

STUDENT
SPEAK OUT
SUR

What is your
guiltiest
pleasure?



Jon Meyers
Communications

"Watching football on
Sundays instead of doing
homework."



Nicholette Boyer
Interdisciplinary Humanities

"Listening to Frank
Sinatra."



Josh DuBrock
Psychology

"Anime and Internet
comics. I'm trying to
break an addiction."



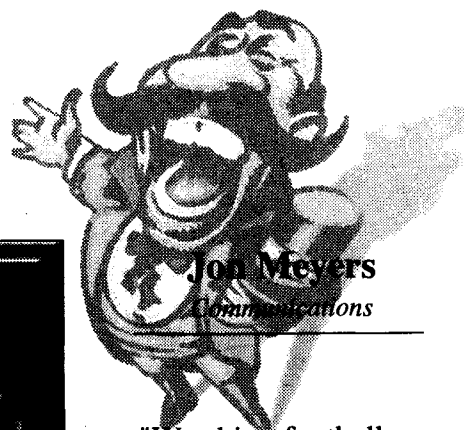
MaryAnne Nguyen
Marketing and Management

"Admitting that I want to
be a soccer mom when I
grow up."



Chris Kalbarczyk
Information Systems

"Spending too much time
on the Internet and work-
ing on my website
www.fifthgearracing.com."



Afghan Woman talks of tough times back home and refuge to America

By Rachel Shepherd
Features Editor

"Every bump seemed so precious and holy, as I pictured a land of peace," says Farooka Gauhari as she recalls her plane ride to freedom from Afghanistan.

Fifty people packed the Gallery Lounge on October 23rd to hear Gauhari present, "An Afghan Woman Shares Her Story," a dramatic encounter of life in a totalitarian society, her struggles being a woman in an Islamic society, and her flight freedom in America. In the back, copies of her book *Searching for Saleem* sold for \$27.

She began her speech acknowledging the changes the Afghan society has faced both politically and socially in the last 24 years. *Searching for Saleem* describes the changes the country witnessed in the coup of 1978, what Gauhari calls, "the turning point in Afghan history." That year over three million Afghans became refugees, Pakistan recruited Afghanistan citizens to fight, and the government became heavily engaged in collecting data on all citizens. It was also the year that her husband did not come home from the military.

Gauhari heard many rumors of his whereabouts. She heard he was in prison, that he was held hostage or killed. Gauhari thought things could not get any worse but she was wrong. Her 5-year-old daughter got terribly sick and her condition worsened every day. Because her husband was not around to provide any medical benefits for the children, Gauhari was unable to seek medical treatment. She decided to take her daughter to a military hospital.

The hospital was so full, there were no beds for her, and there was no medicine.

"I thought I was failing myself," Gauhari said of her struggle at that time. "I had to be strong. My behavior would disappoint my husband. I decided I needed to become more determined and stronger than before."

"I felt lonely," she said. "All that kept me alive was the children breathing in their sleep at night."

After two years of American spies disrupting the peace of the country, Gauhari had enough and decided to flee to America in hopes of a better life.

More challenges awaited her as she attempted to leave. She needed to obtain a passport and sell her property. To obtain a passport, Gauhari would need to have a background check. This process sometimes takes years. To sell the property, Gauhari would need a certificate of her home, which belonged to her husband.

Nine months later, when she was about to lose all hope, Gauhari learned not only

was her background check successful, allowing her to leave freely, but her husband was alive and had been promoted in rank. She went to the black market to get money, and received just enough to complete the journey to the United States. She took her children, even

"I thought I was failing," Gauhari said of her struggle at the time. "I had to be strong. My behavior would disappoint my husband. I decided I needed to become more determined and stronger than before."

her daughter who was better thanks to a helpful stranger and his medicine.

"My story is the story of my Afghan women," she said. "First under the communist rule, then the alliance and now the Taliban. Afghan women have nothing left in that country."

On September 11th, Gauhari said she was "glued to the television set." She was concerned about the safety of her friends in Afghanistan as she said she values all that is left of her country. Someday she would like to go back in hopes that she can help the next generation of Afghan women.

She said she was pleased with the

"Someday, she would like to go back in hopes that she can help the next generation of Afghan women."

attendance at the speech, despite its uneven gender representation there were about 10 women for every man. Dr. Felicia Brown-Haywood, NCC, Director of Student Support Services and Intercultural Affairs said "this lecture had a much better turnout than any other held on campus so far this year." The reason, says Haywood, may be in part because of the strong personality of the guest. "She is so nice. I have known her for three hours and already we are best friends."

Farooka Gauhari is currently a professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. "For now," she says, "this is my country and I am proud."