Message From the FIN Staff

I hope the spring semester has started out well for all of you! As the new office assistant, I am very excited to be a part of the international experience at FIN. Personally, I have traveled around the world to many countries as a student and a ceramic artist, most often to Japan. I am now looking forward to being a part of this community and learning more about all of your international experiences and interests! If there is anything I can help with, please stop by my office any time. Or, just come by and introduce yourself!

- Meredith McGriff-Miller
  Office Assistant

Community Announcements

FIN Website and Blog
Did you know Foster International has its own website and blog? Keep up to date on FIN events at www.fin.indiana.edu and http://finblog.edublogs.org/.

Yearbook Committee
We are actively seeking residents to participate in the development of our 2008-2009 yearbook! This would be a great opportunity for you to display your artistic ability by photographing events, conducting interviews, and writing narratives of life at FIN! Contact Dr. Galuska or Meredith McGriff-Miller if you would like to participate!

Still Seeking Photos & Stories!
Every year we seek out photos from residents' home towns and home countries to feature on our website and in our newsletter. We are also interested in featuring short stories about students' experiences, interests, and activities. If you have something to share, please contact Dr. Galuska or office assistant Meredith McGriff-Miller.

Returning Next Year?
Contract renewal for the 2009-2010 school year has already begun. Be sure to check the RPS website - http://www.rps.indiana.edu/reshallrenewal09-10.cfml?aud=current for information about the renewal process. We hope to see you at FIN again next year!

Upcoming Events

Movie Nights - FIN movie nights have returned! An exciting cultural film will be shown every Tuesday night beginning at 7 p.m. in the Ground Floor Lounge.

Ski Trip - A trip to Paoli Peaks is planned for the evening of February 20th. Check the website or contact June Park (park61@indiana.edu) for information!

Anniversary Events - Many events are being planned for Foster International’s 25th Anniversary! The End of the Year 25th Anniversary Celebration will be on Friday afternoon, April 17th. Check the website and future newsletters for more information!
The Inauguration Experience

Maggie Bishop and Claudia Torres

On January 20th, 2009, Barack H. Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States of America. He is the first African-American ever to hold the office of U.S. Commander-in-Chief. This event was witnessed by well over one million people in chilly Washington D.C., and by many millions more through coverage on television and the Internet.

From the “We are One” Concert to the inauguration, the feeling of continuity and camaraderie was present. It was almost unsettling how much popularity Obama has acquired, how he is able to please a group of people who so badly are looking for change that they look to one man as the next FDR, the next Kennedy, or the next Abraham Lincoln. As I stood I could not help but wonder how one man could captivate a nation the way this man has. How a Junior Senator from Illinois could become the president of a country so lost. Awe is the only word I can think to describe the sensation. Awe at the number of people and of the enthusiasm, both of which contributed to violent jostles in the crowd.

I am grateful for being given the opportunity to witness this historic day, President Obama, with the help of us all and promise of positive change, can bring glory, honor, fairness and hope back to the United States.

As Barack Obama so poignantly stated in his inauguration speech: “In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted - for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.”

We all must do our part and we all must step up to create the America we want to live in.

The Inauguration Welcome Concert
photo courtesy of Steve Ewing

The Inauguration Day, itself, was marked by a feeling that we were not only witnessing history, but creating it. “Life is not measured by the breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.” This time, this moment was breathtaking, and it was literally just a chair with wheels and whether or not the ice in the reflection pool is thick enough to support a person (it’s not), we called it a night and returned to our homes.

Bad Morning Mr. President (1/20)
In the distance ahead was the capital of our country. And, we’d be liars if we said that spending such a long time in a car was something we’d now like to do often. However, the voyage provided the opportunity, which we quickly seized, to bond with our fellow car members.

We visited presidents Roosevelt, Lincoln, and Washington, and the monuments erected after the wars in Vietnam and Korea. We made a serious effort to study, revere, and clown around our nation’s capital. After discoveries, such as where the first statue of FDR in a wheelchair is (the WWII room of his memorial, and the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom."

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During their trip to Washington D.C., some of the FIN Ambassadors kept us up to date on their experiences by writing in the FIN blog. Below are some excerpts from their writings. To view all of their blog entries, go to http://finblog.edublogs.org.

The Schlep (1/17)
MapQuest estimates a trip from Bloomington to DC takes at least 11 hours, so none of us were expecting a simple journey. And, we’d be liars if we said that spending such a long time in a car was something we’d now like to do often. However, the voyage provided the opportunity, which we quickly seized, to bond with our fellow car members.

Covered by the Washington Monument
photo courtesy of Dina Chipiga

A Little after two, the Star Spangled Banner was played, and a procession of VIP’s rolled in. Vice President Biden, his wife. When the Obama’s arrived, shrieks of joy and waving arms filled the air. I couldn’t help but awe at the effect this one man has on such a large group of people. Throughout the concert Obama bobbed his head to the music, laughing at impersonations done of him, while his daughters took pictures of people of “celebrities” on stage. The Obama family wooed the crowd once again with their ability to make people feel that they are one of us, we are one and together we will change the fate of our country.

Meeting the Audience (1/20)
With a set of snipers milling around Smithsonian buildings, complete especially our front and back were the crowds. Vast and colorful, a sea of people waiting for something we could all see comfortably at home on our couch. But, this was much more than we would find on our couches. This was anticipation breathing between our shivering lips. This was giddiness at the thought that in front of us was something so big.

The rest is history, plan completely and utterly intended...
Gone Native
Claudia Torres

Everyone has an opinion on the greatest challenge facing our President. What do you think will be his greatest challenge in the first one hundred days of his administration?

The most important challenge facing Obama is restoring a sense of leadership and trust. The President has to be respected and be able to take the country in a new direction, especially in these extremely difficult times. Also, he has to commit to the promises he made during the campaign trail, and to be able to deliver results for the country.

Amy Taylor, Freshman

The biggest problem facing the Obama Administration is the revival of the economy. Also, he has to make sure that he can get all his policies passed without the Republican Party obstructing his movements. Ultimately, the most important issue is foreign policy. He needs to build good rapport with countries around the world and re-establish a positive image of the United States.

Kelsey Lauter, Freshman

Obama’s challenge is to get the country out of a recession and stabilize employment opportunities. It is also important that he promotes peace and stability in the Middle East through a strong multilateral agenda. The President needs to work on unifying the country. None of the problems facing the new administration can be fixed without a united nation.

Sweeney Machado, Sophomore

I think the biggest challenge that he will face would be overcoming some of the high expectations that have been put on him. Many people believe that many of the problems will be able to be solved quickly, however, I believe most of them will take time. People have been waiting for a long time for him to be finally inaugurated and now that he is people expect there to be an immediate change across the board, and I believe that will not be the case.

Michael Melvin, Junior

I think the biggest issue Obama will have will be the media’s representation of him. A lot of people have really high expectations about what he will do, but that won’t happen within the first days of his administration. The media will watch Obama like a hawk, and will criticize any actions that do not conform to the plan he proposed during the campaign trail. He will also be challenged on public policy issues, such as the Middle East, but that he will be triumphant because he is popular amongst foreign leaders, governments, and people.

Matt Orr, Freshman