

# *Friends of the International Center, at UC San Diego*



# *Newsletter*

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Volume XXXIX No. 4

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December 2011

# President's Message

Gifts from the heart are always the most valued...gifts of our time and our talents...gifts to a cause that we really believe in. So, as we approach this gift-giving season, I'd like to thank all the people who give so generously to the programs of the Friends of the International Center. We really make a difference in people's lives.

The value of our work is proven by stories.

A spouse of an international scholar who attends our Family Orientation shortly after arriving in San Diego, learns about our Wednesday Morning Coffees. Our volunteers welcome all with grace and skill, and so our international visitor quickly finds new friends and interesting activities. How much better than sitting home alone!

Highlighting our fall season was the Thai Ethnic Dinner and program, presented by **Liz** and **Chris Wills** and many volunteers. It drew many students and their families, on campus for Family Weekend, as well as Friends members and their guests—113 in all! Besides the good food and animated conversations, the event netted a healthy amount for the Friends Scholarship Program.

Every month in this *Newsletter* we read rave reviews from our scholarship recipients, students abroad as well as internationals studying here. These leaders of tomorrow tell us how they are being transformed by their experiences. And we are playing a part!

So, THANK YOU FRIENDS for all your good work...for selling in the Resale Shop, or chopping vegetables for an Ethnic Dinner, or bringing campus and community together at an ArtPower! Supper, or conversing or crocheting on Wednesday mornings—seemingly small activities that contribute to a big cause, and thus change lives. Thank you to our devoted

Board of Directors who make it all happen. Thank you for your membership and for your monetary donations to the Friends. All of you contribute gifts from the heart.

My best wishes to all in this holiday season. May our work contribute to a peaceful world in the future.

Joan Adamo

# Holiday Lunch

—by Arline Paa



A photograph of a poinsettia plant with vibrant red flowers and dark green leaves, positioned in the top left corner of the page.

The Friends Annual Holiday Luncheon will be held at the International

Center on Tuesday, December 13, at noon. Both the staff and the Friends of the International Center are invited. We will enjoy a delicious Persian menu, have door prizes, and hear from Friends Scholarship recipients about their international experiences.

Reserve your space by December 8. Please send in your reservation coupon (see p.11) right away. If necessary, you may contact **Jeri Abernathy** at [jala9@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jala9@sbcglobal.net) or at 760/632-9895.

We hope to see you there!

Members of the Friends and International Center Staff

are invited to a

# Holiday Lunch

Tuesday, December 13, Noon

Cost: \$10

# Wednesday Morning Coffee

—by Georgina Sham

For up-to-date information on what's happening at the International Center and other places, I refer you to the bulletin board on the dining room wall by the kitchen. If you would like to be reminded of Wednesday events via e-mail, please contact me at [gbsham@gmail.com](mailto:gbsham@gmail.com).

Dec. 7 and 14: **Mommy/Daddy and Me** class, 10:45-11:30.

Dec. 7: **Cookie Exchange, Santa's Visit, International Kitchen Lunch.**

**Cookie Exchange:** Please bring 4 dozen (48) homemade cookies for our annual cookie exchange. You will go home with 3 dozen (36) cookies of a large variety! We will consume the extra dozen for dessert at lunch.



**Santa's Visit:** Jim Chase will don the Santa suit this year. With Daneila Zubcekova as his helper, Santa will hand each child one of the stuffed animals we have been making throughout the year.

**Holiday Soup Lunch:** We will prepare a large crock of soup and all our attendees are invited to join us for a free lunch, with cookies for dessert. Please stay afterwards to help clean up.

Dec. 14: **Last Meeting of the 2011 Calendar Year.** Bring any project you wish to complete or, if you wish, have us help you start a new project that may involve knitting, crocheting, *kumihimo* braiding, or making friendship bracelets using whatever is available in our crafts cupboard.

We will take a two-week holiday. Our Coffees will resume with the beginning of Winter Quarter on Wednesday, January 4, 2012.

## Global Leadership Certificate

—by Sarah Ross

This Fall Quarter, the International Education Office launched a new program for undergraduates called the Global Leadership Certificate Program. International students, study abroad returnees, and other students interact in small groups, with an advisor, both in person and through an online community. Students engage in a series of activities and write reflection papers about the international and intercultural components of their student experiences.

Dean of International Education, Lynn C. Anderson and I, Sarah Ross, Director of International Education, advise the initial two cohorts of 13 students. Those who complete the program will be able to articulate how they have developed the knowledge, skills, and sensitivities necessary to be effective, engaged leaders in our interdependent world.

You may find more information online under the International Education Office tab of the new International Center website.

### December Calendar

Dec. 2: **Resale Shop Holiday Sale**, 10:00-2:00

Dec. 2: **Friday International Café**, sponsored by the Friends, Noon-1:15

Dec. 7: **Family Orientation**, 9:30

Dec. 7, 14: **Wednesday Morning Coffee**, 10:00-Noon

Dec. 7: **International Kitchen**, soup lunch, Noon

Dec. 10: Fall Quarter Ends. **Resale Shop closed until Jan. 4**

Dec. 13: **Friends Holiday Lunch**, Noon

Dec. 24-Jan.2: **Campus closed**

Dec. 25: **Christmas**

## International Café

Friday, December 2 is the date of the Fall Quarter's final International Café; the Café sponsor will be none other than our own organization: **Friends of the International Center**.

Jeri Abernathy, Joan Adamo, Judy Bavasi, Mildred Cleveland, Dottie Keffala, Ruth Newmark, and Carol Smith will help serve the lunch that has a Canadian theme.

The main course will feature maple-glazed chicken, mashed potatoes, and a green salad. The dessert will be a Québécoise specialty, Poor Man's Pudding in English, or more authentically in French, *Pouding Chômeur*; in either language it's a vanilla cake topped by a brown sugar coating.

Cost is \$5 per person, drinks included. Time: noon to 1:15 p.m.

## International Center Profile: Jeri Abernathy



Hi. I want to tell you a bit about myself. I was born in the Midwest, but came to San Diego County in 1956. I have never left.

I graduated from high school in La Mesa, went to Grossmont Community College, and graduated from UCSD in 1976, as a literature major. For five years I ran the office and was chief

my way back to the Friends Board as Treasurer. My current business gives me more time to commit to the Friends, but not a really large amount of time. I try to come to the Center on Tuesdays. While I am there, I work on the books, meet with the Resale Shop volunteers, go to the bank, and generally hang out for a couple of hours. You can probably find me in the Friends Office between ten and twelve o'clock, if you want to stop in and say "Hi."

My fiber arts business keeps me pretty busy teaching spinning, fiber preparation, knitting, weaving, and needlepointing. This is a passion I developed when I was a young girl and pursued with limited time throughout my life. It is wonderful to have a chance to work at something that is truly joyful. But, it takes up almost every weekend, so I don't have lots of time for weekend activities with the Friends. After the holidays, though, I hope to bring some of my work to the Wednesday Morning Coffee group to give some demonstrations.

I am grateful to Alma Coles for having stayed in touch with me through the years. She contacted me about the closing of the nursery school; then again, to ask if I would join the Board, but I declined that year. This year, she contacted me about the International Center's 50th anniversary celebration, and asked me to be the new treasurer.

I enjoy getting reacquainted with those I worked with before, and look forward to meeting more of the Friends members during my regular and special times at the International Center. It is always a friendly place and brings back lovely memories.

See you there!

bookkeeper for a plumbing company. Then I had children and stayed home with them. After a short time, I started looking for a good nursery school and found ICNS—the Friends International Cooperative Nursery School. In 1984, I became the President of ICNS, which led to doing various activities with the Friends.

I know the school is gone now, and some of you may not remember much about it. I was very active there during the years that coincided with the expansion of the International Center. We built a great playground and had full enrollment. But time moves on, my children grew out of the nursery, and I became President of the Friends. I had great fun there, too. Time moved on. I got divorced.

In 1991, I went to law school, and then practiced law for twelve years. I remarried in 2001. In 2006, I started my current business in fiber arts, and this year I found

## Discover UC San Diego

Discover the award-winning architecture and stunning landscaping of the University of California, San Diego with a free 90-minute guided tour. Expert adult guides will lead you through the picturesque campus—recently named third “coolest” school in the nation by *Sierra Magazine* for going green. Tours are offered Sundays at 2:00 p.m., year-round. Walking tours are offered the first Sunday of each month; bus tours are offered each additional Sunday. Group tours can also be arranged for any day of the week. For reservations or more information, please call 858/534-4414 or visit [www.ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/tours](http://www.ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/tours). Reservations are required.

### SAVE THE DATE

WE WILL CELEBRATE  
CHINESE NEW YEAR  
WITH AN  
ETHNIC DINNER  
ON SATURDAY  
JANUARY 21, 2012

# International Family Orientation Program

—by Nancy Homeyer

It began as a concern discussed at an International Center leadership meeting in the spring of 2010. Certain questions were raised: Were there spouses of international scholars and students who were unaware of the resources and activities available to them at the Center? Were there isolated spouses who did not know how to get around and connect to others in this area? It seemed likely.

The problem was brought to the attention of the Friends of the International Center, who responded in their characteristic thoughtful way. **Joan Adamo, Alma Coles, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Carol Smith, and Eleanor tum Suden** developed what was called, at first, the International Family Outreach Program. The name was later changed to the International Family Orientation Program, a name more understandable from the perspective of potential clients.

This newest program of the Friends of the International Center is thriving. Volunteer presenters welcome the families of international scholars to the campus of UC San Diego and share essential information about the University, the city of San Diego, and life in the United States. So far over 86 individuals from 27 countries have registered with the program. They frequently have children, and/or spouses, attending with them. Many of them are glad to hear about resources for improving their English. They are interested in buses, holidays, things to see and do in San Diego, and traveling out of the city. Everyone's eyes light up when they see the bargains

available at the Resale Shop. Many are relieved to find out how the Oceanids Kitchen/Baby Exchange can help them with household needs. They learn about Wednesday Coffee, Cooking in America, Ethnic Dinners, Friday International Café, and International Kitchen. (The Friends do like to make sure people are well fed.) They learn about volunteer opportunities, and the presenters make sure that they are aware of culture shock and how to deal with it.

To cap it all off, a tour of the Center ends at Wednesday Coffee where there is something for everyone. Crafts, book group, cooking, English language table, Mommy/Daddy and Me play group, and the Explorers. Participation at Wednesday Coffee has increased quite a bit since the initiation of Family Orientation. As a volunteer "orienter," I find it rewarding to watch how the old-hand participants and the local volunteers at Wednesday Coffee pull in and welcome the newcomers, and how some of the newcomers dive immediately into the various activities. Frequently friendships are formed among the participants at Family Orientation itself. I bring to mind a young woman from China, one from Taiwan, and one from Korea forming a threesome and chatting away in the sun on the patio after one session. It is these budding friendships that are the essence of Family Orientation.

The Family Orientation Program involves close cooperation between the Friends and the staff of the Center, especially

the International Scholars Office (ISO). ISO does the recruiting by distributing written and verbal information about the program to scholars coming from abroad. Twice a month, the Family Orientation is held at the same time as the orientation for J-1 immigration status scholars. **Kevin DelMastro and Charmagne Herlien**, immigration analysts, introduce our volunteers at an informal gathering for coffee, and then we split into two groups: scholars (J-1's) and staff; dependents (J-2's) and Friends volunteers for the respective orientation sessions.

The program is doing well, but with over 2,300 scholars on campus, many of them with families, there is a lot of room for growth. Current volunteers for the program are **Nancy Homeyer (chair), Joan Adamo, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Carol Smith, Eleanor tum Suden**. If you would like to join us in this rewarding activity, please give me a call at 858/459-6661 or send an e-mail to [homeyer@san.rr.com](mailto:homeyer@san.rr.com).

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## Donations

Treasurer **Jeri Abernathy** is pleased to report that the Friends received a donation to the **Ruth Newmark Scholarship** from **Barbara and Jerry Fitzsimmons**, as well as a donation to the general scholarship fund from **Maxine Bloor**. With the ever-rising cost of higher education, including the cost of study abroad, Friends contributions to UCSD scholarships are both needed and greatly appreciated.

## Cooking in America

—by Barbara Starkey

The 2011 Fall Quarter Cooking in America course—a series of six classes offered for the cost of \$30 (lunch included!)—has a relatively small but diverse enrollment with students coming from South Africa, Korea, Japan, China, Germany, and Australia. Fresh faces always infuse a special excitement into the Friends cooking classes that I chair.

**Joany Mosher** began the session on October 13 with four recipes from *Savoring San Diego*, a cookbook that she co-edited to raise money for UC San Diego Medical Centers. Over 17,000 copies have been sold nationwide since its initial publication in 1995! **Susan Starr** followed; her class had an Oktoberfest theme. By contrast, **Louise Engleman's** recipes were more American in origin; she used a black bean chili recipe as the focus of her October 27 menu.

As of this writing, the November classes have not yet been held, but **Susannna Llop Jover** says that on November 3 she intends to prepare *paella*, a deservedly famous Spanish rice dish. Susanna is a Spanish language instructor in UCSD's Linguistics Department, who gives cooking class parties in private homes for a second vocation. On the subsequent Thursday, **Ginny Das** will highlight dishes with a mix of East Indian and U.S. flavors. At the final session, on November 17, **Liz Fong Wills** will demonstrate how to debone and stuff a Cornish game hen. By then, I hope to have recovered sufficiently from hip surgery to join Liz in the kitchen, and plan on doing some traditional Thanksgiving side dishes.

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October 20 Cooking in America class with Susan Starr as instructor

## Friends Resale Shop

—by Joe Nichols

The days are getting shorter and the temperature is dropping. We Californians are so spoiled. The Resale Shop is preparing for the winter by stocking up on warm sweaters, sweatshirts, and thick T-shirts. Since the start of the Fall Quarter, sales have boomed and students, staff, and friends of the Center continue to realize what great bargains we have—and all for a cause we so strongly believe in.

Still, we need more volunteers to help keep us fully staffed; if you know anyone who would be interested, kindly contact **Gayle Barsamian**, the Shop coordinator.

Our big winter event is our Holiday Sale on Friday, December 2, held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the walkways outside the Resale Shop—great stuff for the holidays. The Friends are sponsoring the International Café that day; consider combining lunching with shopping! In the event of rain, the Holiday Sale will be held on Tuesday, December 6.

The Shop will be closed for winter break from Monday, December 12 until January 3, 2012, and will reopen Wednesday, January 4, 2012.

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and we wish good holiday cheer and peace to all.

## Membership

Please extend a warm welcome to new members: **Hannah Hailu-Beyene** (a volunteer in our Resale Shop) and her husband, **Terefe Beyene**; **Mary Woo** and husband **James Branson**; and **Isabel** and **Roger Escalle**.

We regret to report the recent death of **Patricia Austin** (1922-2011). A longtime member of the Friends of the International Center, Pat also was actively involved with Oceanids (President in 1973-74 and long a member of the Wine Tasting group). In the fifties, she and her husband came to Scripps Institution of Oceanography, where **Roswell Austin** was with the Visibility Laboratory, a research unit then located on Point Loma. We extend our sympathy to the Austin family.

# Thai Dinner

—by *Liz Fong Wills*

Our most recent Ethnic Dinner was held on Saturday, October 22, and I am pleased to report that we had 113 paid customers for a delicious Thai meal and informative photographic tour of Thailand's less visited places. Attendance set an all-time record for an Ethnic Dinner fundraiser! About half the guests were parents and students taking part in UC San Diego's Family Weekend, and we fielded many questions about the role of the International Center in student life. This was a twofer: a huge boost for the Center's image and a big boost for the Friends Scholarship Fund. We will do our best to continue to coordinate future Ethnic Dinners with Family Weekend.

Because of the large number of guests—thirty more than usual—we were short on dishes, serving pieces, and flatware. Luckily, we could borrow 40 teaspoons and a few other essentials from the Kitchen Exchange (Oceanids rental service for international visitors). Even so, everybody had to ladle the *tom yum* soup with teaspoons, as we needed each and every soupspoon to dish out the two curries, the salad, and the rice served family style. To complicate things further, we were short on serving pieces, so that serving bowls had to be refilled, making for some hectic moments in the kitchen. All the while, people were hastily washing teaspoons, so that they could be repurposed as dessertspoons for the black sticky rice with coconut and mango.

Our hardworking helpers coped with all these challenges with aplomb, and everybody raved about the dinner. One of the guests told me: "There was no leftover food at our table, surely an indication of how much it was enjoyed."

Because fruit and vegetable



Photos by David Dannecker, a Warren College sophomore, who attended the Ethnic Dinner with his mother, Michelle



Liz Wills serving guests ginger tea

carvings are part of a festive Thai meal, I felt that an authentic Thai dinner needed authentic centerpieces, leading several of us to experiment with carving different foods. We quickly learned that food carving requires skill and patience. In the end, we were quite pleased with our creations, and enjoyed learning how to carve fanciful Napa cabbage roses, make chili flowers, and fashion red roses from tomato skins.

I would like to thank all who helped to make this a very successful event: **Joan Adamo, Dagmar Bocakova, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Gail Fliesbach, Josie Foulks, Sari Gantzel, Keiko Hirai, Marjorie Jackson, Nan Oselett, Arline Paa, Madeleine Rast, Renate Schmidt-Schoenbein, Georgina Sham, Guntima Suwannapong, Miracema Ueyoshi, Sharon Wong, and Ginny Young.** Not to be forgotten are **Candace Kohl**, who provided votives for the tables, and **Eleanor tum Suden**, who set tables and welcomed guests at the check-in table. Special thanks go to my husband, **Chris Wills**, for once again providing the evening's cultural program—a presentation of his photographs with accompanying talk entitled, "Thailand: Beyond the Beaten Path."



*The dinner likely raised enough money for two international scholarships. The Friends extend our thanks to **Liz Fong Wills** for chairing this event that stimulated both our palate and our mind.*

*These evenings of food and culture are a true labor of love. As one who once chaired the Ethnic Dinner series, I know how much is involved in putting on such an event, and speak for all when I say to Liz and Chris: "We so appreciate everything you two do to help the Friends raise money for scholarships AND to provide us with a good time."*

*Matters were more stressful than usual, not just because we had such a wonderful crowd, but also because Liz was in Boston taking care of her grandson up until Thursday, only to rush home to La Jolla just in time to do the shopping and cooking for Saturday's dinner.*

*There was no time to recover. Once more her grandmotherly skills were required—Teo had chicken pox and his busy physician-researcher parents needed to be at work. Without hesitation, Liz immediately flew back. To fly twice across country for two exhausting days of work shows dedication beyond surpass.*

*We owe Liz and Chris more than just a few words of thanks—their devotion to the UC San Diego international community is truly exceptional.—Ruth Newmark*

# Endowed Scholarship Awards

—by Ruth Newmark

In the two previous issues of our *Newsletter*, we tried to acquaint you with the most recent recipients of Friends international scholarships. In this issue, we will concentrate on a slightly different group—eight undergraduates awarded endowed scholarships for study abroad. Since eligibility requirements for these endowed scholarships are virtually identical to those of Friends Scholarships, the Friends Scholarship Committee was privileged to make the selection. Just like the recipients of our Friends Scholarships, these students were invited to our annual awards ceremony held on May 24, 2011, giving them a chance to meet the donors (**Gail Fliesbach**, **Ernest Mort**, **Marion** and **Kwan So**, respectively), all members of the Friends.

## *Fliesbach International Scholarship for Study Abroad for students majoring in theater, the visual arts, dance, or anthropology*

•**Ramona Brooks.** Ramona is spending the fall semester at the University of Ghana, Legon, where she was planning to take courses in sociology and theater not available to her here at UCSD. The opportunity to take a course in Theatre for Development excited her the most, as “that class really exemplifies my views on the potential of theatre to be a catalyst for social change.”

## *Ernest Mort International Scholarship for Revelle*

•**Heather Banic.** As a student majoring in physics and economics with a special interest in astrophysics, Heather has chosen to study at Scotland’s renowned University of St. Andrews, where she is guaranteed to find opportunities to work in labs with sophisticated equipment, gain access to the university’s observatory, and, as if this were not enough, play on grass tennis courts, something that she, as a competitive tennis player, has so far only dreamed of.

•**Aliya Hoff.** Aliya has a very focused vision of what she wants to accomplish in the next few years: to complete her undergraduate work in neuroscience, rounded out by classes in anthropology, linguistics, and cognitive science, followed by graduate studies in the hopes of ultimately becoming a member of Doctors Without Borders. The Berlin Global Seminar will allow Aliya to fulfill her humanities requirement.

•**Joshua Kenchel.** A student in bioengineering, Joshua wrote: “I realize that there is more to learn from life than what can be studied in the classroom. This is the point of studying abroad. There is as much to learn from living in the midst of another culture as there is from reading about it. Revelle in Berlin offers me a unique



Zachary Watson, Andrea Fong, Lin Joy, Joshua Kenchel,  
Aliya Hoff, Heather Banic, Ramona Brooks

opportunity to become more independent and improve my ability to adapt to different places and situations.”

•**Joy Lin.** As an aspiring physician, Joy has worked as a patient advocate at Hillcrest Hospital. “I have seen firsthand the impact of language barriers on patient care. Multilingualism enhances trust and improves communication in healthcare, and I aim to improve my knowledge of Mandarin to create a more comfortable experience for the Chinese-American patients I hope one day to serve.” Joy chose to study Mandarin at National Taiwan Normal University.

## *So Family Scholarship for Study Abroad in China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan, or Singapore*

•**Andrea Fong.** Andrea is already thinking of future studies well beyond a B.S. in Management Science and Accounting. She anticipates that rigorous business and economics classes at Hong Kong University will strengthen her decision to seek a career in business.

•**Neo Kuu.** As a Chinese-Vietnamese descendant growing up in Vietnam, Neo states that he has yet to experience a real-time, first-hand encounter with China, the focus of his Political Science major. “Before I graduate and enter the job market as a mature and educated person, I want to return to my roots in Shanghai and discover my Chinese history and identity.”

•**Zachary Watson.** A Global Seminar in Turkey seems to have whetted Zachary’s appetite for further study abroad. Presently, he is spending the Fall semester in China, exploring the impacts of globalization and perfecting his knowledge of Chinese while enrolled in a joint UC-Fudan University program.

# SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

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Dear Friends of the International Center,

I simply cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for your support of my study abroad. With your generous financial assistance, I had the most incredible opportunity to study epidemiology and global public health in Jordan this summer. Having concluded the trip, I can confidently say that the academic work I completed while in Jordan was some of the most challenging, yet simultaneously rewarding, that I have ever attempted during the course of my undergraduate studies.

On Sundays and Tuesdays, I studied at the King Hussein Cancer Center under the tutelage of Dr. **Wael Al-Delaimy**, Chief of the Division of Global Health at the UCSD School of Medicine. On Mondays and Wednesdays, I shadowed physicians working at refugee health clinics sponsored by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the Jordan Health Aid Society. Additionally, on these clinic days, our class administered a health survey that provided the data for our research project and final presentation on the health status of refugees.

On Thursdays, our class embarked on site visits that exposed us to the many dimensions of the Jordanian healthcare system, ranging from the official offices of the Jordan Ministry of Health to the bustling Al Bashir Hospital.

And, finally, on weekends (considered Friday and Saturday in Jordan) we had the opportunity to explore the beautiful country. We also enjoyed the many wonderful cafés where we spent a hefty amount of time studying.

I have never quite visited a place like Jordan. The people were some of the friendliest and most welcoming people I have ever met. Many people in the United States have developed an unfavorable image of the Middle East, shaped in large by stereotypes and the media, but I felt completely safe and at home with these Jordanians who practically

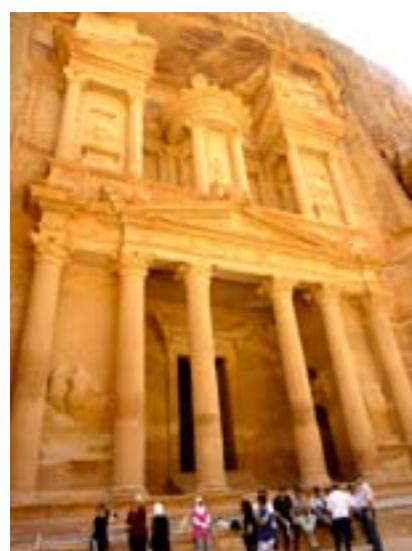
welcomed us like family. As for the country itself, I could speak endlessly about its beauty. Nothing can compare to walking among the awe-inspiring Nabataean and Roman rock-cut architecture of Petra, exploring on camelback the vast wonder that is the Wadi Rum Desert, floating while standing up in the Dead Sea, and wandering through the streets of downtown Amman, streets teeming with night market vendors and people on their way to a mosque.

Yet, some of the most rewarding moments of this journey were my firsthand encounters with the refugees. Through this Global Seminar program, I had the privilege of working directly with Palestinian, Iraqi, and Sudanese refugees, and was able to listen to stories of their struggles, their hopes, and their resilience.

This trip has, without a doubt, enriched my life and helped to further shape my career ambitions in the fields of public and global health.

Once again, I want to express my utmost appreciation to the Friends of the International Center and to the UCSD Global Seminars for making this truly inspiring trip possible.

Sincerely,  
*Brandon Kuang*



The Treasury at Petra



View of downtown Amman

## Studying in Korea

The concept of fast and convenient food is redefined in South Korea. Unlike in the U.S. where fast food is analogous to hamburgers, fries, and pizza, the concept of fast food extends well beyond these boundaries in Korea. Trust me, there's much more than kimchi. Thus you can order a hamburger with rice patties, while American pizza chains morph into sit-down restaurants where you can get a bulgogi pizza or a white sauce seafood pizza. Drive-throughs hardly exist and every fast food restaurant delivers. My favorite fast food chain is Lotteria, pretty much the Korean version of America's Golden Arches. Its specialties include a Rice Burger and a Red and White Sandwich that consists of a chicken and shrimp patty with ketchup and mayonnaise.

In convenience stores, located on every block in Seoul, one can find microwaveable bento boxes, curry chicken sandwiches, packaged kimbap (rice rolls wrapped in nori), aisles of ramen noodles, ready-to-eat dokbokki (spicy rice cakes), and bibimbap (rice mixed with vegetables and meat). Banana milk is the staple of many students, while a select few prefer strawberry or coffee milk. Some coffee and juice drinks are even sold in pouches that you pour into plastic cups filled with ice.

Street stands line small alleys, especially near subway station exits. Affectionately called aunts and uncles, street food vendors sometimes stay open all night, so that one can still find a hot meal at 4 in the morning. Rice cakes sit simmering in a sauce of red pepper paste, while corn dogs wrapped in french fries are deep fried before your eyes.

By now many of you probably think I ate instead of studied abroad. Though I've only mentioned fast food and convenience stores, it is through the overall dining culture that I learned much about the people of Korea. On weekends, families eat at food courts before they begin their shopping

adventures in department stores. Coworkers go out for dinners and long nights of drinking to bond and relieve stress. Professors take their students out for drinks to celebrate the end of yet another academic term. Small groups of friends spend hours in coffee shops catching up. Couples get "couple sets" when they go out for dinner or dessert. People getting off from work stop to chat with street vendors as they get a quick bite to eat. Whether it be family, friends, significant others, or complete strangers, relationships are built through shared meals. So, in a sense, eating is a form of studying abroad. Food teaches us about cultural dietary customs and the flavor palate of a society; yet, on a larger scale, how people share meals exemplifies the multiple levels of relationships among different members of society.

What I remember most from this summer in Seoul are the late nights spent at street stands with newfound friends, the hunt in the rain for the best curry rice, and the stumbles ordering at restaurants using my "crash and burn Korean," as one of my friends likes to put it.

While eating out is something not advertised in the typical study-abroad brochure, I definitely learned much about Korea and her people at the dinner table.

It was a wonderful experience to study in Seoul as a scholarship recipient. Thank you for this opportunity.

*Amy Lam*

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*With Harrison Gill's permission, I have selected some paragraphs from his blog about his semester abroad.—Ed.*

I am studying in the East and Central European Studies department at Charles University in Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic, through the American Institute for Foreign Study. So far classes are good. I'm taking five: Czech, Jewish History

and Central European History (both with the same professor), as well as a course on the post-communist transformation of Czechoslovakia, and one on race and gender in education, as it applies in the Czech social context. It's a bit much, but the topics are interesting. Because of the four-day calendar, I still have plenty of free time, even if it means my Mondays and Wednesdays are particularly busy.

Last week I attended an art exhibition in the new wing of DOX, Prague's Centre for Contemporary Art. There were two new shows opening the following day, and because the museum wanted to celebrate, it held an after-hours party with drinks, live music, and, best of all, free admission. The main exhibit was by Ivana Sramkova, a Czech glass artist who studied glassmaking ever since attending a special high school dedicated to making glass (yes, the Czech Republic actually has such a thing). On display were interesting, modern glass sculptures of people and animals. The other new exhibit "Luxury Dwelling," featured the work of Jiri Pelcl, essentially an installation of cardboard furniture.

Monday, I went to the Sparta vs. Slavia soccer game. It was quite crazy. The stadium is designed with a lot of fences and barricades, so that if there is a problem in one part, it won't spread to another. Supporters of Sparta, the home and winning team, lit fireworks everywhere. One even fell onto the field, so that security had to run to put it out in the middle of the game while the athletes were still playing. No one seemed to be kicked out. Though there was a huge presence of riot police, neither the police nor security ever intervened.

The weekend before last, I visited Krakow, Poland with the other Americans in the program who live in my dorm. It is quite a nice city, but I'm glad I did not choose to study there (I was considering it at the Jagiellonian University). Prague is so



Prague

much nicer. Nevertheless, the city of Krakow is amazing. Wawel Cathedral, where many famous Polish kings are buried, is particularly impressive. I also think that Polish food may be a little more exciting than the Czech. I especially enjoyed the pierogis and the doughnuts with rose jam. We visited Auschwitz, which was of course depressing. What more can you expect from a place where so many people were killed for no reason? I'm glad that such memorials exist, so hopefully everyone realizes that this must never, ever happen again.

Today [Nov. 3] I had another fascinating and really influential experience. I traveled with one of my classes to the towns of Dobrá Voda and Nová Farma. These are what are called socially excluded localities. Most of such Czech communities are made up of Roma and, as I learned, the unemployment rate can be as high as 95%! Today, however, an NGO named Český Západ helps empower the local community by not only offering social services to help lead residents in the right direction to take control of their lives for the better, but also by providing jobs and a source of income.

\* \* \* \* \*

*On October 30, Harrison sent this report:*

Dear Friends of the International Center,

It's hard to believe that my stay in the Czech Republic is already half way over. My how time flies. I'm enjoying my studies, but at the same time, I am already forced to think about my return. I just applied for I-House, and now have to start on class enrollment.

In my time here, I've experienced Czech sports, seen quite a few castles, and been to a fair share of museums. None of these experiences are as meaningful as connecting with my Czech peers (much easier said than done). I took quite a leap when I signed up for the Charles University International Club's tandem teaching program, a program best described by comparing it either to UCSD's I-House's language tables or Extension's Conversation Partner Program. And as strange as it may sound, this is one of my most enjoyable activities.

About a week ago, I had the opportunity to introduce the group to the American game Apples to Apples. We had gone to see the light

projections on Prague's world-famous clock tower on a rather cold night and were now sipping tea. Something happened that night that is extremely difficult to describe. For the first time, I felt that I was really connecting with the Czech people, something that had been impossible at the start.

Two Fridays ago, I encountered an older American couple from Arizona who asked a question that still resonates in my mind. They asked why the Czechs are so rude or something along those lines. While I can't remember the exact wording of the question, it portrayed the Czechs in a rather negative light. I might have thought much the same, when I first arrived in Prague, but not anymore. I have connected! Czechs value close relationships, but a post-communist society like theirs is not readily open to outsiders (or so say a lot of documents). For my part, I have finally broken down some of the barriers that stand between the locals and me. This is why my Apples to Apples tournament was so significant.

*Harrison Gill*

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*For 7 years, beginning in 2004 when Jeff Le studied in Ghana on OAP, we have been in touch with one of our favorite scholarship recipients. Since then Jeff has moved around, working first for the U.S. Department of State, then earning a graduate degree in Budapest, followed by jobs in, among other places, Denmark and Afghanistan. In between, he also became a serious marathon runner. In early November, he wrote:*

*"After forty job interviews, I ended up accepting a position in DC at Global Rights ([www.globalrights.org](http://www.globalrights.org)) as their senior manager for development and communications. The organization does international human rights capacity building for women and minority groups in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Give my best to the scholarship committee and shoot me an update when you get a chance."*



# Holiday Lunch

Tuesday, December 13, 2011, Noon

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UC San Diego*

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