

SPRING VIEWS

Spring International Language Center, Littleton, Colorado

October 2007

Join the World

International Dinner Features Food, Music, Friendship

The 27th annual International Dinner will be celebrated Friday, October 26 at 6:30 p.m. in the ACC cafeteria. Highlight of the Dinner will be foods from more than 20 countries prepared by international students, faculty and staff from Spring International and the college, host families, and guests. Admission to the event is one international or American dish to feed 6-8 persons.

Entertainment will feature the Zebra Marimba band, a Boulder group that plays music from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The band includes seven marimbas from a tiny *sopranino* one up to a giant bass that requires a two-foot stool for the player to be tall enough to reach the keys. In addition to the marimbas, the band includes drums, gourd shakers, stringed instruments, and colorful costumes.



From the Students' Desks

What Do I Value Most About Life? by Nhu Truong, Viet Nam

I am a girl, 21 years old. That means I don't have as much experience about life as many other people do. However, I know exactly what the most valuable thing in my life is. That is my *will*. When I lose my will, I lose everything. I lose my life.

When I think about the lessons I have learned in my life, I think about what I learned from my friends and from my family. While my friends have taught me to enjoy my life, my family has taught me to be strong. My friends have taught me how to feel independent. They have encouraged me to be myself, to have a lot of fun, and to find happiness in life. On the other hand, my parents gave me advice, such as "Fight your own battles." They said that so I would be strong because they could not always protect me. In different ways, my friends and my family have given me the will. Doing something really hard may seem impossible, but if people keep trying (cont. p. 2)

What Do I Value (Cont. from p. 1)

it again, again, and again, it will be possible one day. That is will, a will that overcomes all difficulties. People are influenced by the world around them. Once I was really interested in one thing, but it was so crazy, so stupid to other people. They laughed at me, so I gave up. After that, I regretted many times what I had done. If I hadn't given up, I would be a singer or a dancer right now. At that time, I lost my will, so I also lost my opportunity.

I always remember one of my teachers taught me how to forgive. She was a good teacher, but she always gave my classmates and me bad grades. For us, it was not reasonable because we thought we were the best students in the school. One day, we all went to the beach instead of going to her class. She was really upset. If she had reported that to the campus, we would have gotten in serious trouble, but she didn't. The day after that, she gave us a lot of exercises and homework. We all knew it was the way she forgave us. Sometimes, I hate someone because of what they did wrong to me, but I remember my teacher's lesson, so I try to find a way to forgive. The way I learned to forgive is the way I have trained my will by myself.

Now I recognize that I can't lose my will. That is the most valuable thing in my life: Where there is a will, there is a way. The lessons from my family, my friends, my teachers were not always enjoyable, but they are deep in my heart.

A Funny Story...by Saengduean Kanthong, Thailand

One time before I came to the USA, I woke up in the morning and then went to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I saw a tube of toothpaste in front of the mirror. I opened it. I saw it had a pink color, smelled good, and looked like candy, too. Next, I used it to brush my teeth. I brushed my teeth about 15 seconds. I felt it didn't have bubbles and was sticky, but I thought maybe it was a toothpaste produced in the USA.

What happened was that it stuck to my teeth and gums. Now I knew it wasn't toothpaste, so I tried to take it out of my mouth. However, it was difficult to take it out. I kept this a secret because I felt embarrassed, but I wanted to know what it was. So in the evening, I asked my sister. She laughed at me and told me that it was a denture adhesive cream (Fixodent) for her husband's false teeth. She told her husband about my story, and then my brother-in-law and my sister laughed at me together. It took two days to get the Fixodent out. I think it is a funny story. When I shop at the store and I see Fixodent, I run away because of my silly experience.

Popular Spanish Proverb Contains Wisdom...by Javier Nieva, Spain

“Nunca es tarde si la dicha es buena.” “It's never too late if you are lucky” is a very popular Spanish proverb. The meaning is clear: if you get a good thing only after waiting a long time, you should not complain because of the time when you didn't have this good fortune. This proverb also means that it's necessary to be patient because you never know when you are going to be lucky.

Usually, proverbs contain a lot of wisdom. they are the witnesses and the guardians of the experiences of an entire people throughout the ages. Of course, they are not like physical laws that are valid always and everywhere, and sometimes life is more spontaneous than the strict formulation of the proverb, but they are like milestones that our ancestors have put on the way of life.

Regarding this proverb, it prevents us from the risk of pessimism. It's a usual “temptation” to complain about one's own luck. Very often we look at our past life with sadness, and we think that we have lost a lot of opportunities, and that others have been luckier than we. Maybe it's true, but it also involves a deceit. We forget that the past cannot be changed, and that the only real time we have in our hands is the present moment and probably, the future. Who knows if we will be able to reach our goals some day? With more effort or luck, life can still surprise us. So, I think that this is a very useful proverb that raises our hope and warns us of the risk of remaining anchored in our past. For me, “Nunca es tarde si la dicha es buena” has been very helpful.

My Experiences in the U.S.....by Hussain AlZahrani, Saudi Arabia

The experiences that people have may influence their lives positively or negatively. Behaviors and deeds of people depend on their experiences. These events may even create criminal or peaceful people. Experiences may come from family, friends, school, media, or travels. The cultural experience of travel I have had in a foreign country, the U.S., and its relation to my culture, occupy a huge part of my life.

Love of parents is the first common experience I have known between American and Arabic culture. When we live alone in a foreign country, the climate of the family is an important thing that we miss. Usually we remember our mothers, fathers and brothers. Actually, we feel all foreign parents are as our parents. Therefore, we try to understand the relationship between parents and their children. Surprisingly, I have discovered that American families and Arabic families usually get together for the longest times on religious or patriotic occasions. American families meet at Christmas, whereas Arabic families meet at the time of *Eid*. Both cultures meet to eat and get together with their parents and the rest of the family.

Women Driving Is Hot Topic of Discussion in Saudi Arabia **by Mahmood Garoot, Saudi Arabia**

In the last decade in my country, the argument about many things in our lives as Muslim people has reached a high rate. There are a lot of hot subjects that we have discussed in order to have an appropriate solution. Many foreign people cannot understand what we argue about correctly if they don't have an overview of a few details about Islam. In the last few years, many liberal Saudis have brought up some subjects to reconsider. However, people who are really conservative have protested against these subjects.

For example, liberals have asked the government to reconsider the question of women being allowed to drive. At first, a lot of people disagreed and asked the government not to listen to those people who want women to be equal to men in regard to driving. In fact, it was something that nobody expected to be discussed as a real problem. However, the government has truly considered and studied the subject. With the passing of time, many people have joined the first group who asked to let women drive. People were distracted about the country's decision until King Abdullah, the president of the country, said in an interview that it's the population's decision. Therefore, the affair is still delayed until the government finds out which side agree with.

So far, many people think women should be allowed to drive; on the other hand, a large number of people disagree. Consequently, the conflict between conservatives and liberals is growing daily because many people have started to think about a lot of things that women generally need to have. In conclusion, many people are proud of this conflict because they assume it is a democratic change that could benefit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Stress Is High in Level Six Research Paper Class

"I don't have time to do that. I have to work on my research paper" is a common response when level six students are invited to go out and have fun. This class, which is considered the culmination of study at Spring International, is also considered to be the hardest one on the schedule. The class requires level six-ers to use the skills of writing, grammar, and reading in addition to learning how to research a topic on the Internet and in the library.

Here are the topics for Fall I term: Internet Marketing, Global Warming, AIDS in Africa, Ozone Depletion, Alternative Fuels, Water Pollution, Illegal Immigration in the U.S., Deforestation, Cohabitation, Divorce in the U.S. and Japan, The Effects of TV on Children, and Capital Punishment. This term's Research Writing class is taught by Gunilla Johnson.

Technology in Marketing . . .by Nouf Al Othman, Saudi Arabia

Marketing is the easiest process to connect with customers, and it's also concerned with customers' future needs. There are plenty of ways to be successful in marketing's. Using the Internet is essential for the most modern techniques. These techniques encompass e-mail, website, and cell phones.

To begin with, marketing by e-mail is a proven way to stay in touch with existing clients and to recruit new ones. E-mail makes marketing quick, easy, and enjoyable. For these reasons, most companies, especially clothes and cosmetics shops, use e-mail marketing. People who receive e-mail from these shops receive good advantages; for example, they can immediately know about goods and sales, which the shops have. thus, marketing by e-mail is wonderful.

Today, many organizations have websites. Websites are an excellent way for business organizations and institutions to expand their business because it enhances the relationship between these organizations and their clients. Hotels are on example that uses websites constantly. Tourists make reservations in different types of hotels and get a special price, according to the specific websites.

Globally, there are billions of people who use cell phones. Using the cell phone in marketing is effective. As a result of using text SMS marketing messages, many businesses whether large or small, announce their websites with these messages. In these ways they reach their goals.

All in all, different types of techniques have special effects and advantages. In my opinion, marketing by e-mail is the best technique because it is faster than other techniques and easy to hide the marketing strategies from other rivals. In addition, e-mail can be saved for a long time; in other words, it cannot be lost without your knowledge.

Technology's Effect on Health Care...by Anna Kihara, Japan

In 1897 in Japan, the life span of people was very short. Men's life span was only 42. Women's life span was 44. However, nowadays the Japanese life span is 81 on average. Why did this happen? The answer is that technology has evolved to a high quality. if so, what are the reasons and influences of high technology on longevity?

Illnesses in Japan have been increasing because people work very hard, and some people do not take medical tests. Especially, victims of cancer have increased because of stress, hard work, and eating habits. If someone gets cancer, and they can take a test early, they may get well. Technology is important in these cases. Therefore, some machines to find diseases were made. For example, in 1996, mammography was developed to test for breast cancer. Mammography takes a photograph by x-ray, and an imperceptible difference constituent compounds the breast, so a special machine was needed. If mammography had not been developed, many women would die.

The human body changes everyday, and machines have limits, so patients and doctors should not rely entirely on technology. Therefore, we have to have medical check-ups at least once a year from youth through old age. Women over 30 should take a test once a year for breast cancer. Workers also should undergo a thorough health examination once a year.

Technology in health care has evolved to a high level and will continue to evolve in the future. Technology makes our life span longer because it can search the length and breadth of our lives. However, we must not forget to take care of our own bodies because we can also help to protect our health.

Individualism Is an Important U.S. Value...by Jose Alonso, Spain

“Individualism: a theory maintaining the political and economic independence of the individual and stressing the individual initiative, action, and interest.”

When I first came to the United States, there were things that seemed very odd to me because in my country, people act a different way. However, after I spent some time here, I understood that individualism is a very important value to Americans, especially when I heard my brother-in-law say to his mother, “I’m going to work in a restaurant.” That’s what my brother-in-law told his mother when I first came here, and he was only sixteen! I couldn’t understand that. In my country, when you are studying, you try to do the best you can. Study is hard enough by itself. It would be more difficult to study and work at the same time in Spain. Maybe you can work during the summer, but here, kids want to work all year long when are not even eighteen. In most cases, they have to because they need to leave their homes and pay rent. According to Gary Althen in his article *American Values and Assumptions*, “Parents train their children to do so,.”

Then I noticed that nobody waits for other people in the family to have lunch. Each one does his own thing. In Spain, you eat with your family at a certain hour every day. If you are hungry before the others or have nothing to do, it’s too bad; you have to wait for your family and eat together. That doesn’t happen here because “Americans place a premium on efficiency.” They don’t like to waste time.

Another strange thing to me is the fact that as soon as one is eighteen or in college, he is on his own. Parents encourage their children to do so. In my country, parents try to be with their children as long as possible. They do everything they can to make them stay home. Nowadays when everything is so expensive, you can see working people who are more than thirty years old and still living with their parents. You will never see that in the United States. If a mature person lives at home, people are going to think that something is wrong with him or her.

The first time I came to this country, some things were bizarre to me. I am from a different culture with different assumptions, but now I understand because I know what values are important in American society.



Saudi Weddings Are Expensive

Wedding Customs Vary Widely in Different Countries

The wedding is a ceremony that originated a long time ago, and it reflects the culture and traditions of each country. The wedding in Saudi Arabia has evolved from a populist traditional ceremony to a modern wedding. Actually, there are similarities and differences in wedding traditions and cultures between my country and the United States.

In Saudi Arabia, parents are usually responsible for their son's engagement. They go to ask the wife's parents to accept their son as a husband. In contrast, in the United States, a boy usually chooses a girlfriend. After they have known each other very well, they announce their engagement. This is only an example of the many differences between Saudi Arabia and U.S. wedding traditions; however, there are more differences, such as ceremonies, clothes, and food.

The wedding ceremony is completely different in my country. A wedding costs a lot of money because rental of a wedding hall is very expensive. In addition, the bride and groom's parents usually invite between 300 and 500 persons. The guests always come at 10 p.m., but the bride comes at midnight. She enters with the special music of marriage. After an hour, the groom comes to the wedding hall and enters with the bride's family; her father, brother, and uncle follow. The bride and groom stay in the wedding party for a couple of hours to take pictures and cut the cake. Then they leave the party. On the other hand, in the U.S. the wedding ceremony is almost always in a church, and it usually begins in the afternoon at 2 p.m. The bride walks down the aisle of the church on her father or godfather's arm. She meets her bridegroom at the altar at the front of the church where the bridesmaids and groomsmen are standing. After the minister finishes the religious ceremony, everyone goes to a large reception room to congratulate the bride and groom. Then they go to eat the wedding cake. Before she leaves, the bride throws her bouquet of flowers to the single women who have attended the wedding.

The similarity between weddings in the two countries is the bride's dress. In both countries a bride's dress consists of a white gown decorated with pearls and a veil or hat. She also carries a bouquet of flowers to match the elegance of her dress. The differences in clothing between the countries also relates to the groom. In Saudi Arabia, the groom wears a white *thob*, a white *shemagh*, and black or brown *besht*. On the contrary, a groom in the U.S. wears a black tuxedo or suit and a cravat.

The wedding dinner is very necessary in my country. In the majority of weddings, the bride and groom's parents invite the guests to have dinner at the end of the wedding, a separate event for men and for women. At the women's wedding dinner, they always make a big buffet which has different kinds of food from different countries. The dinner starts immediately after the bride and groom leave the wedding hall. On the other hand at the men's dinner, they usually cook about 30-50 lambs and rice. In contrast to most Saudi Arabian weddings, in the U.S. the bride and groom and their families and friends sometimes go to a restaurant or to the bride or groom's house for dinner. However, they usually eat the wedding cake and listen to music before they leave the church.

In conclusion, weddings in Saudi Arabia and the United States have many traditional differences. I like the wedding in Saudi Arabia, but I would like to see a wedding ceremony in the United States.

by Razan Al-Abdulqader

Editor's Note: Spring Views is published each term for the purpose of showcasing the writing of students from all levels of Spring International and sharing the writing with the larger community. C. Shoemaker, editor