



Staff
Advisor: Rosie Speck
Editor-in-Chief: Kyongwon Ju
Copy Editors: Keza Mireille, Zouzou Nzuzi Nsemi
Graphic Designers: Jamileth Henriquez , Kalenda Osée
Writers: Kyongwon Ju, Keza Mireille, Zouzou Nzuzi, Kalenda Osée, Trung Dao, Nora Magadan, Maggie Camacho, Jamileth Henriquez



This is the staff of the *Crowder College Melting Pot*.

Newsletter Articles
Introduction Page 1
Pondu Page 2
Reyes Magos Page 2
Christmas Page 3
Vietnamese New Year Page 3
Traditional Wedding Page 4
Let's Talk Please Page 4
Christmas in Guatemala Page 5
Family Marriage Culture Page 5
Matching Game

### Welcome to the *Crowder College Melting Pot*

It is my pleasure to present to you the third edition of the *Crowder College Melting Pot*, a newsletter in which advanced students from the English Language Institute share their culture. For this edition, the students chose the theme of family culture, and they invite you to take a rare glimpse into their homes to learn about their family traditions. Many of the articles in this newsletter focus on holiday celebrations because as we all know nothing says family like holidays, Christmas, and wedding ceremonies in particular. Other articles such as "Pondu" on page 2, and "Let's Talk Please" on page 4 highlight some other important aspects of family life, such as communication among family members and favorite family recipes.

This newsletter is written and formatted entirely by the ELI 35 class. Once again, I am very proud of these students and their dedication to creating a quality publication. Special acknowledgment goes to Editor-in Chief Kyongwon Ju, who, along with Executive Team members Maggie Camacho, Kalenda Osée, and Jamileth Henriquez spent much time outside of class working on the newsletter by formatting pictures, editing articles, contacting writers, and setting deadlines. The class of ELI 35 would also like to extend thanks to Jon Finley and the Print Shop Staff for printing the newsletter each semester, to the Crowder College Proofreading Committee for reviewing the newsletter before print, and to Ray Martin for maintaining the webpage for the *Crowder College Melting Pot*.



### *Pondu*



**Pondu mixed with smoked fish.**

Pondu is a recipe from my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pondu is made from cassava leaves, which is the plant tapioca comes from. Pondu can be made for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. There are many variations of this recipe. The common recipe in Kinshasa (the capital of the DRC) is the one cooked with smoked fish. The flavor or taste of the dish will depend on the ingredients you have on hand. Ingredients:

- 1 sachet of Pondu (cassava leaves)
- 2 capsicum (red bell pepper), chopped
- 1 chili pepper
- 3 eggplants, cut into pieces
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- 1 smoked fish (must be soaked and boneless before you add it to your dish)
- salt, palm oil or other cooking oil

To begin, place unfrozen Pondu leaves in a pot. Add some water. Add the eggplant pieces, capsicum, onion, leek slices, smoked fish, and cook it about 30 minutes with the chili inside it. After that, add some palm oil, let it cook at about 1 hour, and then toss it. Wait for it to cool before eating.



Written by Kalenda Osée,



### *Reyes Magos (Magi Kings)*

A Mexican custom for children and adults is the day of the Reyes Magos (Magi Kings). Every day, at my home, I listened to my parents say: "Behave, because the Reyes Magos will bring you gifts. If you misbehave, they will just bring a piece of charcoal."

The history of this custom is based on the Bible. It says that the three Magi Kings gave gifts to Jesus when he was born: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Therefore, every year children from Mexico, Spain, and other Latin countries receive gifts on January 6. On this day, my brothers, my sisters, and I woke up early to find the gifts we received from the three kings: Melchor, Gaspar, and Balthazar. Good behavior was the key to receiving the best gifts! I remember my best gifts were a bicycle, a doll that talked, and a guitar!

In the afternoon, we joined the family to share the bagel king (rosca de reyes), which is a traditional bread in a circular shape that is accompanied with a cup of hot chocolate.

The day of Magi Kings is one of the best memories I have of my childhood!



**This is traditional Reyes Magos food.**



Written by Maggie Camacho



## *Christmas*

Christmas is a big celebration all over the world, but the difference is that not all countries celebrate Christmas on the same day.

In El Salvador, December 31st is the most important day for celebrating Christmas. We can do many things because it is a free day that starts at 6:30 a.m. Some of the activities that Salvadorians do at Christmas time include: put a big tree in the middle of the living room, decorate it with ribbons and moneditas (candies), and invite family and friends to eat dinner.



Christmas Dinner in El Salvador.

The foods that we eat for Christmas are panes con pollo (bread with chicken) and ice cream made with coconuts. After dinner, we still sit at the table talking about special moments that happened to us the whole year. We share the joys and sorrows. After this special moment, we put on music, and people start dancing to Spanish music, for example, bachata, salsa, cumbia, and reggaeton. The dance starts at 9:00 p.m. and end at 11:30 p.m. because at midnight everyone goes to his or her home to give everyone a huge hug and to wish a happy new year to family. Fireworks are popular in this celebration because without them it is just silence in the dark night, but people buy them to explode in the sky so we can see a lot of light. In the middle of the night, some people prefer to tell scary stories. At the end of the day, everyone is ready for a new year to forget the bad things and to remember the good things. My family always prays to thank God for another year.



Written by Jamileth Henriquez



How does your family spend Christmas?

## *Vietnamese New Year*

The Vietnamese New Year is the first seven days of the first month of the lunar calendar. It is a very important holiday for everyone in Vietnam.

In my family, a week before New Year, everyone in my house is very busy cleaning, decorating the house, and preparing a lot of food. For example, we cook meat, eggs stewed in coconut juice, pickled spring onions, sticky rice cakes, candied fruits, watermelon seeds, and a tray of five different fruits consisting of custard apple, ficus racemosa, coconut, papaya, and mango.

We do this to ask for a blessing on the next year, and we give flowers to pay respect to our ancestors. On New Year's Eve, everyone wears new clothes and gathers in front of the ancestral altar to burn incense sticks, pray, and to remember our ancestors. At midnight, everyone in my family watches fireworks and celebrates together. After that, all my brothers and I give best wishes to our parents for this year to be lucky, healthy, and for us to live a long life. Then my parents give all of us red envelopes with money inside (called lucky money), and they give best wishes to us and also to those who are still in school.



The dragon dance kicks off the festivities during the Vietnamese New Year's celebration.



Written by Trung Dao



### *Traditional Wedding in my Family*

Congolese weddings are a family affair and involve two lives, two families, and sometimes even two communities. The Democratic Republic of Congo (or the DRC), is a country located in central Africa, and there you will find many tribes. Every tribe has its own way of celebrating marriage. My tribe is called "MUKONGO" and when my oldest sister got married, her husband's family gave gifts which we call in French "la Dot." This is the most important thing to do if you want to marry a girl from my tribe. The Dot is also called "kanga Nzo" in my tribe language, or "dowry" in English. The dot is given during a meeting organized in the girl's family. This meeting is held as an introduction to both families.



**Traditional Congolese wedding gifts**

The terms are as follows: my future brother-in-law, or his representative, who can be his uncle, presents his resume at the meeting of the family members. This allows us to understand my brother-in-law, his parentage, his school career and profession, and in fact, my parents have the right to know in detail about their son-in-law. They want to feel that their daughter's husband is capable of taking care of their daughter. The meeting is followed by some gifts according to our custom (beer, whiskey, fruit juice, wine, etc.). They also give money depending on the family's capability. This is considered a symbol to entrust my sister to her husband, and also to reward my parents for my sister's worthiness. Other than gifts, they also give some sacred items. My father receives a full suit, a pair of shoes, and a pair of socks. For my mother, she receives a wrapper, a pair of shoes, a hand bag, a bag of 15kg of salt, a box of 36 household soaps, a 25 liter of peanut oil, and a large bowl. This is how we celebrate marriage in my family.



Written by  
Zouzou Nzuzi



### *Let's Talk Please*



**This is a family picture for celebrating the parents' 35th anniversary.**

Harmony in the family is fundamental in Burundi, my country, just as it is everywhere else in the world. In my country, there are also issues which can bring about disputes between parents and children, especially when children start to become adults. That is why, in my family, we do the best we can in order to maintain the harmony among us. The secret of that harmony is just dialogue.

In daily life, my parents go to work during the day, and my siblings and I go to school. This does not give us enough time to talk about serious issues. This is why we schedule dinner one weekend a month to talk and try to solve issues.

At the dinner, we first order what we want to eat and drink. Our dialogue covers many topics, such as our activities at school, our life, etc. We talk about curfew times, and my parents teach us how to live a productive life and to not to be lazy. The communication is two ways; we can also talk to my parents. We can talk about changing the curfew and the need for more freedom. Finally, we just try to find how we can change things.

It is not easy to talk about problems between parents and children, but the result is positive. Once we talk, we become closer.



Written by Keza Mireille



## Christmas in Guatemala

Christmas day is an important day my family gets together. My mom cooks tamales and my aunt mixes fruit punch. Also, my uncles cook meat on a barbecue and everybody asks questions of each other, plays games, listens to music, and sings songs.

After that, everybody goes to eat tamales or barbecue meat and drinks punch that has a little bit of tequila, or we drink sodas. One of the important traditions is that we give each other gifts.

As soon as it turns 12:00 a.m., we go outside and everybody eats 12 grapes and makes 12 wishes. Then after everybody goes to sleep, my cousin and I go outside to play basketball, and we go to bed around 7:00 a.m. I was born December 26th, so my parents also give me gifts and take me out for dinner.



Written by Nora Magadan



Tamales.

## Family Marriage Culture

I am from South Korea and I want to share my family's special marriage traditions.

Many Koreans choose to have a modern or westernized marriage ceremony, like you would have in America. But my family thinks a traditional marriage is better, and they are proud of the Korean heritage. So in my family, the future husband or wife is asked to do a traditional marriage ceremony. This is a point of pride for my family, and we like to pass it down to each generation so that our sons will know that Korea has this kind of tradition.

The second tradition my family keeps is that my parents give their children a two-bird wooden structure when they get married. Two birds mean peace, and they represent happiness for the married couple, in hopes that the couple do not get divorced. It is a gift the parents give, and it means you have your family's blessing to start a new family.



This is "Won-Ang," a traditional Korean wedding gift.

The third Korean tradition my family keeps is that the bride should stay at her family's house for about two weeks. Before a daughter gets married, she is not ready to be a mother or wife. For two weeks the bride's mother teaches the bride everything like how to cook, clean, and take care of a husband. After those two weeks, the daughter should go to the husband's parents' house for one week and continue to learn household things.

Those are my family's culture. What's your family culture?



Written by Kyongwon Ju



# Matching Game

Match the flag with its country.



Vietnam

Mexico

El Salvador

South Korea

Guatemala

Burundi

USA

DRC