



Friends of the International Center,  
at UC San Diego

# Newsletter

Volume XLIII, No.6

February 2016

## A Celebration of the Year of the Monkey

—by Chris Wills



Last February, my wife, **Liz Fong Wills**, and I spent a month exploring the world's most diverse coral reefs. During our trip we dove on Cape Kri, a reef that holds the world record for number of fish species seen on a single dive—374!

Raja Ampat—Bahasa for “Four Kingdoms”—is a scattering of largely uninhabited Indonesian islands that lie to the west of New Guinea. Raja Ampat is surrounded by some of the world's most amazing human societies. We will set the stage for you by brief returns to the hidden valley of Tana Toraja, on the island of Sulawesi

to the west, and to the highland Baliem Valley to the east of Raja Ampat that is the home of some of New Guinea's most amazing tribes. Then we will set sail through the islands of Raja Ampat themselves.

We will visit both the soft coral reefs in the south of the archipelago and the hard coral reefs in the north. These reefs provide some of the most beautiful underwater landscapes on the planet. There we will encounter the huge schools of tiny silversides that other fish feed on, schools of manta rays, a bewildering diversity of inver-

tebrate creatures, and the world's most extensive collection of tiny pygmy seahorses.

We will also spend time above water, looking at the beautiful islands themselves and visiting some of the scattered villages.

Raja Ampat is a world that remains largely unexplored. Be sure to join us on this adventure!

New Guinea is not known for its gastronomy, which is why we are featuring Chinese cuisine, also more appropriate for a celebration of the year of the monkey. The fabulous Chinese feast produced by **Theresa Song** and **Peggy Cheong** plus an army of cooks will be sure to power you through this adventure!

(continued on p. 2)



Local children in a Raja Ampat village getting ready to dance for a visiting government functionary



Clown triggerfish on Raja Ampat reef



Liz Fong Wills

## A Fabulous Banquet to Celebrate Chinese New Year —by Liz Fong Wills

### *Loo Hon Jai* or Buddha's Delight

My mother's talents did not lie in the direction of cookery, and she could never have produced a banquet like the one that **Peggy Cheong** and **Theresa Song** and friends prepare for us every year for our fundraising Chinese New Year Dinner. However, my mother did make *Loo Hon Jai*, a Buddhist vegetarian dish with 15 or more ingredients, to celebrate the New Year. Called *Jai* for short, the dish is traditionally served in Chinese households on the first day of the Chinese New Year. It is an important part of the Buddhist tradition of maintaining a vegetarian diet for the first five days as a form of self-purification. Each and every item has a particular auspicious significance. The following are often found in Buddha's Delight: bamboo fungus and/or shoots, bean curd sticks, black and/or other types of mushrooms, cellophane noodles, daylily buds, fat choy (Hair seaweed, clusters of a black hair-like cyanobacterium), ginkgo nuts, red jujubes or dates, lotus roots and/or seeds, dried oysters, peanuts, snow peas, water chestnuts, fried or braised wheat gluten, and wood ears (aka black fungus).

I'm sure that you are wondering why we aren't serving this dish. Epicurious describes it as being "extremely subtle and very delicate ... it is all about texture." That is a polite way of saying BORING!



A Celebration of the  
Year of the Monkey  
and  
Fundraiser for  
Friends Scholarships

.....  
**A Chinese feast  
followed by  
an illustrated talk on the  
stunning world of Raja Ampat  
by Prof. Christopher Wills**

**Saturday, February 27  
6:30 p.m.  
International Center**

You may make reservations  
via eventbrite:  
<http://FICasia2016.eventbrite.com>  
or by check for which you will find a  
handy coupon on page 11

Deadline: Feb. 19, 2016

### From the Scholarship Committee Chair:

Besides enjoying fabulous food and following the amazing adventures of **Chris** and **Liz Wills** in New Guinea, we will hear from two Friends scholarship recipients about the importance of international scholarships like ours.

Come meet **Yingzhen (Nancy) Zhang**, an American medical student who plans to participate in a clinical rotation at a 1,200-bed tertiary care hospital affiliated with Zhejiang University in China, and **Ruichen Sun**, a Chinese student completing her Ph.D. in Biological Sciences with special concentration in neuroscience. Both Nancy and Ruichen are recipients of a 2015 *Luna Fung Scholarship*.—*Ruth Newmark*

Instead we will have the usual fabulous filet mignon dish, the phenomenal giant prawns, my favorite braised eggplant dish, plus a poultry and a pork dish, and other wonderful surprises. A Chinese banquet has to have the full complement of beef, seafood, pork, poultry, and veggies or else it is considered not complete. We will also top the meal off with a Chinese dessert.

In addition to our complimentary house wine, premium wine will be available for purchase by the glass. The brainchild of **Elisabeth** and **Kurt Marti**, this is yet one more way Friends try to raise money for our international scholarships.

Come help us celebrate the Year of the Monkey with a fantastic, non-boring banquet!



Filet mignon



Elisabeth and Kurt Marti dispense premium wines

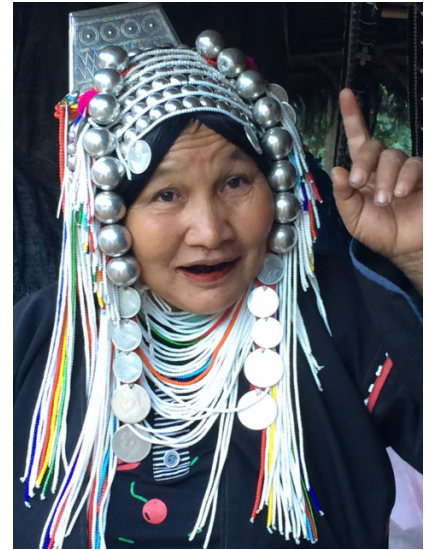


The dive boat Arenui under sail





Golden Triangle: Thailand, Myanmar, Laos



Akha hill tribe woman in ethnic costume

## President's Message

I write this month's column from northern Thailand where English is not commonplace outside of tourist centers. In possession of just a few phrases of Thai, it is rewarding to see the smiles of appreciation from the locals as I do my best to communicate. Of course, the danger is that the eagerness on the Thai's part to communicate has them quickly speaking far more than I can possibly understand, and we laugh and resort to gestures. It is amazing how well people can communicate relying solely upon desire and hands.

Technology has crept in as well to facilitate communication and for some matters, like to insure that a dish contains no shrimp (to which I am allergic), I show my smartphone with its translation, using both Roman and Thai alphabet. I am not the only one to rely upon my smartphone as the Thai use their smartphones to teach their own children the 44 consonant and 15 vowel alphabet, using a variety of games and programs. Even in the poorest hill tribes, where families crowd into humble abodes without running water and dinner

may be a field rat, a smartphone is somewhere to be found paving the way to a better future for the next generation.

The ability to communicate is paramount to forging relationships and cultural understanding. Happily, it takes only rudimentary skills and a willingness to engage to establish lines of communica-

tion. Each of our Friends activities, whether or not officially intended as an English skills class, provides our international visitors an opportunity to improve their communication skills and to create their own path to a more enjoyable stay in San Diego.

*Katya Newmark*  
presFIC@mail.ucsd.edu



Beautifully-lit shrine at a festival in Chiang Rai

## Wednesday Morning Coffee

—by Georgina Sham

This month we pay tribute to a very special volunteer, **Keiko Hirai**, who has just told us the exciting (for her) and bad (for us) news that she, **Maretoshi**, and **Yuki** will move back to Japan by the middle of March, as Maretoshi has accepted an excellent faculty position in Osaka.

Keiko arrived in La Jolla in 2007 with her husband, Maretoshi, who was first a postdoc, then a research scientist, and is now an assistant project scientist in UCSD's Skaggs School of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences. He works long hours, which has given Keiko a lot of time to volunteer, and we are very fortunate that she chose to do so at the International Center.

Keiko is especially fond of working in the kitchen, and no wonder—she's a great cook. Soon she was helping every week at Friday Café: first learning the ropes, then working as chef with Café Coordinator **Anjali Scholten**, and after Anjali returned to Germany with **Ginny Young**, and each will tell you that Keiko was her right hand.

On the third Wednesday of the month, Keiko assists with the Friends International Kitchen lunches. Most memorably, she created the menu, shopped for, and led the cooking for a Caribbean lunch; for a Hawaiian, she brought molds for the state's popular Spam *musubi*; not to mention that she prepared a Japanese lunch almost singlehandedly! Keiko is unmatched at contributing ideas, recipes, and leadership.

By no means is cooking her only talent. She is also an expert crafter, who has led the Wednesday Coffee participants in a number of



Tashu Malik, Georgina Sham, and Keiko Hirai

useful and fun projects. She had us learn origami; showed us how to decorate gift boxes and photo frames; and taught us how to make beaded jewelry, autumn wreaths, miniature pincushions from bottle caps, and more. Not only does she introduce her own projects, but she acquires craft skills demonstrated by others so well that she can teach them herself. Case in point: when **Doris Sant'Anna** moved to Florida and left us a lot of materials, Keiko was able to take over from where Doris had left off. Keiko is skilled, well organized, and chooses projects that can be completed in two hours, while using very little funds from our kitty. As if this were not enough, she is also instrumental in keeping track of all our supplies in the kitchen, pantry, and craft cabinet. She is amazing!

No wonder that already in 2010 Keiko was named International Visitor of the Year!

Two-and-a-half years ago, Keiko had baby Yuki. Did that slow her down? NO! She has continued to go backpacking with her husband whenever they can find the time, and has continued to be just as involved at the International Center as before. As a matter of fact, Keiko



Keiko with daughter Yuki

has brought her daughter with her to the Center practically from Yuki's birth on. We have literally seen Yuki grow up right at our feet.

Keiko has helped in too many ways to enumerate here. Most significantly, she also serves as co-coordinator of the Friends cooking classes, but come March, **Tashu Malik** will remain as sole coordinator of the International Cooking Experience. When Tashu learned that Keiko was about to return to Japan, she lamented: "If it were up to us we would never let her go."

We invite all of Keiko's friends to a *Bon Voyage* party to be held in her honor on Wednesday, February 24, at noon. The in-house lunch will be prepared by **Mary Woo**,



Feb. 3: *Yarn weaving* with **Lynn Jahn** and **Jennie Chin**.

Feb. 10: *Decorating Valentine's cookies* with **Lynn Jahn**.

Feb. 17: *International Kitchen*: join **Lexi Jiang** in preparing a Chinese lunch.

Feb. 24: *Making key chain holders* with **Keiko Hirai**.  
*Farewell lunch for Keiko* at noon.



Lynn Jahn, Jennie Chin, and Ginny Young (but we wouldn't be surprised if we found Keiko in the kitchen too!). The menu will feature lasagna (with or without meat), salad, and garlic bread, with brownies and ice cream for dessert. Cost is \$5 per person. Reservations are required and

may be made by e-mailing me, **Georgina Sham**, at gbsham@gmail.com and making advance payment to the Friends of the International Center. Come help us say goodbye to Keiko. We will greatly miss her expertise and friendship. I don't know what we will do without her!

**December 2015  
Friends Volunteer Hours  
812.5 = 4.62 FTEs**

## Dexter Davis: A Resale Shop Volunteer

—by Joe Nichols

On Thursday afternoons, **Louise Keeling** and I have the pleasure of working with **Dexter Davis**, one of our student volunteers. He is a Junior at Thurgood Marshall College, majoring in mathematics and economics. It seems volunteering in the Friends Resale Shop is a family tradition, as his sister worked in the Shop while she was a student at UCSD.

Dexter is from Redding and reminds us that Redding is real northern California; perhaps it could better be described as southern Oregon.

He enjoys helping out at the Resale Shop and his math skills make closing the Shop easy, as he

whips through the record keeping lickety split. Meeting people from different countries, he says, helps him get a broader picture of the campus.

Dexter has an interesting take on grades. He feels that if you attend every lecture, do the work required, you should get an A grade; if not, the professor is doing a poor job in teaching the class. Needless to say, he is an A student. His best-kept secret is that he really likes Disneyland.

Dexter is one of the four male volunteers we now have—good news indeed. We thank Dexter for helping the Friends raise money for our scholarship program.

### February Calendar

- Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23: **Gus' English Conversation Table**, 10:00-Noon
- Feb. 3, 17: **Family Orientation**, 9:15
- Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24: **Wednesday Morning Coffee**, 10:00-Noon
- Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25: **Intermediate English**, 10:00-11:30
- Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26: **Friday Chat Group**, 10:00-Noon
- Feb. 9: **Board Meeting**, 10:00
- Feb. 9, 16, 23: **FIC Craft Circle**, 1:00-3:30
- Feb. 11: **International Cooking Experience**, 9:30-1:00
- Feb. 15: **Presidents' Day**
- Feb. 17: **International Kitchen**, Noon
- Feb. 27: **Ethnic Dinner**, 6:30

## An Authentic Korean Cooking Experience

—by Tashu Malik

Our International Cooking Experience started the year 2016 with a Korean cooking class led by guest chefs, **Hellene Ahn** and **Jeongmin Choi**, who shared with us the secrets of a Korean kitchen, as they led the class in preparing a few Korean classics, such as *Beef Bulgogi* (grilled beef), *Pajeon* (seafood and vegetable pancake), *Sujebi* (noodle soup), and *Matang* (candied sweet potatoes). Moreover, Jeongmin and Hellene kindly brought us some kimchi and yuzu tea, which we enjoyed with our post-presentation meal.



Bulgogi



Sujebi

We look forward to more of our participants stepping forward to lead classes, as it gives them a chance to present their culture to others and makes International Cooking Experience truly international.

Our February 14 class will focus on Valentine's Day. Aptly called *A Sweet Valentine*, we will prepare an assortment of Valentine's desserts.

**Happy Valentine's Day!**

## Friday Chatters

—by *Ellen Scott*

The Friends Friday English conversation table, affectionately called the *Friday Chatters*, meets every Friday, rain or shine. Post-docs from Brazil and China; visiting scholars from Korea and Turkey; undergrads from Chile; dependents from Iran, Spain, Mexico, and France, all bring their special skills, interests, and concerns to the table. Conversation is invariably relaxed and lively. Over **Danny Adams'** fresh-brewed coffee (Danny, the I-Center building mechanic, is a big help in making Chatters feel welcome), we explore American customs, idioms, and politics; help each other cope; and just enjoy each other's company. Friendships have been forged; support bonds created.

Chatters often linger on Fridays for the International Café to plan beach and tennis dates. Outings slated for 2016 include hiking in Torrey Pines Reserve; tide-pooling at Dike Rock just north of Scripps Pier; mingling and munching at the Friends Annual July 4th party and beach fireworks; and a walking tour of the UCSD Stuart Art Collection, led by longtime Friends supporter, **Jerry Fitzsimmons**. Who knows? We may even



return to the Friends kitchen for another cooking lesson and tasting.

The secret to our success may be the limited group size, which allows us to stay nimble. Chat leaders can respond readily to our participants' needs and interests by remaining flexible—hindered by few guidelines and rules. Folks can come and go during a weekly session. No topic is off-limits—swear words and sexual politics included. One challenge is to discourage our more-fluent participants from dominating the conversation and give everyone an opportunity to speak.

The facilitators bring different skills to the table. Speech and language therapist, **Cindy Tozer**,

fosters active listening and guiding correct pronunciation. **Michelle Brown** is our scribe; participants relate to her youthful exuberance and daily challenges as a young parent in a new culture. **Ellen Scott's** mediator experience helps keep the group focused and balanced.

Long after they return to their home countries, Chatters stay in touch. One visiting scholar from China sent this holiday greeting: "Christmas is coming, I know it is the most important festival and holiday for you. So I would like to send best greeting to all of you and your whole family. Have a good time and enjoy your holiday! Best

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## Donations

—by *Ruth Newmark*

Unquestionably Friends Treasurer, **Karen Davis**, and Corresponding Secretary, **Susan Graceman**, were kept very busy processing and acknowledging the many wonderful end-of-the-year donations that poured into the Friends mailbox. Most contributions, but not all, were earmarked for scholarships—some were made in honor of a specific person.

Before we thank, here in our *Newsletter*, the many generous donors, I would like to turn back to the International Center Holiday lunch, to which we invited two recent Friends scholarship recipients, who spoke poignantly about their study abroad and the importance of their award that covered the high cost of travel and a bit more.

**Ralph Torres** introduced him-

self by speaking in Māori, explaining that he had learned the rudiments of New Zealand's native language while studying at the country's oldest and most prestigious university, the University of Otago. He treasures the possibility given him to conduct lab experiments not only on the Dunedin campus, but also on a research vessel, work that tied in well with his chemistry major and



Ralph Torres and Dan McFarland

marine science minor. Of course, Ralph took full advantage of the natural beauties of New Zealand by participating in outdoor activities that stretched beyond hiking and mountain biking to include bungee jumping and skydiving!

**Dan McFarland** spoke about the delights of his Global Seminar on Jazz in Paris led by pianist extraordinaire, Professor **Cecil Lytle**. Dan, a sophomore majoring in aerospace engineering, who plays the saxophone, told us that he packed his horn on the chance that he might jam with his professor, which he did; but that was not all. He also was given the opportunity to drive around Paris with the world-famous saxophonist **Branford Marsalis**.

While Friends were proud to showcase the breadth of talent of Dan and Ralph, guests appreciated hearing from our two scholarship recipients, so representative of their fellow awardees.

Friends are truly appreciative of all who contribute to making our scholarship program a reality, this year helping 57 students to expand their horizons in a meaningful, often life-altering, international academic setting.

We thank those who with their annual membership renewal added contributions to the Friends scholarship fund: **Nancy & Bill Homeyer, Barbara Baehr, Penny & Dane Winkelman, and Ann Bowles**.

In response to a notice in the memorial program for the heartwarming celebration of the all-too-short life of staff member **Paul Yunouye**, Friends received sufficient donations to fund a scholarship this spring in

Paul's memory. We are most grateful to **Yiyang Zou** (a former student of Paul), **Tonia Pizer, Dulce Dorado, Kirk Simmons, Carol Robertson, Kim Burton, Katie Palumbo, Jan Tuomainen, Jennie Chin, and Mary Woo** for their contributions to a *Paul Y. Yunouye Scholarship*.

We note with pleasure a donation to the *Teclé Kidane-Mariam Scholarship* made by **Carol & Stu Smith**. Several staff and Friends members, who knew Tec during his role at the I-Center as international student advisor, continue to keep Tec's strong belief in international education alive—he himself was once an international student from Eritrea—by making scholarship contributions in his memory.

**Nori & Stanley Faer** made a much-appreciated donation to our Community Compassion Fund.

And as a follow-up to President **Katya Newmark's** end-of-the-year letter to our membership, we received a flurry of donations. We are greatly indebted to the many who sent in scholarship gifts heeding her words: "The money you donate not only touches the life of one person, but has the potential of changing the world. So many scholarship recipients report that their life's course has been redirected through their experience abroad, resulting in a shared resolve of structuring their life to bring about positive change in the world."

We thank: **Janet & Maarten Chrispeels, Heidrun Faulkoner, Dorothy Gish, Susan & Barry Graceman, Lynn & James Jahn, Louise Keeling, Jean & Jeff Selzer, Georgina & Lu Sham, and Laurette Verbinski**, as well as **Lily & Shao-Chi Lin**, who made what has become an annual contribution to the *Diane Lin Scholarship* fund in memory of their niece, Diane Lin (Friends President 1997-98).

And much to our delight, Friends received a significant donation in memory of **Joseph D.**

**Mitchell**, who upon his retirement from the United States Army moved to San Diego and became a dedicated volunteer tutor in our English-in-Action program. **Doug**, as we knew him, was lauded not once, but twice—in 1986 and again in 2004—for his exceptional devotion to his students by being named Tutor of the Year.

The donation came as a total surprise (after all Doug had died in 2009) and came from son **Doug**, who accompanied it with a very touching letter in which he noted his father's strong advocacy "for understanding across barriers of language, culture, or any other differences. My Dad was proud to be honored as a 30-year tutor for the program, and he was rewarded many times over by the enduring relationships many of his tutees formed with him. He had a powerful intellect, and your program gave him a vital outlet for mentoring others."

Quoting further from Doug's insightful letter: "In today's chaotic world with over-charged rhetoric, the International Center represents the best efforts of a great university and of committed volunteers to help students recognize and, throughout their lives, act on what people understand and share in common. I'm sure my father would approve making this donation, but not just in the light of contemporary events. His own story was remarkable: he fought as an infantry officer against the Japanese during several Pacific campaigns and was wounded. I never heard one racist or jingoist word from him against the Japanese. I think that was a result not only of his being a sober student of history, but of his having entered Japan at the close of the war and then experiencing the people's humanity, dignity, and sense of honor. These are values we sure hope not to lose."

**Thank You!**



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# SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

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Dear Friends of the International Center,  
Thank you for helping me along my way to study abroad in Edinburgh. Studying far away from home has allowed me the distance to look at my life with an honesty that was difficult to have when I was back home. I've been able to strengthen the relationships with the people that mean the most to me back home, and reorient my compass for when I return. Also, being in Scotland has been an absolute blast! I've had the pleasure of attending *Ceilidhs*, hiking in the highlands, enjoying the concert scene in nearby Glasgow, and getting the rain I never had back in San Diego.

I've attached a couple pictures I've taken during my time here to give you an idea of what it's like.

*Marshall Seid*

Education Abroad Program, Scottish Universities  
Marshall College, Computer Science major



Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

*By a couple of pictures, Marshall meant eight! From among these, I have chosen one, although I was tempted by some snow-covered mountain scenes. —Scholarship Committee Chair*

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## My Experience in Lund, Sweden

With my time abroad at an end, I wanted to let you all know that I had an amazing time studying in Sweden, and I am extremely thankful for the role the scholarship had in making it all possible. With my memories still fresh in mind, I want to share with you all the highlights of my time abroad.

From the start, my journey to Sweden did not quite go as planned. My flight leaving Boston bound for Iceland got delayed, causing me to miss my connecting flight to Copenhagen, from where I would take the train to Sweden. Courtesy of the airline that I was flying with, I ended up staying in Keflavik, Iceland for a little short of a day. Since this was my first time traveling by myself outside of the U.S., the situation was a bit stressful. I was afraid that I would miss my orientation, and, at times, I was unsure of what to do. In the end, everything worked out: I made my rescheduled flight to Copenhagen and I was able to make my orientation the next morn-

ing. As stressful as the situation was, I'm glad it happened. It was my first challenge being abroad, and I was able to overcome it. It gave me a confidence boost for what was to come, and now I can say that I've been to Iceland, even though it was brief.

As I settled into Lund, I found it both fun and challenging. While there were similarities to things back in California, there were also many things that took some getting used to. The biggest thing that I had to adapt to was hearing and seeing Swedish everywhere. With almost no previous exposure to Swedish, the first few days were a great challenge. However, since most Swedes speak English, I was able to get around; however, this fact later became a curse as I was trying to learn Swedish but found myself falling back to speaking English. By taking an intensive Swedish language course, I grew very motivated to learning Swedish, and the words that once stressed me out

became an endless source of things that I wanted to learn. Even though I have left Sweden, I still plan on continuing to learn Swedish, because one day I plan on returning. Beyond learning Swedish, I fell into habits that I ended up enjoying and hope to continue in California, such as cooking most of my meals and biking everywhere. While all of these things have been different and sometimes difficult adapting to, I have enjoyed the differences and am extremely glad to have had the experience.

Since this was my first time being in Europe, I took the opportunity to do some traveling. I was able to visit places that were rich with history that I had only heard about in class. I learned about the impact of World War II while in Berlin, and visited palaces of past Royals in Copenhagen. I took a boat tour of Amsterdam through its canals, and I tried some real Belgian chocolate while in Brussels. Being able to visit these places



was amazing, but I loved coming back to Sweden and learning more about the Swedish language and culture.

I was able to experience so many new things while on EAP in Lund. Luckily for me it snowed one weekend—that was my first time seeing snow fall. It was amazing to watch, but I quickly learned why people move to warmer weather. The start of December brought with it Advent. Christmas decorations adorned Lund, and Christmas markets popped up every weekend leading up to Christmas. Even though the days got shorter, I loved seeing the candles and lit-up stars that people place in their windows to brighten the night.

I was also able to enjoy a very Swedish Christmas. Celebrated on the 24th of December, it was a day filled with lots of fish and sweets. We watched two animated shorts, “From All of Us to You” [*a Disney production—more popular in Scandinavia than in the U.S.*] and “Sagan om Karl-Bertil Jonssons Julafton” that have become Christmas classics in Sweden.

It is cliché to say, but studying abroad has been a life changing experience. It turned the future that I had planned on its head, and I developed new plans that I would’ve never considered before studying abroad. I feel like I have developed a more open mind and bolstered my sense of inde-

pendence and self-confidence. I have learned a lot about myself and about a different culture and place. I’ve met so many new people, and I made memories that will last a lifetime. Five months may not be a very long time, but it was enough for me to change and see the place where I grew up in a different light.

Thank you all again for making this possible! I truly look forward to encouraging future students to travel abroad and have an adventure of their own. I hope you all have a *gott nytt år!*

*Med vänliga hälsningar,  
Megg García*

Muir College, Biochemistry  
and Cell Biology major

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## EAP Study in Chile

In fall 2015, I participated in the EAP Chilean Universities Program and spent about 6 months at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (La Católica) as an exchange student. During my stay in Chile, I not only have learned about topics that I might not have been able to study in the U.S., but also have gained useful experience from my internship, which will definitely prepare me for my future career. It is hard to believe that I am already at the end of the semester and more surprisingly to me, I have overcome so many obstacles that seemed to be insurmountable at the beginning, and have reached all the goals that I had set for myself before applying for this program.

I am very thankful for being part of this program because academic experiences at La Católica enable me to be more informed about the relationship between Latin America and China, a topic that intrigues me, but is barely discussed at my home university. In the course Latin America Foreign Policy, I read several articles regarding China’s expansion in developing countries, and listened to a speech given by Professor **Isabel Rodriguez**, an expert who has studied China from a Latin American perspective. Passionate about this top-

ic, I cooperated with another classmate to give a final paper on the economic relation between China and Chile since 2000, in which we pointed out some major characteristics of these countries’ foreign policies, and analyzed the origin and effects of the Free Trade Treaty signed in 2005. With opportunities to access abundant academic resources and work collaboratively on a specific topic, I have gained a better insight into trans-regional relations, and have become inspired to study transactions between these two regions in my future education.

Being in Chile has also built me up professionally. After visiting several companies and organizations during the first month, I began to work for Acción Emprendedora (AE), a non-profit committed to supporting start-ups in Chile. Although I did not acquire technical knowledge or experience to be a business professional while working at AE, I was able, for the very first time, to work with many people from different



Asian Study Group at La Católica

countries and learned to adapt to a multicultural group.

Apart from academic and professional experiences, the process of applying for a student visa to Brazil while I was still in Chile has greatly improved my ability to handle complicated situations and deal with constant pressure. My 6-month stay in Chile is also my 6-month struggle with the visa application. By processing the application successfully, I obtained skills to be more able to deal with difficulties in my life, and will soon embark on the EAP Brazil Program.

*Yingtao Xie*

Muir College, International  
Studies/Economics major

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## Global Seminar in Scotland

My only regret during my time studying abroad was that I hadn't selected a longer program. The structure of the UCSD Global Seminar allowed me to go abroad in the first place; but still, I wish I could have stayed longer.

As an engineer, people don't expect me to think deeply about the humanities or politics or the non-technical problems that face the world. Yet my experience in Scotland was a great opportunity to do just that.

I recall one of my first real conversations with a local Scotsman on the train to Linlithgow. During the course of our conversation, we managed to speak of education, healthcare, transportation, and a number of other issues that, as it turns out, Scotland and the United States share. And while I will not detail here the impact on my opinions, I can say that after gaining some understanding of the conflicts surrounding these issues in another country, I was able to reconsider many of the opinions I hold on these issues in the U.S. More importantly, it opened my mind to the idea that regarding these issues, there are often many more feasible solutions available than we tend to consider, even when we think we've covered "all sides" of the issue.

This trend continued throughout my time in Scotland. Seeing the unarmed police helping citizens with directions, taking public transportation to nearly every one of my destinations, even watching the cashiers at the supermarket sitting rather than standing at their tills. All of these experiences highlighted cultural differences, big or small, in areas much more varied than "food and clothing." And these cultural differences have spurred me to think not only of the big issues, but of the smallest things we might never think to do differently.

Attached is a goofy photo of my peers and me while hiking Cairn Gorm mountain (I'm looking up and to the left). This was probably one of my favorite days of the trip, because we ran into bad weather. Despite rain and gusty winds, we continued onward, and I found the experience absolutely exhilarating. It was quite unlike any hike I had done before.

As for this fall quarter, I'm mostly glad I survived the chaos. I often felt as though I had even less time to breathe than usual in the quarter system, but I do believe I did well in my classes. I did have a successful time leading my team within the Triton Rocket Club through some exciting projects, and I began initiating for Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society.

I am forever grateful to the Friends of the International Center for making my trip to Scotland possible this summer. You'll be pleased to know that since I've been back, I have become a major advocate for study abroad and have encouraged numerous friends and peers to pursue an international experience.

*Trevor Irwin*

Revelle College

Aerospace Engineering major

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*Occasionally, I like to share highlights from correspondence with past Friends of the International Center scholarship recipients. Some may remember **Bambi Chapin**, who received her award in 2000 for fieldwork in Sri Lanka that ultimately led to a doctorate in cultural anthropology. **Carol Smith** recalls making transparencies for a presentation Bambi gave for our Armchair Travelers. — Scholarship Committee Chair*

Hi, Ruth

I just wanted to say happy New Year! I am off to Sri Lanka again for a month; this time to set up a new comparative project, with one leg in the U.S. and another in Sri Lanka. I am not sure any of this would have happened without your initial support!

**John** and I separated soon after coming back from Sri Lanka during our initial stay, but we remain close. **Tucker** is in his second year at Johns Hopkins, studying computer science and endlessly working on developing new apps.

*Bambi L. Chapin*

Associate Professor of Anthropology  
University of Maryland

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## Update

I am currently finishing my dissertation and looking for employment, both in and outside of the U.S. I very much appreciate the Friends of the International Center's grant, which has allowed me to spend more time on my research than I could afford otherwise.

*Ben Van Overmeire*

Ph.D. candidate from Belgium, Department of Literature

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# Reservations for The Year of the Monkey Saturday, February 27, 2016 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 Chair, c/o Friends of the International Center, UCSD International Center 0018, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0018.

Alternately, you may reserve via eventbrite: <http://FICAsia2016.eventbrite.com>

Reservations must be received by Friday, February 19, 2016.  
Late reservations will be charged an extra \$5.00 or may be refused.

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Editor: **Ruth Newmark** (editorFIC@ucsd.edu)

Contributors: **Joan Adamo, Jennie Chin, Karen Davis, Nori Faer, Nancy Homeyer, Kristine Kneib, Audrey Leriche, Katya Newmark, Joe Nichols, Renate Schmid-Schoenbein, Georgina Sham, Marion Spors, Eleanor tum Suden, Liz Fong Wills**

Contributing Photographers: **Katya Newmark, Carol Smith, Stuart Smith**

Circulation: **Renate Schmid-Schoenbein**

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