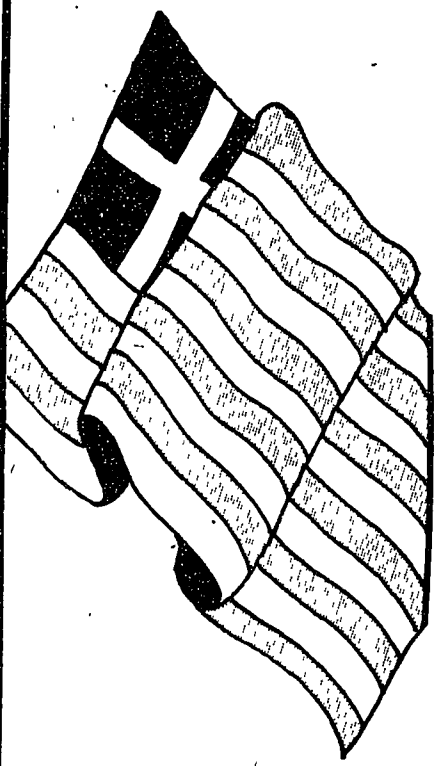


# Indians live an American dream



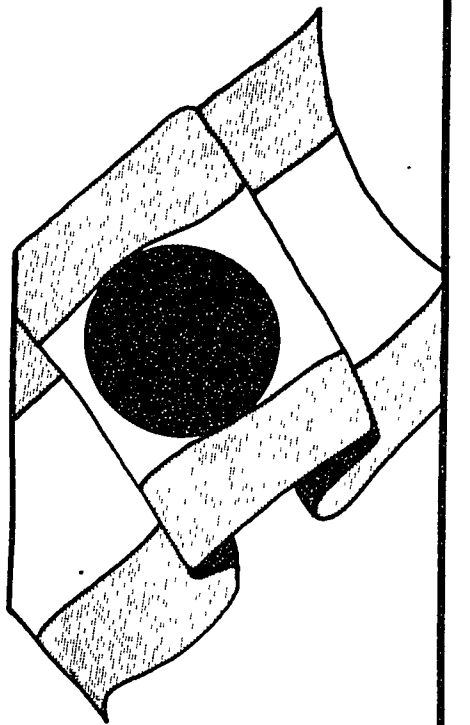
By **ASHOK K. MOZA**  
India

**Graduate-fuel sciences**  
Coming to the United States is a dream come true for most middle class Indians. Not every one of them makes it, but those who do make it tend to be rich or brainy or both.  
Excepting some highly chauvinistic or politically biased people, the United States is looked upon with fascination. To some it is a country of poor hippies who they see flocking around the Temple of Benaras and elsewhere.  
To others it is a country of tough, rugged people who they see in Western movies. To others, it is a rich country, stinking with money and opportunity.  
Being educated in this country (or for that matter, in any Western country) is a kind of a social status symbol among Indians in India.  
Not that education is inferior in India, but I guess it has to do something with our colonial past.  
India is a heterogeneous country with

422 dialects and 16 fully developed languages. It has five religions. India has the largest Hindu, Sikh and Jain populations and the second largest Muslim population.  
Not only do Indians have different religions and languages, they may have entirely different cultural backgrounds. In fact, a north Indian is about as different from a south Indian as an American from a Latin American.  
It is therefore expected that no two Indians will react in an identical manner to north Indian culture.  
What of course impresses me the most about the United States is the obvious material advancement of this nation. In fact, it is this factor that generally attracts most Indians to settle down in this country.  
India, although it is now ranked as the fifteenth industrially advanced nation in the world, is still a rich (in terms of natural resources) country of very poor people.  
On one hand India makes its own

nuclear reactors while half of the population still uses bullock carts as a means of transport.  
India is the sixth largest producer of coal, yet 60 per cent of its population still uses cow dung as a fuel.  
Though the Indians who make it to the United States generally come from the middle class or upper middle class strata, they cannot hope to maintain the same standard of living in India as they can in this country.  
The other thing I was personally impressed with is the honesty of an average American. He is honest with himself and says what he believes in.  
One very rarely comes across situations of organized forms of hypocrisy. There is a deeper appreciation of personal honesty by most Americans.  
Americans tend to have less hang-ups about what they wear or eat or how they eat. Jeans, I think, are a perfect example of this.  
There is a lesser tendency in the

American culture to attach social values to money.  
One is also impressed with the efficient organization of the state. The system here is more flexible, allows people more freedom, but is still efficient.  
On the negative side, Americans tend to have a false pride in their way of life. Anything need not be big and great just because it is American.  
I am at times surprised at the ignorance of some American students about the rest of the world.  
Americans are too standoffish, they don't like to get too close. One rarely comes across a close knit family one sees in "The Waltons."  
There is not much interaction in families as in India. Children sit glued to the TV and don't want to interact.  
There is also an overemphasis of sex in the American life. American women tend to identify it with women's lib, and this way they are only weakening the cause of women's lib in the long run.



## Happy Valley syndrome common to citizenry

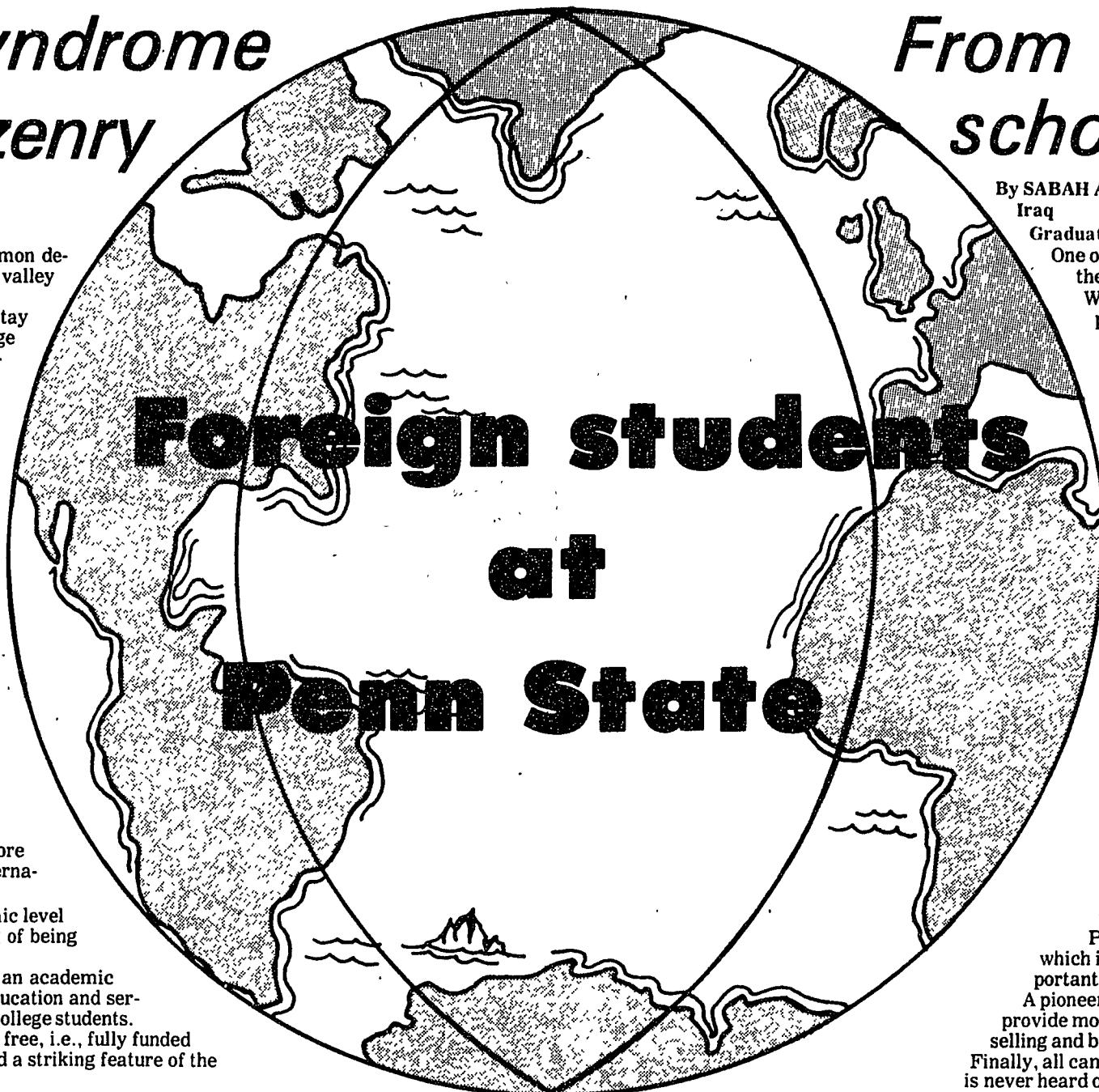
By **PAUL ESQUEDA**  
Venezuela  
Graduate-electrical engineering

Most international students are in agreement with the common description of Penn State and the areas around it, it is a happy valley indeed!  
Needless to say, the majority of foreign students find their stay at Penn State a very rewarding learning experience. Language difficulties and cultural differences add, at times, unpleasantness to that experience.  
One of the most unpleasant situations that foreign students have to face in their everyday life is the lack of knowledge and understanding of traditional values and ways of life of other cultures by most North Americans. This is possibly in contradiction with the fact that this is a college community and, as such, a somewhat higher cultural level is expected.  
A reason for this may be the poor coverage of international news and events by the local and national mass media. Most North Americans get to know about some areas in the world because of either extreme disasters in those areas or because of serious disagreement of those countries with the United States's policies abroad.  
The general feeling of international students is that more concern of the American public in world affairs is of utmost importance since the United States is politically and economically involved in the everyday life of a large number of a large number of countries all over the world.  
U.S. involvement in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America are examples. It must be recognized, though, that there are small groups in the community who have a legitimate interest and are receptive to international problems.  
In most of the developing countries, college students take a more active role in political and economic issues of national and international nature.  
On the average, foreign students are satisfied with the academic level of the university; nevertheless, they cannot escape the feeling of being treated as consumers rather than students.  
Penn State and almost all North American universities play an academic role as well as a business role in this society. They must sell education and services at prices that are not necessarily favorable to prospective college students.  
Students who come from countries where college education is free, i.e., fully funded by the state, find tuition costs at Penn State extremely high and a striking feature of the American system of education.

## From costs to unions, school systems vary

By **SABAH A. WALI**  
Iraq  
Graduate-physiology

One of the first things that struck me about education in the states was the cost of education.  
With recent increases in tuition, it will be obvious that certain people (mainly the poor) will have less chance in getting higher education, and, ironically, these are the people who need it most.  
At home (Iraq), universities are completely subsidized by the government; thus, college education is free to all who seek it. Not only that, all graduate students are paid modest salaries to help cover their needs for school and some of their living expenses.  
Academically, Iraqi undergraduates have to take a special number of courses. These requirements vary according to the school you are in.  
In colleges of sciences, all freshmen take the same courses. Then when they are sophomores, they apply to the department of interest with their grades as freshmen as a guideline.  
Courses are either for a whole academic year (September to June) or for one semester, with a three-week midyear break in February.  
In each college, a student union is elected by the whole student body. From these unions, a national student office is elected that has representatives in the highest legislative bodies. Their task is to solve student problems and defend their rights.  
Areas covered are housing, food, courses, examinations and other important aspects of student life. A recent accomplishment is a free round-trip ticket for students who study abroad and their families each year to visit the country.  
Local student unions sponsor social activities including weekly movies, plays and parties in addition to educational programs which are an important and integral part of the student life.  
Political awareness of what is happening in the world in general, which is almost completely lacking in students at Penn State, is an important aspect and is given considerable attention in our schools.  
A pioneer experiment of the student unions is to run college cafeterias to provide more and cheaper food for the students; also, there are centers for selling and buying used books with no profit made.  
Finally, all campuses are safe; assault and vandalism are very rare, and rape is never heard of.



Illustrations by Lisa Bollinger

## Distance changes student's views

By **WEI-CHANG LIAUH**  
Taiwan  
Graduate-chemical engineering

When I was a little kid (that was about ten years after the second World War), I was impressed that America was a wonderful country.  
People living here were wealthy, friendly and happy. This was a country which was leading in technology and many other fields.  
However, I can remember when I had the impression that this country was full of crime, violence, drugs and any other terrible things that one can imagine.  
Of course you know, as I gradually realized, that this picture is certainly not true. We should blame the mass communication media. They like to report news good for themselves, although it might not be good for the society.  
In my opinion, I still think that

America is a nice, beautiful and great country. This might be because I am living in a small, quiet college town.  
If you ask a person from a big city such as New York or Philadelphia, you will very possibly get a description which is similar to the one I mentioned before. However, thank God, not everyone has to live in the big city.  
I used to think that American people belonged to two groups — one that played sports and one that only watched the other group play.  
It is surprising to me to find out that most people do play a lot of different kinds of sports.  
Generally speaking, American students work harder than I used to think. The educational system seems to be directed towards being real and facing the actual problem.  
One thing about this country that

really bothers me is the American patriotism. I can never understand why American people always complain about their own government.  
I would become crazy if I were president of the United States because there are so many complaints. Some of them even involve psychologically personal attacks.  
Well, this might be the American way of politics.  
The other thing that bothers me is people's attitudes towards foreign cars. My roommate was intending to buy a car, and he just completely ignored American-made cars in his consideration. This is common, since you always hear people complaining about American small cars.  
However, he finally changed his mind and made a right decision. You don't expect a '71 Vega to be still in good condition, as you seldom see a car of the

same price and same age running well on the road.  
However, I cannot understand why complaints always are made about American cars.  
Well, the above opinions might not be true since I have been living in this country for only a little more than two years.  
As a matter of fact, I am very grateful for what I have been obtaining from this country. I enjoy and appreciate the experiences that I have had at Penn State.  
University President John Oswald often mentions how well he was treated when he was in Taiwan. That is because Penn State has a strong and active alumni organization there.  
Someday when you have a chance to travel abroad, you will be happy to find out that there are so many good friends that you can call on in each country.



Photo by Chip Connelly