

SPRING VIEWS

Spring International Language Center, Littleton, Colorado

May 2008

International Food Day

28th Annual Festival Is Big Success

By Ali Jarad

When I wrote the title "International Food," I immediately focused on an International Day that contained many beautiful things from many countries: different types of food and clothes, customs, cultures, all of them in one place, Spring International Language Center at Arapahoe Community College.

During this really famous day in the history of SILC, diverse countries were represented showing more than 24 cultures of the world and various programs, like singing and dancing, customs and traditions of people and the types of food they have. The day opened at 10 a.m. in the cafeteria at the college. Participating in the event were many students from countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait from the Arab world. In addition were contributions from other countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Korea, Japan, Viet Nam, Russia, Mexico, Finland, France, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Gabon, and Congo. Each country had models of traditional clothes and photos showing some of the popular activities held in that country.

The festival opened with Mexican music and booths featuring different types of food and drink. This event gave everyone a clear idea of the cultures. The atmosphere was like a mass wedding celebration with our families in our home countries. In fact, Spring International is a large family to which each student belongs. We thank the managers and faculty members for their encouragement at International Day, and we wish God to provide enduring affection and love among all.



Students in the Asian booth at the 38th annual International Day April 23 at Arapahoe Community College.

An Important Event in Gabon...by Pasty Mpiga-Tsiba

Two years ago in Gabon, I witnessed a big national disaster. It was a terrible plane accident that shocked the whole Gabonese population. All the people in Gabon were astonished because it should have been possible to save everybody in the airplane, but because of some military mistakes, we did not.

It was in 2005. It was 9:00 when a small plan with about 115 people inside took off. Fifteen minutes after this take-off, the plane that already had flown over the ocean tried to come back to the airport because of an important technical problem. The problem was too important, so the plane crashed in the sea a little bit far from the coast. The plane floated for almost ten or twelve minutes and then started to sink. On the beach, there were some fishermen before military help came. These fishermen had some weapons, so they went to the plane that was sinking and started, with their weapons, breaking the plane roof. A few minutes later the military help arrived. They ordered the fishermen to stop because maybe they could kill some people in the plane.

We all were surprised because it was live on TV and all Gabonese people were watching this dramatic event. We could see some people swimming who escaped from the plane. It was terrible. The military help ordered the fisherman to stop breaking the plane but didn't do anything to save the people in the plane. Later, the president came, stayed on the beach, and saw what happened. He couldn't do anything very important but ordered the soldiers to break the plane and scolded the military because they had stopped the fishermen who were doing something because the soldiers weren't helping.

The plane sank and a lot of people died. It was too terrible, but more for some other people. For example, while the plane was sinking, a woman who was watching the drama on TV received a call from her husband who was in the plane. They talked for a short time. She explained that her husband said to her: "I know I'll die, but it's not a problem. I just want you to take care of our children and love them for me." It was his last words. Another man who escaped from the plane said: "While I was swimming near me there was someone also swimming, but he got tired and couldn't swim anymore. I couldn't help him because I was too tired, but I encouraged him. Unfortunately, he couldn't keep going. He is dead."

This day was terrible for all Gabonese people because it was the first time for us to seem something like this live on TV. This drama will stay in our minds as the worst disaster Gabon has ever known.

It's Up to You...by Fares Kamal

***Any one can clean up your tears,
but it's up to you to stop crying.***

***A teacher can help you to study,
but it's up to you to understand.***

***If someone insults you,
You can be wise or you can be ignorant.
It's up to you.***

***You can walk and you can run,
Or you can just stop where you are.***

***You can sleep and you can wake up.
You can laugh and you can cry.
You can hate and you can love.***

***Every thing is about you,
And every thing is up to you.***

***So let's try our best to be better persons,
And to make this a better place to live.***

Spring Views is published each term as a venue for student writing. Essays and poetry published in this issue are from beginning to advanced students in Spring International Language Center, Arapahoe Community College. Connie Shoemaker, Editor.

Embarrassing and Funny Moments

Beaches

I remember my first days in the U.S. when I started to learn English. I had an embarrassing experience one day when I was at an American party. The host father of my friend started to talk with me and ask me about Venezuela. I began to talk about the important and beautiful places in my country. However, as I was talking I said, "In Venezuela we have a lot of beach." I saw a strange expression on his face, but I continued talking. I didn't know what I had said wrong.

Then a few days after this American party, I was talking in my class about the same thing. However, the teacher said to me, "NO, for your pronunciation of 'beach' you said another word." He explained to me, and I was very embarrassed because the word I had said was a bad word that sounded almost the same as 'beach.'

It was a very embarrassing experience because I didn't want to say that word, and I didn't know what the host father of my friend thought about Venezuelan women. Now, because I don't know the difference in the pronunciation of these two words, I prefer to say 'sea' or 'ocean' than 'beach.'...**by Gabriela Gonzales**

Grills

I would like to write about a funny story that happened to me with my friend's host family. Two weeks ago, my friend invited me to his birthday party where he introduced me to his host family. First, the family did a nice barbecue and we had cake and juice. When the party finished, and I wanted to leave, I wanted to thank my friend's host family.

"I said, "Thank you. I like your girl." I saw the host father laugh very much and the mother looked at me and her face was red.

"What did you say?" she said.

"I like your girl," I said again.

They laughed together. In that moment, I knew I had made a mistake, so I told the father, "You are a good cook." After that, they said together, "You like our 'grill' not our 'girl'." I felt so embarrassed, but I was lucky because they do not have a daughter...**by Obed Alshamari**

Restrooms

One of the scariest moments happened to me a year ago. I entered a women's restroom by mistake. it was scary, funny, and embarrassing at the same time.

I was with my friend at a mall and we were eating. I had just finished eating, so I went to the restroom to wash my hands. I entered the restroom and there wasn't anyone I could see, only someone inside the stall. I started washing my hands, and the person inside the stall came out. it was a girl. When I saw her I realized I was in the women's restroom, and I was really scared. I wanted to get out of the room, but she started to scream.

"No, I'm sorry. It's my mistake," I told her, but she wasn't even listening to me, so I ran away. When I exited the restroom, there was a man looking at me and the girl was still screaming. he thought I had done something wrong to her. I was scared and didn't know what to do, so I ran. Some men were following me. I hid in my car and called my friend to tell him what had happened.

When my friend answered his phone he told me, "Hey, Fares, did you know there are a lot of people looking for a man who entered the women's restroom and tried to rape a girl." I told him, "No, nothing happened. Just come over here, and I'll explain everything. My friend came to me, and I explained. Then we started to laugh. This is one of the funniest and scariest moments I have ever had....**by Fares Kamal**

Our Countries and Cultures

Democratic Republic of Congo

What is so special and unique in my Congolese culture? The Democratic Republic of the Congo has eleven regions. Each region has its own culture that differs from others, but based on some similarities among these cultures, we can group them into three main cultural traits: Marriage, Respect for elders, and Hospitality

The first cultural trait is marriage. marriage is more than just a union of a girl and boy. It is a union of two families. The groom's family pays a dowry to the bride's family. The dowry is comprised of money, gold, or goats or cows, and some specific present that the bride's family has requested. In return, the bride's family will cook a big dinner and invite the groom's family to share. After giving the dowry and sharing the meal, the bride will move to the groom's family to learn more about her in-laws. After a trial period and the groom's family approval, she can then move to live with her husband happily ever after.

The second cultural trait is respect for elders in the society. Respect for elders must be observed by everyone. Kids should respect their parents. By respect, young people are obligated to assist any old people in need. Also, the younger person should look down when talking with older people. The young person should always wait for their elders to first offer to shake hands. Children cannot speak back to their parents and should always listen and obey any parent even if he or she is not your parent.

Lastly, there is the Congolese hospitality. Hospitality is something in common across the country. Hospitality, as understood in Congo, means to be kind and nice to strangers and guests. Guests are always welcomed. Because most people go by foot very long distances, they go from one village to another village. Everywhere they go, they are welcomed. They don't need a hotel or restaurant because everyone will kindly offer them something to eat and a place to sleep. they don't need to pay for any service received. Life is worth living in Africa because of the hospitality mentality.

As you can see, there are similarities among the cultures in Congo. However, the most important and distinct of them all is marriage...**by Nancy Mbenga**

Libya

My country is Libya. It is in the middle of the world. It is in the northern part of the African continent. It has a long beach on the Mediterranean Sea and a big desert. Libya has many natural resources. One is food from the sea. Libya helps the world population by exporting seafood to many countries that don't have this kind of food.

Another way in which my country helps human beings is with oil and gas. it exports gas to many countries to use for energy. The third way Libya helps the people of the world is with agriculture. it makes projects in the desert to change the color of the desert from brown to green. Also, it makes many projects that depend on rain. A fourth way to help the world is by generating electricity from the sea. many countries besides my country use electricity made by Libya...**by Salah Jabar**

Every year in October when I was a kid I would go to the desert with my father and my uncles, brothers, and cousins. We always used to go to the Zalaf desert by desert cars (land rovers). We would go to that place because we had a lot of date trees on our land, which is called Albedrawey. Our trips to Albedrawey always were very beautiful. When we arrived, we would camp on our land between the date trees. The weather was very hot in October. After that, my father divided the work among all the campers. We would divide the wood and dig a trench one meter down until water turned up.

At night, we lit the wood near our camp. the wood soon caught fire, so someone from my family could cook dinner. In the morning, we collected dates from the trees. When we finished our work, we always played football with my brother and cousins in the afternoon.

Albedrawey is a beautiful place because there is a golden sand dune on the south side. We always would ascend the golden sand dune before sundown. When sundown comes on Albedrawey, we are charmed with the scenery. I remember seeing birds between the date trees and also desert rabbits under the trees. I like this place because it reminds me of my boyhood and my father before his death. When I go to Albedrawey, I remember all the places where my father was sitting with my uncles. I like those days because they were very beautiful...**by Salem Abusherida**

Our Countries and Cultures (Continued from p. 4)

In Solog, Libya, who is the man who has a statue there? Why does the Libyan government show his face on the 10 Dinar bill? What was his story? What did he do for Libya? And how do Libyan people consider him? Omar Al Mukhtar, or the Lion of the Desert, as many people call him was a teacher born in 1862 in eastern Libya. In 1911 when the Italian colonists attacked Libya, he changed his job to lead groups of guerillas on their horses against the Italian occupation. On September 16, 1931, an Italian army captured him and hanged him after 10 years of struggle. According to "Omar Mukhtar," an internet article, when the Italian army asked him if he wished to say any last words, he replied with the Qur'anic clause: "From Allah we have come, and to Allah we will return.

"The lion of the desert is the biggest symbol for Libyan people. On the other hand, he isn't only the martyr of Libya, but he is also the martyr of all Arab nations. he is a symbol of steadfastness in the same way as Muammar Al Gadafi is currently a symbol of steadfastness. There are plenty of traits that Libyans learn from these symbols.

Al Mukhtar grew up in a desert area. Libyans learned from him how to love their motherland. Libya has a wide desert. Some people have cattle, sheep, goats, and camels, and others are farmers. Libya has many attractive areas such as Jebel Akdar, the green mountain, in eastern Libya; an old city in Godames in western Libya; the green Alsaria, Lubdh, and Subrath in Northern Libya and Gaber Aon, the Grave of Aon, and the Akakos mountains in southern Libya. Most Libyans like to drive their cars and go hunting in the desert to have many adventures. Some like to ride horses and camels there and sleep in tents. They camp without electricity, bathrooms, Internet and cell phones to run away from city life.

All Libyan generations know the Lion of the Desert because parents tell their children his story. Besides that, students have to study his life in primary school to know how he fought the Italian colonization for 10 years until the Italian army hanged him. In addition, all Libyan people learned from him how to be brave, and that they have to defend Libya until they win or die. if you ever visit Libya, you should visit the Omar Al Mukhtar Museum and his statue to know more about his life. Libyans say, "We are grandchildren of Omar Al Mukhtar," because he represent many of our finest characteristics. (Work Cited: "Omar Al Mukhtar." Wikipedia, 31 Mar. 2008 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/omar-mukhtar>.) ...**by Nasser Bireni**

Thailand

In Thailand, the busiest city is Bangkok, but there are some other major cities in every part of the country: Chiang Mai, Nakorn Ratchasima, and Udon Thani. People in those cities have very busy lives, especially in Bangkok, the capital city. their lifestyle is mostly focused on their jobs. You could see that if you were there in the morning or the evening. Moreover, most of them prefer to have a Western life-style rather than a traditional culture. the way Thai girls dress in Bangkok is similar to Western culture because they think that they are city girls, so that they want to be more fashionable than girls from other parts of the country. their relationships with their neighbors are seldom to be seen, since their busy lives makes them ignore making friends with people around them. Some people call Bangkok people mean and selfish.

Unlike city people, country people have a very different attitude. For country people, the relationship between friends and neighbors is very important in the community. Sometimes they have too close a relationship. For example, they will know everything that is going on in their community and that news will be spread very fast. Although it seems not so good, it shows that they care and pay attention to their community. they know what is wrong and who is a newcomer. they keep their traditions and pass them over to a new generation. Some old-country people aren't too open to Western style. Their lives are peaceful because they do what they feel comfortable doing, which is so different from city people, who work because they think that they have to.

I would like to be a country person rather than a city person, even though some people think that you can learn a lot from city life...**by Maimyo**

Homesickness...by Svetlana Shulgina

The ancient physician Hypocrites believed that homesickness was caused by excess of black bile in the blood. Today we know the real reason. This is a separation from a habitual life. For me, as for most homesick persons, it is missing parents and friends.

My parents, like all parents in the world, love their children. They worked hard to bring me up and give me a good education. They taught me to be responsible, to do my best, to be courteous and friendly. They always told me: "Treat people the way you want to be treated." My parents gave me a strong life basis. That helps me to overcome difficulties in life. My Mom and Dad live in my country, Russia. They visited me last year. We went for trips to mountains, Las Vegas, Conifer, Denver's art museum, etc. And the best thing was that we all were together. We were happy! They brought deep memories back to Russia. Unfortunately, I cannot bring them to the USA for good because I can't afford to support their living and medical insurance. However, I can help them financially, which will make their lives a little easier. I always call them, send letters and new pictures of me, but I understand those are not enough. I can't be with them when they need me. I can't share good or bad moments in their life. I miss my parents a lot.

Another reason for my nostalgia is my friends. Friendship is a very important part of my life. In my opinion, a real friend is someone who I trust and who trusts me. One who helps and supports in difficult times. Although my friends and I had problems in our friendship, we discussed everything and tried to find the best solution in any situation. I have three best friends. One of them I met during my middle school years. It was thirty-three years ago. The other two I met at the university. With my friends, I went through good and bad times. We have long life experience in our friendship. Today we keep in touch through Internets (Viva, high technology!) and by phone. It doesn't matter that we live so far away, on different continents. We are still friends.

The half of our life we spend at work. One wise man said: "If you are happy to go to work, and you are happy to go back home, you are a lucky man." I was really happy at work in my country. I had an interesting job and friendly co-workers. It was my second home. Our job wasn't easy, and we tried to help one another. We celebrated holidays and our birthdays together. We were not best friends, but we had a really good relationship.

Finally, my parents, friends and my ex-coworkers are the best things in my life³. And they are causes of my homesickness. Consequently, my homesickness is missing the people who are important for me.

HAPPY FAMILIES

I have the most harmonious and the sweetest family, so I really love my family. It is very important for a family to have good relationships with each other and for the parents' role for a happy family.

First of all, having a good relationship with each other is important. Communication or conversation is a good way to build the relationship. Although the blood bonds together, the family can't be happy without communication. Through conversation, each member of the family can share happiness or sadness, so their relationship is more and more friendly, and they can have a more open mind toward each other. Additionally, it is important to communicate with each other because some families have only one person to transmit communication. For example, most of the children in Korea are closer to their mother than their father. They talk only with their mother because they are not close to their fathers. Then the father feels isolated, and they may become far from each other. As a result, it is not a good way to have a great relationship.

Second, the parent's role is important for a happy family. Parents must be friendly toward each other. Then, they can show their friendship and love to their children. Their children can feel comfortable when they are at home. Also, parents have to give appropriate love to their children because, if the parent is overprotective, their children can't appreciate the parents' love. Finally, parents should consider that their priority is to each other, not just to their children. If one parent thinks their priority is only to their children, they will talk more with their children and be more interested in them, not in each other. Then, they may change their love toward each other, so they become far from each other....**by Seung Min Oh**

The family is the most important thing in our lives. Being included in a family is crucial for the formation of the person, and being included in a happy family makes the person a good person. Happy families are formed by good relationships and education.

Good relationships are essential for the lives of the people, especially when they live together. Respect, affection and conversation are very important to make harmony and peace at home. In my home, for example, sometimes I disagree with the thoughts of my father, who sometimes has thoughts like my grandfather, who is 95 years old, but I know that we have different ideas and I have to respect his thought.

Education is essential in a happy family also. It can be at home or at school, but it is better that people have both types. Education gives knowledge for the people about everything like respect, sciences, and lessons of life. I had luck because my parents gave me a good education at home, and I could study in good schools. I can say that I have learned very well all the lessons that my parents and my teachers have taught me...**by Gisela Evangelista**

I've Got a Plan...by Sino

I've got a plan for you and I,
Let's journey across the American skies.
Can I get some of your books?
Can I take some of your dictionaries?
May I read the first paragraph,
so you won't... speak or shout or cry

English at the top of your lungs,
Everybody's feeling right
English at the top of your lungs,
Everybody's feeling right.

You can learn English in the car,
at the party, in my room, on the rooftop.
It even feels good, so don't stop learning English.