

La Gazette / La Gaceta



Languages and International Studies Newsletter

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Greetings from the Director

It is with great excitement that I greet you at this time because our department has experienced new developments that have enriched our curriculum. First and foremost, our French major and our Spanish major were reinstated at the beginning of 2004 and several students have already joined one of the majors while others have chosen to do a double major. Many International Studies majors are also choosing to add a language major to their program. So, the department is growing by leaps and bounds! We recently had the meeting of majors that we hold every year and the room was too small, although it was a fairly large room! I was almost happy that some majors chose not to attend!

We welcomed back three of our International Studies majors who studied in France last year; I was amazed at the improvement in their spoken skills. This shows how the experience has changed them, how the contact with another culture has brought a change in their attitude overall. They all loved the experience and recommend it to every student; we have several students who are getting ready to study abroad either next semester or next year.

We are lucky to be in a university where International Studies plays a very important role: we have become an NGO of the United Nations; the ambassador to the UN from Sweden, Piere Schori, is a visiting professor this year in the department of Political Science; our

“Ambassador Series” (see last page) is continuing to present very interesting speakers thanks to the efforts of Dr. Axelrod and Dr. Laatikainen of Political Science; the number of lectures officially sponsored by the university brings very well-known speakers to the campus. All the activities provide “real world” experiences for our students. “Le Cerle français” and “Global Impact” have also presented interesting programs and I want to thank the students who made this enrichment of our programs possible.

This issue of “La Gazette/La Gaceta” is devoted to our international students who are a vital part of our program and who bring so much variety to it; several of them have written articles to introduce you to some aspects of their country and culture. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Our faculty members have been very busy as you will see in our next issue in the Spring.

Although it has been a very good year for our department, I must end on a somewhat sad note: after being in Harvey Hall for over 45 years, we moved to the Science Building. We miss our friends in the Humanities who are still in Harvey but we are getting to know our colleagues in Science a little better. So, if you want to see us, look for us in 216C.



Initiation and Award Ceremony of
Pi Delta Phi (French Honor Society) Sigma
Delta Pi (Spanish Honor Society)
Spring 2004
Front Row: Agnes Glaz, Ewa Sobczynska
Back Row: Dr. Carbo, Dr. Amador,
Dr. Touya, Prof. Vazquez



Pi Delta Phi
from left to right:
Prof. Vazquez, Ewa Sobczynska,
Dr. Touya



Front Row: Dr. Carbo, Agnes Glaz,
Dr. Amador

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

A Note from Agnes Glaz

Why do I study español? I do not know. I have always had this inexplicable pasión for learning the lenguaje and I am still seeking the precise answer to my question. Maybe it's because my best friend is a puertorriqueña. Maybe it was my 6th grade maestro who inspired me with his stories of the Man of la Mancha: Señor Don Quixote. It might be that the Spanish cultura is a bit similar to the Polish: la familia and the Catholic Church are both intrinsically important. Either way, español is extremely important to know today, especialmente en Nueva York, and learning Spanish will only reap tremendous beneficios to those that will take that challenge. So although I can't explique porque I study español, I know that embracing the Hispanic culture has brought me closer to mine. It helps me better comprender why things are the way they are, and why people think the way they think. And it may well be, that if we opened our hearts, and allowed ourselves to embrace another cultura, we would grasp a better understanding of not only the world, but also a clearer picture of quién y lo que somos en this world of más than seis billion.

Life as a Muslim and aMalien Belco Bocoum

Born in Mali and raised in Ghana, I came to the US at the age of thirteen. I don't really have a good recollection of my life in Mali because I didn't grow up there, except for when I took a vacation there about three two years ago. My life in Ghana was good except when I went

to live with my uncle and his wife in Nigeria when I was seven. They say that a child never forgets the wrong that is done to them, well that is definitely true because to this day I dislike my uncle's wife for the way that she treated me.

Though I did not grow up in Mali, I feel like I did because that is the way I live my life and I speak the language of Fulah that they speak there so fluently. The Malien life for women is a difficult task due to the fact that women are seen as inferior to men and therefore have no say in anything except maybe in household chores. In my Malien tribe, (I have no clue to its name), when a female is born a match or husband is made for her. Some women can be lucky when their husband is only about five to ten years older than her, but some women are not so lucky because their husband can be more than ten years older. A woman is expected to go into marriage a virgin or else she would be shaming her family. Women in Mali are also not allowed the opportunity of education like I have been. Women in Mali are trained since they are born in how to behave in their husband's home and the tasks that will be their responsibility.

Since the majority of Maliens are Muslims, the men are allowed to marry up to five wives. As upsetting as this may be to a wife, she is expected to accept it and welcome her husband's other wives, and they are to act as sisters towards each other. In some marriages a man will not take several wives either because he doesn't want the burden that will surely befall his family due to the many disputes that will occur between his wives, or simply because he prefers one woman. The world has evolved, and yet few Malien men believe in marrying for love and staying with only one wife. It's unfortunate that my father couldn't

be one of the few men who stick with only one woman; he is now on his fourth marriage. But in my father's case he divorced each wife before moving on to the next, except my mother because she is his first wife and he actually does love her.

I have been the lucky female in my family because my mother and father have been in this country for over 20 yrs and therefore wanted me to first attend high school and college before getting married. My parents have also blessed me with the opportunity to choose when I want to get married and to whom. However, the latter was just my imagination since it has been brought to my attention that a husband has been chosen for me, the good part is that I get to decide whether he is the man I would like to marry. This decision is not so easy because my mother has made it her duty to try to enforce the decision of marrying this man because my family including myself would benefit greatly from this union. In my religion and tradition a woman is expected to respect and obey her parents' every word.

In Mali the action that most upsets me towards the treatment of women is female circumcision. Mostly all women in Mali are circumcised, depending on the strictness of tribes. Women are circumcised because it is believed that, to add to their inferiority, their duty is simply to please their husband in life and in bed. Circumcision is believed to prevent the woman from cheating on her husband since female circumcision gives a woman no pleasure in the act of sex, meaning that only the male would feel the pleasure from it and not her. After circumcision, the female won't feel any pleasure; therefore she won't be inclined to cheat on her husband, because what is the point? All she can do is have babies,

and please her husband whenever he wants even if she is not in the mood. This is also another reason why I am so happy that I am in America, where I have my own mind and act as I please and not how I am expected. However, this is the life of my older sister since she grew up in Africa and married in Africa.

A woman owes her parents obedience and respect no matter what the parent does to upset or hurt her. That is the same situation I am faced with, to marry this man because my mother believes he will bring the family happiness and forget the fact that I might not be happy with this man. How can I make such a decision when I do not like this man, but then again how can I say no and disappoint my mother including my elders? How can you bring me to America for a better life and education but give me a man for a husband who you believe is right for me when the point of education is to educate yourself and try to not fall on the path that those before you have. If I make this decision to marry this man who is to say that he will not have multiple wives like my father has done, causing my mother so much pain in the process. Why would you want your daughter to fall in your footsteps when you've educated her in not making the same mistakes you have? These are the few questions that run through my head every day and night.

Regardless of all the problems I might have facing my mother and responsibilities expected of me, I am ever more grateful because I am attending college and have goals and ambitions. I had the advantage over my elder sister because I went to school and though it may not seem like it, I have a better life. Education is the key to all problems. My mother told me that

education is your #1 husband. With it no man can belittle you or destroy your life because with education you are your own boss. With an education I can become whomever I want and marry when I choose. If my husband decides to cheat I can kick his behind out of my house or simply buy my own house and live in it. With an education no man can hurt me, which is exactly what I plan to do, finish school and become my own boss.

Carnival in the Dominican Republic By: Dannerys Valerio

The home country of "el Merengue" is the Dominican Republic which is an island situated in the Caribbean on the island of Hispaniola. Christopher Columbus discovered this country during his first voyage to the new world in the year 1492; according to him "this is the most beautiful, most prosperous, and harmonic place on the earth." If you have visited or lived in the country then you are able to easily agree with this observation.

The capital of the Dominican Republic is Santo Domingo and it is an interesting city from many perspectives, mainly because it is the oldest city in the New World and American civilization's cradle. Today the Dominican Republic still maintains a lot of its charm with warm and friendly people who live with and for its music, el Merengue.

The carnival is celebrated in all cities throughout the Dominican Republic and different towns and villages have their own traditions and dates for the celebrations. In Santo Domingo the carnival reaches its peak by the end of February or the beginning

of March each year. For a few intense days the people dress up according to tradition, usually as demons and devils. Each village has a different type of mask designed to represent its uniqueness to their town. The devils in Santiago are called "Lechones". They are the local conception of zoomorphic creatures that appear wherever pre-Lent pagan celebrations occur.

The paper mache mask making-tradition probably came with Spanish colonizers centuries ago. In Santiago, in particular, the carnival tradition dates back to the 1800's when Dominicans started to assume their own identity as a nation. There are two basic types of devil masks: La joya, that feature thorny horns around the main horns; and Los Pepines masks that appear with smooth horns and a wider beak or snout. They represent two competing neighborhoods that at one time used to stage mock fights at which the devils cracked whips to assure bystanders of their ferocity.

Many participate in disguises as they assume the identity of different traditional popular carnival characters: "Chicken thief", "Bear man", "Beggar woman", are some of the most popular ones. The central protagonist, however, is The Devil. "Lechones", "Diablos", "Toros", or "Cachuas", all represent The Evil One.

Overall the Dominican people are cheerful and pulsate with the beat of the national music or as the carnival music says: "baila en la calle de dia, baila en la calle de noche..." (dancing in the streets days and nights). Each and every person who listens to el Merengue will automatically be affected; with the beats of the drums, the guira, and the accordion, who can stay still? During the

carnival "el Malecon" (the seaside), the country turns into the world's largest discotheque with huge trucks slowly passing through the streets with loud music and dancing people. And to top it all off to cool down people give praise to the national beer "Presidente", especially during those hot carnival days!

Cuba **by Shadine Alveranga**

The reason that I decided to study Spanish is mostly due to my cultural background. I was born in Jamaica. But my heritage stems from the Spanish speaking countries. My father side of the family is Cuban. My grandfather now passed was a ship worker during the 1940's. He was a Cuban ship worker who would travel around often, Jamaica...being one of his many stops. I guess, for good reason, because that is how he met my grandmother. Well, we all know what happens when a passionate Cuban meets a spicy Jamaican. Love...marriage...and then seven kids...my father being one of them. My grandmother wasn't the first wife for my grandfather, he had been married before.

Sadly, my grandfather died before my father was born...my father was the last one born.

But, it didn't just end there...because even as all that time passed, stories about my grandfather were passed down. It was as if he never died. Growing up in Jamaica, I knew even as a kid that I had very strong cultural ties. I was taught that I wasn't just the typical Jamaican as you may say...I came from something bigger than that. I was taught to embrace both the culture of Jamaica and the culture of Cuba. I remember

growing as a child listening to my aunts and uncles...and grandma of course talk about my grandfather, and how big our family was...and sadly, the family that I would never know...because of the political situation in Cuba. I remember that politics was a big conversation piece when the family gathered...I would always here my mother say...Castro this...Castro that...

I had an uncle who was considered to be the smart one in the family...He was a school teacher, and he was chosen to become a part of a program they had in those days. It was kind of like an exchange program, where he went to Cuba for a year...to teach Spanish. Imagine a Jamaican, whose language is considered broken down English or Patois going to Cuba to teach the Spanish, Spanish. That story is classic at family get togethers. In that time; this is around the 1960's and 1970's, there was a lot of political drama, both in Cuba and in Jamaica. I remember my mother saying that she was so worried for my uncle, and that the family even tried to talk him out of going...because they feared that he might not make it back. My mother says, that Castro had a hard hand back in those days. For many that went to Cuba, it was hard for them to get out.

Thankfully, my uncle did his year of teaching and made it out safely. Moreover, he had even met Castro. We have a picture of them together, my uncle and Fidel Castro. "WOW".

At the age of eight, I relocated from Jamaica and moved to New York. My father had already been here for years, but it took a while for him to bring my mother along with my other siblings...Immigration is no joke. I learnt that at my young age. At this time most of my family, especially on my father's side

had relocated to England, Canada, and Florida. But they still never lost sight of their culture. I however, unintentionally lost that part of myself somewhat... I quickly lost my accent, and some of the language, I became what many immigrants from other countries would call "Americanized". My family even says that about me, and my other siblings...including the cousins I have that were either born here or grew up here. As children my aunts would encourage us to learn Spanish...mostly because it was a part of our culture. But as time went on...it diminished. I took up Spanish in junior high, it was required and plus you only learned the basics, in high school the same thing...but a little bit harder. In college I continued to learn and wanted to study Spanish, it wasn't just a subject to me anymore...it was a part of who I am. It took me a while to learn that, but hey...I am young. I have always been identified by my last name...when teachers saw it they immediately thought I spoke Spanish. I realized that learning how to speak and write properly in Spanish wasn't just a required credit, it was a way for me to hold on to a part of my culture, because language is part of a culture.

Guatemala by Kaity Velez

Many people would be surprised to know that Guatemala is known as the *Land of Eternal Spring*. The country has only two seasons, the dry and wet season. The dry season is from mid August thru April and the wet season is from May thru mid August. Guatemala is beautiful as it enjoys beautiful geography and culture.

Guatemala is located in Central America just below Mexico and borders El Salvador and Honduras. Some of the most visited cities in this country are Antigua, Chichicastenango, Flores, Tikal, Guatemala city, and Panajachel. This multicultural nation is one of the most diversified societies in Latin America. 60% of the population speaks Spanish and the other 40% speak Amerindian. There are 23 officially recognized Amerindian languages, which have a Mayan root. English is also becoming a tool of communication in Guatemala. Guatemalans are also known for their hospitality.

Guatemalan food is also amazing. A lot of rice, beans, and meat and not only does it taste good, but in Guatemala one can buy a meal for \$2 and eat almost for free at the fruit markets. Another great thing about the food is it is fresh; it does not contain all the preservatives that we find in our food here in America.

All the wonderful plains, mountains, lakes, and volcanoes in Guatemala should be seen by all. It is a spiritual and peaceful place that is loved by residents and tourists.

Passion for Spain
by Joan Drabczyk

Folkloric flamenco dancing, heroic and traditional corrida de torros, *deliciosa* paella, fascinating beaches and islands, rich culture, a past full of explorers, strong minded people, creative artists, lively music all come to mind when I think of España!

Looking out the window while flying over Spanish soil makes my heart stop with amazement of the breathtaking landscape below me. Having only been there three times, my feelings for Spain and inspiration to learn more about Spain become stronger every time.

Who knew that this Polish-American girl from a strong Polish background would be so fascinated by Spain? No one knew. I discovered the Spanish culture on my own. Studying the language in school was just the beginning, but as a dancer my interests for Spanish music and art sparked my passion for Spain and the rest grew from there.

As a young girl, my parents involved me in many Polish activities: Polish school, Polish mass, Polish Day Parade, Polish folk dancing, Polish shows, Polish food: kielbasa, pierogi, etc., Miss Polonia Pageants, and traveling to Poland for every occasion.

This fortunate experience of learning the Polish culture while growing up as an American-born young girl, helps me to understand my love for Spain. As Poland is rich in culture, language, history, art, science, dance, and music, so is Spain.

My equal love for Spain and Poland will continue and become stronger. My family's culture will be enriched with Spanish influence. Trips to Spain will never cease but become

longer. Dance studio times will be spent perfecting Spanish dances, and the lively rhythm of Spanish music will never stop filling my home. ¡Viva España!

Peru
by Vanessa Zavaleta

I am very proud of my ethnic background. My parents are both immigrants from Peru, and they have struggled greatly to come to the United States and raise my brother and me here. Although I have the privilege of growing up in the US and having more benefits than my parents did when they were young, my heritage has allowed me to experience things unique to my culture. I love to see my friends try, for the first time, some of the Peruvian dishes my family makes; I like being the source of new experiences they encounter. I am also lucky enough to have the general understanding of two languages; English and Spanish. Although my Spanish could use much more improvement, it is easy for me to learn new things in the language and practice them on my family members. I also have the wonderful opportunity to visit my parent's homeland. I have been making repeat trips back to Peru ever since I was a baby, and I always enjoy myself there. When we go to visit my relatives, we stay with them at their house; it is very different from being a tourist who stays closed up in a hotel and only views the culture through binoculars. I am able to participate directly in neighborhood events, such as the Peruvian independence day celebrations (lots of dancing, lots of food, and lots of fireworks!). It is a truly wonderful thing to be able to experience Peruvian

culture first hand, and sometimes I feel so much like I am at home that, when I return to the US, I forget myself and wonder why all the street signs are in English! I am extremely lucky to be a part of two different cultures, and for this I am grateful for both my heritage and for the sacrifices my parents made to rear us in the United States.

Le VIH\ SIDA EN HAÏTI by Gertha Sougrain

Le VIH\ SIDA reste l'un des fléaux qui continuent de semer le deuil dans les familles des pays en voie de développement. Haïti, le seul pays en voie de développement de l'Amérique n'échappe pas à ce grand mal. Il s'y trouve au centre même du problème.

La population d'Haïti, environ 6.000.000 d'habitants est également confrontée au sida. La jeunesse haïtienne surtout, les élèves du secondaire, les surnagées de l'école fondamentale, les étudiants (etc.) représente la couche la plus touchée. Plusieurs raisons peuvent expliquer pourquoi : 1) Dans le pays on a un nombre très réduit de médecins donc, on peut comprendre la situation de la santé. 2) Le manque d'infrastructures sanitaires pour des raisons économiques fait qu'il n'existe pas de recherches scientifiques. Ainsi la jeunesse se trouvant livrée à elle-même, se jette dans la prostitution, la drogue, l'alcool pour survivre. Et le plus souvent on a beaucoup de grossesses précoces.

Tout ceci, malgré les avantages réalisés par les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) et les gouvernements qui se sont succédés dans le pays. Ce pays qui célébrait ses 200 ans d'indépendance, se trouve

toujours exposé à cette infection. Quand est-ce que Haïti sortira de ce borbier ? Pour répondre à cette question, en dehors des considérations précédentes, les acteurs intervenant dans la définition des politiques doivent aborder le problème de manière uniforme. Car chaque zone, rurale ou urbaine, possède ses propres caractéristiques. Les croyances culturelles doivent également être prises en considération.

En somme, les jeunes sidéens fréquemment dans les villes comme Port-au-Prince, le Cap, Jacmel sont voués à eux-mêmes. Le plus souvent, ils meurent très tôt par dépression une fois qu'ils apprennent qu'ils sont atteints par le germe. Ils sont humiliés non seulement par leur famille mais également par leurs camarades.

Peut-être un jour, les réalités sociales, économiques et géographiques dans lesquelles évoluent les jeunes Haïtiens seront prises en compte.

Zouk by Sophia Schutt

In the seas of the Caribbean there are two small islands where Zouk is always present in the buses, in the stores and, of course, in the Saturday night dance clubs. In the neighboring islands, Spanish and English are the main languages, but in these two particular islands people speak French and Creole (a mix of French with some African influence that the slaves invented in order to communicate). These two islands are: Guadeloupe and Martinique, The French Caribbean islands.

“Zouk” means “party” in Creole. Zouk truly draws its power from the rich musical heritage of Africa and the Caribbean. Its hot, sizzling brass and light beat can also be heard from

Dominica and Haiti, with driving tempos thrown in from Paris, Zaire, Antigua, Trinidad, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The most striking elements in Zouk musical mixtures are the basic African instruments. These come from a traditional drum and vocal music called Gwo ka, performed in the hills of Guadeloupe at festival times. They consist of local wood in a West African design and a Gwa ka unit that consists of up to ten drums.

Taste in Zouk styles differ slightly between the two Antilles Islands. Martinique has a strong preference for the romantic “Zouk style, while Guadeloupe also enjoys the harder, percussive “zouk béton” or “chire” style (sizzling brass beats).

Today Zouk is becoming better known as many visit the Caribbean. Don't be the last to hear this new wave of Antillean Beat! Go to your nearest record store immediately and tell them that you want to “ZOUK” (PARTY)!

Bunny Hopping in Hungary by Stephanie Szitanyi

Ahh, Hungary. The country of amazing goulash and plethora of paprika. A land of historic landmarks and lion statues missing tongues...hmm, you wouldn't know about that would you? I guess it's a Hungarian inside joke. But regardless of all that Hungary holds, in my heart, it mostly holds weird...I mean WEIRD Easter Day traditions that I don't think I'll ever be able to get used to, no matter how many Hungarian relatives I have, or how many years I've lived there.

So I get off the plane and unlike in NY, the sun is shining way too bright and all the tulips have bloomed. It is absolutely obvious that it's the weekend of Easter Sunday as a stewardess dressed

as an Easter bunny directs me off the plane (I'm shocked that the Customs Officers weren't dressed in costumes). Regardless, I continue my exit, meet the family, kisses, presents, blah blah blah, and I can't help but notice that all my cousins, aunts and uncles, are wearing shorts and summer skirts, while I'm wearing jeans, a turtle-neck shirt and a blazer. I look up to the monitor in the terminal only to read that it's 30° F's. Hey don't judge. It gets cold on the plane.

Forgetting the hours of jet lag that linger in my body, I wake up with the family the next day at what seems like the crack of dawn to go to Easter Sunday service, then it's back to the house to cook, paint and decorate the house for the mayhem that's about to occur the next day. I have to say though, painting the eggs is really entertaining. First we dye them in red ink, let them dry, and then sketch patterns over them with gold paint or markers. Real pretty. Now that's as far as the “having fun” part goes. Next, are the hours and hours the females endure in the kitchen cooking up a storm, while the men sit in the living room fanatically watching the sports events of the entire day, oh, and by the way, that's not Easter tradition, that's just how it is in Hungary...men can't cook, and trust me, you don't want them to try. Cooking mostly includes dozens and dozens of eggs, cooked ham, bread, relish, and mayo that turns into an industrial line of bite size sandwiches for the guests. Next, it's outside and into Grandma's garden to hide the children's presents, Easter chocolates, etc. in the grass, bushes, sour cherry trees, where they will all go on a wild goose chase adventure looking for their presents in their pj's and curly tenders waving in the wind.

Ahh, so the big day arrives. Seven o'clock and the females are up putting on their best flowered dresses, fixing their hair and putting on make-up, while Grandma grabs the pre-prepared food and places it on the table in her garden. The children are still sleeping; the men are gone. Ten o'clock rolls around and the doorbell begins to ring off the wall... Let the festivities begin, the men have arrived. Each man (dressed in a suit) greets each female, kisses on both cheeks, and then proceeds to say a little poem or prayer which roughly translated basically asks that this beautiful flower (the woman) may bloom through the spring and not rot away. This is then followed by the male spraying perfume all over the woman as a symbol of watering the flower. In return, the woman offers the man something to eat, a glass of wine or cognac, and a pick of his favorite red egg. So the whole day is basically spent eating, drinking, chatting... and for the females, smelling extremely bad by the end of the day, feeling more like a rotting flower than a blooming beauty.

A week later I'm back in New York missing all that I have often taken for granted... that's okay, I can wait another year to be watered again.

Russia? Russia. Russia!
by Irina Kaufman

You could fill a book with all the misperceptions and stereotypes. I can't even imagine the extent to which they reach. Indeed, it is fairly cold in Russia, but we don't have snow all year round. We consider vodka to be a national drink, but we don't have vodka soup. Polar bears do not walk around in Siberian cities, and, to the great disappointment of my friends, I do not

have a small polar bear as a pet. Communists, mafia and continuous repressions on top of that would complete a typical perception of Russia.

However, let me tell you about a different Russia – a Russia that stands out for its great spirit and culture. I can fill pages telling about the exclusiveness of our cultural heritage. Indeed, our churches and cathedrals, museums and theaters, libraries and historical monuments intensely exhibited in Moscow and St. Petersburg stand as the noble signs of our impressive history. Russia can also be justly proud of its children – Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Shostakovich, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Solgenizin, Sakharov, Lomonosov, Gagarin. This list can be continued indefinitely since Russians have deeply contributed both to the scientific and cultural legacy of our civilization.

Yet, Russian cultural legacy is only a reflection of Russia's greatest power and pride – its people. The exceptional spirituality of Russian people is what really helped our country to survive all the ups and downs of its history. It is the people of Russia, who drugged our nation through the darkest years of war and hunger that, unfortunately, occurred more than once in Russian history. It is the people of Russia, whose greatest minds allowed our nation to celebrate its triumphs. It is everyday people who make Russia so distinct from any other nation.

The Mysterious Russian soul has already become metaphorical. The greatest of our writers and movie directors have tried to depict the Russian soul. Yet, they were able to capture only a small part of it. Foreign attempts to analyze Russians through the film version of "Dr. Zhivago" or "Eugene

Onegin,” are simply laughable, and provoke nothing, but repulsion among Russians themselves. Russian soul is an explosive combination of controversies, where only a thin line separates love from hatred, black from white. There is nothing in the middle; there is no average, but only maximums. Russians cannot be analyzed from a point of common sense; we break any laws of rationality, as impulses of our heart always come before any logic. Indeed, you either hate or love, kill or forgive, win or lose, but you are never in the middle. A Russian can never be impartial!

Bulgaria by Dobromira Banova

So where are you from again? Bolivia?’ my roommate asked me one of the first days of our freshman year.

‘No, Bulgaria.’

‘Oh, where is that?’ she asked with seemingly genuine interest.

‘Well, on the Balkan Peninsula...,’ I started. A blank look ‘It’s in Eastern Europe, you know, near Greece, and Turkey...ah... and Russia.’

‘Oh, I see, so it’s near France and England!’ she responded with a gleaming light of recognition on her face.

‘Well, it’s actually on the other side of the continent. It’s in Eastern Europe.’ I shouldn’t have pushed her that much... At least up till then she was on the right continent.

‘So... near Japan... and China?’

Huh?

‘No, no, in Europe. Only, it’s in the Eastern part...’

‘Europe?’

I gave up.

‘So you are from... uh... Bulgaria?’ my supervisor asked me one day.

‘Yep’

‘Then, you speak Russian?’

‘No, actually, I never learned Russian,’ I answered, ‘When I started first grade, it was not a mandatory subject anymore.’

‘So you don’t speak Russian in Bulgaria?’ he asked, confused.

‘Well, many people do... I understand some Russian since the two languages are so similar,’ I explained, still not sure why he insisted that I knew Russian.

‘So what language do you speak then? English?’

Ha?

‘Uh... No... we speak Bulgarian.’

‘Oh, where did you learn English then? In Russia?’

‘No, I learned it in high school. I’ve never been to Russia, actually.’

‘Then, where did you go to high school?’ He still seemed baffled.

‘Well, in my hometown, in Bulgaria...’ I felt like we were going in circles. I could almost hear the question “Wasn’t Bulgaria part of Russia?” coming, so I just turned around and headed towards the other room...

These are just the two most memorable anecdotes from my early days in the United States. At the time, there were four Bulgarian students at Adelphi. Today, there are thirteen of us, and twenty-nine have been admitted for this academic year! Almost everywhere you go on campus, you will find a Bulgarian – in the computer labs, in the library, in the cafeteria, in the bookstore, in the Learning Center. In fact, every student’s nightmare these days is being stuck after 7 p.m. in the Honors College basement with some five or six Bulgarians talking loudly in an alien

language and giggling incessantly. And where did all these omnipresent Bulgarians on the Adelphi campus come from? In fact, from a country with a population of less than eight million, and the number keeps decreasing each year. Yet, ask any Bulgarian what he thinks of his country and he will start telling you all the wonderful stories of Bulgaria's ancient history; He would certainly continue by praising the beauty of Bulgarian mountains and beaches, or eulogizing Bulgarian folk music and its unique rhythm. You might also hear that the Great Wall of China was built to stop the Proto-Bulgarian tribes in Asia, that a Bulgarian was the real "father of the computer" and that a Bulgarian folk song is currently being played in space... When it comes to nationalistic sentiment, Bulgarians are certainly true to their Balkan blood.

Should you try to bring up the historical facts that Bulgaria sided with Germany in both World Wars, you will immediately hear how Bulgaria rescued her Jews in the Second World War. You want to talk about the forty-five years of communism? Well, since April 2004 Bulgaria is officially a member of NATO and Cold War hostilities are really not applicable nowadays. You have heard of the human rights violations against ethnic Turks in the late nineties? Well, after all, for five hundred years the Bulgarian people had to suffer constant killings, rapes, plunders and thousands of other violent acts under the Ottoman Empire!

The list goes on forever. To say that Bulgaria is a paradise on earth would be untruthful and, frankly, disrespecting my readers' intelligence. Yet, every time I talk to a foreigner about Bulgaria, I inevitably put myself in a nationalistic, defensive position. I

am often frustrated when people have not heard of it, or dismayed when they associate it only with the dark moments in its history. True, Bulgaria is a tiny country thousands of miles away, but it has its charms and attractions to every curious mind. It might have a controversial history record, but for almost fourteen centuries it has managed to survive and preserve its culture and traditions, despite numerous obstacles along the way.

El Salvador by Marie Cerritos

My name is Marie Cerritos and I was born in El Salvador. I have a dual major, Math and Spanish and I am planning on becoming an ESL Math Teacher.

El Salvador is the smallest of the Central American countries, and the most densely populated. The cultural wealth of El Salvador combines indigenous folk traditions, some of which are linked to Mayan forebears, as well as those of the Spanish colonists. Since the mid 20th century political repression has been responsible for a decline in the arts, but as part of a recently initiated and ongoing peace process the Salvadoran government has endorsed the work of such organizations as the National Council for Art and Culture (CONCULTUTA).

CONCULTUTA has pledged to work toward peace and cultural rebirth by fomenting new creative activities and putting authors of national importance back into publication.

CLUBS

Le Cercle Francais by Susan Novak, Vice President

The 2003-2004 academic year has seen the creation of Le Cercle Français at Adelphi University. Le Cercle français was originally Adelphi's first club ever founded many years ago. This year therefore marks its come back and renewal into the Adelphi Community. The purpose of the club is to enlighten students about French culture and language, to enable them to learn more about the history and tradition of France and Francophone countries, and help them understand better the nature of their relation with other cultures in the world.

Last year Le Cercle Francais was very active. A number of French films were shown, such as *Huit Femmes*, *A Bout de Souffle*, and *Le Retour de Martin Guerre*. We welcomed the French Ambassador's visit to Adelphi University. The members of the club but also the students and faculty of the Adelphi Community were welcome to participate and discuss what they thought were the most important questions that should be asked to the ambassador about the relation between France and the United States in the context of international relations today.

This year, Le Cercle français is planning to organize and sponsor a series of activities at Adelphi. Keep your eyes open for trips to Manhattan and Québec, lectures, films, and a Mardi Gras festival in the spring. Hope to see you there! Le Cercle will also organize a fundraiser on campus through the French organization *Aide et Action* that promotes and funds

educational programs in the francophone world.

Update on: Global IMPACT by Agnes Glaz, President

Last semester was a very busy yet very exciting time for Global IMPACT. Global IMPACT has sponsored two discussions on campus and has finally been recognized as an official club at Adelphi University. The budget for this semester has already been submitted and consists of money for several new discussions, including a symposium on international human rights with a fellow club, Amnesty International, and a movie night in which Global IMPACT plans on showing a popular foreign film left up to the choice of club members. Members of Global IMPACT are also eager to hold a charity event in which they will raise money for victims of a global crisis. The crisis that money will be raised for will be determined by the students, reflecting a current catastrophe.

The first discussion that Global IMPACT sponsored was a discussion on a recently passed law in France that prohibited school children from wearing headscarves, yarmulkes, Christian crosses, as well as any other display of religious symbolism. Both students and faculty attended the event to voice their opinions. Each participant brought different perspectives to the table, and everyone learned something new.

The second discussion held drew an astonishing audience, as students and faculty attended a discussion on Mel Gibson's, "The Passion of the Christ". Members of religious groups on campus, as well as many interested students, came to voice their opinions and share

their attitudes towards not only the film, but also towards the global controversy surrounding the film. As expected, attendees had very differing and opposing views that they were not shy of expressing, yet there was not one incident of disorder. The discussion went very well, going well into an hour past the scheduled ending because everyone was still eager to keep the discussion going.

Global IMPACT is planning events and ideas for the fall and spring semesters of this year and we would like to encourage all of you to become involved with the club. We have definitely come a long way from where we started and have some very solid ideas about where we are going. Elections will be held towards the end of this spring semester for the few main positions but the majority of positions will be elected in the Fall semester, so please come and join if you are interested. We hope to see you there, helping us to make an IMPACT! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact President: Mariam Cisse (fa3s2m@hotmail.com).

**Activities at Adelphi
related to International Studies**

Ambassador Series

Wednesday, February 18

12:00 p.m. UC Ballroom



“The Geo-Political Role of Turkey in the 20th Century” by Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations Ambassador, Umit Pamir. Ambassador Pamir was appointed as Turkey's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in August 2000. Prior to this post, Ambassador Pamir served as senior diplomatic advisor to the Prime Minister.

Wednesday, March 31

4:30 p.m. UC Ballroom



“The Future of the UN: Is Reformation a Reality?” by Ambassador Luis Gallegos, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations. Before this posting, Mr. Gallegos was his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva. Mr. Gallegos also served as vice-president of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Monday, April 26

2:30 p.m. UC Ballroom



“France and the United States in a World Transformed” by The Honorable Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, the French Ambassador to the United States in Washington. He has compiled a remarkable record of achievements serving on the staff of two French Presidents and holding various senior positions in the French Foreign Service.

Other Cultural Events of Interest

Wednesday, February 11

8:00 p.m. UC Ballroom

“Matters of Justice – Brown vs. Board of Education and its Legacy After Fifty Years” by Genna Rae McNeil, a professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill specializing in African American history and twentieth century United States history

Wednesday, February 25

7:00 p.m. UC Ballroom

“Return to Little Rock: Looking Back at the Civil Rights Movement” with Minnijean Brown-Trickey. Minnijean Brown-Trickey entered the Civil Rights Movement and America's consciousness as one of a group of African American teenagers who faced an angry mob and helped desegregate Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas. She has spent her life fighting for the rights of minority groups.

Monday, March 22

7:00 p.m. UC Ballroom

(Ticket Event)*

“An Evening with the Capitol Steps” The Capitol Steps is a troupe of current and former Congressional staffers who monitor events and personalities on Capitol Hill, the Oval Office, and other centers of power. They take a humorous look at serious issues.

Ambassador Series

Wednesday
September 22, 2004
University Center Ballroom
1:00 PM



Ambassador Pierre Schori

Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, 2004

Distinguished Visiting Professor, 2004-2005

"The United Nations, Global Governance, and Global Citizenship after September 11th"

Ambassador Pierre Schori was the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations from 2000 to 2004. During his time at the UN, Sweden held the Presidency of the European Union and represented the EU at the United Nations in 2001. During the 2004 to 2005 academic year, Ambassador Schori joins Adelphi University as Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Wednesday
December 1, 2004
University Center Ballroom
10:00 AM



Antonio Bandini

Consul General of Italy

"Emigration and Immigration: A View from Italy"

Antonio Bandini, the Consul General of Italy in New York, has a distinguished

career in the foreign service of Italy beginning in 1974. Minister Bandini has served in embassies in the Middle East, North Africa, as well as head of the Balkans Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. From 1998 to 2001 he served as Ambassador of Italy to Eritrea. From 2002 to 2003 he served as Deputy Head of the Italian Delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva. He has been at his current post, Consul General of Italy in New York since July, 2003.

Other Cultural Events of Interest

Wednesday
October 13, 2004
University Center Ballroom
7:00 PM, Ticketed Event

James Carville and Mary Matalin **"All's Fair: Love, War, and Politics"**



In this joint presentation, Washington's best-loved couple James Carville and Mary Matalin give audiences an entertaining and enlightening look at today's most important political issues and happenings in Washington. Their fiery discourse is highlighted by the quick-witted repartee for which they are both renowned. Co-authors of the national best seller, *All's Fair: Love, War, and Running for President*, both Matalin and Carville have been key players on the national political stage for over two decades and offer unmatched insight on the scene.

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