



V.I.S.A.

# V.I.S.A. INK WINTER 2010





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# The Producer !

And so, another year comes to an end. And along with it, my time with V.I.S.A. has as well. For me, the experience of being with V.I.S.A. has been like a fine Wine: it has gotten better and better every year. At the same time though, just like the Wine I have become older too!

This year, V.I.S.A. broke many frontiers. We now have our own meeting place, in the basement of Cody Hall in the International Student Centre. Renovating and painting flags on that wall was a highlight of the year for us.

This was also a year of new events such as the UWindsor Amazing Race, which took place during Windsor Welcome Week. V.I.S.A.'s efforts at this event were featured in the Windsor Star as well. We are hoping the UWindsor Amazing Race will be a part of V.I.S.A. tradition in the years to come.



**Pumudu Liyanage**  
**Coordinator**

Being Coordinator for the past eight months has been an amazing experience for me. It has been an experience full of learning, discovery and getting to know about myself and others. It has taught me again and again, the core values on which V.I.S.A. is built upon: Friendship, Imagination, Happiness, Perseverance, Adventure, Leadership, Diversity, Determination and Innovation. These are values which will be cherished by the incoming team for 2010-2011, and I am sure will be for many a year to come. I could write so much more about my experiences with V.I.S.A., but this is a time for remembering and thanking people and that is what I shall do.

We had 32 events in the 357 days, plus over 2000 volunteer hours and none of that would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Executives. So, first and foremost I would like to thank them. While all of them did a fantastic job, I would like to especially thank my Assistant Coordinator, Lulua Mala and Executive for Events Vanessa Sperduti for their unflinching support and friendship through the year.

I would also like to thank the volunteers who selflessly gave their hours to the betterment of their fellow students as well. In addition, I would also like to thank the staff at the International Student Centre and the Educational Development Centre for their support as well. Finally, I wish the best of luck to the new Executive team for 2010-2011. I have no doubts that this team will be the best ever and as V.I.S.A. reaches the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding they will take us to even greater heights!

Good luck to everyone and thank you for your support and friendship through these last three years!



# The Director's Cut

“In the end we are all separate: our stories, no matter how similar, come to a fork and diverge. We are drawn to each other because of our similarities, but it is our differences we must learn to respect.” – Anonymous

Every semester we come across new ideas, new people, and new beginnings. Each idea, individual and beginning comes with a bout of excitement. Just like everyone else, I met new people, made new friends, networked with a lot of staff on campus, and just had a wonderful time!



**Lulua Mala**  
**Assistant Coordinator**

I have had a fabulous year being Assistant Coordinator and have had the privilege of working with one of the best teams V.I.S.A. has ever seen. Under the supervision and careful watch (LOL) of Coordinator, Pumudu Liyanage, this year's team has overcome various obstacles and have come up with so many new initiatives for the organization. I am proud to be associated with a group like V.I.S.A. which does not only provide assistance for international students regarding matters on volunteer opportunities or enhancing leadership skills but also to encourage them to take an active role in the community at the University of Windsor.

We provided students with various training opportunities this semester and took students for a wonderful, fun-filled day trip to St. Mary's for Tubing.

As the new team takes over in the Summer, I encourage all students to be a part of V.I.S.A.

and to continue helping V.I.S.A. in integrating the experience of learning from the

Have a great Summer everyone!!!



# Screenwriter



**Mahek Ajmera**  
**Executive, Publications**

“Coming together, sharing together, working together, and succeeding together.” I had read this quote somewhere on the web but I can now say that I truly understand the meaning of this quote. Over the last year, I have worked with the V.I.S.A. Executive Committee and the volunteers on different tasks and one thing I have realised is that working together is the only way of achieving success and having fun while achieving success would be the best recipe for a great team.

I would especially like to thank my Associate, Avinesh and the other volunteers for assisting me make this newsletter.

I am extremely grateful to all of our sponsors. Their support

I would like to dedicate this newsletter to our outgoing coordinator Pumudu for his leadership in V.I.S.A. and keeping trust on his volunteers. I also dedicate it to the other Executive members who are graduating this year. We will miss you.

# Art Director

When I was told that I have to write few words describing my experience being with V.I.S.A., a quote I read by ‘Margaret Carty’ long time ago came to my mind. The quote says "The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side." One can't fully understand the meaning of these profound words unless he/she has been in a team.

Thanks to Volunteer International Students Assistance (V.I.S.A.), I fully understand and value this statement. Being with V.I.S.A. instilled a sense of belongingness in me.

Publishing V.I.S.A. newsletter is always a rewarding experience. It's an opportunity to work with many new people, re-living their experiences and understanding their thoughts. Then the part I personally cherish the most that involves thinking outside the box; ‘Creative Brainstorming’ regarding the newsletter's theme, design and layout.

Preparing this little booklet wasn't an easy task but with the help of Executive of Publication Mahek Ajmera, it surely was a joy ride.



**Avinesh Wadhwa**  
**Associate, Publications**



# Audience Review



“Your time at the University of Windsor is a lifetime changing experience, the best way to share this period of your life is to be surrounded by good friends, VISA does that for you and more, they provide you with the opportunity to learn and succeed in this new country.”

- Enrique Chacon, International Students Advisor

“VISA...What a great way to meet others, have fun and do something meaningful, all at the same time! Do yourself a favour and get involved...you won't regret it. Make VISA part of your University of Windsor experience!”

- Nancy Steeves, Admission Officer



“They may Forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel” - Carl W. Buechner

Join my Facebook fan page “**ISC Handsorvising Fan Page**” to be informed about Important Dates, Deadlines, and other advising information.

- Lori Handsor, Program Advisor

“V.I.S.A.—A great way to gain volunteer experience while expanding your knowledge about different cultures.”

- Kelly Dagenais, Office Coordinator



“V.I.S.A is a great social outlet for students to take a break from their studies and gain experiences through volunteering and leisure activities.

- Vanessa Cain, International Assistant

# Foreign Location -Brunei



Brunei is a little country nestled in between Malaysia on the island of Borneo. Right next to the South China Sea, the coast line stretches for miles. Further inland, the lush tropical rainforests cover the landscape. With warm weather all year round, you can lounge on the sandy beaches or trek through the jungle any time you feel like an adventure.



**Sharon Ann Yong**

Life in Brunei is relaxed and calm. This fits very well with the country's full name: Brunei Darussalam, which means Abode of Peace. The denizens of Brunei are friendly and laid back. The majority of the people in the country are Malay, indigenous to this region of the world.

What may come as a surprise to most people is that there are no taxes in Brunei. Brunei is prosperous because it is rich in natural resources of oil and gas. Oil and gas make up the main bulk of export. This has enabled citizens to enjoy many benefits from free healthcare and education to low living expenses.

Food come in many varieties and is very affordable. The huge selection of food comes from influences of nearby countries. Chinese, Malaysian and Indonesian cuisine are commonplace in Brunei. Local food is usually spicy and is an acquired taste. But once you get used to it, you'll be hooked for life. *Nasi Katok*, *laksa* and *kolo mee* are local food that is simple but oh so delectable. If you ever swing by, they are some of the food that you must try out.



As Brunei is a predominantly Muslim country, there are no local bars within the country. If you feel like partying, you can cross the border and head over to Malaysia. It is less than 2 hours drive from any point in the country as the country is small in size.

For most people, Brunei is a refuge from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. It is a relic of simpler times. Bruneians are kept up to speed of global events but life goes on as usual regardless of the turmoil of the outside world. Brunei has a population size of less than 500,000 for a country that is about 2000 square miles. This means that the country is very sparsely populated, made up of little towns with close knit communities where everyone knows each other.

If you love the salty breeze of the sea and the wonders of nature, Brunei is just up your alley. The friendly people are a bonus. Feel free to drop by the next time you are in Asia.



# Foreign Location -Qatar

Qatar is an Arab emirate in the Middle East and is an absolute monarchy ruled by the Al-Thani family. Qatar got independence in 1971, before which it was under the rule of the British. It is an official member of GCC, UN, OPEC, IMF and World Bank. Qatar was a former pearl- fishing centre and one of the poorest Gulf states, now with the discovery and the exploitation of its oil and gas fields, it is one of the richest in the Gulf states. Qatar is currently the world's largest supplier of LNG and it holds the world's third largest natural gas reserves. Qatar hosts a lot of sport events out of which the Doha Asian Games was hosted in 2006. It was a great sport event with almost all the countries from Asian participated.



**Marsha Pereira**



The official currency is called the Qatari Riyal. The most popular language spoken is Arabic. Most of the country consists of a low, barren, covered with sand land forming a desert. There are mild winters and very hot, humid summers. A variety of sub-tidal flora and fauna species can be found in the country. Oryx is the national animal of Qatar as is the most popular part of the wildlife. Mollusca are the most common spotting of wildlife in Qatar along the east and west coast of the Gulf. Sand dunes, tidal sand flats and lagoons are resting spots for flamingoes and wading birds.

There are various historic forts and museums and unique features would include the Corniche and dunes. Recently Qatar built an artificial island called The Pearl which represents a string of pearls. The name "The Pearl" was chosen because the island will be built on one of Qatar's previous major pearl diving sites.



# Critics' Reviews



VISA has been an exceptional service involved in programming services for new international students. The diverse events organized by a multicultural and diverse staff truly represent the essence of this service. VISA has been successful in making new international students adjust to the University environment by organizing events, outings, outreach programs, regular meetings, etc. New international students must actively take part and get involved. The International Students Society supports the initiatives taken by VISA and wishes them all the success.

It has been my pleasure to have worked with some of the most active student leaders on our campus in the form of Volunteer International Students Assistance. From my first year on campus, I have always felt welcome to attend your events and have always had a great time. From a training session on Microsoft Office software, to decorating the International Student Centre for the winter holiday season and painting flags in its basement to the "Visions For Darfur" event, I have not only had fun but I've typically managed to learn something, too. Although V.I.S.A. is a non-funded

student group, I have always been on the opinion that they are the most active student group on campus.

Some of the best and brightest students come up through the ranks of V.I.S.A. and I only hope that the next 10 years are as successful as the last.

-- Robert Woodrich, UWSA



## Multicultural Festival

Multicultural festival, an event that brought all the cultures together under one roof was held on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb'10 at the University of Windsor. I enjoyed being a part of it and I think it was a really good experience. The aim of the multicultural festival was to bring up all the people from different cultures together so that they can better know each other. It started with a beautiful Flag Parade from the Cody Hall to the CAW Student Centre followed by a speech by Prof. Neil Gold, Vice President. It was a really nice view to see all those colourful flags together and united. Though I was not present there for the whole time but I learnt a lot about other cultures during those few moments. I was there as a V.I.S.A. volunteer. I proudly represented V.I.S.A., many students seemed interested



**Syed Binish Hassan**

and also promised to show up for our upcoming events. Apart from volunteering, I enjoyed demonstration by some university students on Akido, which is a martial art developed in early 1900's. Two students gave an impressive musical performance, it was a beautiful fusion of classical and western music. There were many stalls from other countries. Some stalls had sweets to sell from their countries. I enjoyed having samosas, which I was craving for ever since I came to Canada. I also got to know a lot about our university radio station 'Cjam' and how we can use it to spread out our messages and concerns to other students in the university and the people around it. I was really happy that I got a chance to learn about the distant cultures and more about the university life; and this whole multicultural experience was really exciting for me and I'm looking forward to attend it next year as well.

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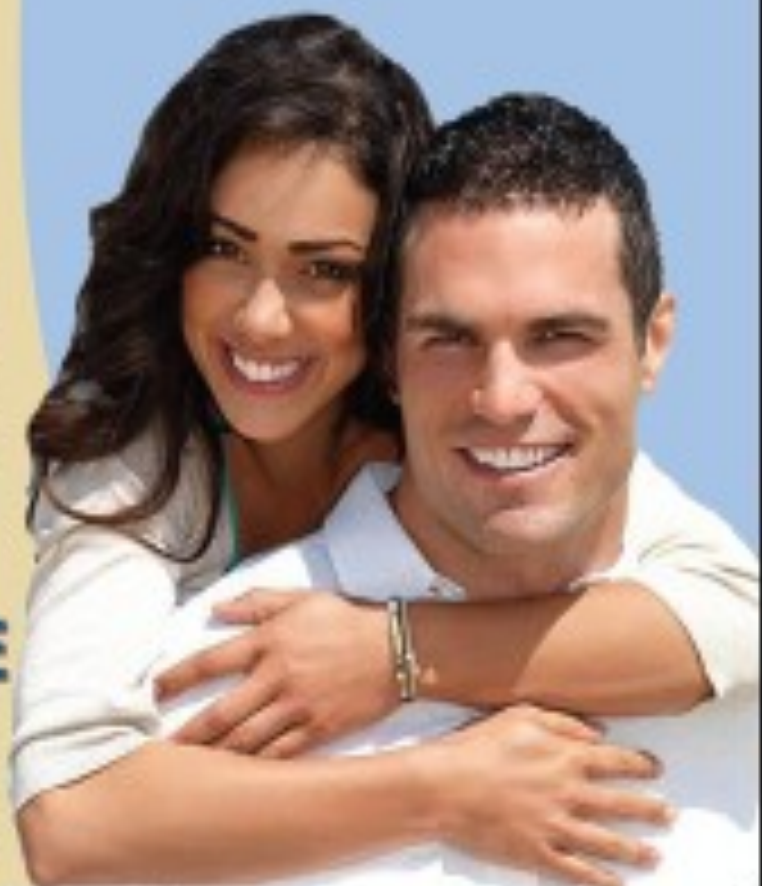
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**Coming Up: The Windsor Fringe Arts Festival 2010**

**Date: July 16th to July 25th 2010**

**\*\*\* More volunteer opportunities coming up for other theatre shows and events in April and May\*\*\***

**For more details about what a Fringe Festival is, visit our website (listed below) or please feel free to ask V.I.S.A., as they have had volunteers who have previously come out to volunteer for the Fringe Festival!!**

*Actors Theatre of Windsor*

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SEASON



**Get involved by just filling out a Volunteer form on our website @ [www.windsorfringe.com](http://www.windsorfringe.com)**

# Photo Shoot !



# Tubing All the Way !

Volunteer International Students Assistance (V.I.S.A) has been organising events to let the International Students know the Canadian culture better. This time V.I.S.A took a group of 55 students to St. Mary's, London, Ontario for a tubing trip. Tubing is a wintertime activity which is performed on the hill or slope, using gravity to propel the rider to the bottom of the grade. At a time, one to 4 people can slide down the hill. One of the most important features of the Canadian Weather is Snow. Ontario gets an average of 130 cm of snow every year. This gives an opportunity to the students to add another new experience to their life which most of them doesn't witness in their respective countries. The excitement in students can be seen from the fact that on Saturday morning everyone was on time even in such a cold weather. Before reaching our destination at St. Mary's, the bus also stopped at London Oaks Mall for 2 hrs. After reaching St. Mary's, we had 4 hours for tubing. For those whom it was their first time, some of them were scared after hearing people screaming while going down the slope. But after trying it once, they were so excited that they went to top of the hill running, even after being tired. After finishing tubing around 6 P.M, everyone got together for refreshment and everyone was talking about how much they enjoyed tubing. Even if it was the second time I went tubing with V.I.S.A, it was a better experience for me than the previous time. After talking to many students when we get back to Windsor, I can't remember anyone who didn't have fun on the trip.



**Kanik Kumar**

# Blades of Glory - Ice Skating

I can't think of anything more fun than moving precariously over ice and hoping you won't fall flat on your face and embarrass yourself in front of your friends. Trust me it is fun, and even if you do fall down, the bruises are absolutely worth it. That definitely sums up my first ice skating experience that I was fortunate to go for, through V.I.S.A (Volunteer International Students Association). On February 5th 2010, V.I.S.A offered to take a group of thirty student's ice skating at the Charles Clark Square in downtown Windsor. The trip was absolutely free of charge and included skates which had been rented from the All Saints Church. The cold did not seem to bother anyone, as they were too busy having fun. It was definitely a unique cultural experience for all of us first time skaters. Not only did I get to figure out how to balance on ice, I also made a few friends and caught up with ones I hadn't seen in a long time. Nothing brings people closer than hilariously embarrassing moments. Two hours of falling and getting up and making others fall in the process, I was pretty sure I had had the most fun yet that semester. Even though it was scary at first, everyone helped each other maintain their balance, that way everyone was guaranteed to have fun. This excursion not only, broadened my cultural horizons, but also gave me memories that would last me a long time. I would definitely recommend joining V.I.S.A for any of their winter activities as you get to experience a whole new side of Canada along with people who are new to the scenario too.



**Ishita Guptan**

# Winter ISO

I was welcomed at ISO as an international student and I now welcome the other international students on ISO. International student orientation is when an international student for the first time meets his/her most potential friends and well wishers for the rest of his/her University life.

ISO is an event that is designed to make the freshmen from all over the world to get to know each other before they could all get fragmented between their respective faculties or departments. Many students choose to live at the University residences and they live with either friend or else with other students of their own major. But for every international student, irrespective of off or on campus it is a very important date when they all cheer and learn the beauty of diversity. In 2009 fall session, I was just a freshman and was very keen and excited to see how ISO volunteers were working hard in making our first day at University fun and full of activity for us. They had the internationally run students societies of University present who asked us to be a part of them and be more involved to gain some volunteer experience. But the best part was that they had set games, free food stalls, and many more fun activities for students to interact with each other. It is a very helpful session for every International student who is new to Canada and at University.

I was really impressed by the service and purpose the orientation served. In winter 2010, I decided to give back the goodness I received on my first day at University. And so, I myself volunteered at the ISO and could experience this great session from two different perspectives.



**Gazala Rahman**

# Training

For winter 2010 semester, V.I.S.A. had 4 training sessions:

Microsoft Word 2007 level 2 – Jan 22, 2010

Microsoft Excel 2007 level 2 – Jan 29, 2010

Microsoft PowerPoint 2007 level 2 – March 19, 2010

V.I.S.A. Diversity Workshop – March 26, 2010

Computer workshops were provided by Computer Literacy Skills instructor Ms. Mical Palumbo.

Diversity workshop was conducted at Freed Orman Conference Centre between 10 am – 1pm on March 26, 2010. 110 students with various majors and from different organizations registered for the workshop.

I have learned many useful functions through Microsoft workshops. Especially, working on multiple spreadsheet at once and the use of slide master for PowerPoint were very helpful. I never knew that these functions existed. This workshop has provided me with very useful skills and this will help me to use these software effectively with less amount of time from now on.



**Aya Komatsu**



# Best Movies of the year and the nominees are ...

No, it's not the official nominees for the Oscars. It's my top 5 list of movies for the year.

2009 was a good year for the movie goers. May it be exploring Pandora to revisiting Ice Age, investigating secret society 'Illuminati' to figuring out what you did last night, witnessing Paranormal Activity to laughing your guts out at Zombieland. All in all 2009 had something for everyone. Here is my finite playlist of movies that I really enjoyed watching.

## #5. 2012

Being a special effect fanatic that I am, I knew I will see '2012' in the theatre for sure. I didn't go to theatre because I thought it would have a nice story, I did for its ridiculously excessive special effects and it pulls it off fabulously.

## #4. Angels and Demons

'Angels and Demons' by Dan Brown is my most favourite novel. Naturally, I was waiting eagerly for director Ron Howard's adaptation of the book. Being disappointed after watching the movie 'Da Vinci Code', I went in theatre not expecting much from the movie. It was a really good surprise, much better than expected. A decent action-thriller flick trying to combine science and religion. If you liked it, I would recommend you to read the book too!

## #3. Avatar

James Cameron did it again! Stunning visuals and compelling story line, James Cameron's 'Avatar' is memorable and meaningful. CGI and 3D effects takes one to the world of wonders, to the forests of Pandora. I can't think of anything as captivating, beautiful and wonderful as this, that I have ever seen on screen. Do yourself a favour, if you haven't seen this masterpiece yet, go catch it in 3D in any theatre near you.

## #2. The Hangover

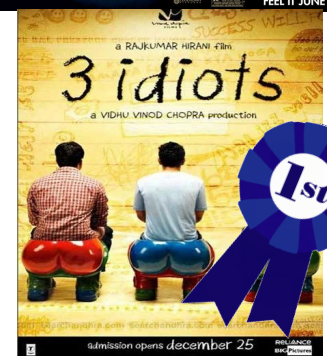
Wacky bachelor party, Mike Tyson's tiger, missing friend, naked guy in the car, unknown baby, missing tooth, getting married to a stripper, stolen cops' car, getting tasered by kids in police station, counting cards to save a friend is the perfect recipe to create this out and out laughter riot. Warning- Might cause headaches due to excessive laughter.

## #1. 3 Idiots

Finally, the movie that tops my list, '3 Idiots'! I realise not many of you would even have heard about this movie. It is a Bollywood flick based on a novel 'Five point someone' by Chetan Bhagat (though only little part is inspired from the book, rest all is original). It is a story of three engineering students, where one student questions the education system and believes learning is more important than just getting grades. Not to forget his meditative mantra 'Aal Iz Well' (a.k.a. 'all is well'). If you do get a chance to see this movie, don't miss it.



**Avinash Wadhwa**



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