



# Multi-Cultural Brief

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## Points of Interest

The Multi-Cultural Brief is a newsletter created by students in the ESL Newspaper class. Its purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to improve their English while at the same time making a connection between foreigners and Americans and providing an opportunity for readers to learn about different cultures and peoples and about the Charlottesville community.

## Census 2000 is Here

By Haiying Chen

You might have received a questionnaire by mail from the U.S. Census Bureau. As you know, every 10 years, the Census Bureau conducts a complete accounting of every resident in the United States, no matter where they live and what language they speak. The Census 2000 will be conducted this April.

The census statistics will help government and businesses to learn what the public needs and make some important decisions. The federal and state governments use census information for allocating funds for community programs and services, such as schools, roads and highways, day-care centers, hospitals, 911 services

and more. Businesses use the numbers to decide where to construct factories, shopping centers, banks and housing, etc.

Census information is also used for making laws and policies. For instance, the Congress uses totals to determine how many seats each state will have in the House of Representatives. Likewise, states use the number to allocate seats in their legislatures and to draw district lines. It is important to communities when they need services from government and non-profit organizations. For example, it helps us to get an ESL program in Charlottesville. (continued on page 4)

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## Spring Events

By Zhong Mei Zhou

Spring is a beautiful and vigorous season. Do you know what American people usually do in springtime? Do you know which holiday or festival is important in spring? Do you know - -

With these questions, Intermediate II class students went out to interview Americans on the Downtown Mall. Here is some information we learned.

People prefer walking outside and playing outside in springtime. One special thing is to clean their house, it's called "Spring Cleaning". All family

members participate in it. Fathers take part in outside cleaning, such as work in the garden; mothers do the inside cleaning. Sometimes, children will help their parents, for example, they clean the windows and put their own rooms in order.

There are many holidays and festivals in spring in Charlottesville. For example: Court Days; Dogwood festival; Easter; Garden Week; Fox-field Races - - -

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# AMAZING THAILAND

By  
Amornrat Sompornpisut

Have you ever been to Thailand? If you are interested in art, cultures, ruins, temples, and a peaceful country, or if islands and beaches are your destination, Thailand will never disappoint you.

The kingdom of Thailand is a country in the Southeast Asia. The country is divided into four distinct areas and each area has a unique identity. In the North, there is full of forests and mountains, populated by hill peoples and lowlanders. In the South are beaches and islands. Between the North and South lie the fertile central plains of the Chao Phraya River. The semi-arid plateau of the Northeast has a rich culture from Laos and Cambodia. Thailand is well known as "the land of smile". Thai people are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality towards all visitors.

Bangkok is the capital city and is the gateway for most travellers. The major sights include a trip along the Chao Phaya River, the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Arun, and Vimanmek Mansion, or a shopping trip to Chatuchak Weekend Market. If a beach vacation is your priority, go directly to the South: Phuket or Samui Island. In Northern Thailand, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai have plenty of flowers, such as orchids which are most beautiful and colorful in the winter.

monks and elders by sprinkling water over their hands and throwing water among the people in the spirit of fun and goodwill. **Loi- Krathong**, the water-lantern festival, is celebrated nationwide on the full-moon night in November. People launch small lotus-shaped vessels (krathong) onto rivers, canals and lakes which float away the sins of the past year and bring good luck for the future.

Thai cuisine is well known by the spices (flavors), the aromas, and the look. Actually other sweet, sour, and salty flavors are also available on individual dishes.

Amazing Thailand is a project of Tourism Authority of Thailand that mainly aims to encourage foreigners to visit Thailand. I believe that you will get a lot of impressions and have an excellent vacation if you visit Thailand.

In Charlottesville you can find typical Thai food. There are three Thai restaurants; Thai, Thaithip, and Thai' 99. I wish you will enjoy and love them.

*Thailand is well known as the "land of smile"*

# Smart Country Man

By Jungok Kim Chung

There is a joke in Korea about a countryside man who went to the city. The country people used to say that there are so many con-artists in the city, that when a rural person goes to the city he does not even notice that the city person has cut and taken his nose away even if he is awake. That means you have to be really alert in the city because you just don't know what is going to happen there.

A countryside man went to the city. The country person saw that the city had these tall buildings and many many people. He was amazed. He came in front of a tall skyscraper

and he looked up to see how high that building really was. Then a city person came along and asked, "How many floors did you see?" "Five floor," said the country person. The city man said, "It is \$1 per floor, you know." So, the countrymen said, "Oh, I didn't know that," and gave him \$5. The city man received the money and walked away.

When the city man went away, the countryman said, "well, I heard that the city people are really smart, but that one wasn't. Why, I saw more than 10 floors. Surely he didn't know that! I did outsmart that fellow!"

## Spring Events, continued

**Spring and Fall Court Days** Court Days is a fine arts and crafts festival held semi-annually, April and October, in Lee Park. Over seventy-five juried artisans from around the country show and sell their crafts in this outdoor event which is now twenty years old. Categories include glass-blowing, pottery, fiber artistry, leather, woodworking, jewelry, and more. Sat. Apr. 8, 10:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m., Sun. Apr. 9, 10-5. Free. For more information or application, call Charlottesville Downtown Foundation at (804) 295-8548.

**Dogwood Festival** Dogwood is the state flower of Virginia. This festival is held during the peak of dogwood blossom season. There are many activities for celebration on April 18-30, such as: fireworks at dusk in McIntire Park on April 18; Grand Feature Parade at 10:45a.m. on the Downtown Mall on April 29; and so on. The fireworks and parade are free. Some other activities you have to pay for. For more information or to receive a brochure, call the Dogwood Festival Office at (804) 961-9824.

**Easter** This is a religious Christian festival for remembering the death of Christ and his rising from the grave. On April 23, many Christians wearing new clothing go to church in the morning. (Wearing new clothing means to get a new life.) After returning home, some people make a basket of Easter eggs and hide them. Children are happy to play the Easter hunt. Further more, for children ages 12 and under, there is an annual Easter egg hunt at 10 a.m. on April 22 at the Downtown Amphitheater. This is free. For more information, call at (804) 295-8548.

**Historic Garden Week** Selected private homes and gardens are open for tours from 10:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. on April 24-27 in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Admission charge. For more information, please call at (804)977-1783.

**Foxfield Races.** This is a horse race from 10:30a.m. to 5:30p.m. on Garth Road on April 29. The admission charge is for charity. For more information, Please call at (804) 293-9501.

If you have time, don't hesitate to go. I think you will have a lot of fun.

## Census

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Don't worry about your privacy, because it is protected by law. The Census Bureau cannot share your answers with others, even the Immigration and Naturalization Service, welfare agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, courts, police or military.

The Census 2000 will be easier for everyone to participate. The questionnaire will be available in six languages. Furthermore, Questionnaire Assistance Centers and a toll-free telephone number will provide assistance to people who have difficulty filling out the form. If you need help, please feel free to call 1-800-471-9424 between 8:00am and 9:00pm, 7 days a week, or 1-800-582- 8330 (a Telephone display device number) for hearing impaired people.

Participating in the census is in everyone's interest, since so many decisions related to your life are based on the census figures. Your answers work for you. Please fill your form out and mail it back.

## Spotlight on a Volunteer

Devora De Granville Manco Teixeira (from Brazil) has volunteered at the dental department of the primary care center in UVA hospital.

"When I came here, at first I was so busy for fitting myself to new circumstances. Soon after that I began to feel bored...At that time my husband's friend who has been here about 10 years, recommended to volunteering. As you know, volunteering doesn't give monetary profit, but I could gain many things much more important and better than money. I could make new friends, learn new things, and feel a great sense of personal satisfaction. I hope many more people will have the opportunity for such good feelings like me."

Although she is a mother of two boys, she still has two more volunteering jobs! Although she speaks English very well, she said her English skill has improved due to volunteering. (continued on page 5)

## Democracy and Freedom: An Opinion

by HabibuRahman Abdullah

I don't doubt that the majority of western countries have democracy. I also believe that in the U.S., democracy means the government is for the people. It means you can vote, you have freedom, and there is no dictatorship. For example, in the U.S. there is freedom of speech; nobody is above the law. There are many channels to speak or share ideas. Everybody is free to give speech and write whatever he or she wants. Because of this reason every year, from different countries, many people are coming to live in the US. However, people who are coming from different countries have also issues in the US. These people don't like life's style of Americans. They are coming to the US because of the democracy and freedom in the US. Therefore, I think there are two important points about life in the US. The good point is freedom and democracy. The bad point is that some people are losing their cultural identity; children are losing their family ties. When you choose freedom and come here, you might lose something else.

In conclusion, if I compare life here and other countries, I can say that life here is better than the other countries. We all make choices. Life and freedom is more important sometimes.

What about you? What is your opinion or experience with democracy and freedom?

# Festivals Around the World

By Joan Ko

Off the top of your head, what is your first image of Japan, Italy, or Honduras? Probably they are known for sushi, pizza, and coffee...However, there are some things more interesting than food, such as the Doll Festival in Japan, Settembre al Borgo in Italy, and The Rain of Fish in Honduras. These festivals are not well known by the world, but people will have fun joining any of them.

**Doll Festival in Japan.** The Doll Festival is the day for girls to pray for health and happiness. Every year before March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the families display dolls called “*hina hingo*” for their daughters who are under seven years old. “*Hina hingo*” is a set of dolls representing emperor, empress, attendants, and musicians in ancient court dress. The families celebrate with a meal of “*hishimochi*” (rice cakes in a diamond shape) and “*shirozake*” (a drink of rice malt and sake). The display of dolls continues for a month before March 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, they need to put those dolls away as soon as possible, because people say that if the dolls are displayed too long, the girl will miss her chance to get married!

**Settembre al Borgo in Italy.** *Borgo*, in the Middle Ages, was a city on a hill. This festival is

especially in September, in Naples. Many singers sing every night under the star bright sky, actors present stories, and people dance in *tarantella* (typical Neapolitan dance).

In Naples, another traditional festival is **Piedigrotta**, with many fireworks like on New Year's Eve. There are many places on the street where people cook pizzas in wood stoves and serve you while the fresh mozzarella is still fluid and really could burn your mouth.

Here are only some examples of interesting festivals in different countries. What festivals do you have in your country that other people

**The Rain of Fish in Honduras.** This is a natural phenomenon that occurs in the north of Honduras, Central America. It occurs in a place called Yoro, on the shore of the Caribbean Sea. Every year for a few days, during the month of August, high waves cover the shoreline and leave behind a great quantity of fish of different species. This phenomenon called “*Lluvia de Peces*” (Rain of Fish) draws tourists from other parts of Honduras and Central America. The local people wait for the Rain of Fish with baskets and then they pick up the fish left behind by the waves. Then they have a festival in honor of the Virgin of Suyapa, Patron of Honduras, giving thanks for this miracle.

## Spotlight on a Volunteer

continued

Working at the gift shop of UVA Medical Center, Maye is another foreign volunteer. She came here 8 months ago, from China. She has volunteered as a cashier for about one month.

“I can’t speak English very well. When I first arrived here, I wanted to improve my English as soon as possible. I heard about volunteering from my neighbor. She gave me information, so I called the

volunteer services department of UVA Medical Center. They were so nice. Although I was a little afraid of that, little by little I began to gain confidence. I think volunteering is a wonderful way to study English. Besides, it makes me very happy. It’s a wonder I can do something for others!”

Maye goes to work every Monday afternoon. They sell foods, flowers, toys, and more.

# Volunteers: Participating in Your Community

By Se-in Shin

Have you done something for others? At that time what did you feel? If you are looking for different kinds of valuable activities, just knock on the door of volunteering. You don't need to worry about your ability or situation. Even if you are foreigner, you can do that.

There are many volunteer opportunities in Charlottesville.

If you want to volunteer at UVA Medical Center, just call the Volunteer Services Department. Anytime, they will welcome you and guide you to volunteering. You can choose the volunteer job and times you want. Just before starting to work, you have to take a TB (tuberculosis) test and a 3-hour training course. For more information, call Liz Courain with Volunteer Services, at 924-5252.

United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area Volunteer Services mobilizes people and resources to meet community needs. They are committed to

*meet new people, gain  
valuable experience, and  
feel more connected to our  
community*

raising human service standards in our area. According to their information, year after year community needs and numbers of volunteers increase. Basically, anyone can volunteer. United Way has many volunteer opportunities that will allow you to express and expand your talents and enthusiasm. You can choose the time, day, and kind of work suitable for you. If you join them, you will meet new people, gain valuable experience, and feel more connected to our community. For more information, call Shaele McGihon, Volunteer Coordinator, at 972-1705.

Are you an advanced level ESL student or a native English speaker? The Charlottesville Adult ESL Program is always looking for volunteers to help out in our classes. For more information, call 245-2817

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