

"Lunch with an International Flavor"

Features Indian Food and Fashion Show

By Cathie McCormick
for The Capital Times

The largest crowd on record for "Lunch with an International Flavor" clogged Olmsted's second floor auditorium and hallway Oct. 28 to sample Indian culture and food.

An informal collaboration of PSH students from India, their Indian-American counterparts and supporters from the local Indian community dazzled an estimated 200 visitors with music, dance and food.

"Before this, we thought a success was 20 people," said Donna Howard, coordinator of student services for non-traditional students. "The restaurant owner said he brought food for 200."

Howard's office helps international applicants negotiate the student Visa process and campus orientation and encourages them to share their culture with the PSH community once they are here. She minimized her role in the Indian event. "The students took care of everything," she said.

Jinesh Varia, an Information Systems graduate student, applauded the motivation and mutual support of the individuals involved. Varia introduced Payal Parekh, traditional Indian dancer and PSH MBA candidate from Bombay with, "Bombay and smart go together like Paris and wine."

A presentation of Indian history and culture, albeit with an unsynchronized power-point slide show, followed Parekh's colorful introductory performance. The event included a fashion show of traditional clothing from various regions and then adjourned to an adjacent room for a sampling of Indian food provided by Harrisburg restaurant Passage To India.

Varia said the Indian student community

began discussing an educational event during the spring semester but decided to wait for the number of Indian students to increase. Several Indian students from other Penn State campuses arrived this fall, Varia

said.

SGA Junior Senator for the School of Business Manish Vigh transferred from Penn State Berks. He has been in the United States for four years, has applied for U.S. citizenship and plans to make the United States his permanent home. At PSH, Vigh carries a double major in Information Systems and Finance and a minor in International Business.

Vigh and Varia are both involved with the process of creating a new campus organization to address the needs of Indian students and continue sharing Indian culture with the larger community. A possible affiliation with the University Park Indian Student Association is being discussed, but Vigh emphasized the new club's desire to be inclusive. "I want as many students as possible to share their culture," he said.

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"The PSH community this semester includes 82 international students; 13 from India, Howard said."



Payal Parek kicked off the festivities with an Indian dance, which preceded the fashion show

Howard said. Howard said the international students want more interaction with the students from the United States. They tend to disappear in the diverse PSH community, Howard said. Events like the "Lunch with an International Flavor" series are designed to encourage the mix.

Vigh said the new organization hopes to obtain SGA sanction by next semester and encourages interested students to contact him. His e-mail address is msv111@psu.edu.

FALL FEST 2002

Photos by Steve Standridge

Design by Pete Strella

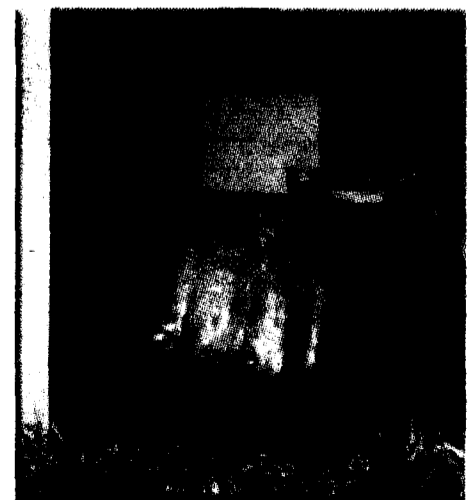
Fall Fest 2002 was held on Oct. 30 and 31 in Olmsted. Day one featured a pumpkin decorating contest, free food, and the music of Boost (a local cover band). Day two featured featured more free stuff.



Lion sports witch's hat and plots on scaring people.



Boost treats spectators with covers of Lit, Blink 182, Sublime, and Everclear.



The giant 97-pound pumpkin-chills and plans a way to take over the school once students leave. Chris Patterson won the weight-guessing contest with a guess of 97.6 pounds.