

# INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

DIRECTIONS: Each flag represents a spring 2008 resident's homeland. Identify where the flag is from, and then check your answers on page 9.

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# SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

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# A Milestone Year

For the first time, we will have  
 a 2nd generation I-House resident. 1982 ... 2008 ...  
 Laura Salas lived at I-Center in 1982.  
 She called recently from Venezuela to let us know that  
 her son Eric will be coming to SJSU in the Fall  
 and he is applying to live at I-House. How exciting!!!

Our new Kitchen is GORGEOUS!  
 Phyllis Simpkins (Founder) and Larry Lagier (architect)  
 made an impact again with their significant donations.  
 Now our student kitchen is just as wonderful as our newly  
 remodeled restrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors.



Phyllis Simpkins  
 viewing  
 construction  
 during the  
 kitchen remodel  
 she made  
 possible through  
 her generous  
 donation  
 May 2008.

Visit the webpage and re-connect with I-House ...  
 Send us photos of yourself and family ...  
 Write to us at I-House ...  
 Consider donating to I-House ...  
 Support I-House residents ...  
 Visit I-House ...

[www.sjsu.edu/ihouse](http://www.sjsu.edu/ihouse)

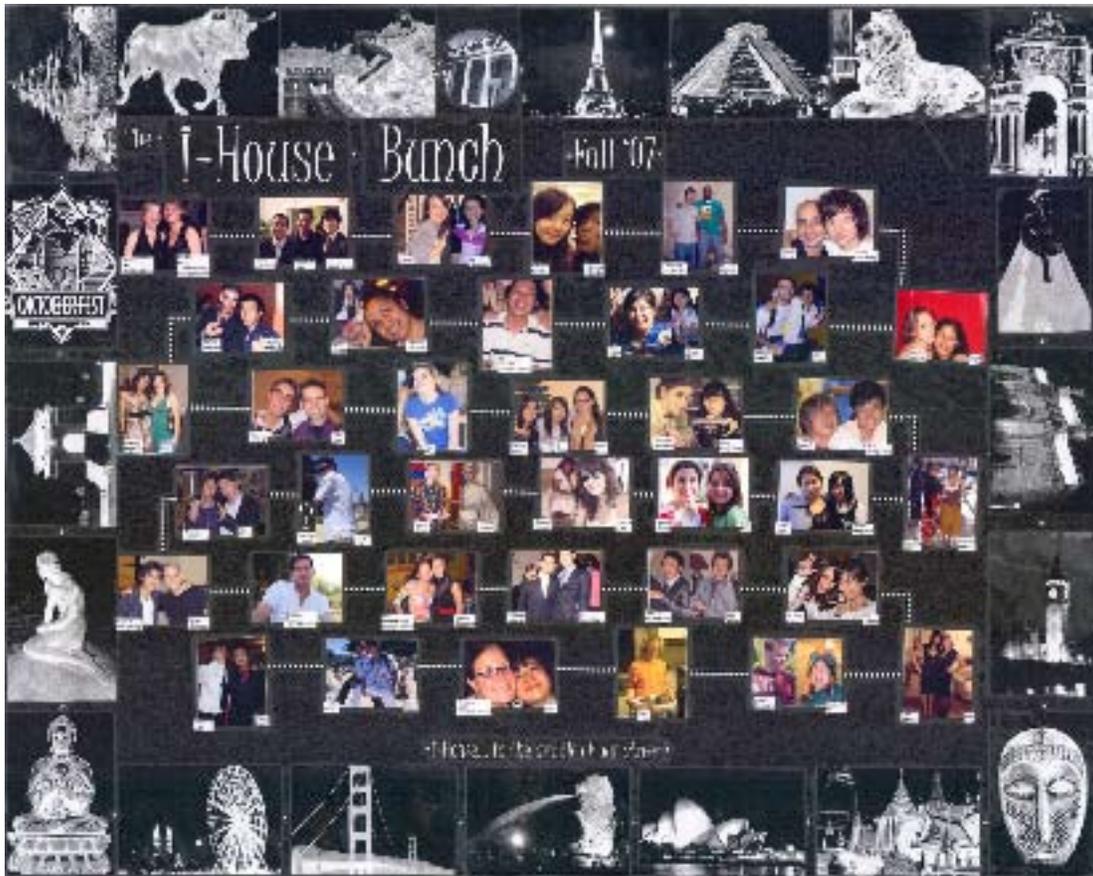




**ROOMMATE PHOTO BOARDS ONLINE SOON!**

Thanks to a helpful donation of scanning services by San Jose Blue all of the roommate photo boards will soon be online on the I-House alumni webpage. Check the website later this summer to find your photo(s) with your former roommate(s):

<http://www.sjsu.edu/ihouse/alumni.htm>



Keep in touch!!  
 Warm regards to all,  
 Leann Cherkasky Makhni  
 I-House Director





A poem

# No More Home Food

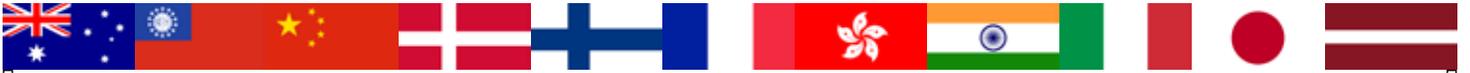
Now in college, everything is changing,  
 Only the food tastes most worst and aging.  
 More and more I want to cook my own food;  
 Oatmeal, eggs, or noodles, whatever I'm in the mood  
 Rather than eating school breakfast, lunch, or dinner  
 Eating a home cooked meal sounds less bitter,  
 Home is where I want to eat my everyday meals.  
 Outcries to eat Mom's and Dad's specialty, I just need to deal.  
 Matter-of-fact these urges have left me with the illness,  
 Early in the year I figured what it was, I had given my home a goodbye kiss  
 Finally after eating so much school hamburgers and fries,  
 Officially I was growing, not taller, but wider in size.  
 "Oh, that doesn't look good", I said, "It looks really lame,"  
 Day-to-day I realize that everyone says the same.  
 (*From the comments of the international students*)

— CYNTHIA S. GARDUÑO, 



Courtesy of <http://www.rsph.org/Bookshop/EssFoodHygFoodIndustry.jpg>





# Cockfighting the Philippines

Sunday morning, I can hardly open my eyes due to the lack of sleep from the enormous heat and humidity, I can hear crowing. In the beginning there are only a few of them getting pumped up for the great fight, but shortly the noise becomes unbearable and I decide to get up and get out of my room. Outside I find a large number of cages with cocks inside and an even greater number of Filipinos sitting and standing around talking about the latest cockfighting news and the upcoming fight. Taking a closer look, the cocks appear strong and extraordinarily beautiful.

The tradition of Sabong (Tagalog for cockfight) goes back to around 300 B.C. The Filipinos are said to be among the first to have developed this sport. Curved blades, usually made from high quality steel that extend to as long as three inches are attached to one or both of a rooster's legs. The roosters are set up in front of each other and start the fight right away. A usual fight only lasts a couple of minutes until one of the roosters is either dead or so seriously injured and the other one is named the winner. Cockfights take place any weekday in many places in the Philippines. But you will not find a city or village that doesn't have a big fight on Sundays. Sunday is the day when everyone has time to join. The greatest number of the audience consists of men. Women hardly ever watch the fights. Gambling is the main purpose of cockfighting but there are other implications to the fight, too. The way the gambling is organized or not or-

“ In the Philippines, cockfighting has an important social value. People from all classes mingle during a cockfight. ”

ganized is quite interesting. Although the number of people watching a fight can reach several hundred, only hand signs are used to take part in the gambling. The amount of money one wants to invest in the gambling is passed through several hands to the collector. There are several collectors in the arena. Once the fight is over, they remember who bet on which cock and the money will again be

passed through several hands until the right amount reaches the right person. Although it hardly seems possible, this technique works out most of the time.

Of course, gambling in general and cockfighting in particular have led to controversial discussions in the past. Some countries made cockfighting illegal because of violation of animal rights. However, cockfighting has to be looked at from different perspectives. It should not only be seen as a brutal satisfaction of one's urge to spectacle. In the Philippines, cockfighting has an important social value. People from all classes mingle during a cockfight.

Furthermore, a huge industry has developed around the cockfight. Breeders, food producers, supervisors, trainers, etc. benefit from this industry.

In a country where life is often a struggle and where western forms of entertainment are not affordable to most people, cockfighting does play an important social role.

— LINA JENSSEN, 



Photo courtesy of <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Cockfight2.jpg>





# Chinese weddings, American style

I have never attended a wedding in China. I have, however, attended ceremonies and banquets in the United States for my newly married relatives. These special occasions usually have some Chinese cultural influences because of our ethnicity.

It varies from couple to couple, but many Chinese-Americans include some traditions from their families' homeland in their wedding ceremony.

On the day of the wedding, the groom and his groomsmen go to the bride's house to "bargain" with the bridesmaids in order to see her. It's a light-hearted matter, and instead of paying money, the groom may be asked to do silly things such as dancing before he can finally see the bride.

The groom's car may also be decorated for the special occasion. The vehicle transports the bride and groom to either the groom's home or his parents' home for the tea ceremony. The couple serves tea to their parents, as well as other older relatives such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. They do this to

show respect to their elders, an important aspect of traditional Chinese culture. At the home of the groom's parents, the couple may also bow in front of an alter, praying for a happy marriage.

After the tea ceremony, the festivities begin with a banquet. Family is cherished in Chinese culture, so there may be a lot of loved ones invited to share this happy moment. For instance, during part of the reception, the bride and groom, perhaps with other members of the wedding party, would visit each table to raise their glasses for a toast.

If you're invited to a Chinese-American wedding, come prepared with a big appetite because there will be so many courses, one after another. In my family, the couples usually have the reception at a Chinese restaurant, where it's not unusual for at least twelve dishes to be served and shared amongst the people at the table. Some interesting food that I've eaten at wedding receptions includes shark fin soup, jellyfish, and lobster.

Each type of food has a special meaning to Chinese people. For instance, noodles symbolize longevity, while a whole fish

represents prosperity. The sight of a whole cooked fish or poultry, such as chicken or duck, at the table is quite common.

Utensils aren't only used for eating food. Throughout the banquet, family members and friends may gently tap their chopsticks against their plates to encourage the bride and groom to kiss each other in front of everyone. The tapping may start with one person, but it'll catch on and pretty soon, everyone in the room will join in on the fun.

During the banquet, the bride may change into multiple outfits. For instance, she may start out wearing a white Western-style wedding gown, but then later on, she changes into a fitted, high-collared, silk dress called a cheongsam.

In the United States and other countries, white is the traditional color for a bride's gown, symbolizing purity. For the Chinese, however, white is worn to funerals.

Instead, red is a popular color for Chinese people, meaning good luck and happiness. This color can be incorporated in the color of at

least one of the bride's outfit, as well as the décor. The bride and groom may receive money as wedding presents. If so, the money would be given inside red-colored envelopes.

Something else that may be part of the decorations is a Chinese character referred to as Double Happiness. This can be found on items such as invitations and decorations. It represents the couple's joy.

Again, the customs at a Chinese-American wedding will vary from couple to couple. They may choose to follow some or all of these customs. I think I'll probably include at least some of these traditions if and when I do get married in the future.

Also, perhaps someday I'll be able to travel to China. Who knows? Maybe it will be for a wedding.

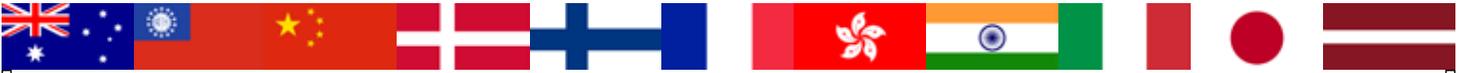
— SARAH KYO, 



TOP LEFT: Photo courtesy of orchidclothing.co.uk

TOP RIGHT: Photo courtesy of images.buyfromachristian.com





# Fingerhakeln:



## An Authentic Part of the Bavarian Culture

Photo courtesy of  
<http://news.xinhuanet.com>

Probably you already know some facets of the Bavarian culture: “Lederhosen”, different types of beer and corresponding festivals like “Oktoberfest” are known all over the world. Oktoberfest has been exploited for commercial reasons for many years now. It has become a gigantic swigging happening. Many Bavarian citizens would not regard it to be a true element of Bavarian culture. There are other traditions in Bavaria that are not as well known but are much more authentic.

One example is “Fingerhakeln”.

“Fingerhakeln” is an old-established Bavarian/Austrian heavy athletic competition. Two opponents sit face to face at a table and try to pull one another over the table. As the name of the sport already suggests, they are only allowed to pull with one of their fingers. While any finger except the thumb is allowed, they usually hook their middle finger into a strap made of leather. In official competitions, a combination of leather and hemp is used. This is to reduce the risk of fractures and other serious injuries.

Some don't use a strap and simply hook fingers. The strap is about four inches long and 0.3 inches thick. The measurements of the table and stools are standardized for the competition: The table should be 31 inches high, 29 inches wide and 43 inches long. A stool should be 16x16 inches and 19 inches high. The table is padded with leather at its long sides and bolted to the floor. It is expected that the athletes wear the Bavarian traditional costume, the “Lederhose”.

To win, one should have strength and good technique. The ability to endure a lot of pain is necessary. Often, the athletes use their knees to support themselves at the edge of the table. By the way, the use of tape or anything similar to ease the pain is prohibited: “A good competitor can take it!” Torn open fingers are the norm. That might be one reason why only very few

women compete in “Fingerhakeln”. Before the match starts, guards are placed behind each of the two competitors. They are there to catch the contestant in case the strap rips or one of the two suddenly slips out of the strap. In official tournaments, there are also two observers, a chairman and a referee. Bavarian, Austrian and German championships in various age groups and weight classes take place every year. But not everybody can take part. According to the National Association of Bavarian Fingerhakler, a potential competitor must prove to have an exemplary character. A “Fingerhakler” is a person that exercises this type of sport.

The origin of the sport is unknown. It is believed that arguments were solved in this manner.

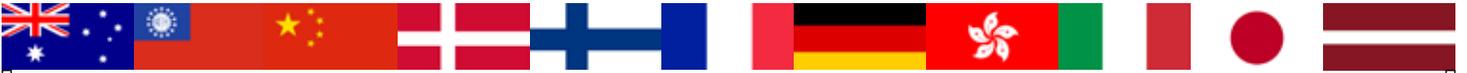
Nowadays, the German media has coined the term for describing long lasting negotiations between companies or political parties.



If you are interested in watching a Fingerhakeln fight, feel free to check out:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3Ld08cZpko>

— LUKE HILGER, 





# Going to Goa's Carnival



*Photo courtesy of goablog.org*

It's Carnival time again! So take out those dancing shoes, your most colorful outfit and head straight for the land of fun and frolic - Goa, India. Let's celebrate carnival on this side of the world, 'Goan style'.

The Goa Carnival is an essential part of the Portuguese heritage that was a dominion of Portugal until 1961. Vasco de Gama and his band of adventurers had set out to find a new route to India, and to break the monopoly that the Turks held in the spice trade. They reached India in 1498 and opened the Indian Route allowing regular sailings of fleets between the West and the East. The Portuguese colony existed for about 450 years (one of the longest held colonial possessions in the world), until it was taken over by India in 1961. However, even after so many years, the Portuguese left behind their legacy in terms of their music, dance, cuisine and particularly architecture still breathing true Portuguese life, as it must have been in those years.

Keeping with the Catholic tradition, Carnival is celebrated for three days and nights just before Lent. The word 'Carnival' (Carnaval in Portuguese) is derived from a Latin word meaning 'to take away meat' and is an expression of the 40-day period of fasting of Lent, during which abstinence from meat is a rule. Some people believe that the word came from 'carrus navalis', the horse-drawn, boat-shaped carriage that was paraded during the Roman festival Saturnalia, in honor of Saturn. It carried men and women in fancy dresses, wearing masks, and singing obscene songs. It is possible that the present-day concept of a carnival emerged from this parade.

The Goa festival today has no religious undertones and has come to be a cultural highlight of the state, rather than of the religion. The mood sets in days before the three-day long festival. The highlight of Carnival is the appointment and arrival of "KING MOMO" and his followers to the capital city Panaji on "Fat Saturday", the eve of Carnival. One can witness street plays, songs, dances, historically-based one-act plays and Konkani stand-up comedians who perform before an enthusiastic, responsive audience.

No carnival can be complete without floats. The floats make a whimsical and colorful addition to the streets in the categories of sponsored, traditional, club/institutions, family, clowns, and fun junky cars that depict popular lullabies and nursery rhymes. The participation of dancers accompanying the floats is a vibrant addition to the parades that line the streets. The floats carry meaningful messages like Save the Trees, cultural heritage, children's rights, etc. They pass along the route decorated with giant butterflies and bunting to provide a festive ambience.

Apart from the festival, Goa has a lot to offer for tourists making it a virtual melting pot and India's most popular tourist destination. Its clean beaches with clear shores, lush greenery, rich culture; plentiful sunshine and palatable food draw millions of tourists from all over the world throughout the year. So if India is on your 'must go' list of places to see, consider finishing your tour with a rest-and-relaxation stop, it will be the perfect finale to your trip. I hope to see you there soon ...

— NATASHA GUPTA, 





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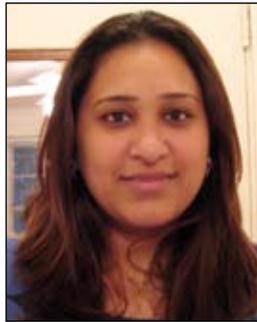
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Answers from the cover: 1. Malaysia, 2. Denmark, 3. India, 4. Spain, 5. Latvia, 6. South Korea, 7. Germany, 8. Thailand, 9. Sri Lanka, 10. Finland, 11. Japan, 12. France, 13. Singapore, 14. Poland, 15. Australia, 16. United Kingdom, 17. Hong Kong, 18. Italy, 19. People's Republic of China, 20. Myanmar (Burma), 21. Republic of China (Taiwan), 22. Mexico, 23. United States of America

