



Multi-Cultural Brief

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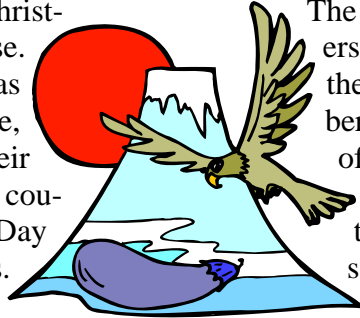
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New Year's in Japan

By Noriko Egawa

Happy New Year! The 21st Century has started! "Gantan" (January 1st) is the most important day in Japan. Although Christmas is very important religiously for many Americans, it is not for most Japanese. Christmas is fun for Japanese. They decorate Christmas trees, eat Christmas cake, and give presents to their children. Many young couples spend Christmas Day together in fancy hotels. Japanese decorate the downtown with lights and trees until December 25th, and then they change their decorations for the new year. Japanese think *Gantan* is the most important day spiritually because one year has finished, and then a new year



is starting. We call December "Shiwasu." It means that we are very busy at this time. Every December, we send "Nengazyou" (New Year postcards) to friends and relatives. The Japanese post office delivers them after January 1st. If they send them before December 20th, the Japanese post office delivers them on January 1st. Every November, the Japanese post office sells "Otoshidama Tuki Nengazyou" (New Year postcards with lottery). Most Japanese buy and send them, too. The postcard has a lottery number on the bottom of it, and the lottery numbers are announced on January 15th. (Continued on page 8)

The Chinese New Year

By Xihui Lai

The Chinese New Year, which is also called the Spring Festival, is based on the lunar calendar. So, every year, the Chinese New Year has a different date in the solar calendar. This year the Chinese New Year is on January 24th. To me, there were so many wonderful and exciting things that filled up all my childhood memories of Chinese New Year in that big old house in a small village in the countryside.



When I was a little girl, I always said loudly, "Oh! The New Year is coming! The New Year is coming!" The happiness flew out without control. During New Year's, I would seldom be given a scolding. My mom would buy new clothing for us, as many other parents usually did for the coming New Year. Joy filled up over all my heart. It was a kind of light flash- (Continued on page 5)

Raising Your Child to Be Bilingual

By Charo Mina-Rojas

Maybe, some moms who are in a bilingual family group with babies under 3 are wondering how their kids will learn to speak. Will it be difficult for them to learn?

I have a nephew who is two years old. He was born in the U.S., but his mom is American and his dad is Honduran. When he was born, all the adults in his family were wondering how he would do with language. Would he speak English or Spanish?

His parents wanted him to learn both well.

Because probably he will learn English first for the reason that the English environment will be stronger, his mother has surrounded him with Spanish speakers since he was in the womb.

When my nephew was born, I started speaking to him in Spanish, and his father usually did the same. His mother and her family talked with the baby in English, so, we all were waiting for the moment when he would speak.

When he was six months old, he was able to understand both languages, and when he started saying some words, he could say *juice* or *milk* as he could say *gato* or *agua* (Spanish for cat and water). When someone asked him, “*Donde estan los zapatos?*” (where are the shoes?), he pointed to them and said, “*shoes.*” If you said to him, “*carro,*” he repeated, “*car*”, and if someone asked him for “*la pelota*”, he pointed to it and said, “*ball.*”

Now that he is two years old and speaks a little more, he can talk with his parents at the same time in both languages. If his mother asks him something, he answers her in English, but if his father talks with him, he answers him in Spanish. One time, he was watching a movie and saw a horse, so he said, “*caballo.*” His grandmother, who understands little Spanish, asked, “What did the baby say?” The baby answered, “*a horse.*”

We have enjoyed teaching him. All of us in the family think that it is very important that he can communicate in both languages because we are used to talking in both at home. For example, I speak Spanish with the baby’s father, my husband speaks English with his sister (the baby’s mom), and we all speak English with my mother-in-law. Sometimes (I think because we all want to learn more and improve in the

other language), we mix both languages in one sentence; the baby has the capability of understanding and participating with us in the conversation. This is not only nice, but important. We know that when he starts school, he is going to improve and use more English. Nevertheless, he won’t forget Spanish, and when he goes to Honduras or meets the part of his family that speaks only Spanish, he will feel comfortable in that environment.

He is learning, too, little things about the culture that we, the Spanish speakers, represent. He likes salsa music; he enjoys dancing; he is accustomed to seeing his relatives around; and he loves plantains, beans and the sugar cane beverage that we eat and drink. He not only will be able to speak a different language than his native one, but he also will be able to understand the differences between the cultures. I’m sure he is going to enjoy that.



Three Milks Cake

By Sheila Vallejo

Do you like desserts? I love all kinds of desserts: cakes, ice cream, pies, etc. But sometimes they take a lot of time and effort. This one, which I learned in Ecuador, is easy, fast, and delicious. Please try it.

- 5 eggs
- 1 3/4 cup flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 can whipping cream (heavy)
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk



Separate egg whites and yolks from the eggs. Beat egg whites until they become like snow, then add yolks one at a time and continue beating. Gradually add sugar and flour until all the ingredients are mixed. Bake in a greased pan at 350 degrees F for approximately 45 minutes or until it becomes golden brown. Let it cool. After that, put in a blender the whipping cream, sweetened condensed milk and evaporated milk and mix for one minute. Pour the mixture over the cake. It needs to be refrigerated for at least 1 hour. Decorate with slices of canned peaches if you want. Serves up to 8. Enjoy.

The Power of the Internet

By Laura Cafagna

Have you ever thought how easy our life is becoming, thanks to the Internet?

Until two years ago, I did not know what the Internet was. Now I can not imagine my life without it. Take this morning, for example. As soon as I woke up, I turned on the computer. I made coffee and then went back to the computer to check my e-mail. I spent the next two hours sending electronic cards and e-mails with New Year's wishes to family and friends.

Currently, I am writing to friends in three continents: Asia, Europe, and the United States. Can you imagine how much I would have to spend on stamps and how long I would have to wait for an answer? Some people consider e-mail very impersonal, and I sometimes think so too, but this is a price which is worth paying, in my opinion. E-mail is very important for people like me who live far away from their families. Thanks to the Internet, we can speak every day with our families and in this way feel a little less homesick. The Internet would never replace a classic card for Christmas or a telephone call, but it is, without any doubt, the most immediate, cheap and convenient way to keep in touch.

The Internet is also a lot more than this. What about getting information? How easy can it be? I use the Internet basically every day. When we were going to move to Virginia, I did almost everything through the Internet from California. I looked for an apartment, and this included availability, prices, and location. I looked for an English class, tennis

lessons, and tennis courts. I knew before coming here that in Charlottesville I could find my favorite shops. I knew that at the University of Virginia there is a symphony and an Opera. I bought airplane tickets, contacted the moving companies, and rented a car. Thanks to the Internet, when we came to Charlottesville, we already had a lot of information that made our lives a lot easier. And thanks to the hospitality of friends, we had a roof under which to sleep until our apartment was ready.

For me, the Internet is great, probably the best discovery after the coffee machine.

Here are some of my favorite websites:

- www.yip.yahoo.com: In the yahoo yellow pages, you can get all the information you can dream of about school, apartments, gym, maps, and a lot more.
- www.gocho.com: The Charlottesville airport website is good if you like to travel or have friends visiting; you can get weather information, schedules of departures and arrivals, and lots more.
- www.hollywood.com: Simply digit your zip code and you get all the theatres with the movies and their times. Great!
- www.virginia.edu: This is the UVA website where you can get information about entertainment, and a lot more.
- <http://recreation.ci.charlottesville.va.us>: This is the wonderful website of the City of Charlottesville with events, information, and classes.

Do you have more to share? Let us know.



Calendar News



- Feb. 2: 1st Fri.: Arabic Culture: Co-sponsored with the Arabic Student Organization Baptist Student Center, 1500 JPA
- Feb. 12: Registration: International Cooking Classes "Luscious Desserts." Meets: 6:00 pm Feb. 26, Mar. 5, and Mar. 19. International Center. Fee: \$20. Call 924-7983.
- Feb. 16: Deadline for entries for Voices of Adult Learners
- Feb. 23: Feb. ESL assessment at Jefferson School. Call for appointment 245-2817.
- Every Tue.: Book Group. Intermediate Reading and Discussion of American Literature. International Ctr. 10-11:30 am. Call 924-7983.
- Every Wed.: Latin Nightclub Dancing, New Dance Space on Downtown Mall, 105 N. 1st St., 8:45 to 10:00 p.m., \$10/person. For info., contact Edwin O. Roa (804)295-7103, edwinart@yahoo.com.

The Story of Sacajawea

By Laura Cafagna



Do not be surprised the next time you go shopping if, instead of receiving a dollar bill, you get a golden coin. In fact, there is a new-born dollar coin. It is a gold coin, slightly bigger than a quarter, with the image of Sacajawea and her infant son, Pompey.

Who was she? She was a Shoshone Native American and a guide and interpreter for the Corps of Discovery, better known as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Let me go back and tell you what the Corps of Discovery was.

At the beginning of the 1800's, the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, decided to organize a scientific expedition to discover the Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. At that time, nobody had any idea about how expansive the United States was. They had explored as far west as the Rocky Mountains, and they knew that going down to the opposite coast was a river, which they called the Columbia River (named after the boat that took Captain Robert Gray there in 1792). They did not know what was west of the Rocky Mountains. Jefferson put his secretary, Meriwether Lewis, in charge of the expedition, and he chose William Clark to be the other captain. The expedition, including 2 captains and 13 men, left Fort Massac on the Ohio River in 1804.

The expedition was supposed to bring back to President Jefferson samples of animals, plants, flowers, and more. It also was supposed to inform the Native Americans living there that their land was now a part of the United States of America. Captain Lewis was the scientist of the expedition. He had taken courses in medicine, botany, and zoology. He had to be ready for every eventuality. The people on the expedition brought with them the most advanced instruments, rifles, and gifts for the Native Americans that they were going to meet.

They met Sacajawea at Fort Mandan where they spent the winter. According to *Encarta 2000*, she had been "sold as a slave to the Missouri River Mandans, who sold her to a trapper named Toussaint Charbonneau," who made her one of his wives. Lewis and Clark "hired Charbonneau as an interpreter and guide for the rest of their trip west. Sacajawea and her young son were allowed to go with the expedition when it set out in April 1805."

Sacajawea was a very young girl, but she was essential for the Corps' success. "When the expedition encountered a tribe of Shoshone led by her brother, Sacajawea obtained food, horses, and guides, which allowed the explorers to continue" their trip.

After almost two years of a very hard journey, the expedition finally found the Northwest Passage and reached the Pacific Ocean. They came back east after two years, in 1806, with the most amazing collection of animals and plants, and with very precise maps. If you go to Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, you can still see some of the samples that Lewis and Clark brought back. There is also a statue of Lewis and Clark, and Sacajawea at Main Street and Ridge Street. I recommend you go take a look. This is an amazing story. I truly think that Sacajawea deserves

Twenty-six Reporters in the World Were Killed in 2000

By Laura Cafagna

According to "Reporter Sans Frontieres" (the organization that defends the freedom of the press), almost 1/3 of the global population lives in countries without freedom.

In the year 2000 alone, 26 reporters were killed doing their jobs, 10 less than in 1999; 329 were stopped by the police; and 77 were arrested. Of the 26 reporters killed, 11 of them were killed by rebel forces, including in Sierra Leone (3), in Sri Lanka (2), and in Colombia (2).

Four countries are still holding more than half of the reporters arrested. These include Burma (13), China (12), Iran (10), and Ethiopia (9).

Are you impressed by these numbers? Well, for sure I am. As an Italian, I am shocked. I never realized how lucky I have been to live in a country where everybody can express their opinions without any consequence. I have never lived in and I have never visited a country in which there is no freedom of speech or press, and I cannot imagine it.

If you were born in one of these countries and you have a story to tell, please write us. We will be more than happy to hear your voice.

The Chinese New Year

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ing through my body.

Closing the New Year, every family hung different antithetical couplets on the wall beside the door, one on the left, one on the right. A horizontal scroll of inscription was hung above the door. The kind of couplet which would be hung was very important. That was the New Year's Wish.

People good at calligraphy were usually asked to write couplets for other people. They would be very proud of doing it. On the door and on the window or on the wall, people liked to put the word "Fu" upside down. *Fu* means happiness. The pronunciation of "upside down" in Chinese is the same as the pronunciation of "coming." *Fu* with heels over head meant happiness was coming.

On the last day of the lunar calendar, every family would have a big meal, which is called the "Meal of the New Year." It would be eaten at noon or in the evening. Just before the family ate, they lit a bunch of fireworks, then closed the door until they finished the meal. During the meal, no matter who knocked on the door, the door would not be opened. The people who knocked would quite understand and would go away with no complaining.

During the meal, usually there was a dish of a whole fish, which would not be eaten until the day after the New Year because it should be left for the coming New Year. This is because the pronunciations of the words "fish" and "left" are the same in Chinese. This meant that every year we had something left, and so we were not poor; we were rich.

At midnight, you could hear a lot of noise from fireworks. Every family went out to light fireworks. That was the most exciting thing for me. I was afraid to light them, but I wanted to do it so much. I always covered my ears immediately with my hands after lighting the fireworks.

The first morning of the New Year was another exciting time. Every kid wanted to get up early; each one especially wanted to be the first. It meant they would

not be lazy the whole year if they got up early. At this time, the kids could go to say "Happy New Year!" to their relatives (those relatives were from their father's side, and usually they lived in the same building or nearby). Then they would be given a red pack with money inside. That was called "*Ya Shui Qian*." The parents also gave a red pack of money to their kids. During the New Year celebration, a married woman would go with her family to visit her parents and her other relatives. If she had her kids with her, they also would be given *Ya Shui Qian*.

Since China is very big, the culture and tradition has been different in different parts. I was in the south of China. I have heard that in the north, they usually had dumplings for the New Year's meal instead of rice. The family sat together making dumplings while speaking and laughing. There was so much warm feeling around the whole family. Also, some people prayed to Buddha.

But now in China, especially in the cities and for the young couple families, people do not pay so much attention to the traditional New Year's meal and so on any more. Also, in my family, my parents usually just make some simple food. On New Year's Eve, the family usually sits together watching the big TV program of the Spring Festival party.

I miss my childhood so much and that traditional New Year. Maybe the joy of childhood is the best among many other things.

Mushroom Soup

By Rosio Ascensio



Hot soup will be great for this winter!

- 10 whole fresh mushrooms
- 1 tomato
- 1/3 onion
- cilantro
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1 cube chicken broth
- 6 cups water

Chop mushrooms, tomato, and onion. In a casserole put the butter to saute all the chopped ingredients for 3 to 5 minutes. Add water and the cube of chicken broth. Allow to boil for 10 minutes.

Serves 4.

First Night Virginia 2001

By Noriko Egawa



It was a nice surprise for me to spend a New Year's Eve with many Americans.

First Night Virginia 2001 was held on December 31st. The event was from 3:00 in the afternoon until

midnight. There were 21 sites, and most were indoors. First Night Virginia is an alcohol-free, family-oriented and safe alternative to traditional New Year's Eve celebrations. This year it had many kinds of musical events and magic shows, an ice show, a parade, fireworks, etc. It was impossible for me to watch all of them because I have only one body, but I tried to watch many events by taking a shuttle bus from 3:00 to midnight.

To watch the events, we had to buy Admission Buttons. Buttons were \$10 for adults 13 and up, \$5 for children between 4 and 12, and children 3 and under got in free. During the events, we were sure to pin our First Night buttons where they were easily seen. I bought my button at Kroger the day before New Year's Eve. I also bought three tickets for reserved seating for \$2 each at the First Night Headquarters in the Omni atrium on December 31st. Reserved seating offered me the opportunity to avoid waiting in long lines and to organize my evening in advance.

I watched a magic show, gospel, country music, jazz, blues, Latin music, and, at midnight, the fireworks. I especially enjoyed the Latin music. I wanted to dance there, but I was shy. Therefore, I couldn't, even though many people were dancing to the music. The fireworks at midnight also were great. It was freezing, but the beauty of the fireworks let me forget it.

I enjoyed First Night Virginia 2001. It might be the first and last opportunity to do so for me because I am going to go back to Japan in June. If you missed First Night Virginia 2001 and you will stay in Charlottesville another year, you can see First Night Virginia 2002 next New Year's Eve. Please enjoy it with many Americans.

Different Things and Different Life

By Rosio Ascencio

I could say that all of us as Mexicans are very fortunate in our country, although I couldn't say the same about our political situation and our government. The main idea here is that we have a country very rich in mining, oil, agriculture, cattle, etc. Also, we have many tourist places, too.

The style of life that we used to have is healthier and easier than here. The food in Mexico is natural and delicious. We have many kinds of fruits and vegetables. They aren't as expensive as here.

The food in the U.S. is ready to eat. You just have to go to buy it at the store. Maybe it is because most people work and they don't have time to cook.

In Mexico, most people work, too. But there it is more possible for somebody to help you to clean, to press, and to cook. This person sometimes stays at your home or just works for you part-time. This may happen if you have a little apartment or a big house. Also, you may have this person no matter if you are a housewife or you work. This kind of service is a reasonable cost to you. In Mexico, we say that this person makes our happiness at home.

Please Pick Up After Your Pets

By Noriko Egawa

Do you pick up after your pets?

When I was taking a walk in a park in Charlottesville last spring, I saw a lot of dog feces along a sidewalk. Recently, I have not seen as much dog feces in parks. The Charlottesville Department of Parks and Recreation installed a "dog poop bag dispenser" and waste receptacle at Riverview Park. When you take a walk with your pets in Riverview Park, you can use it.

If you are interested in this, please visit: <http://www.cityofdogs.com/news1.html>.

SNOW DAYS

In case of bad weather, call 245-2401 for school closing information.

MERCI — What a Wonderful Program!!

By Mariko Ajiro

There are many kinds of volunteers in this country. I wanted to be one of them, and I started at U.V.A. Hospital. At the hospital, there are a lot of kinds of volunteers. For example, you can take pictures of newborn babies, deliver flowers to the patients, deliver mail, or be a shuttle driver for frail patients from their cars to the door of the main hospital. You also can be a translator. I chose MERCI because my English is not good enough to communicate with patients. In Japan, I was interested in environmental issues, and MERCI also is concerned about these things. I met wonderful people there: Helen French, who started this program by herself, and two other wonderful ladies, Corina Willoughby and Cindy Thacker, the volunteers. I want to introduce the wonderful program to many people, so I went to interview Helen with Laura Cafagna, my friend from the Newspaper Class at Jefferson School. This is what we learned:

Who is Helen French? She was born in Czechoslovakia and came to the U.S. when she was five. She has three children and three grandchildren. She is a nurse at U.V.A. Hospital and has a lot of responsibilities there.

Why and when did she start the program? When she was working in the operating room, they were incinerating all products from the operations, including both infectious waste and products that had never been used. In 1991, the Operating Room Management asked her to find a way to decrease the amount of incineration. She started separating waste from clean medical equipment and saw that a lot of unused equipment could be recycled. On her own time, she began to send the good equipment to Missions. Since 1997, she has had two wonderful volunteer ladies, Corina Willoughby and Cindy Thacker, to help her.

What is the name of the program? It is called MERCI Program. It means Medical Equipment Recovery of Clean Inventory.

What is the program about? First, they classify and sort equipment. Then, they send it to missions. Many researchers at U.V.A. also come to pick up for free what they can use.

How many pounds of equipment does MERCI send? Last year they sent more than 101 tons to humanitarian missions and over 25 tons to U.V.A. re-

search labs.

Where do they send it? The biggest mission is Christian Relief. They send equipment to 17 countries, Indian Reservations, and the Appalachian area.

How much money does the hospital save? It saved more than \$24 million last year.

Without this program, what would have happened to the equipment that it recycled? It would have been incinerated or thrown away.

What does MERCI recycle? Only clean medical equipment, mostly from U.V.A. Hospital. The value of each piece of equipment has to be less than \$500.

Does MERCI also recycle medicines? No, because it is strictly restricted by law.

Does MERCI receive money for this service? No, it doesn't receive any money. The hospital just offers space for the program. Helen and 3 volunteers do all the work.

What are Helen's goals? She wants to educate medical students not to waste and encourage them to reduce waste. She also would like to organize some of the small humanitarian programs into one.

If you would like to volunteer at MERCI or explore other volunteer opportunities at U.V.A. Hospital, please contact the Volunteer Services Department at 924-5251. Martha Jefferson Hospital also offers volunteer opportunities.

Want to Contribute to the Multicultural Brief?

Do you have a story, an opinion, a skill you want to tell people about, a recipe, a good idea, a complaint, are response to what you learned here?

Share it with others!

All submissions are considered. You don't have to be part of the Newspaper Class to contribute! Next deadline is February 21, 2001.

There are still openings in the Newspaper Class! Classes meet every Wednesday from 9:30 to 12:00 and Friday from 11:00 to 1:00.

If interested, call 245-2817, or e-mail: erno@esinet.net.

New Year's in Japan

Continued from page 1

People who get the postcards look forward to the announcement. The biggest prize is a big TV or digital video camera, and the smallest prize is a postage stamp. The odds of winning are more than 3/100. After Japanese finish writing and sending *Nengazyou*, they clean their houses perfectly because they want to spend January 1st cleanly. Then, they decorate "*Kagamimoti*" (rice cakes with decorations) in the house and decorate "*Okazari*" (a decoration) above the entrance door. We eat these rice cakes on January 15th.

We cook "*Osetiryouri*" (a special dish for New Year's) on December 31st. We eat it during "*Sanganiti*" (January 1st, 2nd, and 3rd) because housewives don't have to do their chores during *Sanganiti*. Today, many people order it at a hotel or buy it at a grocery store.

On the evening of "*Oomisoka*" (New Year's Eve), many Japanese watch "*Kouhaku Utagassen*" (a musical contest, men vs. women) on TV. It is a big honor to sing a song at *Kouhaku Utagassen*. If singers participate, they can raise their performance fee. Every year, more than 50% of the people in Japan watch this event. The program ends before midnight. After watching TV, people listen to "*Zyoya No Kane*" (sound of a bell at temple). When it rings 108 times, it becomes 12:00 midnight. We say, "Happy New Year!" Then we go to bed. If you have a "*Hatuyume*" (a dream), it can foretell your future for the year. The luckiest is to have a dream of Mount Fuji, the second is a hawk, and the third is an eggplant. If you dream of one of these, your new year will be happy!

When I was a child, most Japanese wore "*Kimonos*" (Japanese traditional clothing) on New Year's Day. Japanese don't wear *Kimonos* now because they are uncomfortable and expensive. Many beautiful traditions are being lost in Japan.

The majority of Japanese have two religions: Shinto and Buddhist. We pray to the sun, a family Shinto altar, and a family Buddhist altar. In my house, like many young people, we don't have any altars, but in my grandparents' house, they do. Then we drink Japanese sake and eat rice cakes and *Osetiryouri*. We talk about New Year's Resolutions in front of the family. I always say that I am going to write in my

Mission Statement

The Multicultural Brief is an ESL newsletter created by students who want to improve their English and is produced as part of a newspaper class offered through the Charlottesville Adult Education program. Its purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to

- share their experiences of being from another country
- offer multicultural perspectives on life in Charlottesville
- help inform people who are new to Charlottesville of issues and opportunities around town
- build a bridge of communication between the ESL population and Americans living in the Charlottesville community

diary every day. Unfortunately, I have never accomplished this. When I was a child, I got "*Otoshidama*" (money in a small envelope) from my parents and relatives and my parents' friends. Now, I have to give *Otoshidama* to children. Today, some children get more than \$1,000.

During *Sanganiti*, we visit the shrine and temple and throw some money into a box in front of them, and then we pray. We also visit a Shrine on January 15th and burn our New Year's decorations and New Year's calligraphy. This has religious meanings.

I hope lots of happiness is coming your way in the New Year!

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS ADULT ESL PROGRAM

Room 215A, Jefferson Annex
201 4th Street NW
Charlottesville, VA 22903
Phone: (804)245-2817
Website: avenue.org/adulted

Contributors

Mariko Ajiro (Japan)
Rosio Ascensio (Mexico)
Laura Cafagna (Italy)
Noriko Egawa (Japan)
Xihui Lai (China)
Charo Mina-Rojas
(Colombia)
Sheila Vallejo (Ecuador)
Editor: Leslie Furlong

