



Smiles From Iraq to Wausau and UWSP

By Yauo Yang



Yauo Yang in Iraq

Thanks, Yauo, for taking the time to give us great insight into what is happening in Iraq. We think of you often and we wish you a safe journey home in the near future!
-Editorial Comment

“Welcome to Wausau.” Wow, I can’t wait to see that sign again! It is only something that I can dream about seeing for now. Wausau will always be my “home” even though I’m half way across the world. Since June 20, 2004 my Wisconsin National Guard unit from the 1-128th Infantry Battalion has been activated in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We trained for about six months in Mississippi and California. Last Thanksgiving our unit left the states to come to Kuwait and about a week later entered Iraq. Since then I have been stationed here in Samarra, Iraq. We are located just north of Baghdad in what’s known as the Sunni Triangle. This city’s population of about +200,000 is mostly made up of the minority Sunnis.

Our job here is to do urban missions, trying to stop the insurgents from disrupting the peace process. Many of us have seen combat that we once only imagined or was only something we saw in Hollywood movies. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine coming to Iraq to fight. It was only this same time last year that I was a senior at UW-Stevens Point. Now I’m fighting for a country that has mixed feelings about us U.S. troops being here. I want so much to help these people to rebuild their country and get them back on their feet, but how do you do that with some of them trying to kill you? What makes it even worse is that this war doesn’t have a defined, uniformed enemy. We have seen our deal of combat battles and close encounters with death, but many of us have yet to see “a face of the enemy.” We are fighting in a war that is unconventional. You don’t know who your enemy is. There is a saying here that goes, “Friends during day, enemy by night.” Some people come and shake our hands and give us the thumbs up with big smiles, but by dark they are the ones who are trying to kill us.

It’s a different world over here with so much poverty and

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Student Spot Light

Tong Xiong



Tong's Favorite:

TV Show or movie: Gladiator

Food: Pho (Vietnamese Noodle)

Singer: Bird Sek

Color: Blue, and Gold

Song: Let it Be- Beatles

Website: www.uwsp.edu (I see it everyday)

Hobbies: Attend family gatherings, play volleyball and tennis, read a good book and watch movies

Tong Xiong will be graduating with a degree Broadfield Social Studies. He plans to get a teaching position in high school social study areas. He is currently interning at Wausau West High School as a Intern-History Teacher.

During his years at UWSP, he held many leadership positions and has been involved in various organizations. He was the president of HaSEAAC 2002-2003, a member of International Club, History Club, Pi Gamma Mu (2003), StWEA (Student Wisconsin Education Association), School of Education Peer Advisor (2004), and Residence Hall Governor.

“Being involved in these organizations helped me tremendously because I learned how to get a long with different groups of organizations. They helped me developed and enhanced my leadership skills. They also helped me get to

know many important people and established important networking here on campus as well as in the community,” Tong said.

Hence, Tong traveled extensively during his junior year at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He studied for a semester in London, England, and traveled throughout Europe visiting major cities such as Paris, Prague, Montreux (Switzerland), Rome and Vienna. In the summer of 2004, He also studied at Payap University in Chiangmai, Thailand. Tong speaks English, Hmong, Thai, and is currently working on learning the Lao language.

Along with that, Tong has also achieved and accomplished many other things. Tong has received the Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards, 2000-2004, the Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges Award, 2005, the Chancellor's Leadership Award, 2005, the University

HaSEAAC Conference Scholarship Winners

ON FEBRUARY 19, 2005, HMONG AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN CLUB (HASEAAC) HELD A CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY CENTER.

BY ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE, STUDENTS WERE ELIGIBLE FOR THE HASEAAC HMONG CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP. THIS IS THE FIRST YEAR THAT THIS SCHOLARSHIP HAS BEEN GIVEN OUT.

ASHLEY GRABOSKI-BAUER AND MAI YER CHANG WERE THE TWO RECIPIENTS OF THIS HASEAAC CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP. EACH RECEIVED \$100.00.

Native American Awareness Week

Highlights of the Native American Awareness Week March 28—April 2, 2005 at UWSP:

- **Monday, March 28** - Author and UW-Green Bay professor, Dee Sweet (White Earth Ojibwe) conducted a poetry reading. Later that evening, a video presentation of the American Indian Dance Theater was shown.
- **Tuesday, March 29**—Students hosted an evening panel of tribal Elders from Menominee, HoChunk, and Oneida communities, who shared their life experiences.
- **Wednesday, March 30**, students sold Indian tacos to help with activity costs for the week.
- **Thursday, March 31**—A highlight of the week occurred when Grammy Award-Winning musician, Bill Miller (Stockbridge-Munsee) visited the UWSP campus and presented, “Life on the Rez,” which was followed by a concert.
- **Saturday, April 2**—The 32nd annual AIRO Traditional Pow-Wow was held in the Berg Gymnasium. A traditional feast was included in the cost of admission. There were dozens of vendors on hand, offering a large variety of Native American crafts.

A change to this year’s event included a musical performance by Award-winning musician Michael Jacobs (Cherokee).

The AIRO Pow-Wow began with the “Grand Entry” at 1:00 p.m., which is the formal opening of the Pow-Wow. Native American singers (also called drum groups) from various tribal communities



Jasmynne and Donovan Collins dance at the Pow-Wow. They are children of Ericka and Fletcher Collins and grandchildren of Sharon and Allen Cloud. **Photo by Tom Charlesworth**

attended, along with perhaps a hundred dancers in traditional tribal regalia. Inter-tribal singing and dancing followed, and continued until a two-hour break scheduled for late afternoon. During the break, a traditional feast was served at DeBot Center, while musician Michael Jacobs remained in the Berg gym to offer a second performance at 5:30 p.m.

A second evening session began with a second Grand Entry at 7:00 p.m., followed by additional inter-tribal singing and dancing. Closing with a traditional giveaway and traveling song, the AIRO Pow-Wow concluded around 10:00 pm.

Written by: AIRO Students

Geary Larrick, DMA



Geary H. Larrick, Doctor of Musical Arts and a retired assistant professor or Music at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, performs regularly on marimba and piano in Central Wisconsin. During February, 2005, Black History Month, he has featured a program of music composed by African American musicians. Composers whose work is featured include Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin, Miles Davis, Thad Jones, Freddie Hubbard and Thomas “Fats” Waller. He taught Miles Davis’ “Blue in Green” in music theory classes at UWSP in the new Fine Arts Building in the early 1970’s, when he conducted the Stevens Point Symphony Orchestra, the UWSP Concert Band and the University Percussion Ensemble. Geary was the presenter for Multicultural Affairs’ Brown Bag Luncheon on April 11, 2005.

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Student Spot Light

Josh Ertl

Josh's Favorite:

TV Show: Seven Samurai-Directed by Akira Kurosawa

Food: Japanese Curry

Color: all of them

Song: Fur Elise by Beethoven

Pastime: Hanging out with my friends, watching movies and reading

Website: www.ninjai.com



Josh Ertl has a major in Asian History. He plans to teach English in Korea, and travel. He also plans to pursue a PhD degree in the same field of study.

During this years at UWSP, he's held six leadership positions in three years and a member seven different organizations. In HaSEAAC, Josh has been the Public Relationship officer, sectary. He was also Vice President and Sectary for the gaming club and Vice President for Fencing. Josh also was a senator for Student Government.

Josh tells about his first experience with a multicultural organization and how he felt when first joining HaSEAAC.

"Being a member of HaSEAAC has made me realize

how important friends and family really are and that I would do anything for my friends," Josh said. "I remember walking into my first HaSEAAC meeting and realizing that the other guy in the room was one of my friends who I hadn't seen since 3rd grade."

Josh has studied abroad in China for a semester. He recommends student to study abroad. "Everyone should go to a foreign country for at least a month. You not only learn a lot about the country and its people, you also learn a lot about yourself."

After five years of being here, Josh will finally be graduating. According to Josh, "Out of all the awards I've received, this acknowledgement is the best one."

Editorial Comment- Linda Pluke



Wow, another academic year is coming to a close! We are thrilled to have our students graduate, but it is also sad to know that they are moving on, and we won't be seeing them for a long while. I particularly want to thank all of the student employees in the Multicultural Affairs Department. Without you, we couldn't survive. Each job is important, and we depend on you to help us get things done.

Have a safe and fun summer, and come back in the fall refreshed.

- Linda

Quote from a cereal box:

Once your consciousness has been raised, it cannot be lowered.



INFLUENCE

Influence is like a savings account.

The less you use it, the more you've got.

- Andrew Young

From the Director's Desk - Ron Strege

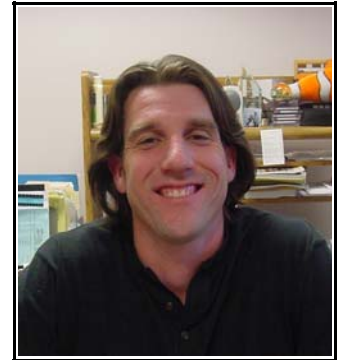
Last night I got to sit in on the Chancellor's Leadership Award ceremony for 2005 and I was struck by how many great leaders we are losing. Nicole Sutton; Marika Loftman Davis; Laurice Biemeret-Freeman; Tong Xiong; Billie Haas; Melissa Samolyk; David Cohen; and Xia Lee Vang all received this prestigious award. This is not even mentioning our other graduates that have given so much to this campus like Justin

Mallett and Jeremy McClain to name a few.

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of our great seniors for the work they have done for us and to wish them well in their future!

For the rest of you, this should serve as a reminder that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and your time is coming soon! Also, it is time to step up and make a difference on this campus. Do it now!

-Ron



“Smiles from Iraq” continues:

violence. It's nothing like the quiet, peaceful Wausau I knew and grew up in. This has definitely been another eye-opening experience for me. I say this because in some ways you could say that I've seen and been through these harsh conditions before. I grew up in Ban Vinai, a war-torn refugee camp in Thailand. When I see these poor, little Iraqi children, I am reminded of my own early childhood struggles. I have been in an environment just like these children are in right now. I know what it means to be hungry, to live in poverty and to not know if you will be alive the next day. The list goes on and on. Part of me wishes I could help all these little children, but I am just one soldier. I can only do so much with my rank as an Army Specialist, but I have tried to help at any available opportunity. I have given out personal food to the begging kids, pens and paper to the school children, toys to the little children so they don't have to play with old tires, and given much needed personal hygiene supplies to my good Iraqi army soldier friends who we fight side by side with. This is my little personal way of trying to make a small difference in this big crazy country which I will call home until the end of this year. I wish I could do more, but for now this is my little way of giving my love to these innocent people who just want to live in peace. Like you and I, they just want to raise their families without violence and death and war. Unfortunately, for so many of these people that's all they've ever known. They don't know what it means to go to bed at night without worrying about gunfire and bombs going off.

We are fighting our own war over here, and I hope that our daily sacrifices are making a difference back there. I am proud to hear that the city of Wausau declared April as Hmong History Month. I am also proud to be one of the few Hmong soldiers in Iraq, the only Hmong in my company of about 120 soldiers, and one of three non-citizens. I'm a non-citizen who has been trying to obtain my citizenship for the last couple of years now, but have been bogged down by red tape. My Caucasian comrades and I continue to perform missions whereby they cover my back and I cover theirs. Many of the soldiers here have never spoken to a Hmong before. This is the first time that they have gotten to really know one. I challenge all of you back home, this particular month, to reach out to someone you don't know. Maybe that person might be your Hmong co-worker, neighbor, or stranger whom you may have a few minutes to talk with. Take the time to get to know them.

We Hmong are also a part of this great community in which we all call “home.” We are here to stay and want to make a difference in the community we live in. Serving here in Iraq is my little way of saying “thank you” to all the kind and caring residents of central Wisconsin who have been so accepting of us Hmong. I am trying to make a small difference by protecting my community so that these terrorists will never ever again bring the same 9/11 terrorism back to the American home front. We, the Hmong, are part of this great country and we, too, are trying to make this nation a better place for everyone. As I go out each day to risk my life for peace, I hope that each one of you back home will take advantage of the daily opportunities that you have to make a difference in your community. All it takes is a smile and a kind “hello” to change someone's life. For me, this means bringing a smile to the face of an Iraqi child when they taste American candy for the very first time. This war is about winning one smile at a time, so go out there and give your smile to someone in the wonderful community of Wausau. Remember, in Wisconsin you are “A Hmong Friend.”



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Check out the
Multicultural Affairs
Web Page!
www.uwsp.edu/multicultural

MULTICULTURAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

AIRO:

*American Indians Reaching
for Opportunity*

Advisor: Sharon Cloud

Purpose: To encourage awareness
and understanding for all Indian peo-
ple

SAS:

South Asia Society

Advisor: Jyoti Chander

Purpose: To foster global family
and promote an exchange of cul-
ture, friendship and understanding
among members and the commu-
nity.

AISES:

*American Indians Science & En-
gineering Society*

Advisor: Andrew Gokee

Purpose: To provide opportunities for
American Indians and Alaska Natives to
pursue studies in sciences, engineering,
business and other academic arenas.

HaSEAAC:

*Hmong and Southeast Asian
American Club*

Advisor: Sue Kubley

Purpose: To provide a more exten-
sive understanding of the Southeast
Asian culture and to promote cultural
awareness

INTERNATIONAL CLUB:

Advisors: Jutta Brendel and Kathy
Lamb

Purpose: To promote and encour-
age an exchange of culture
throughout the nations by providing
opportunities for friendship, under-
standing and the social interests of
its members.

SALSA:

*Student Alliance for Latino Stu-
dents and Advancements*

Advisors: Elia Armacanqui Tipacti and
Beverley David

Purpose: To provide a more extensive
understanding of Latin American cul-
tures. It will promote education about a
positive image of the Latin American cul-
ture within the university and the wider
community.

BSU:

Black Student Union

Advisors: Melvyn Rousseau

Purpose: To cultivate self-esteem,
racial understanding, and to unite the
black students on the UWSP campus
and educate people on black issues.

CCC:

Chinese Culture Club

Advisor: Jianwei Wang

Purpose: To encourage an under-
standing of current and traditional
Chinese cultural, social, and eco-
nomical development.