four options: Ginseng Tea, Green Tea, Kenyan Tea and White Tea. There was a great turnout, as we served more than 150 cups. If you missed out, then come join us next spring—there will be tea for your health, music for your leisure and international games for your entertainment.



Ginseng Tea

Increases immunity, reduces risks of cancer, improves blood circulation, and relaxes lungs and other core muscles.



Green Tea

Reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure by helping the body lower total cholesterol, body fat, and weight.



White Tea

Helps prevent dental cavity and strengthens the immune system by helping the body fight against viruses.



Kenyan Tea

Reinvigorates the mind and body, helps people to relax, and supports the immune system.



ISO CULTURAL EVENING

Friday, April 23, 7:30 pm

The Harris Center

**This event is usually a 'packed house' ...
so come early if you want a seat!*

**HOST FAMILIES, if you have young children who might like to participate in the cultural fashion show, contact us ASAP!*



IPOC '10 (International Pre-Orientation Committee)

IPOC helps plan and conduct Pre-Orientation for International & Global Nomad Students:



Sunanda Vaidheesh '12 (India) will serve as a returning IPOC leader.



Andrea Asimeng
'12 (Ghana)



Anuraag Bhadana
'11 (India)



Mateo Jarquin
'13 (Nicaragua)



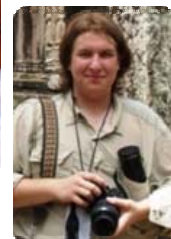
Shuangyue Wu
'12 (China)



Chinar Verma
'13 (Tanzania/India)



Panayot Poshtov
'13 (Bulgaria)



Abraham Kohrman
'13 (USA)

From ISO (*International Student Organization*)

This Spring the Rosenfield Program will hold a symposium on poverty. As part of the symposium, ISO will host a student panel discussing international perspectives on poverty; how international students have seen or experienced poverty in their communities. We will focus on how the six students on the panel have seen people in their countries work themselves out of being in places of need to become economically empowered. **The symposium will take place April 13-15. The international student panel takes place on Thursday, April 15th, at 8pm.** In addition there will be a display showing the relativity of one USD in different countries. The week prior to the symposium ISO will show documentaries about life in different countries to provide more context to the following week's talks. Times and dates will be announced soon. We hope to see you all there!

ISO Cabinet 2010-11 !

Andrea Asimeng (President); Austin Redman (Vice President); Wanjie Ren (Secretary);
Elias Elias (Treasurer); Cyril Afeku & Chinar Verma (Social Coordinators);
Tolu Alabi & Olivia Wen (Publicity Coordinators)

FISCHLOWITZ TRAVEL GRANT



Chandara Veung '12 from Cambodia, will visit skyscrapers and science and arts museums across the US as a way to learn more about this country and its relations with Asia—Cambodia in particular.

Radka Slamova '13 from the Czech Republic, will explore the natural wonders of the US this summer. She plans to organize a photography exhibition to share her experience.

www.grinnell.edu/offices/socialcommitment/awards/fischlowitz



DAVIS PROJECTS FOR PEACE

Ami Shrestha '13 from Nepal has received a \$10,000 grant from the Davis Projects for Peace to carry out her proposed education project in her home country of Nepal.



www.grinnell.edu/offices/socialcommitment/awards/davis

**Office of International Student Affairs
JRC 3rd Floor, Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa 50112**

