

ESSENTIALLY PALS

The Program in American Language Studies Newsletter

<http://pals.rutgers.edu>

Session II- 2007-2008

Greetings from the Director

Dear Students,

Only a few more days to go for Session II to come to an end and we can all look forward to our well-deserved winter break!

Well, as Mary Ellen would say, "Remember, a break from classes is not a break from maintaining your F-1 status." I would add to this and say, "Remember, a break from classes is not a break from English." In fact, it's the best time to review and practice whatever you have learned during the session. How can you do this best? Here are a few tips:

- Make it a rule to read something in English everyday - newspaper, article on the net, anything. Pick up a novel to be finished during the break or you may just like to review the readings from your textbooks.
- Try and speak in English with your family and friends. It is so easy to slide into your mother tongue but remind yourself that you are here for a purpose. If you are in the dorm, come and chat with us. PALS is open after Jan 2.
- You know which particular sounds you need to work on, make a list of words starting with that sound (use the dictionary for doing that) and practice to pronounce them correctly. Review the related chapters in your phonology textbook.
- Write a small piece in your journal everyday. Do not hesitate to use the dictionary to pick the appropriate word for what you want to say.

- Try and do all your family shopping at the mall or at supermarkets. Always try to speak in complete sentences.
- Try and see at least one news telecast a day and if possible, one movie per week.

Well, before the list gets too long, let me close by wishing each one of you a very special, healthy & happy 2008. We are looking forward to seeing you again in the New Year!

Dr. Veena Kumar

From Denise's Desk

I hope everyone is having a wonderful session!
Please don't forget:



****The PALS office will be closed from 12:00pm on Friday, December 21st until Wednesday, January 2nd. If you need travel signatures or transfer forms, you MUST see Mary Ellen before the 21st!**

Session II ends on *December 18, 2007.*

The payment deadline for **Session III** is **January 8, 2008**. Please pay by this date in order to avoid being charged a late fee!

Session III begins on **Tuesday, January 22, 2008**. Returning student orientation will be in the Yorba Lounge at 11:30 am. All schedules and books will be issued at that time.

Mary Ellen's Corner



With Session II coming to an end, I'm sure we're all looking forward to a break! Remember, a break from classes does not mean a break from maintaining your F-1 status! Before winter vacation, please keep a few things in mind:

-If you are **transferring** to another school beginning in January, please make sure you have submitted all of your transfer forms to me **before** December 21, 2007. I will be transferring you shortly after that date. Be sure to contact your new school to pick up your new I-20. If you are traveling home for the break, I suggest that you pick up the I-20 from your new school **before** you leave. You will need the new I-20 to return.

-Speaking of travel, if you would like to **travel outside the US** for vacation, please bring your I-20 to me for a travel signature **before** you leave. The signature ensures that you will be returning to PALS when you return from vacation. You must pay a deposit for Session III before I can sign your I-20 (this way I'll be sure you will return to PALS). Please do not leave the US without a travel signature on your I-20! **Remember, the PALS office will be closed from December 21 until January 2!!!! I cannot sign your I-20 during that time.**

As always, if you have any questions, please stop by the PALS office to make an appointment with me.



EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

For campus status information, visit:
<http://campusstatus.rutgers.edu/>
or call 732-932-7799 for a recorded message

Holiday Fun!

By Joanna Deskiewicz



Looking for something to do this holiday break? Try taking advantage of the many holiday-themed activities offered in this area! Luckily, New York City is right next door. For those interested in theatre, you can catch a showing of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at the St. James Theatre, the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* in Radio City music hall, Charles' Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, or *The Nutcracker* at the New York State Theatre in the picturesque Lincoln Center

If you would rather go shopping or sightseeing, you can take a stroll down 5th Avenue in the evening and admire all the colorful lights and window displays. Along the way, you can stumble upon the famous Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree and browse the quaint little shops along the main concourse. Across the street is Saint Patrick's cathedral, which always attracts tourists from all over the world. Grand Central Terminal also holds its "Holiday Fair" every year, which gives visitors an opportunity to shop for unique gifts. After that, you can head up to Wollman Rink in Central Park for a true New York holiday ice skating experience. The line may be long, but it is totally worth the wait! Those who are brave can ring in the New Year and watch the ball drop in Times Square.



It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you can brag about for years to come! Don't feel like leaving New Jersey? No problem! You can scout the local malls or spend a cozy evening at the movies checking out various holiday feature films, such as *Sweeney Todd*, *I Am Legend*, *The Golden Compass*, *Atonement*, *Enchanted*, *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, *This Christmas and Fred Claus*. Whatever it is you choose to do this holiday, the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy your break to the fullest!

Varied Educational System

Ko-Wei Han

Education is the basis of a civilization, and teachers are the basis of education. An old Chinese saying goes, "A teacher's mission is to pass wisdom, teach knowledge, and solve confusion." It indicates the meaning of being a teacher in a Chinese civilization. However, different civilizations have different meanings of teaching, which makes teachers and teaching style vary. In Taiwan, the two most distinctive situations are teachers cannot be disrespected and offended, and test-taking strategy is an education necessity.



When I was a student, teaching was a noble occupation and its social position was very high. Teachers were morally authorized by parents and society to physically punish students for incomplete schoolwork and misbehavior. Therefore, students respected them, but were also afraid of them. I believe that was the reason that students were not used to asking questions or delivering opinions during the class. Asking teachers questions during the class was considered a kind of challenge, and delivering opinions would be taken as an interruption. Although I believe the situation has changed a lot nowadays, the image of "teachers are august" is still passed by generation to generation.



The Taiwanese education system is built for hundreds of exams and tests. Learning is not the main value of education. It is just a path to hundreds of exams and tests that are used to determine students' future development. Therefore, besides absorbing knowledge, students also need to know how to take an exam or test in the class. Test-taking strategy somehow becomes an important subject among all subjects. Some teachers even give extra classes for those students who do not know the strategy very well. It may be ridiculous, but it is a necessity under this kind of education system.

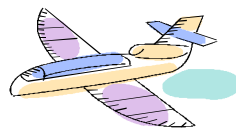
In conclusion, even though Taiwanese education has been used for a long time, it is being "Americanized" little by little. Today, teachers welcome questions from students and even encourage students to express their own opinions. Also, instead of only using exams and tests as the standard to evaluate students, most schools take applications as well. Therefore, maybe all the educational systems have the same purpose, but they still vary from time to time, and one civilization to another.

My Experience in Germany

Paula Bernal

When I was 5 years old I was in a German school in Cali-Colombia. In 10th grade, the students always traveled to Germany to improve the language and to learn important things about the culture and customs.

In March 2003, I lived with a German family for 5 months. The experience was just amazing because of the lovely family I had, my friends at school and of course, because of my boyfriend during that time. Each of those aspects made my trip a great and unforgettable experience that changed my life and way of thinking.



When I traveled to Germany I was 15 years old, and it was the first time that I traveled alone for such a long time. At the beginning, it was a little bit difficult because I missed my family and my country, but to be there alone with another family made me become a maturer person; I lived with a totally different culture.

In Germany, I found the love of my life. It is hard to believe but I was so in love with a German man named Florian Wachsmann. He was my first boyfriend and real love. I will never forget the moments that we shared together. When I had to go back to Colombia it was very difficult and sad, but we were together until 2005, and in 2004 he

visited me in Colombia. Also, to the moment we still have contact through e-mail, computer and the telephone. Maybe he will visit me in Colombia next year, we will see.

To go to another school with different friends that speak another language was very interesting. Everyone was very nice and helpful to me, and it was not so difficult to get used to their life style celebrating important events that in my country we don't celebrate like Easter, using the bicycle every morning not matter if it was 30 degrees, and learning to be very independent and to make important decisions by myself.

If anybody asks me about an event that changed my life, the first thing I think of is my trip to Germany. Such an experience makes one a better person who can live in a community with other customs and learn the best things from a country and a culture. I love Germany, my family, and friends that I left there, but they are still in my heart and will stay there forever.

Cultural Event

Yayoi Jimbo

Today was a Cultural Event day at PALS. I don't really like joining a play. However, today we had to play at the event. Whenever I have to say or play in front of many (even a few) people, I feel so nervous and my face turns red. I really hate this habit, but



it never changes. My part was really short, so it wasn't so difficult to remember. But if I'm nervous it's a different story. Even I remember everything, I forget all the things that I remember when I stand in front of many people. Today, I had to say words in English, and not Japanese. However, every one of my classmates is so kind and warm, so I didn't feel really nervous.

Anyway, I appreciate the play was done. When people play, sometimes we can find new character or talents in the people that we have never know. It's interesting. I found one person's new character today. I had through that he is kind of shy and not so talkative, but I knew he is such a witty person. If I didn't join the play, I may have never known that.

My Country

Duyen Vu



Although almost all things in the US are better than my hometown, I still miss my country a lot. I even miss the environment with air pollution, traffic jam and noisy all day. In my city, anytime you go out, you'll see a lot of people, people there have nothing to do and just go around all time. In here, New Brunswick, everything seems quiet, it's very different from my country. I realize that I like to live in places which are crowded more than in quiet places. However, in New Brunswick, I can see the squirrels jump in the road. I haven't ever seen it before in my city, that thing is so lovely.

The most important reason why I miss my country a lot is that my family lives there. This is the first time I've left my family for a long time. I miss the foods which my mother usually cooked for me. I miss the time that I spent with my parents every morning. We were go jogging, have a breakfast...together. And I miss my pets, two dogs and one cat. They annoyed me all the time but they were very cute. I hope I can go back my country in this summer; I'll try my best for that thing.



