

'Glocalization'

Perham foreign student's experiences shared in book

"Glocalization." Its a word invented by Dr. Patrick Mendis, who developed a profound sense "globalization" and "localization" as a foreign student here in East Otter Tail County back in 1978-79.

As a teen, Mendis came from a far corner of the globe, Sri Lanka, to Main Street Perham. Those years in Perham provided him with a unique perspective. Since then, he has worked in Washington D.C. as a diplomat and an assistant at the U.S. Secretary of State's office--working with Collin Powell. Many of his Perham friends became re-connected with Mendis in 2005, when he helped coordinate tsunami relief for his homeland.

From all of these experiences--globally and locally--Mendis has written a book:

"Glocalization: The human side of Globalization." The book explores the influences of U.S. policy around the world, through first-hand observations of global forces operating in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

"Born in Sri Lanka, educated in America, now truly a citizen of the world--has an infectious enthusiasm for the diversity he has experienced," wrote one of his Washington connections, Ambassador Harlan Cleveland.

Copies of the book are circulating in Perham. When Mendis visited last summer, he presented copies to his high school friends Doug Huebsch, Jeff Haverland and Perham school administrator Fred Sailer. He attended the funeral of his American "father" Bill Johnson, who hosted Mendis when he was here as an exchange student. Mendis plans to donate some of the proceeds of book sales to the Perham school's Bill Johnson Memorial Scholarship fund.

"Mendis has witnessed socialism and experienced the strengths of freedom, democracy, and people's empowerment. His voyage of discovery around the world sheds new lights from uniquely American and cross-cultural perspectives," states publicity materials on his "Glocalization" book.

We plan to catch up with Mendis some time in the future. He most certainly will have a unique view of America's current role in the Middle East. In the meantime, his book is available through Amazon.com and Barnes & Nobles.

It is a unique coincidence that we have a story on current foreign students on the front page this week's edition. Mendis is a living example of how foreign student programs bring the world a little closer to home. His term for it? "Glocalization."



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