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



Newsletter

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January 2014

President's Message

The beginning of a new year brings hope and energy and I am optimistic that you feel invigorated and ready to join in one of our many ongoing programs. Last month I had an opportunity to meet with several new volunteers and I was surprised to hear a couple confess that though they had been interested in volunteering for some time, they had not felt comfortable doing so without the accompaniment of a friend. Thus, I ask each of you to invite a friend any time that you attend a Friends-sponsored activity to help ease others' entry into the Friends community.

Many of our international visitors have similarly confided to me that they experienced initial hesitancy about participating in Friends programs: they felt ill prepared to enter into a group due to concerns about their English skills, their sense of disconnectedness, and their overall loss of purpose (many have professions/careers that have been interrupted). These same visitors expressed an outpouring of gratitude because through their participation in Friends programs, they have eased their feelings of loneliness, grief, and disconnectedness, and know that a warm and welcoming community of Friends awaits them whenever they participate.

We invite you to share your knowledge or thoughts with our visitors as they explore American society. Topics recently overheard have included how local government scandals are treated in different countries (many were surprised to learn that France is far less tolerant than perceived and quicker to demand prosecution and resignations than the USA); how volunteerism is perceived around the globe (those from western Europe opined that because of the government's expansive social programs, there is little volunteerism because what are "volunteer" jobs in the USA are paid positions in Europe); and even how and when to use an oven (an appliance rarely seen in Asian countries).

In closing, my thanks to all in our Friends community who helped make the holidays extra special for not only our international visitors, but also for our members: Dean **Kirk Simmons**, our holiday lunch chairs, our Friends Dinner Social chairs, our Wednesday Coffee team, our hospitality-at-home hosts, and our many other volunteers. Please do not be shy about coming to one of our activities for I can assure you that you will leave feeling that the holiday bonhomie did not end.

—Katya Newmark

Come Celebrate Chinese New Year with Us!

*This invitation to celebrate Chinese New Year comes from Friends Ethnic Dinner Chair, **Liz Fong Wills**.*

*Since 1986, Liz has chaired the Ethnic Dinner series, first as co-chair with **Alma Coles** and **Georgina Sham**, and solo since 1995.*



*Alma Coles and Liz Fong Wills at
Friends 2013 Chinese Dinner*

*For forty years, Ethnic Dinners have offered an array of wonderful meals, always accompanied by a cultural program. During the last few years, many of these dinners have become a husband and wife performance, with Liz taking charge of the kitchen and Prof. **Christopher Wills** providing a fascinating PowerPoint presentation featuring his stunning photographs of out-of-the-way places.*

While the cultural program is meant to complement the dinner, or the other way around, there are times when the exotic places that attract this adventurous couple do not possess a range of foods that please our Western palate. Such is the case this month, for who among us really wants to eat sago grubs or bland kaukau (a kind of sweet potato)?

And so we will be treated to a somewhat unusual amalgam that mixes highly refined Chinese dishes with striking photos of a remote existence in Papua New Guinea.

We are greatly indebted to Liz's friends, who, once again, will treat us to what we know will be a fabulous Chinese banquet. This will be the tenth time in a row that **Peggy Cheong, Theresa Song, and Clara Wang**, who have close ties to and personal experience in family-owned Taiwanese restaurants, will, together with professional chef **Jimmy Chen** and his wife **Rita Hsia**, generously give of their time and talent, simply because they have pride in their culture and wish to assist us in raising funds for international scholarships.

Two years ago, the Friends Chinese Ethnic Dinner program was recognized for its exemplary contributions to the International Center by being presented with a 2012 Chancellor's Award. How

wonderful that this group has not rested on its laurels, but is continuing to champion cultural understanding through delicious food!

Liz is quick to remind us that those who attended one of the previous nine Chinese dinners prepared by these talented cooks will remember some of Chef Jimmy's astonishing creations: "For the Year of the Rabbit, Jimmy made 'rabbits' out of prawns. The Year of the Snake was represented by a large bean curd roll stuffed with minced pork and water chestnuts with little carrot 'eyes'. The Year of the Dragon was represented by a creation featuring the head of a lobster with shrimp and avocado for its body. We don't know what Chef Jimmy will do for the coming Year of the Horse, but we can hardly wait to see! We do know, however, that the menu will feature beef filet, shrimp, chicken, and pork, as Chinese believe that a proper meal is not complete unless all the food groups are included. Please note that there will be no vegetarian options this time."



Peggy Cheong, Theresa Song, and Clara Wang in the International Center kitchen, 2011

A Fundraiser for Friends Scholarships
and Celebration of Chinese New Year

Chinese Banquet

with Illustrated Talk on New Britain by Christopher Wills
Saturday, January 25, 6:30 p.m.

Forest Spirits, Fire Dances, and Erupting Volcanoes

—by *Chris Wills, Professor of Biological Sciences*

The next Ethnic Dinner will be at the International Center on January 25, and will celebrate the Chinese New Year (the Year of the Horse). Our brilliant **Chef Jimmy** and his band of superb sous-chefs promise not to serve up slices of our equine friends, but there are sure to be horse-themed surprises at the dinner.



After dinner I will take you on a journey to a remote part of New Guinea. Together Liz and I have visited this astonishing island and the rich waters around it several times over the years, but this evening we will journey to an unusually remote and little-visited region.

New Britain is a province of Papua New Guinea, but it is actually a separate island that lies to the north-east of New Guinea's main island. It is one of the most active regions of the Pacific's Ring of Fire. Although the island is only 300 miles long, it has nineteen active and dormant volcanoes, eight of which have erupted in the last century. In 1994, its capital city, Rabaul, was buried under twelve feet of ash from nearby Tavurvur

Volcano, though luckily everybody was evacuated. While we were there, Tavurvur was having another bilious attack and throwing rocks in all directions. At one point during our visit planes were prevented from landing because of the dust clouds.

This unstable and ever-changing geology has spawned some of the world's most diverse ecosystems. On land, exotic flowers bloom and trees full of winking fireflies light up the night. In the sea, New Britain's northern coast harbors some of the richest sea life on the planet. The November 2013 issue of *National Geographic* has a brief article attesting to the fact that Kimbe Bay is still an underwater paradise. The brilliantly colored reefs of Kimbe Bay, where we



dove extensively, support seventy percent of the world's coral species. These reefs are filled with animals that range from talented cuttlefish to spectacular squat lobsters to versatile mimic octopuses. We spent more than two weeks diving on some of the remotest of these untouched reefs and barely began to chronicle their riches.

New Britain is as culturally diverse as the main island of New Guinea, and is home to dozens of different tribal groups. While we were staying in the newly rebuilt Rabaul, the annual Mask Festival brought dancers, singers, and musicians from all over New Britain and from as far away as the Wahgi Valley of New Guinea's main island. We attended an initiation ceremony for boys as they entered manhood. On two nights we saw fire dances, in which the Baining people dress in kavat masks and costumes to represent forest spirits, and dance through the flames of a bonfire. This ancient ceremony, the subject of a spectacular exhibit at Chicago's



Field Museum, marks important events in the life of the tribe and appeases the spirits of ancestors.

The art, cultures, and environment of New Britain are unique on the planet and deserve to be better known. Come join us for an evening of great food and amazing adventure. The cost for this event is \$50 for Friends of the International Center and \$60 for non-members. Maybe this is the year for you to join the Friends? All but \$10 will be tax deductible, as this is a fundraiser for the Friends Scholarship Fund.

You will find a reservation coupon on p.11. Sign up soon, because this banquet will sell out!

Donations and Memberships

Treasurer **Karen Davis** reports receiving donations from **Larry & Lucinda Barrick, Heidrun Faulconer, Alice McCauley** and **Dorothy Dish**, and wishes to thank all who continue to support the Friends of the International Center with their thoughtful gifts.

Membership Chair **Renate Schmid-Schoenbein** shares these excerpts from a letter written by **Horst Hoffmann**, former Director of the International Center Scholar Office: "Thank you very much for sending me the new *Friends Directory and Handbook*. I appreciate your special effort and the money you spent for postage. I do enjoy flipping through the pages, recognizing many names and reading about the programs and events during the past year. Yes, another year has gone by so fast. This will be my third Christmas season back in Germany. ... I'm sending a small donation for the Friends. (A check will be issued by my bank in California and mailed to the I-Center.) Could you forward the check to **Ruth Newmark** for the scholarship fund? I'm sure, Ruth will know where to put the money, 'where the need is greatest'."

Additionally, Renate urges us to welcome new members **Cheri** and her husband **Carl Hass**, as well as **Sylvia Komin**, visiting from Germany, who is here for half a year to be with her son (a post doc in physics), his wife, and their baby boy. Says Sylvia: "I like to be at Wednesday Coffee. It is very interesting, and I am very impressed by the International Center."

January Calendar

Jan. 6: **Resale Shop Reopens**

Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28: **Knit-Along**, 1:00-4:00, Conversation Noon

Jan. 8, 15: **Family Orientation**, 9:15

Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29: **Wednesday Morning Coffee**, 10:00-Noon

Jan. 9: **International Cooking Experience**, 9:30-1:00

Jan. 14: **Board Meeting**, 10:00

Jan. 15: **International Kitchen**, Noon

Jan. 20: **Martin Luther King Day**

Jan. 25: **Ethnic Dinner**, 6:30



Danya Costello and Jerry Fitzsimmons man the wine table at the October 2013 Friends Dinner Social

The Secret is Out!

At the October Friends Dinner Social we learned that **Jerry Fitzsimmons**, who helps out at many Friends events, most often dispensing alcohol, is a true professional! His wife, **Barbara**, revealed that Jerry has a Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) certificate. Verified Jerry, with his usual self-deprecating sense of humor: "My professional certification, obtained by rigorous online coursework, and at the not insignificant cost of \$12.95 (discounted), states that I have met all training requirements and successfully completed the course and/or exam." The certificate shows that Jerry's test score was 100 and that the permit, approved by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, is good from June 2, 2013 to June 2, 2015.

Intrigued and inspired, **Danya Costello** decided in November to enroll in the same online training course designed to promote the legal and responsible sale and service of alcoholic beverages in California. She, too, passed easily and received an RBS certificate good for two years.

Even though we may chuckle at such certification, it's still comforting to know that Friends have two members with RBS accreditation in our midst, and are delighted that Jerry and Danya once more volunteered to man the alcohol table at the December Friends Dinner Social. We hope to see them next at the Ethnic Dinner on January 25!

Meet Douglas Shriner

—by Joe Nichols

The Friends Resale Shop has been attracting new volunteers from many backgrounds. Except for a couple of us, the male representation has been sparse. A relatively new volunteer on the job is **Douglas Shriner**.

Doug's way to UC San Diego has been sort of roundabout. Born in New York, raised and educated in Texas, this Texas Christian University grad followed his daughter, who is a student here. Lured by UCSD's excellent science reputation, Doug's high school senior plans to follow his dad's and sister's route to San Diego.

Due to his interest in international relations, Doug felt that joining the Friends would be a good starting point. On Wednesday, he regularly can be seen at Gus' English Conversation Table. He explains that he particularly enjoys meeting UCSD's international students and scholars, many of whom wind their way to our Shop for bargains.

We welcome this new volunteer and hope he finds that our work is indeed enriching. As he said: "It's a really cool thing to do."



Wednesday Coffee

—by Georgina Sham

It is wonderful to see our international visitors take leadership roles in Friends activities. Take the Mommy/Daddy & Me class.

In early 2009, **Keiko Bott-Suzuki** of Japan and Great Britain and **Lois le Brazidec**, a Californian who had lived in Japan for six years, came to me to ask if they could start a class for infants and toddlers. Of course, I agreed and they ran the program for several years, until Lois moved to China and Keiko's children started school.

Because the class had a loyal following, we wanted to keep it going, and were fortunate to have **Alice Blake-Stalker** guide several volunteers, up to the present one—**Aehyang Park**, a Korean participant at Gus' English Conversation Table who answered my e-mail plea for a teacher. Aehyang now involves many moms and dads in the program, and in two age-appropriate Wednesday morning sections skillfully leads young children in singing, reading, games, and other fun activities.

Attending one of our Wednesday Coffees, Friends President **Katya Newmark** snapped a picture of Aehyang teaching from a world map. Commented Katya: "Mommy/Daddy & Me class was so much fun. Kids were adorable. There were 3 or 4 dads; attendees came from Norway, Poland, Brazil, the USA, as well as from Korea, with a large contingent from Japan. Aehyang is a fantastic leader, and I am so grateful that she has agreed to run this program."

Please check the Friends website to see our full January program.



What We Do Makes a Difference!

It is always good to get feedback on our programs, better yet when it is complimentary. The following e-mail was addressed to Liz Fong Wills, who shared it with Barbara Starkey (for twenty years, from March 1992 to May 2012, the coordinator of the Friends Cooking in America course), Alma Coles, Ginny Das, Louise Engleman, and Georgina Sham—like Liz, all stalwart volunteer Cooking in America instructors. Ginny Das' response was: "Very encouraging to hear nice, sincere comments. I agree, Barbara did a wonderful job with Cooking in America all those years. I was happy to be part of the program." More succinctly Barbara herself wrote: "Thanks for sending me this delightful e-mail. It is nice to be remembered."

Hi Liz,

What a nice happening to have seen you at Trader Joe's! Thank you for recognizing me as a former American cooking class student, and calling to me. I really enjoyed talking with you.

It was such a good experience to have joined the class. I still communicate with some people whom I first met in that cooking class. I got not only knowledge and skills for American cooking, but also good friends! I really appreciate that you, Barbara, and other volunteers offered us a place like that.

Yuki

Asked whether we might print her note in our Newsletter, Yuki responded: "Of course, you can use my letter to Liz in a future newsletter. It is nice for me to have a chance to say thank-you to other volunteer ladies. You can also edit and use my words in this letter:"

I came from Japan and attended the Cooking in America class from 1996 to 2002. **Barbara** was al-

ways there to coordinate the class, and **Kate [Klampe]** was helping the instructor and students every week.

The classes were just awesome! Everytime I went to the class, I learned lots of new things about cooking the American way. Whenever I asked questions, the instructors tried to understand my poor English and gave me detailed explanations. All the ladies were so patient, kind, and devoted.

I can clearly recall Barbara's presentation of a Thanksgiving turkey dinner. She told us about the history of Thanksgiving, about American traditions, and the background of Thanksgiving food. That session was the highlight of the course every year.

Barbara once invited us to her house and taught the class in her own kitchen. All the students were so excited and were taking photos of her lovely kitchen. **Alma**, too, invited us into her home. I still remember Alma's delicious flatbread and tandoori chicken that she cooked for us on the huge grill in her backyard. I also loved **Georgina's** Chinese cooking.

Another fascinating session was **Liz's** demonstration of how to debone a Cornish game hen. Using only a small knife, she removed the bones, somehow keeping the bird in one piece. It was like magic! After her demonstration, we all got to practice. For me, that hands-on experience was one of the most valuable and unforgettable lessons.

I not only learned about American cooking and culture, but I also made new friends. I am still in touch with people I met in the Cooking in America class. They will be my good friends for the rest of my life.

I really appreciate your organization's wonderful classes that offer us opportunities to learn new things and meet people. I am grateful to all the volunteers who are involved. I will never forget the tasty American food or the women's dedication and generosity.

Participants in the current Friends cooking classes—led by Jennie Chin, Keiko Hirai, and Mary Woo—are forming their own memorable experiences. Wrote Miho Aki to Jennie:

Thank you for the wonderful cooking class on last Thursday. I like its friendly mood; I can ask whatever I want, and make a request for next recipe! Also, \$6 fee is very reasonable.

What I like the most is the recipes. Though the dishes look professional, ingredients are easy to get and cook. I usually eat Japanese food at home. I often see something unfamiliar at grocery stores, but I usually don't buy them because I don't know the taste of them or how to prepare them. This cooking class gives me a chance to try them. Now I know how to use the ready-made piecrust and herbs, and can enjoy them at home.

The following snapshots are from the International Cooking Experience November class that featured Beef Bourguignon, homemade bread, and individual Pavlovas for dessert.



Helen Choi, Angela Jung Yeon Kim, and Alejandra Ornelas preparing individual meringues



The class enjoys eating lunch together

Louisiana Bayou Soup

—by Barbara Baehr



“I like it,” said **Yusuke Okuda**, my Japanese English-in-Action tutee, about the Faculty Club’s wonderful shrimp, chicken, sausage, and tomato soup. “Where is Louisiana and what is a bayou?” I drew a rough sketch of bayous, strips of land where the Mississippi river empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Then told him how Cajun people, mostly shrimp fishermen, live on the bayou and have their own style of cooking and music.

This led to talk about New Orleans, next to the bayous, known for its French and Creole cuisine, the latter a mixture of African, French, and Spanish food, resulting from who was controlling the city. Spain tried, but France controlled a large, southern part of the country, until 1803 that is, when the U.S. bought it in what’s generally called the Louisiana Purchase.

Always eager to learn, Yusuke, who works in Japan’s Patent Office and is at UC San Diego doing research on fiber optics in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, then asked if I would explain American government when we met next. [BB: Big laugh!] This was during the government shutdown!

As promised, the following week I explained about our three branches of government, the lengths of terms of office of our President, Senators, and Representatives, and their numbers. I then told Yusuke about lobbyists and how they influence legislation.

So much talk about history and government from eating soup!

*For some months I have been trying to profile **Kristine Kneib**, but, alas, she steadfastly refused to answer the questions I posed. Instead, she sent me a profile of one of her dear friends and former Friends of the International Center scholarship recipient, **Holly Belasco**. Still, by way of introduction to Holly’s profile, Kristine allowed me to write a brief Editor’s note. When I sent her my rather limited observations for approval, Kristine surprised me, writing: “Thank you for your infinite patience with me to extract a bio. I am not good talking about myself. However, I built on what you sent—that was the catalyst I needed—and I hope that the attached will satisfy the bill.” Though not all her remarks are in the form of quotes, the profile below reflects Kristine’s own words, and our readers are now able to enjoy not just one, but two profiles!—Ed.*

Kristine Kneib

Australian by birth, Kristine came to the United States on a Fulbright and American Association of University Women (AAUW) fellowship, soon earning her Ph.D. at UCSD in Applied Physics, specializing in plasma instabilities. Portentous for us, a Zonta International Amelia Earhart Scholarship brought her in contact with Zontian **Marion Scott**, one of the founders of our International Center. Through Marion—who instantly became Kristine’s “adoptive” mother—Kristine became aware of our organization. Starting in the mid-1970s, she began to attend Friends functions and dinners, generally in the company of her husband **Vernon**, Marion, and Marion’s husband, **Scotty**. “We were quite a foursome.”

By the mid-1980s, Kristine started her high-tech electronics

consulting company, and traveled extensively to participate in developing international standards and technologies, which she then productized into systems and services. She has been awarded a number of patents. If you have watched video on a television, computer, or a handheld device in the past 30 years, you have experienced the results of some of her career endeavors. She says that Vernon was the wind beneath her wings and he let her shine and always celebrated in her successes.

When her business schedule allowed, Kristine volunteered at Wednesday Coffee and frequently helped out at its monthly international lunches prepared under the leadership of **Emily Stowell**, most often with Vernon serving as sous-chef. Both believed that food is one of the best ways to communicate about culture and identities.

Expands Kristine: “After my beloved Vernon went to his eternal rest in 2011, I started to volunteer at the tide pools at Birch Aquarium, and support activities for young adults and seniors in my church communities.” What is more, Kristine began to assume a vital role in Friends activities. She now participates in Wednesday Coffee, can often be found in the I-Center kitchen, serves on the Nominating as well as on the Scholarship Committee, and holds the Chair



Kristine with her goddaughter Kaitlyn Hall. Along with Dad Michael, they enjoy their play dates at Wednesday Coffee’s Mommy/Daddy & Me.

of Communications and Publicity Chair on the Friends Board of Directors.

Explains Kristine: "I just do whatever needs to be done to support the organization and its causes. It is so enriching and rewarding to welcome international scholars, spouses, and their chil-

dren, and to help them adjust to life in a new culture and under sometimes challenging circumstances. The International Center gives them a place to come and to be. It is a place of friendship."

Kristine delights in having friends over to her home for dinner evenings. She says she is

blessed with a keen mind, good health, and many interests that include Pilates, beachfront power yoga, stand-up paddle boarding, daily beach walks, attending the San Diego Symphony, and going on frequent travel adventures, near and far. "I am full of gratitude for all life presents me."

Profile of Holly Belasco

—by Kristine Kneib

It is with great joy that I share with you the profile of **Holly Belasco**, who received a Friends of the International Center (FIC) scholarship award for her travel abroad as a third-year student. Holly spent the 2010-2011 academic year in Granada, Spain, immersing herself in Spanish culture with the goal of becoming proficient in Spanish. Holly is most grateful for the opportunity the scholarship presented her, and she well accomplished her goal. After graduating in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a minor in Spanish Literature, she then spent the 2012-2013 year volunteering.

First, she spent nine months in Loja, Ecuador, volunteering with a conservation non-profit. The following three months were spent in Urubamba, in the Peruvian Andes, at an elevation close to 10,000 feet. There she led USA high school students in culture immersion and service projects for the local community. Her Spanish fluency was obviously a huge asset that she immediately put to use.

She is back home in San Diego now and is busy seeking a job to tide her over until she begins her master's program in psychology at a place yet to be determined. Holly is busy researching topics and schools for her graduate work.

She is the outdoor lady and enjoys water sports and has spent many a summer at an aquatics ad-

venture camp for children on the Silver Strand in Coronado.

I have the pleasure of being a very close friend of the Belasco family for over 26 years. I knew Holly before she was born. When she and her brother **Jimmy** were young, Grandma **Fran Baker** looked after them while their parents were at work. Jimmy is now finishing up his Ph.D. in Physics at Princeton. Grandma Fran, a Kansas farm girl, passed away this summer at age 96, after suffering for 13 years with Alzheimer's. Holly was very close to Grandma Fran and she takes after her in physical strength and absolute determination.

On Saturday, October 19, 2013, Holly walked in the San Diego Alzheimer's Walk in honor of Grandma Fran, as she has done for numbers of years. Then right after that, she came up to the International Center to help **Liz Fong Wills** and her team with cooking the High Andean fundraising scholarship dinner. As Holly said to me, "I don't have money to donate right now, but I can cook"—and she is a good cook! Always giving back with appreciation.

As well as becoming fluent in Spanish and learning lessons of life in an international setting while on her scholarship in Granada, Holly met **Miranda Conway**, who was also a beneficiary of a Friends Scholarship for 2010-2011. Even though they both attended UC

San Diego, they did not meet until Granada and have become very close friends ever since. Miranda is currently the International Students and Programs Office (ISPO) Office Manager.

Holly felt so strongly about and appreciative of the influence on her life resulting from her studies in Granada that she sewed the Spanish colors onto the stole she wore on graduation day at UC San Diego.

Holly is one example of the high caliber of our FIC scholarship recipients. It is inspirational to meet and associate with such quality young people, and it gives us even more incentive to strive to support our scholarship programs in whatever way we can. They are our future and our legacy!



SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

Dear Ruth and Friends of the International Center,

I am writing to share with you my experience abroad in Rome, Italy, and to thank you for your support. On June 27, I left the United States, for the first time since I was seven months old, to participate in the program Mathematical Beauty in Rome. Arriving the weekend before classes officially started, I was put up in a hotel with other Math in Rome students, and we were able to explore the city and wander its streets together before enjoying our first Italian meal. The Italians eat very well—I'd never had a seven-course meal before, and it was like Christmas every day. Anyway, the weekend passed quickly, and we eagerly moved into our local apartments, jumping into the program schedule.

Over the next several weeks we explored ancient Roma, measuring the towering aqueducts with simple geometry, walking through the Coliseum and replicating its design with computer models, discussing ancient architectural and construction techniques, while being able to hold and touch the results at the same time. And the adventure was not confined to Rome.

We visited Pisa and its leaning tower; Vinci, the birthplace of the great Leonardo; and Florence with its beautiful capture of the Renaissance. Perhaps my fondest memory was sitting in an old prison courtyard in Florence at sunset, a courtyard dating back two millennia and lined with marble statues, listening to an orchestral rendition of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Or perhaps it was standing in the Sistine Chapel, Beethoven in my ears to drown out the sounds of tourists and staff announcements, enthralled by the paintings of Michelangelo?

One day, my friends and I ran through the streets during a thunderstorm to watch the rain cascading through the open dome of the Pantheon. After returning to our apartments, I was soaking wet and decided I may as well enjoy what was left of the rain by dancing on the balcony. Thereafter, I was known around the building as "the strange American who dances in the rain," and neighbors would smile and wave. These moments, the people, the food, and the history will be forever treasured in my memories.

Not a single one of these experiences while abroad would have been possible without the support of those back home, at UCSD, and other institutions. I was still short in the program budget by the exact amount of the Friends Scholarship before you chose to award it to me. I can honestly say that I would not have been able to go, if it were not for your generous award.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and hope that my experience will serve to encourage you to continue your commitment to UCSD and the International Center.

Sam Tracy

Dear Friends of the International Center,

After returning from my study of the Renaissance in Rome, I was so used to speaking Italian that I was saying *grazie* and *ciao* to salesmen in California, and once I even said it to my mother! Now that I am settled back into my own

culture, I find myself missing things from Rome, such as the taste of its tap water. Or a little grocery store that had the freshest peaches and once gave us free cherries while we were waiting to be served. It definitely was

a summer I will never forget.

My favorite parts of Rome were the art and architecture. As an art history major, it was amazing to see in person all of the things I have been learning about. I was introduced to churches I had never heard of, and will probably use as topics for future papers. Visiting the Pantheon was an unforgettable experience; I even went back there a couple of times by myself. The other site that stands out the most in my memory is the Doria Pamphilj Gallery, with its wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling paintings!

Surprisingly, I wasn't much of a fan of the gelato. Whenever we went to a bakery, I ordered a different kind of dessert instead. Chocolate-covered cream puffs, *cannolis*, *biscotti*, but my favorite were little chocolate balls with a hint of cherry flavoring. To this day, I don't know what they're called. To save money, I cooked all of my meals at home, but I allowed myself to buy a dessert when I saw one that looked especially tempting.

Our class spent a weekend in Florence, The food there was by far my favorite, and I enjoyed walking the streets.

We also had a free weekend that my friends and I spent on the Amalfi Coast. The beaches were amazing. We went on boat trips, and enjoyed cave swimming and cliff diving. It was a nice break to the rigorous course work that the program required.

I hope I have conveyed how much of an impact this trip has made on me. I thank the Friends of the International Center again for offering your time and scholarships to students at UCSD. The Friends scholarship made my trip possible, and I am sure it has helped many other students.

Dana Edwards
John Muir College

What is life?

This is a tricky question, and fascinating on many levels. Even in biology there is no universal definition of life. Yet one unarguable feature that distinguishes life from objects is its ability to replicate itself.

It is long known that mating animals, like a dog, will produce offspring that reflect the parents' attributes, or that a nimble acorn will grow into a huge oak tree. The essence that carries the instructions for assembling this copy has mystified humans for millennia. The example of the oak tree was taken from Aristotle. The Greek philosopher long proposed that acorns are "informed" by the plan to make the whole oak tree. Today we know that the essence that "informs" new organisms is a long chained molecule called Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid, DNA in short.

The identification of DNA as our genetic information, its miraculous structure as well as the illumination of basal mechanisms that allow life to replicate itself, is arguably one of the biggest achievements of the last century. DNA is replicated by a specific set of proteins, huge molecules that could be described as the workhorses of our cells. The information about how to make a specific protein is encoded by the DNA itself, yet making the protein requires a DNA-related intermediate, the RNA. It is thus not hard to imagine that the process of copying the information from DNA to RNA (called transcription) is a highly regulated process in our cells.

There are about 6×10^{13} cells in a human body that, besides an occasional mutation (acquired after fertilization), contain exactly the same DNA/genetic information. Looking at our body, however, we quickly realize that not all cells are alike. There are skin cells, hair precursor cells, neurons, blood cells ... indeed, our body has a mind-blowing diversity of about 320 different cell types.

But how is such diversity created

from identical genetic information? The answer is differential expression of the DNA. If our DNA would be a book, it would contain 3.2×10^9 letters, which equates roughly to 800 Bibles or 3,350 Harry Potter books. Using this analogy, differential expression is like different cells reading a combination of different chapters from the same book. The information they receive is thus distinct. Like a teacher who tells his students which chapters to read for homework, specific proteins (called transcription factors) recruit the transcription machinery to specific locations along the DNA. Not surprisingly, there are diverse recruitment mechanisms.

For my Ph.D., I am investigating these recruitment mechanisms on a global level, but am also trying to identify the exact composition of factors involved in determining the precise locations of DNA expression. Many diseases, such as cancer or autoimmune diseases, are caused through the consequences of aberrant DNA expression. Understanding the molecular basis and identification of the involved components regulating the DNA readout is thus essential for developing new treatment methods.

I am very grateful to the Friends of the International Center for the *Ruth Newmark Scholarship* that helps support me in my research, both directly and indirectly. I am also grateful to the International Center for providing such a unique and inspiring atmosphere and a place to learn and make friends with people from all over the world.

Sascha Duttké

Ph.D. Candidate in Biological Sciences, Germany

Sascha enjoys attending the International Center Friday Café and has helped, most often with his British girlfriend, Becky Wright (a postdoc at Salk Institute), at several of our events, including the Friends Dinner Socials. —Ed.

Dear Mrs. Newmark,

I am writing to thank you and the Friends of the International Center for choosing me to be a recipient of a Friends Scholarship, and to tell you a little bit about my experience this summer on the Literature, Art, and Film Global Seminar in Paris.

Making the decision to apply for, and participate in, a Global Seminar was not easy for me. For many months, I researched various programs, agonizing over which one was the "right" one, and worrying about whether going abroad, and studying something unconnected to my major, was frivolous. After participating in the Global Seminar in Paris, I can say, without a doubt, that I am so glad that I pushed myself to take part in this program. I am certain that I will remember my five weeks in Paris, the experiences I had, and the people I met with great fondness and gratitude, and that I will continue to discover the ways in which studying abroad has impacted me.

I thoroughly enjoyed the two literature classes I took while in Paris. There is something truly magical about studying a city, reading about its history and the people that inhabited it, while simultaneously living in it, walking its streets, and discovering it for yourself. One memory of mine seems to capture this idea: I was sitting with some classmates in the Luxembourg Gardens, reading Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*. In the excerpt I read, Hemingway described his frequent trips across the Luxembourg Gardens to Gertrude Stein's apartment, 27 Rue de Fleurus. After my friends and I had decided to leave the Gardens, we wandered out of one of the exits, and looking up at the street sign, I realized that we were unknowingly walking along the Rue de Fleurus, taking the same route that Hemingway had so many times before!

My favorite parts about being in Paris were the little things—walking around the city and riding the Metro,

shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables at the local open-air market, visiting boulangeries and the patisserie right down the street, having picnics on the Champs de Mars (with the Eiffel Tower in the background), people-watching at cafés throughout the city, reading in the Luxembourg Gardens. By the end of the five weeks, all of these little things amounted to my feeling like I had gotten to know the city, and that I was no longer a tourist but a resident of Paris. This is a feeling I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Once again, I thank you for your support. Without organizations like the Friends of the International Center, study-abroad experiences like Global Seminars would be much less accessible, and feasible, for students.

Nina Venuti

International Studies/
Political Science major,
Eleanor Roosevelt College

From Melissa Brouwer, recipient of a 2008 Friends scholarship for a UC EAP study in Italy and speaker at our 50th anniversary celebration in 2011:

Greetings from NYC! It was so wonderful to see **Liz [Fong Wills]**. We had the best time touring I-House. It was great to see a familiar San Diego face, and to hear the latest from UCSD.

I moved here about a year ago. Before I left UCSD, I was the Executive Assistant to Provost **Alan Houston** at ERC, and had started an Alumni Relations Coordinator position at I-House.

The position of Programs Coordinator at I-House New York came available, and I couldn't pass it up! It's been great so far. The house here is the first International House in the world—the one that started the movement.

We have 700 graduate students and trainees living here that go to all different universities in the city. Our office is very lively; we have almost a program every night. I work with a team of 24 program fellows, and I supervise about 14. Never a dull moment!

Friends Listserv 101

—by Joan Adamo

➤ Friends Listserv: What is it?

Our Listserv is the list of our members e-mail addresses, 181 of them, providing an easy way to send messages to this large number of people at one time. The Listserv address is ic-friends-l@ucsd.edu

- Your correct e-mail address is essential•

We must have your current e-mail address for you to receive messages. But here's the puzzle: how will you know if you are not receiving messages?

Answer: You should be receiving a message each month from ic-friends@ucsd.edu that lets you know that our *Newsletter* has been posted online. This goes out to everyone, even if you also get a hard copy mailed to you.

If you did not receive a message regarding the posting of this January edition of the *Newsletter* (or if you aren't sure whether you did or not), please send a message from your correct e-mail address to **Joan Adamo**, jadamo@ucsd.edu, and I will check on it.

➤ How does the Listserv work for you?

It enhances communication within our organization by allowing information of importance to be circulated in a timely way and at no cost. We all enjoy reading the *Newsletter* every month, but sometimes forget to act on what's coming up. Using the Listserv, reminders of upcoming events can be issued, as well as requests for assistance or other items that may surface after the editor's deadline. The Friends Listserv is a great tool, so let's use it!

Holiday Lunch

The International Center's Holiday Lunch held on December 10 was beautifully organized by Friends members **Candace Kohl**, **Carol Smith**, and **Barbara Fitzsimmons**, and thoughtfully underwritten by Dean **Kirk Simmons**. I-Center staff and Friends thoroughly enjoyed the meal and the chance to visit, and listened with interest to Friends Carol and Stuart Smith Scholarship recipient, **Alan Foreman**, speak about his impending multinational, student-led expedition that should shed light on Indian Ocean circulation.



Candace, Carol, and Barbara



Carol and Stu Smith with SIO Ph.D. candidate Alan Foreman (center)

Kevin DeMastro and **Karen Davis** were the lucky winners of the raffle prizes generously donated from her own collection by Candace Kohl.



Karen displays her Oaxacan wood carving



Reservation for Chinese New Year Celebration

Saturday, January 25, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Please complete this form and enclose a check, made payable to the Friends of the International Center. Send to Ethnic Dinner, c/o Gail Fliesbach, Friends of the International Center, UCSD International Center 0018, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0018.

Reservations must be received by Friday, January 17, and will be accepted in the order in which they are received. Late reservations will be charged an extra \$5.00, or may be refused.

Name(s): _____

(If you spell out the names of everyone in your party, all will receive nametags at the door.)

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Number of Friends (@ \$50.00): _____

Number of Guests (@ \$60.00): _____

Number of Students (@ \$25.00) _____

I need handicap parking and have a placard: _____

Total Enclosed: _____



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The Friends Resale Shop (858) 534-1124
International Center Main Office (858) 534-3730

Friends of the International Center, UC San Diego

<http://icenter.ucsd.edu/friends>
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I am interested in these volunteer opportunities: _____

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