

Students sample cultures at festival

By RACHELLE AYUYANG
Collegian Staff Writer

The sights, sounds and flavors of 22 world regions came together yesterday afternoon in the HUB.

The International Fair, part of the weekend-long International Festival, featured international food for sale in the HUB Ballroom, with arts, crafts and cultural displays in the basement.

A children's program that included a puppet show, clowns and storytelling was held in the HUB Fishbowl.

"This is a good chance to see international students in action and as a whole," said Robert Goerder, Penn State Alumni Association travel coordinator and international liaison.

Milam Freitag, a State College resident, said he had already tasted dishes from Thailand, Africa, India, Korea and Turkey. He said he came because there are very few diverse international restaurants in town.

Coffeehouse showcases world cultures

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In the late 1960s coffeehouses beckoned people to come forward and express themselves — and on Friday night representatives from nine international groups did just that.

At the 17th Annual International Coffeehouse in 102 Kern, performers danced and sang cultural songs to show their emotions about their cultures. The Coffeehouse enabled international students to share their cultures with other people through the performing arts, Coffeehouse Coordinator Clive Muir said.

Becky Peretz, of the Penn State Israeli Society, danced to "Shalom," or peace.

"It's a nice way to say we are on the map and to release our emotions," she said.

Peretz, who teaches the new physical education class Israeli Folk Dance, said she thought about all Israelis during the event — especially her Israeli relatives.

But Warren Wood, an Israeli Society member and also one of the dancers, said Israel and the gulf war were far from his mind. He said he focuses on his dancing instead.

"I like dancing because it is a harmonious experience," Wood said. "And it's a lot of fun."

Stan Shepherd, representing the Caribbean Students Association, encouraged audience participation with his medley of folk songs from Jamaica and Trinidad including "Nobody's

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"It's a good food day," Freitag said.

The fair raises Americans' awareness and understanding of other cultures, Goerder said. In turn, international students have the opportunity to show pride in their cultures, he said.

About 2,700 international students are enrolled at University Park, he said.

At his booth outside of the HUB Ballroom, Goerder helped promote the establishment of Penn State alumni clubs in different countries to keep in touch with international University stu-

dents after they graduate. These clubs exist in 45 countries, Goerder said.

"It is important to have friends overseas and create ambassadors for Penn State and the United States in their homeland," he said.

Penn State has 3,179 international alumni, he said. But Goerder said more than 6,000 international alumni are not on record because they have lost ties with the University.

Goerder said he is concerned about the 19 Penn State alumni from Iraq and the 11 from Kuwait.

Concerns about the gulf war carried over into the booths at the fair.

Hussein Cheraghi, presiding over the Iranian Muslim Student Association booth, said that every year Muslims consolidate their material on one table — this year only political and religious literature.

He speculated that Iraqi and Saudi students were absent from the fair because of the gulf war.

"It's a good opportunity to show people other cultures even though the Israelis are over there and the Muslims are over here," Cheraghi said, referring to the two booths' locations.

At the Israeli table, Zvi Weinberg (graduate-aerospace engineering) agreed with Cheraghi that political discussions regarding world affairs are out of place at the fair.

"Our purpose is not to criticize other cultures but to show the culture of Israel," Weinberg said.

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and Trinidad, including "Nobody's Business (But My Own)," "The Banana Boat Song" and "The Redhead." But Shepherd emphasized the songs' music rather than understanding the words.

"If you don't get the language," he said, "you get the rhythm."

The audience reciprocated by singing in harmony the refrain of the "Chi Chi Bird."

"It's spontaneous," Shepherd said. "The music brings people together to entertain them."

One Caribbean Students Association member played music on a steel pan drum with an uncommon concave top.

The first group of the night, the Conversants — an intercultural mix of Swiss, German, Japanese and American students — sang pop tunes such as "Open Arms" and "Heaven." The group sang in their common language — English.

"American songs sound good from people of other cultures," said Conversant member Rich Tito.

The Thai Students Association presented the Ramsern dance in which men and women separated into two lines and imitated motions of working in fields.

TSA members also introduced Thai classical music which involved a percussion instrument called a Kim and a violin and voice accompaniment. In the third part of their act, both dancers and band performed a circle dance — a traditional dance from central Thailand.

Coming to his first Coffeehouse, Lock Haven University student Jay Kumar said, "This is the only program in which international — not just American students — have the chance to come together and see other diverse cultures."

Other performing groups included the Indonesian Student Association, Friends of India, Penn State Filipino Association and the Hellenic Society.

County says hospitals not tax exempt

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Allegheny County appealed the tax exemptions of eight Pittsburgh and suburban hospitals because it no longer believes they fit the state's definition of a charity, the county's top lawyer said.

The county on Friday appealed the exemptions of 35 properties owned by North Hills Passavant, St. Clair Memorial, Sewickley Valley, Jefferson—South Hills Health System, St. Francis, West Penn, Shadyside and St. Margaret Memorial hospitals.

The exemption of each hospital's main building was challenged. Also under review before the Board of Property Assessments, Appeals and Review are parking garages and doctors' offices.



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