CDW - Cultural Diversity Week

Cultural Diversity Week - or CDW for those in the know, is happening on the Melbourne Campus of ACU from Monday August 3, 2009 to Saturday August 8, 2009.

CDW is a joint initiative between the International Office and the Melbourne Campus Student Association (MCSA) to help bridge the cultural divide and bring the myriad of cultures and traditions we have here at ACU to the forefront of our attention for one full week in an attempt to foster an environment of integration and cultural understanding and respect.

Monday 3 August - Cultural Stalls

The foyer area of the main building will be set up with a number of stalls representing our 5 main cultural groups and the remaining continents. Students will be in national dress and will be giving out free cultural snacks and answering questions about their respective cultures. The stalls will be decorated in a culturally appropriate way in a manner that the students feel best portrays their respective backgrounds.

Tuesday 4 August - International Trivia Competition

This trivia competition will be held in the back cafeteria where we hope to have 10 tables of 10 students each. Tables will be mixed to ensure that local and international students are seated together.

Wednesday 5 August - “Speed Language”

Our international students are always telling us that local students ask them “how do you say...in your language?” So...here are the answers!

Thursday 6 August - Calligraphy Workshop and Cultural Games.

Our students tell us that they are often asked how to write Western names in Chinese or Japanese. The purpose of this activity is to show them how to do this, get them to try and take their masterpiece home with them! Cultural games will be happening downstairs in the Vault.

Friday 7 August - Cultural Diversity Concert.

This is the “jewel in the crown” of the Cultural Diversity Week. Students (including locals!) will be showcasing their talents and performing items of cultural significance to them. The Cultural Diversity Concert will be held in Central Hall from 1:00 pm to 4:00. Tickets are required for this event and will be available from the International Office reception desk on Level 1 from Tuesday 14 July.

Saturday 8 August - Snow Trip to Mt Buller

Registrations for the snow trip have opened. This is being offered at an incredibly low rate of $35 per student. The cost includes the transport and entry into the Mt Buller Ski Resort!

Come along and support cultural diversity at ACU. Make new friends and help to bridge the cultural divide!

We hope to see you there!
We live in a multicultural society, with a myriad of languages and customs. Everyone has different ways of expressing themselves, be it verbally or physically. Communication is the essence of survival, and so we have the common language that everyone understands and can use to interact with each other. That is how life goes on. But have you ever felt what it would be like if you were able to speak to a person from another country in their own language? Even a small gesture like ‘hello’ or ‘good day’ when spoken in the other person’s language can make a lot of difference to that person. Imagine how much joy he or she would feel when someone from another country greets in his or her native language. It gives a sense of belonging to a place where despite the ethnic diversity and cultural differences, everyone is open to learning new things and experiencing the variety which is after all, the spice of life.

With that thought in mind, a bunch of like-minded international students along with the international office at ACU Melbourne decided to have an “International Cultural Diversity Week”. A pilot program, it is going to be the first of its kind in Melbourne, and the whole of Australia for that matter. A week which was split into 6 days of exciting cultural events like trivia, speed language, calligraphy, cultural show, stalls and a trip to the snow. This article will give you little insight into one of those events – speed language.

It is really quite simple – we identified the major countries from where students were coming to ACU Melbourne, made a list of common terms that everyone uses, like ‘Hello’, ‘Goodbye’, ‘How are you’, and so on; and then we got those terms translated into the various different languages, like Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Nepali, French, etc. During the international week, we have student volunteers who will teach these terms in these languages to all interested students. Over a period of three hours, students can learn the common terms in as many languages as they are interested in. Quite an exciting activity, don’t you think?

The purpose of this event is to promote cultural diversity, and to allow students from different countries to mingle with each other and learn about their different cultures. Speed language is especially organised to let students learn the basic terms of other languages, so that they can practice it with their international friends. It is a nice way to surprise your friends and will help you to better get along with them. It was not easy to organise such an event, and the whole cultural week planning committee has worked really hard in a short time to set up the International Week. It has been a very nice experience to work with some very dedicated international students in this committee and organise these cultural events for our fellow students. I look forward to seeing everyone in ACU at this Cultural Diversity Week in the first week of August.

Editor’s Note:

The idea behind the “speed Language” activity came from a number of international students who said that they are often being asked by local students “How do you say... in your language?” or “How do you say my name in your language?”.

Well, here is your chance to know the answers to these questions. If you have ever wanted to know how to say a certain phrase in another language, this is your chance to find out!

We have taken 14 of the most common phrases and had our native speaking students translate these into English.

At the Speed Language sessions, you will be able to learn how to say common phrases such as “how are you?”, “what’s your name?”, etc...as well as learn the corresponding answers. You’ll also get to learn to say the most commonly asked one - “I love you”! Aren’t we, as humans, a strange lot? No matter where we come from in the world, there is always a fascination with these particular three words.

Choose from any number of languages you like...learn them all if you like ... And then practice them around campus!
Dealing with The Black Dog: Part 2 - Causes

The causes of the Black Dog of depression can be elusive, as Shakespeare (c.1596) articulates in The Merchant of Venice: ‘...how I caught it, found it, or came by it / What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born / I am to learn’. Still, depression is not usually caused by chemical imbalances in the brain or by genetic factors (Yapko, Breaking the patterns of depression, 2001). And the powerlessness inherent in such explanations is stark, for what is to be done apart from taking antidepressant medication?

As far as most people’s depression goes, nurture is more influential than nature. That is, environmental factors like upbringing, family, schooling, relationships, cultural and religious contexts and current happenings all have their impact.

So often in depression, the present and the past collide. Events in the here and now resonate with episodes of bygone days and are made more potent in consequence. For example, the death of a friend today may evoke unresolved grief over the death of a parent in yesteryear. Or coming up against a harsh boss in the workplace now may stir up bleak memories of an oppressive parent of earlier times. This dynamic is the reason why, the ‘talking cures’ of counselling and psychotherapy ignore a client’s past experiences at their peril, despite the ever-escalating demand for instant, pain-free, uncomplicated cures, devoid of the committed psychological work required to address our deepest ills.

The changing nature of Australian society has surely contributed to the increasing incidence of depression here. In particular, the sense of belonging to a community has largely fallen away, whereas in my childhood in the Antipodes, the strong bonds of religion and family provided cohesion and cooperation. And, though, perhaps, religion, and by extension, domestic life were too harsh in their approach to the human person then, they did uphold and instil values that convinced many of us to aspire to contemplative lives.

In contrast, contemporary life tends to promote superficial and phony pursuits. TV advertisements, for instance, blare out daily ‘tales told by idiots’ that insist we must have high-status, well-paid jobs; drive fast cars; be attractive to the opposite sex; thin; perfectly healthy; smooth in interpersonal relating; and successful in sport. We are discouraged from taking life or intellectual thought too seriously.

It is hard to believe that striving for such shallow returns could make us happy for we are far deeper people than that. And, if, as Carl Jung (1962), the Swiss psychoanalyst, put it, ‘the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being’, we should not be surprised, in the face of such flaky present-day expectations, that some of us find it near impossible to introduce for long any luminosity into the darkness.

Stressful life events, too, can act as a trigger for depression, especially those events that involve the sort of loss which impacts adversely on a person’s self esteem, like the loss of love or emotional support - such as in a relationship breakdown or a death - or personal and economic failure - such as poor academic grades or losing a job. International students face these losses far away from the customary supports of families and home.

These feelings of loss end in depression when grief has in some way miscarried and has never been worked through. And the commonest reason for miscarried grief is the existence of hidden feelings of anger, hostility and resentment, which are not able to be felt or acknowledged, or bear the pain of, or give expression to the ambivalent feelings we all have towards those we love.

Depression, then, is a troublesome summons to seek the way to our true selves, mindful of societal pressures and of our own resistances to discovering the rich and compelling ingredients of our own mental lives.

For more information on depression consult beyond blue Australia at www.beyondblue.org.au

Rosemary Williams
Counselling Psychologist
Counselling Service

Freud (1917) wrote in one of his most famous papers, Mourning and Melancholia, that the self-reproaches of the depressed person ‘are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but with significant modifications they do fit someone else, some person whom the patient loves, has loved or ought to love’.

In counselling any person who is depressed, the counsellor needs to reach hidden anger against someone the client needs or loves – or in Freud’s words, has loved or ought to love. As Malan (1979) writes in Individual Psychotherapy and the Science of Psychodynamics, ‘this mixture of love and hate for the same person is one of the deepest and most painful conflicts that human beings suffer from’ and depressed persons, in particular, will find it hard to acknowledge, or bear the pain of, or give expression to the ambivalent feelings we all have towards those we love.
The Abbey Medieval Festival

Liu Xu Qing
Nursing
Brisbane

Just last Sunday, I went to the Abbey Medieval Festival held on the Bruce Highway and Bribie Island Road, which is near the Glasshouse Mountain and the Caboolture.

On that morning, we were so excited and woke up at 8 o’clock, which was one and a half hours before we were due to depart. We then took Ian’s car together with three other little kids. We all sat in eager anticipation of the festival and couldn’t help chatting excitedly about it as we sat in the car, impatiently waiting to arrive at our destination.

We arrived at about 10:20am and went inside. There was a multitude of people there that day and the car park was filled to capacity with different kinds of cars, trucks and caravans. When we first got inside, the one thing that caught our eye was the tools and weapons from ancient times. There were also some ironsmiths who were making tools. We took some photos and videos as it was a very new experience for us. I’ve never seen people making such things before.

We then moved onto the main ground to watch the Cannon Fire at around 11am. They used an old cannon and after introducing all the different types, they lit the cannon. It was the most amazing, remarkable and magnificent play I’ve ever seen! Next, we were just hanging around different stalls and trying to find interesting things. We stopped at a fur stall in which they had all kinds of animal fur you could think about or imagine. I thought it was a bit cruel to those animals as we were told that their skins were peeled off them whether they were alive or not. But from another view, people had to peel the skin from animals to live. It’s a controversial issue, isn’t it?

In the afternoon, after the lunch, we watched the children’s tournament. Two little kids participated in fights acting like ancient abbey warriors. That was fun and crazy. The kids were separated into two teams: Black and Red. They had to fight each other to become the champion. There was a little girl who looked like she was about 6 years old, fighting bravely in the black team. She was always on the frontier of the team and tried to fight very hard.

She then got someone and lasted until the final grade! I was so excited for her!

We left at the end of the day both extremely happy and wonderfully satisfied. It was really a trip that brought me back to life! After a semester of study, we all felt so tired and less motivated. From this trip, we can feel that Australia is a really a great country to have fun with different cultures. I liked the trip very much and I am looking forward for the next one.

Across a Camelot sized weekend and honouring 20 years of ye olde celebrations, the internationally acclaimed Abbey Medieval Tournament will return to Caboolture.

Regarded as an authentic depiction of life in the Middle Ages, the tournament features a wide range of themed food and entertainment.

From the breath-taking pageantry of the Joust, to the courage and skill of knights in armed combats, the tournament also boasts a spectacular Grand Parade, a castle, medieval music, middle-eastern dancers and a spectacular human chess game.

The Lion’s Den Tavern will be brewing up mugs of beer, mead, ales and wine while jugglers wander through the medieval markets, adding to the unforgettable atmosphere enjoyed annually by tens of thousands of people.

Editor’s Note:

While Melbourne celebrates Cultural Diversity week, Xu Qing has been able to celebrate the ancient traditional European culture.

What a fascinating country we are all in! A place where cultural diversity can be applauded and celebrated.

Take advantage folks! We truly live in a lucky country!
My Journey Across the Cultural Divide - Vanuatu

Hanano Sato
Nursing
Melbourne

ACU provides a fantastic opportunity for 2nd year nursing students every year to work in the hospital and community in Vanuatu during the Winter semester break. I took the opportunity to go on such a study tour this year and the experience is one that has truly changed my way of thinking!

We went to Santo, a small island in Vanuatu for a few weeks in June and July. It was one of the most challenging, but at the same time, most exciting experiences as a nurse in my life.

Vanuatu is a developing country with a limited awareness of health care and a serious lack of medical supplies. Malaria and tuberculosis are still big issues in this country. Our teacher told us "people coming to hospital will either get better or die. There is nothing in between." It made me cry to see people struggling with diseases they should not have had to struggle with. If only they lived in Australia or any other developed country! However, nurses, doctors and health practitioners in Vanuatu always do their best with what they have.

We walked to the hospital and worked there every morning. After siesta time (which is a long lunch break from 11:30am to 1pm!), we went back to the hospital to clean up and finished by 3. Sometimes I joined in the sports day activities and played volleyball with other nurses and doctors until dinner time. Working life in Vanuatu is very relaxed, I must say! We also visited a local school to give much needed vaccinations, a village where some people still live in a traditional way and a youth centre to study health issues for teenagers and young adults.

My most memorable and exciting experience in Vanuatu was that I helped deliver beautiful baby boys and girls. Babies are the cutest things everywhere in the world. It is common for ladies in Vanuatu to have 5 to 6 children. Births are more a part of their lives than a big life event. It was my very first time to work in a maternity ward and I was enthralled by the beauty of bringing a new life into the world. I was more nervous than any of the mothers in the delivery room though! As a student nurse, at first I was so disappointed with myself at how little there was that I could do for the new mothers. All I could do was massage their backs, encourage them and just hold their hands for hours. I could not even communicate well enough in Bislama (Bislama is the official language in Vanuatu, although they can speak a little English and French). Despite my feelings, most of the mothers were so grateful and thankful to have us there. One of the mothers even named her baby after our teacher after we all helped her!

Each of us packed plenty of medical supplies and gifts for the children, such as colour pencils and notebooks. Although they only provide some temporary help, they do go a long way to make the children so happy. I strongly believe that what they need is not only temporary solutions or money, but building a strong health care community and providing relevant health education to all in Vanuatu is essential for them. For their own pride and dignity, they need to be able to stand up and help themselves. It is our responsibility to support developing countries like Vanuatu in the long term. Even simply educating primary school children about the importance of brushing teeth can make a huge difference in those countries.

Away from study, we did not forget to enjoy the most beautiful beach we have ever seen, the tropical weather and the snorkelling! We went on a camp one weekend to Champaign beach. I saw the most beautiful coral and thousands of colourful fish including "Nemo"! Local people barbequed a little pig for dinner for us. People are very friendly in Vanuatu. Every person passing by greets you and they are always willing to help others, especially outsiders.

By the end of the trip, we had all got sun-kissed skin and heaps of mozy bites. And, I am sure that all of us who went to Vanuatu gained confidence as nurses.

Editor’s Note:

What a coincidence that just about every article in this month’s edition goes hand in hand with the theme of cultural diversity and global harmony - exactly what CDW is trying to promote.

Hana had a wonderful opportunity to not only experience another culture, but to extend the hand of friendship and assistance across the cultural divide.
Someone once said that whatever we do in life echoes in eternity. How very true those words of wisdom, especially so when we begin to slice up and dissect the hidden lives of well-loved celebrities and their kith and kin. I am referring in particular to the sad and untimely end of the King of Pop, Michael Jackson, and the numerous tales that the media have now started to lay bare before us.

Personally speaking, I have a little soft corner for MJ since we share the same birth date. My siblings and I grew up in an age of quiet innocence. We watched cartoons and the adorable muppets on *Sesame Street.* And then we enjoyed listening to the endearing notes of immortal Jackson Five classics like *Ben,* alongside other great numbers by family musicians like The Osmonds, The Carpenters and The BeeGees.

Although we were also besotted with the likes of Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck, The Beatles and ABBA, Demis Roussos and Nana Mouskouri, the family shows always held a special place in my young romantic heart. So the recent news of MJ’s unexpected loss upset me more than a little bit. What a terrible waste of the most extraordinary talent and even greater potential.

I do not of course want to go into every gruesome detail of this very lonely soul’s short existence on earth. Though the media have done enough to shred him to pieces already ... in life and now even after his death ... how I wish that things could have worked out differently for MJ. Surely, none of us wants to be known as someone having everything that money can buy, yet technically so bankrupt that one is worth more dead rather than alive.

Perhaps MJ’s morbid lifestyle and tragic last days should provide us all with a lesson or two that we may do well to mull over. As international students in a foreign land, let us take care not to get carried away by the fleeting pleasures of the three W’s (wine, women and wealth). As for the ladies, well, the second W could translate into the temporary joys of transient relationships that end as quickly as they began.

Now take a deep breath and step out to talk to a really close friend or a counsellor, in fact, anyone you can trust. You have to weigh your best options for getting out of that hopeless situation. Believe me, even if it means spending a few extra bucks and taking a holiday to a remote island, there is nothing as therapeutic as a change of scene. It will just naturally change your circumstances from the word “go” so to speak. Learn to listen to that gentle little voice that begs you to do the right thing.

That voice which we call our intuition or conscience is actually the voice of God’s spirit guiding us onto the right path. In the past year and a half that I have been in Australia, I have learnt to follow this little voice very closely. And I must say it has helped me greatly, especially in times of crisis and confusion when I had no way of knowing whether my decisions were right or wrong.

The way to discern this is simple. If you are disturbed after making a choice, then you are probably acting on your own free will and haven’t been listening to His prompting. However, if you find peace in your heart, then you are listening to the right voice. I wish you all a cheery and fruitful time studying this semester. I also pray that each of you, and also my Australian brothers and sisters, will live fulfilling lives that will leave your mark on earth for all eternity.
Chinese music has a history of over four thousand years! In the beginning, Chinese instruments were mainly percussive in nature. The percussion section is the most important section in a Chinese orchestra. Percussion instruments are usually considered easy to learn and perform. As many different percussion instruments produce different sound effects, they are frequently used in depicting joyful and exciting occasions such as harvests and marriages, as well as other traditional Chinese festivals. Later, because of the influence from Central Asia, the bowed string instruments and most of the plucked string instruments came to China. From this time, the Chinese orchestra became more variable.

Nowadays the Chinese orchestra is very similar to that of the symphony orchestra. The number of players in an orchestra can vary from a minimum of 20 to as many as 100. The orchestra is divided into 4 sections, classified by the type of instruments, namely the woodwind, strings, plucked strings and percussion. The typical Chinese orchestra of today also includes the Western cello and double bass, as well as other Western instruments like the vibraphone and triangle which can provide the lower notes that are necessary for a better instrumental blend.

Basically, Chinese musical instruments are categorised by the method by which their sounds are produced. Thus, woodwind instruments are blown, plucking instruments are plucked, stringed instruments are bowed and percussion instruments are struck.

We don't have to go to China to enjoy a Chinese Orchestra. We do have our own!

Let me introduce one of the Chinese Orchestras in Melbourne; the Chao Feng Chinese Orchestra, which is a community-based musical group. Established in 1982 by a group of enthusiastic musicians, the Orchestra is the largest and longest-running Chinese Orchestra in Australia and has become a focal point for the development of Chinese music in Australia.

The Orchestra has staged more than two hundred and fifty concerts over the years. In addition to a major annual concert, the Orchestra conducts educational workshops, participates in community fund-raising activities, multicultural arts festivals, Chinese community festival celebrations and general community cultural events.

The Orchestra is an incorporated cultural organization that is independent and not-for-profit, supporting its activities with membership fees and revenue generated from performances. The Orchestra also regularly applies for, and on occasion succeeds in achieving, funding from private foundations as well as State and Commonwealth arts funding bodies. Meanwhile, they do not just play their music, but also take an active interest in the civic, cultural and general welfare of the Chinese and wider community. The Orchestra is continuously working to develop the group's repertoire and technical capabilities, to foster new audiences and train new members.

The Chao Feng Chinese Orchestra proudly presents 'The Scenic Sound of China', a concert showcasing the vast and beautiful landscape of China using traditional Chinese music on 23th August 2009. This concert features music describing the beauty and magnificence of the natural and man-made landscapes of China. This includes musical styles from different ethnic minorities of China. From the energetic sounds of the Xinjiang people in "By the Banks of the Yi Li River" to the imposing melodies of the Han people describing the grandeur of Mount Tai in "Sunrise"; this concert will take you on a musical sightseeing journey through China.

For further information please see:
Hello everyone. Did you know that a ‘Perfect Trivia Question’ is the one that initially sounds too difficult but once you know the answer it seems so obvious? Did you also know that Trivia has been around for hundreds of years? During the reign of the Roman Emperor, Augustus, trivia information was displayed on notice boards at important crossroads.

Sound interesting? So would you like to test your knowledge about the various countries of the world? Or you may want to increase your awareness about other cultures of various students studying at ACU?

Then come along and register for a Trivia competition on to be held on Tuesday 4th of August at the University Cafeteria. The trivia consists of various topics such as Music, Famous personalities, Culture, Sports, etc. There is also one set of questions related to Australia.

So all those who want to learn something new and also have some fun please come and register for the Trivia Competition. There are also cool prizes to be won such as Movie Tickets for the entire winning team and vouchers for the 2nd and 3rd teams.

So see you all in the cafeteria for the Trivia on 4th August.
So...How Much DO You Know??

TRIVIA COMPETITION
TIME: Tues 4th August 11:00 - 14:00
LOCATION: Campüs's cafeteria

INTERNATIONAL WEEK
During the second week of semester two, the International Office in conjunction with the MCSA are going to hold a series of exciting events to promote awareness of our diverse cultures at ACU and the international students on our campus! We encourage you all to come along and have a look! This will be an excellent chance for you to learn more about the various cultures and make some new friends! You will be able to talk to international students from many different countries and make friends with them! There will also be free and delicious snacks for you to taste at the Cultural Stalls that will be set up on Monday 3 August. This will definitely open your eyes and broaden your horizons to the rest of the world!

Two of the events of Cultural Diversity Week are described below:

The Cultural Diversity Concert.
This has become a traditional ACU event at the Melbourne campus! Every year, we have many international talents show us the amazing beauty of foreign music and dance, which really excites me when I think of it. This year, we will have an even more attractive show for you with diversified and interactive performances from all over the world. While you enjoy the colourful costumes and cheerful performances, you may also have some hands-on experience to learn some traditional and ceremonial dance moves from foreign nations! So join in the show rather than just watching! How cool is that!

I’ve always wanted to really experience such fascinating exotic dancing and music myself! By immersing ourselves in these artistic performances from all over the world, we receive the blessing of happiness and peace from different countries, familiarize ourselves with different cultures and most importantly gain a deeper understanding of this multicultural country we are living in.

In this coming Cultural Diversity show, we have the blockbuster boy band from Nepal who will make a “come-back” this year with new Nepalese songs; the ceremonial dance and chanting from China; traditional dances from Japan…more than you could imagine! So come and join us on the 7th of August in Central Hall at 1:00 pm. Get your FREE ticket from the International Office reception desk.

Cultural Games Session
Remember all the fun we used to have in playing games in our childhood? This coming multi-cultural games event is going to bring that fun back to you! Have you ever tried playing games from other countries? Are you curious about the traditional games that foreign youth play for fun? Interested in competing with other students in these strange but wonderful games? Here is your opportunity! You will be able to watch and learn how to play some of the oldest games coming from the other cultures around the world and participate in the competition to proudly win a prize! Register now for the exciting games!

You can try Rana from Columbia, Origami and paper Sumo wrestling from Japan, chopsticks games from China and the traditional pool game from India! Still wondering what these games are like? Just come along to the Vault on Thursday 6 August and see for yourself!

Editor’s Note:
The Concert and the Games Day will certainly be a fantastic way to learn more about the cultures that we have represented at the St Patrick’s Campus.

We strongly encourage students to get involved. Not only will this be a fun week, but the students have worked extremely hard over the last few months to work on activities that they feel will showcase their cultures to you all.

Your participation not only means that you can learn more about this world we all share, but that you support our international students and the culturally diverse country that we live in.

ACU respects all cultures and religious beliefs and part of our mission statement reads:

“Through fostering and advancing knowledge in education, health, commerce, the humanities, the sciences and technologies, and the creative arts, Australian Catholic University seeks to make a specific contribution to its local, national and international communities. The University explicitly engages the social, ethical and religious dimensions of the questions it faces in teaching and research, and service. In its endeavours, it is guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and for the dignity of all human beings.”

Get involved. Make a difference!
Cultural Games for CDW - Melbourne Campus

Games Day
An International Week

Five games are nominated
to be introduced to you!!

1. An Indian Carrom board: a mini pool table in Indian style
2. Chinese chopstick game: Using chopstick to pick up small beans
3. Japanese Origami: learning what else can we do with paper
4. Rana (frogs) game: introduced from Columbia
5. Pick-up-sticks game: a game of mental skill in which sticks removed from a pile without disturbing the remaining ones

When: Thursday, 6th Aug 2009
Where: The Vault
Majulah Singapora! Singapore’s National Day

Vanjitha Chantherakumar
Social Science
Melbourne

Beginning around mid July each year, Singapore suddenly starts blushing a beautiful red. As the whole country gears up for National Day, decorations in Singapore’s national colours – red and white, start appearing everywhere as early as a month in advance. Local residents who live in high rise apartment blocks proudly display the country’s flag out of the balconies of their homes while town councils put up colourful streamers and flags in many creative ways all over blocks of flats in major housing estates and large boards reading “Happy Birthday Singapore!” are erected all over the country, sometimes even hanging from street lights. The whole country comes together for the one major yearly event in Singapore’s calendar, the celebration of Singapore’s separation from Malaysia to form an Independent nation. The anniversary of this historic event on 9th August 1965, is celebrated extravagantly each year by all Singaporeans across the country.

National Day is an event many school children look forward to each year, and is usually celebrated on the eve of August 9th. Many schools give their students a rare opportunity of attending school dressed in the national colours, instead of their regular school uniforms and schools only run for half the day. Everyone enjoy concerts put up by teachers and other students for the day and receive national day gifts at school, usually stationery items such as pens, pencil cases and files.

On August 9th, National Day is celebrated with the extravagant National Day Parade (NDP) that never fails to disappoint viewers every year. Singapore’s first NDP was held in 1966, one year after its independence and this tradition still continues till today.

The parade which includes amongst many other events, air shows by the Singapore Air Force, colourful dances by people of all walks of life and fabulous fireworks at night, used to be held at the Padang (“Field” in Malay), the historical site where the declaration of Singapore’s independence was held. As the Padang could only seat a limited number of spectators, the authorities introduced a new venue for the parade which was the Singapore National Stadium. The National Stadium could seat up to 55,000 people and remained an ideal location for the parade for many years until the venue for the parade was once again shifted to Marina Bay in 2007. The stage on which the parade takes place is a floating platform on the sea, the world’s largest floating stage. Yes, the entire parade takes place on a floating platform while the 30,000 lucky audiences who manage to score themselves free tickets to view the parade live, are seated on platforms built entirely on reclaimed land. It’s hard to believe that a few years ago the whole site of the NDP was once the sea! Although Marina Bay seats a very limited number of people it was chosen for its gorgeous view of the city skyline which acts as a beautiful backdrop for the event. Furthermore, many people can catch a glimpse of the parade as they take a ride on the Singapore Flyer, the gigantic ferris wheel that every major city has, which is also part of the lovely backdrop of the Marina Bay Floating Platform.

Tickets for the National Day Parade are usually very hard to come by. In the past, it was not unusual to find massive numbers of people arriving hours before the ticket booths opened to stand in line to claim their free tickets. A couple of years ago, some even arrived as early as 36 hours before the booths opened, pitched tents and camped outside the ticket booth overnight, all in the hopes of getting their tickets. With the very limited seating available at the latest venue, ticketing is now done by an e-balloting system to prevent overcrowding. Residents can register their names and addresses via phone or through the NDP website to go into a draw to win their tickets. Thanks to technology, everyone can now try their luck at scoring the free tickets while seated comfortably at home!

The three hour parade usually begins with the assembly of members of the Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore Police Force, Singapore Civil Defence Force, representatives of the different Unions and Ministries as well as students in uniformed groups such as the Singapore Red Cross, the Girls’ Brigade, the Scouts. After the arrival of the Members of Parliament, the Prime Minister and the President, the Parade Commander will call for a full salute, during which the National Anthem will be played accompanied by a fly-past of the State Flag. Following that, the Parade Commander will request that the President inspects the parade and while this happens, a 21-gun salute is given to the President.
Following this, the “fun” part of the ceremony begins! School children sing in choirs in all four national languages of Singapore and participants of the parade perform dances on the field. Acts performed on the day usually revolve around the theme of racial harmony which is represented by cultural dances and amazing gymnastics displays. This section of the parade has changed over the years from the massive flashcard displays that complemented the parade in the 1980s to becoming more theatrical and using multimedia projections in more recent years.

The colourful parade then ends with the much anticipated fireworks display after the sun has set, a segment that never fails to excite everybody of all ages. The entire parade finally comes to a close with everyone in the audience singing much loved National Day Songs, followed by the pledge taking and then the singing of the National Anthem.

This year’s National Day once again promises to be, once again, an extravagant event with many exciting performances, songs and colourful dances. I’ll be catching the live telecast via the internet, maybe you should too!

Happy Birthday Singapore!

Continued...

The ACU St Patrick’s Campus Choir is an affiliate member of the Australian Intervarsity Choral Societies’ Association network and is also a member of the Australian National Choral Association. The choir is a vibrant, friendly ensemble, which encourages a friendly social atmosphere amongst its members through regular social activities both on and off campus. The Campus Choir provides members with the chance to learn and improve music skills as well as choral performance technique. The music performed covers a wide range of challenging repertories. Opportunities exist for members to take on leadership roles, gaining valuable practical experience in event management and production, including promotion, stage management and music administration.

Throughout the academic year, the choir performs in numerous major ACU events such as graduation ceremonies and university services. The choir also performs in professional ensembles, which in 2008 included a televised performance for the International Comedy Festival Gala. We have also recorded for ABC Classic FM and 3MBS FM. Recent performances have been accompanied by the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Academic Freiburg and the Monash Chamber Orchestra. In March this year we travelled to the Church of the Resurrection, Macedon and performed in a special Bushfire Relief service. In August we will perform at the world premiere of the Mary MacKillop Mass in the Melbourne Town Hall, accompanied by the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra. For further information about this performance please see the School of Music notice board which is located on the basement level of the main campus – we’d love you to come along and support us.

The choir rehearses once a week during the academic year on Tuesdays from 4pm to 6pm in the Recital Room. ACU students, alumni and staff are all welcome to join the choir (auditions required). If you’d like to become a member of the Campus Choir please contact Dr Dianne Gome.

(email: dianne.gome@acu.edu.au) for further information.

St Pat’s Campus Choir - Are You Up For It?

Wing Yee Yuen
Music
Melbourne

The ACU St Patrick’s Campus Choir is a choral ensemble of around 45 members, mainly formed by students of the School of Arts and Sciences. If you are in another School of St Patrick’s campus, you may not be aware of the choir. As a member of the choir, I’m pleased to introduce it to you.

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Happy Birthday Singapore!
Macau Pudding - Traditional Dessert from Macau

Wing Yee Yuan
Music Melbourne

Macau is one of the two special administrative regions of China other than Hong Kong, which was both the first and last European colony in China. Portuguese traders first settled in Macau in the 16th century and subsequently administered the region until the handover on December 20, 1999. Similar to Hong Kong, the mixture of two cultures – Chinese and Portuguese has become Macau’s own unique style. Here is one of the most native desserts of the city, which is so easy to make and will only take you 10 minutes before putting it into the fridge.

**Ingredients**
- 150g Marie Biscuits
- 200ml Whipping Cream
- 2tbsps Condensed Milk
- 2drops Vanilla Essence (optional)

**Method**
1) Finely blend the Marie biscuits with blender.
2) Add condensed milk and vanilla essence into whipping cream, beat to soft peak with electric mixer.
3) Pour biscuit into bottom of cup follow by cream, repeat this step to make layer.
4) Refrigerate about 1 hour to serve.

What Happened to Aunty Rosemary?

Don’t fret, folks! Aunty Rosemary hasn’t left us! She doesn’t have a column in this edition and it is ALL MY FAULT!

For those faithful readers of Aunty Rosemary’s famous words of wisdom, I can guarantee you that those precious pearls will be back with us in the next edition.

So, why is it my fault, you ask? Well, I have to take the blame as I have been so pre-occupied with the mammoth task of coordinating Cultural Diversity Week in Melbourne, that not much else has been able to keep my attention for long. And yes, I admit it, I FORGOT to send the emailed AAR questions to Rosemary until it was too late!

I must say that we have been both impressed and encouraged by the number of comments that we get from readers about Aunty Rosemary’s column. I have had a number of students writing in and commenting on the value of the advice given each month and even more students writing in to say that they are so glad to see that other students are in the same situation as them - that they are indeed not alone and that they are able to relate to other people’s issues.

The fact that we get these emails is a tribute to the success of this column and to the ever hard working Aunty Rosemary! Not only do her regular articles inspire and educate us on a number of issues, from dealing with homesickness to understanding the depths of depression, but her friendly and practical advice on the issues asked about by our readers has also given an opportunity to others to realise that every situation has its solution and that nothing is ever quite as bad as we first think. One must always remember the old saying “Every cloud has a silver lining” and take some refuge and solace in the fact that the bad times will inevitably pass.

Well, on behalf of all of our readers, I would like to thank Aunty Rosemary for being that “silver lining” in the dark clouds of many of our lives, time after time. Let me say that not only have you all been able to benefit from her experience and wisdom, but, I have to admit, so have I - on more than one occasion!

So, to those of you who look forward to her column each month, my sincere apologies! But, I can tell you that Rosemary is working on her replies for the next edition as we speak and I am sure you, like me, will wait with bated breath for her next column.

On behalf of all readers of ISV—The Voice, I would like to thank Aunty Rosemary for the time, effort and commitment that she puts in month after month. Her passion for helping others is truly amazing and her commitment to The Voice must be commended!
Managing Your Time

The decision to enrol at university requires a significant investment in time and money. Effective time management becomes an essential element for academic productivity. When time is properly managed it can help students avoid the stress related to the pressure of assignment deadlines and examinations.

Realistically, full-time students can expect to spend about 40 hours a week on face-to-face lectures, tutorials and study. This will include time spent in the library or accessing electronic databases. You will need to allow more hours for study as the pressure of assignments and exams builds up.

Part-time students need to calculate the hours necessary to complete their courses. Study time, time spent in the library and travel should be included. Part-time students, especially those with work commitments, will probably spend more time travelling than full-time students.

Students have to balance these expectations against other demands that will be placed on their time. Where will these demands come from? Family, friends, employers and interest groups all require some degree of commitment. Time for team sports, travel or paid work needs to be factored into students’ busy schedules. Is it possible to juggle all of these things and still find enough time to complete university work successfully?

“If you read texts without attending lectures, it can be more difficult to understand the topic and you will spend much more time trying to make sense of the topic. (Diana Garcia, MBA student, Melbourne Campus)”

Goal setting, both short term and long term can help students to stay focused on the outcomes that they are aiming for. For example, what do I hope to have achieved by the end of a day, a week or the end of a semester?

In the short term, some students find a “to do” list helpful in getting them through a day or a week. Make a list of all the activities that take up your day. Make sure that your travelling time is included. As each activity is completed, cross it off the list. This will give you a sense of achievement.

In the long term, a semester plan can help you keep up with your commitments. At the beginning of the semester, Academic Skills Advisers have semester calendars available. On a semester calendar, students can mark the dates that assignments are due and the dates when they should begin work on each assignment. This is very important. Make sure that there is enough time for research, drafting and a visit to an Academic Skills Adviser, tutor or lecturer to clarify the question.

“Try to see an Academic Skills Adviser for another perspective on the assignment before you hand it in. If you do this, you are more likely to address the requirements of the question more precisely. (Diana Garcia, MBA student, Melbourne Campus)”

When organising time for study, students may need to reflect on the optimum time of the day for them to find information, read and write at an academic level. Is the morning the best time or the evening? If the evening is the only available time, drowsiness can interfere with learning. It’s a good idea to take a break every now and then. Drowsiness can be overcome by taking a short walk, exercising or even just going out into the fresh air and taking a few deep breaths.

Finding friends or establishing a peer group are two strategies for making the most of your time at university. A good time to revise lecture notes and clarify lecture issues can be during a coffee break after the lecture. When students discuss their work with other students they can often clear up ambiguities, for example, in the meaning of a particular word or phrase used by the lecturer during a lecture. Friends can often become peer tutors, showing other students how to locate databases, showing them how to join the local municipal library or explaining time timetables. International students can improve their English language skills if they can find the time to talk to native speakers.

“For a group assignment, students need to attend meetings on time and complete agreed tasks so everyone’s time is not wasted. (Diana Garcia, MBA student, Melbourne Campus)”

Good use of time is an important factor during examination periods. Before the exam, students can find out the length of the paper, how many questions they will need to answer and what types of questions will be asked. It’s a good idea to find the exact location of the exam room well before the scheduled day. Read the exam paper carefully and estimate the time needed to answer each question and try to keep to this time. Don’t forget your watch!

Students can save time by making good use of campus services. If students find the library is confusing they can always ask a librarian for help. Academic Skills Advisers are available on all campuses to assist students in developing academic literacy, critical thinking skills and time management. Check the Academic Skills Unit website for how to contact an Adviser on your campus, and talk to an Adviser about workshops available in semester 2.

Pat Farmer, Academic Skills Adviser, Strathfield Campus
You may be aware that in Australia, marriage is no longer the foundation of the family, but parenthood is. This means that there are more and more couples who are living together but are not married. In today’s society, marriage is not necessarily a requirement for children to be the centre of the family. On the other side of the coin, more and more people are getting divorced and re-marry again later. As the breakdown of long term relationships becomes more common, the law has had to change to protect the rights of individual family members when this happens. Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) has now become a vital tool in reducing tension and solving problems. This article is going to concentrate specifically on “FDR”.

In some circumstances, FDR is compulsory, for example, when the relevant parties want to apply to the court for an order concerning their children. This has been introduced in order to encourage the concerned parties to resolve disputes about their children’s matters outside the court system. Statistically, 95% of family matters are resolved by FDR and only 5% of them by litigation.

FDR is the first step and is the alternative of litigation in our system because litigation has a negative and detrimental effect on children. FDR also serves as a tool in an attempt to save marriages. The parties to a dispute are encouraged to have their own agreements with help from a third party (if required) to avoid unnecessary expense and stress.

As mentioned earlier in one of my previous articles on domestic violence, if there is family violence which involves physical abuse or threats, it would be recommended that the victim considers a court intervention order. However, FDR is an appropriate primary dispute resolution, assuming that there is no court intervention.

There are many forms of FDR such as counseling, negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. It is really important that you consider some of these primary dispute resolutions if you are in a situation involving domestic violence and that you also take many factors into consideration including your safety and your child’s safety before deciding what course of action to take. FDR is the approach to seek a mutually acceptable outcome and where an agreement has been reached, the parties may consider formalizing it in court with a lawyer’s assistance.

Please remember that confidential counseling services, for example, are an advisable course of action if there are children involved. As you are aware, we have counselors on campus and they are accessible in the Office of Student Success. You can register and make appointments online via www.acu.edu.au/studentsuccess.

It should also be remembered that, the law is very complex and that it is important not to make things more complicated than they need to be.

If you are a victim of family violence, you should seek legal assistance immediately. You can visit the Family Relationship Centres and other services including the Family Relationship Advice Line (1800 050 321 or www.familyrelationships.gov.au). If you have any questions regarding FDR, your International Student Advisor, in particular, may assist you in seeking legal advice from a private lawyer or the Legal Aid or a Community Legal Centre. But don’t wait until the last minute!