Spring has Sprung - But watch out for the Creepy Crawlies

It’s that time of year again, folks. Spring! Time to start taking off the layers of warm winter woollies and getting outside to marvel at the beauty of nature as it emerges from its winter slumber. They say that Spring is a time of re-birth - baby birds and lambs and kangaroos abound and the vegetation bursts into wonderful flames of colour. However, as new life begins to emerge from the depths of winter, it may be prudent to be aware that not all of that “life” is beautiful and innocent!

As the weather gets warmer, nature awakens. Although that can mean absolute joy for nature lovers with flowers starting to bloom and native animals beginning to stir from their winter inactivity, it also means that some of the less attractive creatures start to rear their ugly heads!

Now don’t get me wrong, Spring and the warmer weather is to be enjoyed - savoured like a delicious chocolate - and there is certainly so much to enjoy in this big, beautiful country that plays host to us all. But, “forearmed is forewarned” as they say and it is always good to be aware of what may be lurking in dark corners!

Perhaps the first thing to be aware of in Spring is the ever curious Australian magpie. These birds can be found throughout Australia and are particularly adapted to living amongst humans. For most of the year, they are harmless and quite content to partake of food scraps thrown to them by kind souls. In Spring, however, they turn from Dr Jekyll into the evil Mr Hyde! Magpies become extremely defensive of their territory in Spring as they are nesting high up in the gum trees.

When a magpie feels that anything is getting too close to its nest, it will swoop down and attack. As you can see from the picture, they have quite sharp beaks and can do a lot of damage to eyes!

Please be aware that these birds are simply defending their young. They are also protected birds and harming them could get you into a lot of trouble. Please don’t attempt to hurt these birds in any way, but try to avoid being swooped on by following a few simple rules.

Wherever possible, avoid areas with trees. If you must walk through such areas, wear a hat or carry an umbrella. This will deter the birds from swooping. If riding a bike, there are special “scary eye” stickers that you can buy to stick onto the back of your cycling helmet that will deter the birds from swooping.

The next thing to be aware of in Spring is the emergence of creatures who hibernate (sleep) in the winter as they wake up hungry and a bit grumpy (much like many of us in the mornings!!). In Australia, particularly in the cooler states such as NSW and Victoria, most snakes hibernate in the winter and come out in Spring.

Without wanting to alarm anyone, Australia has some of the most dangerous snakes in the world. Every year, people die in Australia due to snakebite.

So what can you do to prevent this happening to you?

If going bush walking, always wear sensible shoes and avoid walking through long grass and thick undergrowth. Don’t go lifting up fallen logs or pieces of tin as snakes often seek refuge under such objects. Most importantly, if you see a snake, walk very quickly in the opposite direction. Most snakes are just as afraid of you as you are of them (continued on page 11)
Riverfire - The Brisbane River Festival

Riverfire marks the start of the Brisbane River festival, ten days of activities and free events which celebrate the Brisbane River and the lifestyle of Brisbane. Hundreds of thousands of people pack various parts of the city as the fireworks are let off all over Brisbane, from South Bank, the Storey Bridge and buildings in the city. This huge and spectacular fireworks display runs for around half an hour and is begun by the RAAF F1-11 strike jets ‘dump and burn’ which also finishes the show.

I interviewed Dolly (Li Jie LIU), a first year Nursing student who attended the evening with friends.

Thanks to Desmond Wong (Administrative Officer – International Office) who provided the questions.

ISV - Did the atmosphere feel distinctively Brisbane?
Dolly: Yes, because we were next to the Brisbane River, and you could see all the city with modern buildings and the bridges. The bridges became very colourful – they kept changing colours because of the fireworks – “very beautiful”. Hundreds of thousands of people were all together and talking to each other – they were very kind and friendly – people were telling others where the best places were to sit. There were a lot of older people being active, which was nice to see. There were lots of children, playing and enjoying themselves – parents put their kids on their shoulders so they could see the fireworks.

ISV - What was the highlight of the night?
Dolly: The music! There were different songs being played to the fireworks – everyone was dancing and shouting. I loved the different shaped fireworks – there were heart-shapes, flowers and different colours. The RAAF jet coming over made a lot of noise but we were so excited that the fireworks were about to start, we didn’t notice.

ISV - Was it the first time you have seen a fireworks display along a city river?
Dolly: I’ve never seen fireworks beside or on a river. “very special”

ISV - What would you rate the show out of 10?
Dolly: Ten! “excellent”

ISV - Would you recommend others to check out the fireworks display next year?
Dolly: A lot of my friends will go to see it next year. I took a lot of photos with my phone camera and they are now on my computer. I also put a picture on my MSN for my family and friends to see.

The advice I would give to people wanting to go next year is you must go there early to get your spot. You should also bring your own food as the food there is very expensive. Don’t take your car because it’s hard to park. You also can’t take glass or alcohol – security will check your bags.

ISV - Can you sum up the event in 5 words?
“fantastic”, “excellent”, “nice look”, “crowded”, “busy”
Dealing with Loss, Separation and Grief.

Rosemary Williams
Counselling Psychologist
Counselling Service

‘Is there no pity sitting in the clouds, That sees into the bottom of my grief?’

William Shakespeare, English playwright, Romeo and Juliet, 1595.

However we live our lives, we will encounter loss and its painful companion, grief. We may leave our homes, our families and our children in order to study in Australia. In time, we all experience the faltering of some of our relationships and our parents will die. And as our lives proceed, we lose some of our certainties about life and we lose our youth. As someone once put it, ‘There are things that we don’t want to happen but have to accept, and people we can’t live without but have to let go’.

Our losses bring us grief, that ‘unwelcome lodger that squats on the hearthstone between us and the fire and will not move or be dislodged’ (Arthur Quiller-Couch, Armistice Day anniversary sermon, 1923). Grief is often a painful ache, but, in reality, includes a wide range of emotions. We may experience some or all of them – anger, anxiety, change in worldview, confusion, depression, despair, drop in self-esteem, fear of going mad, feeling unable to cope, guilt and remorse, helplessness, hopeless-ness, loneliness, questioning of values and beliefs, relief, shock and disbelief.

Our feelings, whatever they are, are utterly valid and we rightly take them seriously. They tell us about ourselves and about our relationship with that which we have lost or with those from whom we are separated.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. We each grieve in our own way. It does seem important, though, to acknowledge our grief and to work through it, so that we are able to carry on with our lives. Someone once said that ‘grief is like a book; every page has to be turned’. Many writers, like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1969), in On Death and Dying, view our grieving as going through different stages.

Stage 1: Denial – the ‘This can’t be real’ stage. ‘This is not really happening to me.’ ‘There must be a mistake.’ Joan Didion (2005) wrote an astonishing memoir of love and grief on the death of her husband, John Gregory Dunne, which she called The Year of Magical Thinking. As her title suggests, she continued for a year to believe that her husband would return. This was a defence, presumably, against such a complete and absolute loss. As Sigmund Freud (1917) in Mourning and Melancholia, put it, the opposition in us to such a loss ‘can be so intense that a turning away from reality takes place (together with) a clinging to the object (i.e. the person) through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis’.

Stage 2: Anger – the ‘Why me?’ stage. ‘How could God / fate / destiny allow this to happen to me?’ ‘How could I have brought this upon myself?’ Anger is a difficult emotion, particularly for women perhaps, yet it is an important one, worthy of recognition and respect.

Stage 3: Bargaining – the ‘If I do this, you’ll do that stage’. Or, as Didion (2005) put it ‘the way in which you obsessively go over the same scenes again and again and again, trying to make them end differently’. So that we try in our minds to arrange that the daughter we left behind in Korea or India or any other homeland comes with us to Australia; or that the unit we failed last semester is transformed into a pass; or that the accident in which we were injured is changed in our imagination into something more benign. Our minds, that is, try to find an escape route out of our grief and distress.

Stage 4: Depression – the ‘defeated’ stage. ‘I cannot bear to face going through this.’

Stage 5: Acceptance – the ‘this is going to happen stage’. ‘I’m ready to face this. I don’t want to struggle anymore.’

These stages are a guide only and we do not proceed through them in a linear order. Nor should they suggest a time limit on grieving.

Some griefs last a lifetime, always present as a backdrop to our lives.

Freud said that in mourning ‘the existence of the lost object (i.e. person) is psychically prolonged’. That is, our grief keeps the absent person alive in our minds. As Constance says about her separation from her son, Arthur, in King John by William Shakespeare (1623): ‘Grief fills the room up of my absent child / Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me / Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words / Remembers me of all his gracious parts / Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form / Then I have reason to be fond of grief’.

Such are the losses that we face in life that they may seem to be a reason for despair, but, our losses cause us to reflect deeply on life and they sharpen our understanding and soften our hearts. They can lead us to become people of gratitude and depth, people, that is, who are aware of the blessings in our lives and people who are thoughtful about life – who give life thought – and who refuse to live life on the surface.

As Lord Byron (1817), the great English Romantic poet, wrote: ‘grief should be the Instructor of the wise / Sorrow is Knowledge: They who know the most / Must mourn the deepest’.
It’s That Time of The Year Again: Tax Time!

Kunal Mehta
MBA, Melbourne

Although this article may not be useful for students who have just started their studies and come to Australia this semester, but to all other international students who came here before 1st July 2008, it should be invaluable!

In Australia, June 30 is considered the last day of the financial year and thus this is the date when you are supposed to start working on your tax returns in order to have them submitted before the final date. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) gives people to October 31 each year to file their tax returns.

You might be thinking that since you pay tax through mandatory salary deductions that you don’t need to fill in a tax return. Well that is not the case. If you have a tax file number then no matter what your situation is, you have to file your tax returns, even if you have not earned a single dollar!

Did you know that the Australian government does not charge you any tax if your income for the entire year was less than $6000. I would suggest you all to log on to the tax office website www.ato.gov.au. From there you can download the software that is required to file your tax returns online. The software is so easily programmed that it asks you various questions about your income & expenditure for the previous financial year and all you do is just fill in the details as per the questions and within 90 minutes, your tax return has been filed!

If you submit your bank details then the tax refund, if any, gets credited into your account within 10 business days.

If you feel lost in the questionnaire, you can go to any certified accountant and ask them to do it for you.

The fees you pay to the tax agent are also able to be deducted from your income for the following year.

So what are you waiting for? If you have still not filed your returns, do it as soon as possible. Who knows you may actually earn back some money from the ATO!

Featured Staff Member: Desmond Wong - Brisbane

Se Jin Park
Brisbane

Desmond Wong is the administrative assistant at the Brisbane Campus. I interviewed Desmond for ISV—The Voice.

ISV: What is your major role in this office?
Desmond: I am here to assist either the Manager of the International Office or the Marketing Manager. I’m also doing some office work to help manage this office and assist international students with any problems they have.

ISV: What is the major difficulty of your job?
Desmond: Well, actually I have no difficulty with my job. All of the staff here are always being kind and friendly to me and students who have come to me are also so nice. If there is any difficulty with this job, it is probably that I need to do so many different things at the same time. However, it isn’t too difficult so I would say that my job is pretty easy for me.

ISV: What is the best thing about your job?
Desmond: It’s obviously that I can meet students from different backgrounds. I personally enjoy meeting new people and this job that I’m doing is all about meeting new people. Learning all about different countries and cultures is always thrilling.

ISV: Have you got any tips for new international students who are struggling to manage their work at uni?
Desmond: Well, I can say that students should always ask questions of the lecturers and be active. I mean, international students tend to hesitate asking questions. It always ends up with some problems with their study because if they miss the right time to ask, they will never get that time back. When international students are able to ask their questions without being shy, they are going to have great success.
Congratulations China on a “Truly Exceptional” Olympics.

John Crowder
International Student Adviser
Melbourne Campus

On the eighth day of the eighth month in the year 2008, the attention of all 5 continents was keenly focused on the “Central Kingdom”, also known as China. This was the day that the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics was due to commence.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrived and the eyes of more than a billion people around the globe were glued to their television sets to see the show. The world had been promised a show of magnificent proportions and China did not fail to deliver!

As a University with a large number of international students from China, we can join together to congratulate China on its wonderful accomplishment! The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games were spectacular, to say the least. The imagination and creativity of our Chinese brothers and sisters was showcased in an extravaganza that will not be forgotten in a hurry.

In a matter of hours, the creators of the show managed to exhibit more than five thousand years of history, national pride, creative ingenuity and unity and join past, present and future in a breathtaking journey of colour, sound and theatrics of magnificent proportions.

To all our Chinese students, we would like to extend our warm congratulations and encourage you in your pride for your nation. China has truly been shown as a country of incredible artistry, strength and creativity. You truly should be proud!

The following are some comments from our Chinese students:

“I watched the Olympic Games opening ceremony and closing ceremony with a group of Chinese friends. We felt extremely proud of the exceptional success of the Olympic Games in China. We were very satisfied about the way they displayed five thousand years of history and the diverse cultures ( 56 minorities ) that China has. Personally I think the person who designed the stage as a picture, which can open and close magically, is a genius.”

(LAN, Huanying)

“Glad to see this topic! I just want to say that I definitely feel proud of my country. It was a pity that I could not watch the Beijing Olympics in China. You know, we couldn't watch every complete game we like in Australia. Ok, keep it short. That's it!

(Bing Tan—Melbourne)

“My name is Yang Chen, I am a Chinese nursing student. My home country, China is still a developing country. China is also the first developing country to host the Olympic Games in the world history, in terms of that, you guys can think how hard we tried. Two of my friends worked as volunteers in Beijing during August, A big thank you for all of them.”

(Yang Chen)

“I was so sorry to see LIU Xiang, the Hurdle athlete, abstaining the game at the last second. Although I was a bit disappointed (as I was in a one hour exam when the tournament started, and I handed in the paper about 20 mins just after I finished without any revision), but then I followed up the news and the interview of his trainer. I then started to understand the stress he faced and the strong faith LIU Xiang showed to our people. Now I hope he is fine and I want to let him know that we still love him. We are still looking forward to see him fly on the track and make us proud. So have a good rest, and we will see you back with the confident smile and great performance soon.”

(LIU, Ying)
Our trip to the “roof” of Victoria.

Vanjitha Chantherakumar
Social Science, Melbourne

After 2 impatient weeks of waiting, the 16th of August had finally arrived. It was 7am on a cold winter morning as 48 of us eagerly waited to board our 6 star coach to Mount Buller. However no one seemed even a bit bothered by our early meeting time as all we could think about was how much fun we were going to have playing in the snow. For many of us on the trip, it was the first time experiencing snow.

“I never travel on my own”, An, a Diploma of nursing student from Vietnam said. “I go home after uni everyday, and I’m hoping to make new friends and enjoy myself on this trip”.

And enjoy we did! From the moment our bus left Melbourne, we were thoroughly entertained by John’s funny jokes and enjoyed watching movies on the coach.

Once we were well out of Melbourne, many of us on board even spotted kangaroos hopping around out in the bush land and some lucky students even saw Koala bears, high up in the gum trees! We stopped briefly at towns called Yea and Yuck, for coffee breaks and the renting of proper snow and ski attire, and finally after what seemed like a very long 3 and a half hour journey, reached the base of Mount Buller.

As our bus driver Jim slowly ascended the mountain, little yelps of excitement suddenly started to be heard throughout the bus.

“Woah! look at that!!” someone squealed behind me, pointing towards the top of the mountain. And to our amazement, high up on the mountain amongst the pine trees, we finally saw it.... SNOW! As we continued our slow climb up the mountain, we heard more and more “ooohs” and “aahhhhs” as cameras clicked away. Everyone on the bus suddenly became like little kids, excitedly shuffling around in their seats craning their necks to get a better view of the newly fallen snow that lay untouched on the sides of the road that we were on.

The journey up the winding road that led to about half-way up Mount Buller lasted about 25 minutes. From there, dressed in our warm and snuggly winter clothes, looking much like colourful marshmallows, we stepped off the bus to take the shuttle bus up to the top of Mount Buller Ski Resort.

Surrounded by a blanket of snow, Mount Buller was truly a breathtaking sight. Tiny white flecks, almost in the guise of rain danced around in the air as they fell softly to the ground. Never had I been in a place quite so beautiful before, it seemed almost surreal. Just as I stood there thirstily drinking in the beauty of what I’d come to see, La-lima, a Bachelor of Nursing student from Nepal started throwing snowballs at everyone. One might think that snow’s soft and would melt when touched but that’s far from true. Snowballs hurt when thrown at you!

Screaming like little school girls and ducking behind partly snow covered trees, our snowball fight started. And once we started, we couldn’t stop! Even the freezing temperatures of -4.3 degrees Celsius that day couldn’t stop us. Exhausted and sore after getting attacked by balls of flying snow, we finally retired for more fun on the scenic chair-lifts.

(Continued on page 7)
More Fun in the SNOW!

A full day chairlift pass cost each of us $20, and we set off, 4 to a seat, legs dangling in the air, getting an eagle’s eye view of Mount Buller. The 10 minute ride to about half way up the mountain was very enjoyable as we watched, below us, hundreds of people skiing down the slopes of Mount Buller.

Being typical international students and wanting value for money, many of us decided to make full use of our tickets and kept going up and down the chairlifts until we were satisfied that our money had been well spent. Next, we went tobogganing, the most enjoyable part of our trip!

Tobogganing, for those who don’t know, is the use of a simple sled used on snow, to carry one or more people down a hill. It started off with a few of us taking turns sitting on the toboggan we had rented, and sliding down the hill. This might sound really boring to some, but it was by far the best part of our Mount Buller trip! Joined by staff members John Crowder, Yvette Grant and Sokha Um, the bigger our group got, the more interesting our tobogganing ideas became! From the usual practice of one person to a toboggan, we got more and more creative and started going down on toboggans in pairs and even in threes! Once, we really got crazy and created a toboggan train, by joining 2 toboggans together. Led by staff members sitting in front, a group of 8 of us squeezed ourselves on both toboggans and sled downhill squealing with laughter! Some of the more daring boys even tobogganed downhill lying flat on their tummies! After an hour of fun tobogganing, we finally had to bid farewell to Mount Buller at 4.30pm.

After returning our snow gear, we watched movies on the bus as we returned back to Melbourne. We were dropped outside St Patrick’s campus at 8pm that day, but many of us, though tired, agreed that the day ended too soon.

“We should have more such trips”, said Fabrice Chatain, a Bachelor of Business student from France. “It was a great day and I’m sure everyone enjoyed themselves”. Manny Singh, a 3rd year Nursing student from India also said he enjoyed himself though like many others that day, was unhappy with the driver’s decision to allow us only to rent our ski equipment from one shop, when there were other shops to rent from. On the whole however, every single one of us had a fantastic time and all of us on the trip sincerely wish to thank John Crowder, the International Student officer, for organizing such a memorable trip.

“One might think that snow’s soft and would melt when touched but that’s far from true. Snowballs hurt when thrown at you!”
Exchange is for International Students too!

Herta Derrij
Study Abroad and Exchange Coordinator

TAKE PART IN THE ACU EXCHANGE PROGRAM – THIS APPLIES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOO!

Exchange is for International Students too! is a very intense experience (4 months) during which students will make lifelong friends with other students from all parts of the world as well as broadening their networks in a professional sense. All students who go on exchange enthusiastically acknowledge that it was the best thing that they have done and that it has definitely changed their life in one or more ways.

In second semester 2008 ACU is hosting 35 incoming students while 12 of our own students are currently out on exchange in Japan, USA, Germany and Canada.

Our incoming students have opted to study a semester or two with ACU and are from universities in Germany, Japan, USA, Chile, Germany, Netherlands, South Korea, Mexico and France. They are studying at our Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne campuses.

An exchange experience students settle in and if you would like to participate, please contact herta.derrij@acu.edu.au

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Each semester our incoming and returned exchange students give a talk on the university they are from or the university they visited. These talks are held in the first month of each semester and are advertised on student email.

Below are some pictures of the information sessions and welcome sessions on each campus this year. We are always looking for volunteers to help incoming exchange
Some lessons are best learned the hard way. Others come to us naturally as part of our instinct or from sheer common sense, so to speak. As international students in a foreign land, let us not forget that good old adage: when in Rome, do as the Romans do. Now substitute Rome/Romans with Australia/Aussies and you'll know just what I mean.

In the few months since my arrival in Australia, I have been listening to some of the critical views of the locals about international students and others in the migrant population. Initially, I was upset; my natural patriotism overtook any attempt at rational reasoning. However, I decided to hold back on defensive counter arguments as I needed to watch people and find the reasons behind such comments. And what do you know? More often than not, the locals were right after all. Just take a train/tram/bus ride and you will see that the loudest chatter comes from people yapping away in a foreign language. Have you ever paused to think that this could be very irritating for people who have never heard these tongues before? You see, what you relish as meat may be poison to another. We could always show a little respect for others around us if we keep our volumes down when we speak in our own languages. Otherwise, just speak in English. That way, you'll also learn this international language faster.

Another problem is in obeying the rules of the land, especially on the road, following traffic laws. Please have a little patience and wait until you see the green ‘walk’ sign before you attempt to cross a busy road. I know what is crossing your mind now (the locals do it all the time). Yes, but they’re breaking the rules too and liable to receive the same fines as you would be. And then, don’t blame anyone that they didn’t warn you if you get run over by a vehicle while trying to follow a local who ‘coolly’ walked across. If you live to tell the story, that is!

A potential disaster could ensue if you ever make the mistake of offering money to get an under-hand favour done. If you think I’m exaggerating, just ask people dealing with international students and other migrants. They’ll tell you some of their first-hand experiences when trying to sort out issues related to matters of serious concern. For example, please NEVER even think of slipping a fat bundle of dollar notes to anyone after a failed exam. If you think someone will be influenced enough to make a recommendation on your behalf, you are sadly mistaken.

Then, there is also this misguided notion amongst us that people can be coaxed to change their ‘No’ into a ‘Yes’. Again, you are wrong. In Western culture, ‘No’ really means “No, sorry, I can’t help you”. And ‘Maybe’ means your case could be considered. But it is not guaranteed to turn their ‘No’ into a ‘Yes’ as many of us would like to think. And it certainly does not mean you can try to ‘buy’ them with a bribe. You would only end up annoying them even more, if you try that tactic. It simply doesn’t work here.

A word of advice for all you nursing students too. I understand your frustration with the recent issues relating to visa extensions. But, let us not forget why we are here in the first place. The Immigration Department has granted us Student Visas which by International Law expires as soon as we lose our student status by the date stipulated on the visa label. We are apparently given those extra months to help us pack up our belongings and pay up any pending bills or invoices in our name.

This extra time also helps us to close our bank accounts and whatever else needs to be done before departing from the country as we are expected to. Otherwise, we ought to have come into the country using the migration procedures for a permanent residency. If we understand these laws better, we would be less offended when someone tries to explain them to us.

There used to be an interesting custom that people followed when someone died in old Britain. The church bells would toll slowly and solemnly to herald the news while people in the neighbourhood rushed down or sent a messenger to find out who had passed on. The great English poet, John Donne, immortalized this custom in his poem For Whom the Bell Tolls, quoted in Ernest Hemingway’s gripping novel, The Old Man and the Sea.
You Can Make a Difference: (Continued from Previous Page)

To make a point here, I would like to repeat part of that quote now:

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main ... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

All our actions have a boomerang effect on those we represent. Everything a person does matters in the long run and affects everyone else, often inadvertently. Just like the church bells could one day be announcing our own end, we cannot simply sit back and think that we are not responsible for the deeds of another. Each of us here represents a foreign country which we are proud of. Let not our actions cause us to tarnish that image in any way, at least whenever we can help it.

There are many good lessons that we can learn from people of other cultures. They will surely be different from what we were used to back home. But it certainly doesn't hurt to try following the ones that are beneficial to us. Understandably, we could make mistakes when we are new in a strange land. That is alright as long as we keep our cool and learn from our blunders.

After all, every little drop is valuable in the making of an ocean. You could be that little drop in the ocean. And you can indeed make a difference ... if only you try.

Editors Note:

Some excellent lessons to be learned in the wisdom of this article for everyone. Thank you Mary for your insight and sensibility.

Sri Lankan Chicken Curry

Sharmalie Wijesinghe
Melbourne

Ingredients:

- 3 lb chicken pieces
- 3-4 tbs lemon juice
- 6 cloves garlic & 1 inch ginger, crushed together
- 2 tsps salt
- 1 tbs powdered black pepper
- 1 tbs roasted curry powder
- 1/2 tbs dry red chilli powder
- 2 cloves
- 4 cardamom pods
- Curry leaves
- 1 inch cinnamon stick
- 1 medium onion
- 3 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 tbs tomato paste or sauce
- 1 cup thick coconut milk

Method:

Wash chicken pieces and drain water thoroughly. Add lemon juice, crushed garlic, ginger, salt, black pepper, curry powder and red chili. Coat the chicken pieces well with the spices and set aside for about 1/2 hour. Heat the oil in a saucepan. Fry curry leaves. Add onions and fry until soft.

Add the chicken pieces and stir for sometime. Add cinnamon, lemon grass, cardamom, cloves and stir until well mixed. Add tomato paste (or sauce) and stir until all pieces are well coated (If the curry is too dry and tends to stick to the saucepan, add 1-2 cups water & stir). Close with a lid and allow the chicken to cook on slow heat. Add the thick coconut milk (or fresh milk) and bring to a boil without covering. Taste and adjust salt.
Hayfever: Another Spring Hazzard

Do you have a constant, or seasonal runny nose and/or watery eyes? Do you suffer from sneezing at certain times of the year? Do you get itchy eyes, nose or mouth? If so, then you are showing the symptoms of a person who is allergic to something in the air called an allergen. An allergen is any substance that will cause an allergic reaction and can be something as simple as dust or grass/flower pollen. Hayfever is also known as "allergic rhinitis". The seasonal hay fever reaction can occur one or two days after exposure, particularly after rain as the rain water causes pollen grains to burst and disperse in the air causing misery for hayfever sufferers. Similarly, pollen grains encountering the moist surface of the inside of the nose, will quickly burst to discharge their allergy-causing particles directly into your nose!

The bad news is that there is no known "cure" for hayfever. The good news is that hayfever sufferers can do a lot to minimise the effects of hayfever and their chances of suffering an attack. As hayfever is usually caused by an allergic reaction to pollen, try to avoid grassland areas or gardens that have pollen bearing flowers. Keep your house as clean as possible to minimise the effects of dust and avoid exposure to strong perfumes and other cosmetic products.

If your allergy is severe, try to avoid hot drinks if possible as these increase blood flow and can cause swelling and blocking of the nasal mucosa. Symptomatic relief for itches, rashes, a runny nose and eyes or hives can be obtained through the use of antihistamine tablets or capsules from your local chemist and these can give good relief in most cases. There are also numerous natural remedies available. If you have a rash or hives then your chemist can supply suitable soothing creams or creams containing antihistamines or steroid preparations which will ease the effect of the rash.

(Info from: allergycentre.com.au)

and will keep away from you if given the choice. If they feel they are cornered, or in danger, however, this is when they may bite.

If you are bitten, seek medical advice immediately as some Australian snakes can kill.

Spiders are another one of those disgusting, horrible creatures that one often asks why God ever thought it necessary to create (surely insect spray kills flies more effectively?). There are some very unusual people who find spiders fascinating. Personally, I have never been able to understand how anyone could ever find a hairy, eight legged multi eyed demon to be interesting, but "each to his own" as they say!

Once again, Australia has some of the most venomous spiders in the world. Two of note are the red back spider and the funnel web spider.

(Red back spider)

Both of these spiders are extremely venomous and their bites have been known to kill humans. Once again, don’t be alarmed! I don’t want you to think that these spiders are lurking behind every flower in the garden. They are not, but it is good to know what they look like and realise that they are not “harmless” as many spiders are. At the very least, they can give you a painful bite and make you very sick.

These spiders tend to like dark, warm places, so beware when going into such places and be on the look out. As with the snakes, if you see one, keep away from it! Remember that to a spider, you also look threatening!

(Red back spider)

Apart from being aware of these “nasties”, just always enjoy yourselves in a careful and responsible way when outdoors. A good tip is to watch what the locals do. If you go to the beach and see some beautiful cliffs, have a look and see if you can see locals walking around the bottom of them. If not, that usually means it is not safe to do so!

We all want you to have fun during your leisure time, but just be aware of the possible dangers and act sensibly at all times. This will ensure that you make the most out of your Australian experience and have a great time whilst here. Now...go and enjoy the glory of Spring!
In Australia, taxes are imposed at the Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government levels. This article is going to be specifically concentrated on the “income tax” which is one of the Commonwealth taxes and it is a very complex area of law.

Some of you may have already filed your 2008 tax return and may be aware that individuals pay a marginal tax rate in respect of each financial year. This means that the tax you pay depends on how much you earn. The more you earn the greater tax that you have to pay. However, many of you may not necessarily know this and may not have even filed your tax returns.

For those who have not filed their 2008 tax return, please note that you can lodge your tax return online using e-tax, by phone, using a registered tax agent or using TaxPak 2008. If you prepare and lodge your own tax return, the lodgment deadline is normally Friday 31 October 2008. If you engage your registered tax agent to lodge your tax return, your tax agent has his/her own lodgment deadline. However, if you are using a tax agent for the first time, or you are going to use a different tax agent this year, you must contact your tax agent by Friday 31 October 2008.

Further please be advised that it is both your legal and social responsibility to pay tax in accordance with the law. You are not required to pay any tax more than you are legally obliged to pay. This means that you, as an individual taxpayer, are allowed to order your affairs or enter into legal arrangements in such a way so as to legally minimize your tax liabilities. This is known as tax avoidance and it is legal. However, please do not confuse this with tax evasion.

Tax evasion is concerned with the illegal underpayment of tax. This involves some kind of non-disclosure of a liability or a fraudulent claim for benefits. For example, the failure to declare income and the claiming of deductions for outgoings that have not been incurred are illegal. Please be advised that this is a serious offence because a failure to pay tax may result in heavy fines and jail terms. This tax evasion should be severely discouraged as it results in less revenue being collected and consequently imposes a greater overall burden on law abiding members of society.

If you have any questions regarding your personal tax matters, you can phone the Australian Taxation Office on 13 28 61 or visit www.ato.gov.au. Your International Student Adviser also may be able to help you find a tax agent to help you with your tax return. Don’t wait until the last minute!