

A recap of Thanksgiving, plus Christmas cheers, make this issue the Holiday Special Edition!

Christmas in Vietnam

Christmas in Vietnam is very similar to the western world. Although Vietnam is predominantly Buddhist, during and after the French rule, many became Christians. Now, Christmas is a significant part in Vietnamese culture to Christians and Catholics. The Christians in Vietnam attend a Midnight mass on Christmas Eve and return home to a sumptuous Christmas dinner. The Christmas dinner usually consists of chicken soup while wealthier people eat turkey and Christmas pudding.

On Christmas Eve, Vietnamese people in Hanoi and Saigon, especially young people, go into the city center, where there is a Catholic Cathedral. The streets are crowded with people on Christmas Eve, and cars are not allowed in the city center. Cafes and restaurants in the area are open for people to enjoy a snack. People also like to wander around, enjoy the street lights and decorations in department stores and grand hotels.

Many Catholic churches have a big nativity crib scene or 'creche' with nearly life size statues of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the shepherds and animals. In some areas of Saigon, usually in Catholic parishes, people have large crib scenes in front of their houses and decorate the whole street, turning it into a Christmas area. These are some attractions that people like to see.

Also like in France, the special Christmas Eve meal is called 'reveillon' and has a 'Bûche de Noël' (a chocolate cake in the shape of a log) for dessert. Vietnamese people like to give presents of food at Christmas. A Bûche de Noël is a popular gift.

On Christmas Eve, children hang up their stockings and leave their shoes out to be filled by Santa Claus. If you have the time, make a trip to Vietnam for Christmas. You'd be surprised by the holiday cheers.

Chúc Mừng Giáng Sinh!



Best Female Actor Award Goes to Twelve-year-old



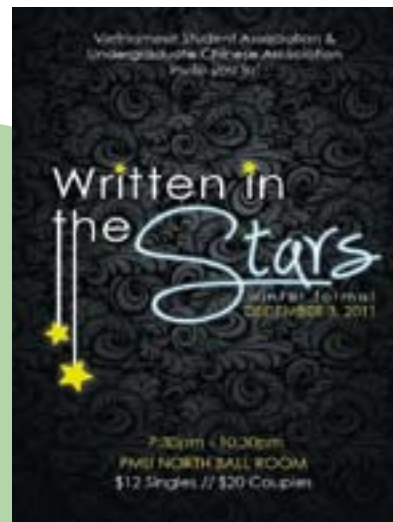
The 8th International Asia Africa Film Festival took place on December 14th at Dubai. From Thanh Nien News, Phung Hoa Hoai Linh, a twelve-year-old Vietnamese actress, won the Best Female Actor award during the ceremonial event for her role in the film Tam Hon Me (Mamy's Soul), which was directed by Pham Nhue Giang. To win the Best Female Actor award at a film festival is quite a feat, but to win the award at the age of 12 makes the accomplishment even greater. Hopefully Linh will continue to achieve great goals and further her acting career as she grows up. The previously mentioned film was based on the story of the same name by renowned writer Nguyen Huy Thiep. The overall story of the film is about the life of a mother and her daughter, played by Linh, who live on a small island on the Hong River. The Best Female Actor award has only been won by two Vietnamese actresses, with actress Hong Anh being the first in 2008 and Linh the second. Quite ironically, the mother of Linh's character within the film was played by Hong Anh.

Local News: Purdue USA's annual Winter Formal

This year, Purdue Vietnamese Student Association hosts its annual winter formal on Saturday, December 3rd along with the Purdue Undergraduate Chinese Association (UCA) as a co-host. Themed as "Written in the Stars," the annual winter formal had a successful turnout due to a strong foundation of dedicated people working together, and a good amount of attendees.

There was a variety of formal attire present, from the men sharply dressed in full suits to the women dressed in elegant dresses. Performances included slam poetry and rapping from University of Wisconsin-Madison's John Vietnam and the President of Purdue UCA, Bobby Chen. Attendees enjoyed an intense game of musical chairs both as spectators and those who participated. On top of everything, desserts and beverages were served, which included a chocolate foundation and fruit punch to lemonade.

The winter formal was wrapped up with a little bit of dancing and a raffle towards the end, where winners won prizes which included discounts and deals to local restaurants and stores. Finally, the night was capped off with the winter formal's official after-set hosted at the Pre Lounge in downtown Lafayette, themed as "Dancing in the Dark."



Spotlight: Iowa USA



"The University of Iowa Vietnamese Student Association was first established in 1983 at the University of Iowa. Iowa VSA strives to promote and inspire awareness of Vietnamese culture throughout the campus and the community. Our group of diverse members work together to organize social and cultural events that provide educational insight into the Vietnamese heritage. Besides regular meetings and bonding events, such as pho nights, camping trips, and a spring RAVE; Iowa VSA hosts highly anticipated, large-scale events including Tet Trung Thu, the Iowa VSA Basketball Tournament, which draws teams all over the Midwest; and our Tet Lunar New Year. Last year, our Tet attracted at least 700 people and continues to unite not only Vietnamese-American families and communities, but all Asians within the state of Iowa. In addition to preserving Vietnamese culture, the goals of our organization also encourage and promote leadership, development, team building, and individual growth. VSA collaborates and interacts with many other multicultural organizations at the University of Iowa and other colleges in Iowa and has been a valuable friend to many growing student organizations. Our group of "Very Sexy Asians" continues to grow today, and as we say at Iowa, "VSA All Day, Everyday!"

USA Iowa's Tet



USAM Tet Show



Madison By Night

The stage was set, lights were dimmed, and the theater was packed. The emcees waited for their cue. Finally, the audience settled in their seats, and voices grew quiet. The spotlight hit the stage, and the emcees walked out to introduce one of the best shows of the semester!

On Friday December 2nd, UW-Madison VSA hosted their 5th annual Culture Night. The night was filled with singing, dancing, and acting.

The first traditional skit was about the legendary star fruit for gold. It centered around two brothers, the older brother who is rich and evil, and the younger brother who is poor but genuine. In the end, with the help of a raven and the star fruit tree, the younger brother became richer, and the greedy older brother fell to his death. The second traditional skit that was performed was about how Banh Trung came along. Many of the older generations such as our parents and grandparents are familiar with these stories. UW-Madison VSA brought these folktales back to life.

The traditional dance that five beautiful ladies performed to was exhilarating. The song was called "Em Trong Mat Toi" which means "you in my eyes" is about the beauty of the traditional Ao Dai that girls wear. The song explains that a woman is most beautiful when she is wearing an Ao Dai, and these ladies did a great job portraying that.

The night went on with a more modern feel, with a modern skit focusing on the Asian American identity, a performance by the modern dance group, and performances from local artists. The night ended with the traditional fashion show that displayed all of the girls in beautiful Ao Dais. If you missed the show, make sure you get a hold of the DVD!



Ways To Succeed For The Upcoming Semester

Study Tips

To determine how many hours you need to study each week to get A's, use the following rule of thumb:

- Study two hours per hour in class for an easy class
- Study three hours per hour in class for an average class
- Study four hours per hour in class for a difficult class

Stress Reduction

According to Gary Grant, a writer for www.academictips.org,

"As classes become more demanding, you need to consider ways to reduce stress. There are certainly a few things not to do, such as procrastinate. If you have a project or paper assigned early in the semester, get started on it right away. In order to do your best job, you need to spend a lot of time on it. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Also, don't work long hours without rest. Ideally, you should sleep seven to eight hours daily to function properly. One activity that reduces stress is exercise. Whether it be jogging, bicycling, basketball, racquetball, swimming, or a daily walk, make sure you make time to exercise. Remember, to help reduce stress, don't procrastinate, get plenty of rest, and exercise regularly."

Reaching Out Can Make a Difference

According to Tacie Thomas, a writer for www.academictips.org,

"Did you know that college students are considered one of the most depressed and lonely groups when compared to the general population? I know this not only through my studies, but also through personal experiences. Often students try to deal with these problems with parties and drinking. My tip is an exception to that rule. Instead, look to friends, professors, religion, or anything that will have personal meaning to you. The more real time you spend with meaningful people and activities, the more alive you will feel. There are so many worthwhile activities and people at your university just waiting for you to discover them. You will be surprised how many people are looking for the same type of interaction you need. On a campus with thousands of people, if you reach out often enough you will find friends and maybe even a few soul-mates. I know this, because I have."

Last Minute Preparation

According to Judy Reynolds, a writer for academictips.org,

"If you've dug an academic hole for yourself, don't panic. Although, little except prayers and luck can help students who never go to class or crack a book all semester, there's one helpful technique for students who have fallen behind at mid-terms and finals. CRAM. First, pick the most important subjects from your material. Don't try to lightly know everything. Spend 25 percent of your time cramming and 75% drilling yourself. The key to cramming is memorization. Recite. Repeat. Then relax. Although cramming can't replace learning, it's counter-productive to scold yourself for not studying more effectively.

Người con gái Việt, mặt chiếc áo dài

Featured Recipe

Bûche de Noël

Total time: 1 Hr 30 Min

Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 6 egg whites
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- confectioners' sugar for dusting



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Line a 10x15 inch jellyroll pan with parchment paper. In a large bowl, whip cream, 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, 1/2 cup cocoa, and 1 teaspoon vanilla until thick and stiff. Refrigerate.
2. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat egg yolks with 1/2 cup sugar until thick and pale. Blend in 1/3 cup cocoa, 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla, and salt. In large glass bowl, using clean beaters, whip egg whites to soft peaks. Gradually add 1/4 cup sugar, and beat until whites form stiff peaks. Immediately fold the yolk mixture into the whites. Spread the batter evenly into the prepared pan.
3. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the cake springs back when lightly touched. Dust a clean dishtowel with confectioners' sugar. Run a knife around the edge of the pan, and turn the warm cake out onto the towel. Remove and discard parchment paper. Starting at the short edge of the cake, roll the cake up with the towel. Cool for 30 minutes.
4. Unroll the cake, and spread the filling to within 1 inch of the edge. Roll the cake up with the filling inside. Place seam side down onto a serving plate, and refrigerate until serving. Dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

Recipe available at: www.Allrecipes.com

Thanksgiving

Big Buys at Best Buy on Black Friday

Black Friday shoppers camp out in front of many Best Buy store as each person tries to snatch the exclusive TV deal. Doorbuster deals on LCD TVs at Best Buy made some shoppers miss their Thanksgiving dinner. The biggest sale was the \$199.99 sale for the 42-inch Sharp LCD TV. Across the country, people are camping out, even before Thanksgiving Day and as early as a week before Black Friday!



How do you spend your Thanksgiving?

As a child growing up in the small, Indiana town of Kokomo I never really got the chance to be around my family much or hang with people that were Asian, much less Vietnamese. That's why I always looked forward to the holidays, or more specifically Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was that one time every year where my entire family across the Midwest would come together at mine or a relative's house and just be able to enjoy each other's company. My mom, aunts, and grandma would always cook up some of the greatest American and Vietnamese dishes and my uncles would all help watch the kids together while talking about happenings within their own families. After dinner the adults would gather together in the living room to talk while me, my brother, and my cousins would go off and spend the rest of the evening either playing football, board games, or video games. Coming to college and being involved with Purdue's AAA I've been able to add one more tradition to my customary Thanksgiving festivities. All the officers and members prior to leaving school for break would get together at a dining court to pig out on turkey and just unwind for hours, talking, joking, and just plain kicking it. In sum, yeah, those would be my most enjoyable thanksgiving holiday traditions.

Name: John Nguyen

State: Indiana

College: Purdue University

Major: Hospitality, Tourism, and Management

Get ready for the **10th annual Vietnamese Interacting as One Conference** hosted at the University of Cincinnati from March 16-18! This year, we present you with the most honorable speakers and workshop presenters. Registration will be up soon!

If you want to get involved with conference planning, you still have time! **Applications for VIA-1 staff is extended until January 5th at 11:59pm EST.** TURN IN THOSE APPS! They can be found at www.uvsamidwest.org.



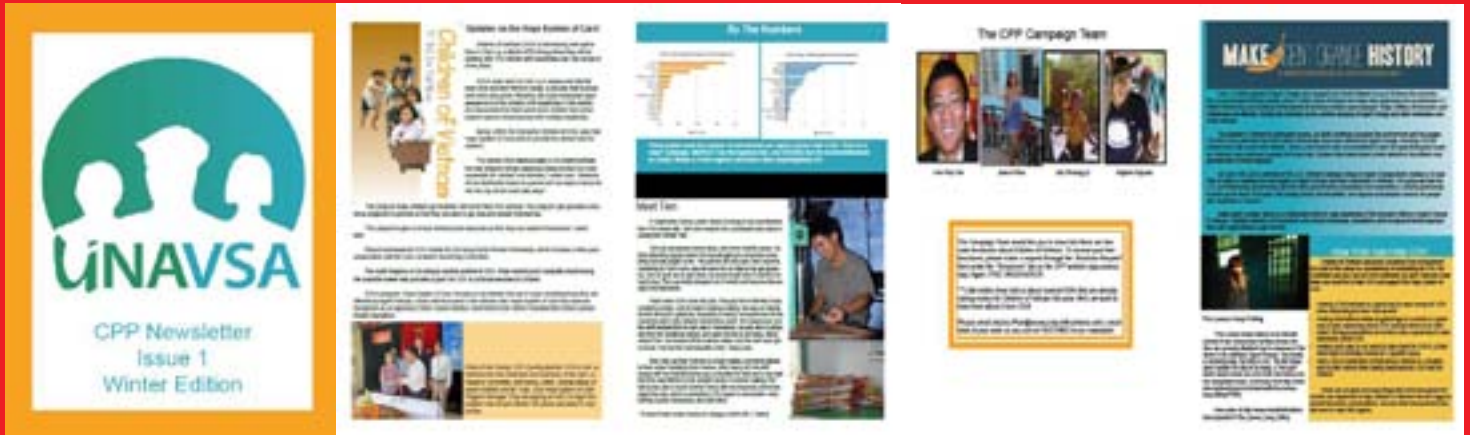
We are proud to bring the 9th annual UNAVSA Conference to the Midwest!

The Union of North American Vietnamese Student Associations (UNAVSA) is proud to announce the 9th Annual Leadership Conference, which will take place July 26 – July 29, 2012 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, one of the nation's most vibrant and diverse metropolitan communities.

Each year, the conference staff works diligently to create an event that will serve as a catalyst to motivate and inspire North American Vietnamese youths. Throughout the conference, participants expand their leadership capacity in order to make a direct change in their community. UNAVSA's goals are to unite Vietnamese Student Associations across the nation and to partner with other major Asian American organizations to build a stronger voice in the APIA community



CPP Campaign Updates



The CPP Campaign Team has released the quarterly newsletter where you can find information and updates about CPP, UNAVSA, Children of Vietnam, latest news and special, personal stories about staff and beneficiaries of Children of Vietnam.

Details and information about how to send in your funds to CPP will also be provided, along with free brochures and resources for your VSA.

Everything is made available at cpp.unavsa.org.

Be sure to check out the website for upcoming campaign initiatives to support Children of Vietnam!

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Please email us at news@uvsamidwest.org.



Best Coast?
No Coast!
Midwest!