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Asian American Leadership and Educational Conference Hits Floor Running

By: Mylinh Nguyen

For a program that is five letters long, AALEC stands for so much more.

AALEC, the Asian American Leadership and Educational Conference, has been put on by a committee of SMU students and held annually every spring on campus for the last decade since 1998. This past weekend from February 27-28, the eleventh AALEC, themed Creative Minds: Imagine, In-

novate, and Influence, brought in 140 high school students and 50 college leaders for a legendary

conference.

If you've been to AALEC,

"run by students, for students."

Because there's always been a disconnect between Asian American youths and the older generations, the conference's purpose is to bridge the communication gap and inspire individuals to embrace themselves and find their inner leader to overcome whatever obstacles might come. The participants are placed into small groups and form

relationships with their assigned home-base leaders, all of whom are college students, to guide and

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AALEC Exec with HereandNow Theatre Company

you know that words just can't describe it sometimes. AALEC prides itself in being a conference

Vietnamese Student Association Hosts Three Sport Tournament

By: Mai Lyn Ngo

The Vietnamese Student Association is hosting its very first Rock Climbing, Table Tennis, and Pool Tournament on Tuesday, March 31.

The tournament is open to every SMU student who wishes to compete. Each participant must pay a \$2 entry fee to enter the tournament. The tournament will take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on the outdoor vol-

leyball courts of the Dedman Center and Lifetime Sports. The Vietnamese Student Association will provide free drinks and food for their participants on the outdoor volleyball courts.

VSA executives continue to work on finalizing event details such as whether to include a fan competition, if competitors can enter into more than one sport, and what the

prizes will be for the first place winner of each sport.

First place winners in all three tournaments will receive prizes. All athletes will receive a boba tea coupon, a Taiwanese drink that VSA sells on the West Bridge of Hughes-Trigg twice a month, as a token of appreciation for participation in the tournament.

Editorial: Cultural Background Affects the Way We Function

By: Daniel Liu

Before you begin to read this article, I want you to see how far you can get through this article without someone or something interrupting you.

As college students, we juggle hectic schedules and lifestyles. Were things any different when we were in high school? And when I say “we” - I fear that I am lumping together many different experiences. For myself, the weekly routine consisted of going to school early for athletic practice, classes, cello or piano practice in the afternoon, and then tutoring. My parents, especially my mother, drove me from one activity to another - relentlessly. I often wonder if that is what she wanted for me. Did she want me to be constantly busy? What compelled my parents to push me to excel in so many ways?

Asian Americans are often stereotyped as hardworking, obedient students. What is it about our cultural that creates an environment that fosters the type/kind of motivation or drive for excellence? What is the secret to our success?

I have a hard time believing that it is genetic. There is no scientific evidence of a “motivation” or “focus” gene. For this article, I am going to have to rely on my own observations and experiences. I cannot speak for other Asian Americans, but maybe some will agree with me.

As a child, my parents taught me to always work hard at whatever I do. I remember countless lectures about how hard my ancestors worked to get my family to the place where it is today. Whenever I had leftover rice in my bowl, my parents would chide me and tell a story about how “every grain of rice represents a drop of sweat from the farmer’s brow”. Looking back - only someone as gullible as me would believe something like that. However, thanks to their incessant nagging, I have learned to cherish even single grain of rice. This idea of treasuring everything that you have become an importance concept in my childhood. I also gained similar education from my school - where I was taught not to be wasteful. These influences challenged me to become an individual who was a good steward of not only his resources, but also his time.

Most of us look back with regret about how we misused our time. We complain about how much work we have to do because we were not motivated enough to get it done when we had the time. Imagine if there was a cure for procrastination. Asian Americans don’t have it any easier than other people. We procrastinate as much and probably more! However, I do believe there are a few factors that drive us to want to succeed.

A few years ago, the New York Times ran an article about the results of several recent studies looking at how interruptions and attempts to multitask can affect the quality of work as well as the length of recovery time. The article presented evidence about how performance decreases when we multitask. In fact, in order to even get back in the mindset for serious mental tasks, about 15 minutes is required. That means every time you are distracted by facebook, a text message, or even a passerby, your brain needs copious amounts of time to recover. Think about those high school years where you had the radio and television playing while you were doing homework. My home environment had a television in the living room and in the master bedroom. That was it. You did homework on an actual desk in a room with little or no distractions. Habits like this allowed me to learn to focus intensely and think creatively to get things done.

I believe that multitasking is a myth. Thanks to the modern age of digital devices, the younger generations have shorter attention spans, but are enabled to more work. Our lack of productivity coupled by the tremendous wealth of information available at our fingertips means we get things done faster than previous generations. But, our end performance lures us into a false sense of productivity.

I’d like you to think about things that motivate you. How do you “start yourself up” or “gain momentum”? Dedicated students usually have a cause for pursuing their education seriously. They have much to gain in terms of knowledge and opportunity and the only thing they have left to lose is their pride. I know that my parents have sacrificed immeasurably for me to be where I am today. Reflecting on that helps me to jump-start myself when I am feeling low on energy. Now that I have you thinking about how unproductive you are - I encourage you to pass this article on and go find yourself a place where you can hide and get more than 15 minutes of studying without distraction. We all have so many things to tackle - learn to prioritize your tasks and deal with them one at a time. Focus and you’ll start noticing huge improvements - I guarantee it!

east.asian.student.association | presents
NIGHT MARKET
southern.methodist.university

wednesday
april 8th
6 to 10 pm

free admission
food | games | prizes | entertainment

location: north end of Bishop Blvd. @ SMU flagpole
contact: janet yang, programming | cijang@smu.edu

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...AALEC cont'd from page 1

motivate them as role models throughout the weekend.

This year's AALEC exec worked year-round to plan a packed schedule of workshops, speakers, and team-building activities for the students. Speakers and entertainers this year consisted of: Jin Au-Yeung (the first Asian American rapper to sign under a major record label), hereandnow (a multicultural improv theatre company), PricewaterhouseCoopers, Fortune

Denim's Karen Noseff, Fossil's Stephen Zhang, author Irwin Tang, and TREAT's Christene Dino.

The whole conference is high-energy and potentially life-changing for each individual involved. Not

only do the participants have a great time making memories and friendships with their peers while they're having the time of their lives, but they all take away a positive message and attitude about who they are and what they're able to accomplish after



AALEC Participants Cheering

Three scholarships were also rewarded to deserving participants at the end.

ter high school. With the Asian American community inarguably on the rise, AALEC is definitely a step in the right direction.

Who'da Thunk!?? The Kingdom of Bahrain

By: Seena Jose

- Bahrain is home to the "Tree of Life", which is 400 years old. It stands in the middle of the desert in the south of the island country with no visible signs of water anywhere around it.
- Women just attained the right to vote in this country in 2002.
- It has been proposed as a site for the Biblical Garden of Eden.
- "King of Pop" Michael Jackson lives in Bahrain. He moved there in June 2005 after being cleared of child abuse charges in the U.S.
- Bahrain has its own Formula One racetrack. It is currently the only Arab nation to have one.
- In Bahrain, a male doctor may legally examine a woman's gynecological parts, but is prohibited from looking directly at them during the examination. He may only see their reflection in a mirror.
- Bahrain became independent from Britain in 1971.
- The whole country is smaller than New York City! (707 sq km)
- There are no personal income taxes, wealth taxes, capital gains tax, death duty tax, or inheritance taxes in Bahrain
- One dollar is equivalent to 0.37 Bahrain dinars.



Destress, Unwind, and Find a Sense of Calm with Bhakti Yoga Club

By: Udoka Omenukor

Have you been at peace today? Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., head to Hughes-Trigg Student Center Portico AB to try Bhakti Yoga. Ratna Englehart heads the program and invites everyone to come and experience it.

Out of curiosity I headed there to check out what Bhakti Yoga was all about. When I entered the room, my body was already beginning to relax. Englehart started out with basic information about what Bhakti Yoga really means. It means 'to become connected to the universe past the physical level.'

When we started singing the words "Hare Krishna, Hara Rama," I slowly began to feel my senses disorient and disconnect from the physical world. I could not tell which way was up or down and it did not really matter. How long the chanting session goes or even how fast the music is played. It depends on the energy of the group. Englehart told us that at some point, everybody's spirit would be so joyful that we would have to get up and dance.

The dinner afterwards was absolutely delicious. They served vegetarian Indian cuisine that I am still craving for right now! I highly recommend visiting the Bhakti Yoga club for those especially stressful weeks.

Englehart agreed to interview with the GWSJ and give a bit more insight about Bhakti.

GWSJ: Tell me about what the Bhakti Yoga Club?

ENGLEHART: well the purpose of the Bhakti Yoga Club is to teach the principles and practices of Bhakti yoga, yoga means to link with the supreme. There are many different kinds of yoga systems, for example Hatha yoga, but, Bhakti yoga is considered the highest, most complete way of connecting with the Absolute Truth. Bhakti means devotion or love.

GWSJ: Where did Bhakti Yoga originate from?

ENGLEHART: It goes way, way back. It has been practiced for at least 5000 years. The process came from the Supreme Lord Himself and it was passed down from guru to disciple down, down to the present day.



GWSJ: Is there a certain kind of culture that comes usually comes with Bhakti Yoga?

ENGLEHART: The practice of Bhakti yoga is not limited to a particular culture, language, country, even gender, race, etc. However, there is a particular environment which is most conducive for practicing spiritual life. That environment is described in Bhagavad-gita, when one lives a simple life-style, excepting only things necessary for maintaining oneself. It is easier for the mind to concentrate on a higher purpose of life. That is called living in the "mode of goodness." Everything we do affects the consciousness--what music we listen to, what food we eat, what things we do, even what clothes we wear.

GWSJ: How many people have come to your meetings, experiencing this for the first time.

ENGLEHART: This semester we have had many new members join. Some came just out of curiosity and some have stayed

on as serious participants every Wednesday! We have an average of 10 steady members. They find it relaxing and fulfilling, something to do in the middle of the week to let go of stress and reconnect with a higher purpose.

GWSJ: What exactly do you do at the meeting? What is the procedure?

ENGLEHART : We start with a 10 minute ice-breaker, then a five minute quiet mantra meditation session (called japa), then a session of mantra meditation with musical instruments (called Kirtan). We do Kirtan for 15 minutes, then 15 minutes discussion, another 15 minutes of Kirtan and finally vegetarian dinner!

GWSJ: What is Kirtan?

ENGLEHART: Kirtan is a process of mantra meditation accompanied by musical instruments. The musical instruments that we use are harmonium (kind of like an accordian), a mrdanga (a two-headed drum from India), and cymbals.

GWSJ: Does the session include dancing?

ENGLEHART: Yes! We don't always dance in our Wednesday sessions, but in the last yoga session, we had Kirtan for nearly 2 hours and everyone was dancing at the end. It was really fun! Kirtan is probably one of the favorite parts of our programs, besides maybe the delicious dinner!

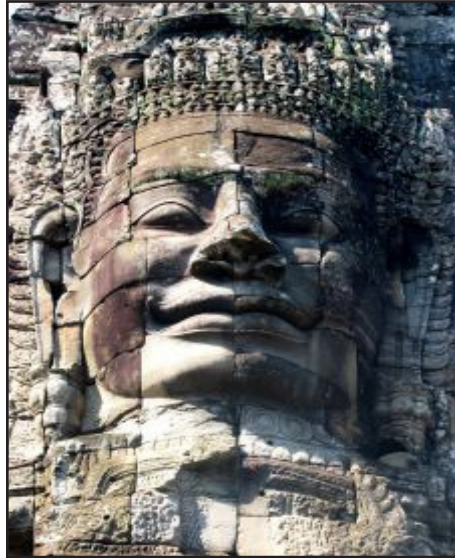
GWSJ: Why is the dinner only vegetarian?

ENGLEHART: Being vegetarian is an important part of the experience. We understand that animals are also living entities and we don't want to harm or kill other living souls for our own gratification. Being vegetarian also helps develop a compassionate spirit. We want to be compassionate and loving to all forms of life.

History: Cambodia 101

By: Prerit Souda

Cambodia, a country in Southeast Asia on the Gulf of Thailand, was once part of the Khmer empire that ruled the Mekong River valley, the area was controlled after the 15th century by the neighboring kingdoms of Siam and Annam. Cambodia became part of French Indochina in the 19th century and proclaimed its independence as a kingdom in 1953. After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1970, Cambodia commenced a long period of political and social disruption, especially under the Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot, which was responsible for more than



a million deaths from 1975 to 1979. The monarchy was restored in 1993. Phnom Penh is the capital and the largest city. Huh?? A long history class!! By the way, if you intend to go to South East Asia, do plan for Angkor. It was one of the finalists for the New 7 Wonders of the

and the world's largest sacred temple. Built during the reign of King Suryavaman, at the beginning of the 12th century, Angkor is noted for its intricate ornamentation and striking beauty. With its water moats, concentric walls and magnificent temple mountain in the center, Angkor Wat symbolizes the Hindu cosmos, with its oceans at the periphery and the Meru mountain at the center of its universe. Did you know Cambodia has the largest number of alphabets in its list (74)!!

World. Angkor is the most important monument of the south-east Asian Khmer Empire

And if you intend to go, try to learn some Khmer-

Hello- jum-reap soo-a

How are you?- tau neak sok sapbaiy teh?

My name is..... k'nyom tchmouh...

Goodbye- joom-reap Leah

Opinion Column: Slumdog Millionaire is a Bust

By: Prerit Souda

Disclaimer- By this article, neither am I criticizing anyone nor trying to judge anyone. I am in no position to be a critic of anyone/anything. The article is based purely on my feelings/ some widely prevalent feelings on an issue and in no way am I trying to associate anyone with any negative attribute.

Anyone who might not have heard of Slumdog Millionaire, should know it has won eight academy awards. Just like Jamaal Malik (Lead Character) who surprises everyone, this film will surprise the entire world. Yet, this film raises issues on both positive and negative side. Let's start with the Oscar Academy which constantly ignores the world's biggest
...cont'd on page 6

film industry, Bollywood (in terms of sales). Personally, I do believe that many Indian films are not up to certain standards expected by western media, yet when you have so many films made every year, you ought to have some rubbish stuff; and even Hollywood can't distance its self by telling that it does not make stupid stuff.

Moreover, there are many films which are made pertaining to Indian culture, which is difficult for westerners to understand. Yet, there are many films which are worth a look but are overlooked by the "GREAT ACADEMY". In recent times, there were a few Indian Films that couldn't surface in the Top 5 Films in Foreign

Category, but were able to move a million people in Indian Subcontinent. It may be because Academy is too obsessed with issues it is ABLE to understand and thinks that all issues that it doesn't understand are not worthy to be looked at. Or may be a million people are stupid or too dumb!!

One of the most prevalent criticisms for this film relates to poverty in India and portrayal of that; perceived in a wrong sense by many Indians. I believe there are two sides to the coin with none being wrong or right. Let me first favor Danny Boyle. Slums exist everywhere in 3rd World Countries as well as developed countries.

Hence, I don't understand the point in opposition to this

... Slumdog cont'd from page 5

issue. Yet, the issue goes beyond the obvious. Today, India is growing at a rate which is unachievable in many parts of the world. People who oppose, too, have a point: In recent times, places have come up which are not less than some of the finest hot spots in Europe or America, yet many do not wish to see that; India has more people on Forbes List than most of the developed countries have and the Richest person of the Country which ruled India, for 200 years, is an Indian.

Yet, correlating India with poverty only and overlooking the other side has created the biggest controversy; may be that was the reason

that this film did not bode well with the Indian audience.



One of the other issues relate to the acknowledgement of India's finest Music Director (my favorite too!): A. R. Rahman. A.R. Rahman's music had been around for so long but was never awarded. Does being on a film made by an Englishman

make The Academy Awards realize the worth of a genius? In fact, I feel if you like music of Slumdog Millionaire, you will love other soundtracks by Rahman. Yet this one was the one that got recognized by the "GREAT ACADEMY"!

Enough of bashing! It's easy to criticize something but very difficult to make something. This film is a creative piece of work and needs to be acknowledged, irrespective of issues associated with that.

Danny Boyle did a great job of making a beautiful, lively movie; making viewers feel like they were a part of the movie.

Events Calendar: Things to Look Forward To

By: Mai Lyn Ngo

EASA and VSA Eggroll and Boba Tea Sales

Stop by for a double wammy of Asian delights. March 4 and March 18 at the Hughes-Trigg West Bridge from 10:45 till sold out. Come out and support them!

EASA's 5 on 5 Basketball Tournament.

EASA is hosting their 5 on 5 Basketball Tournament March 21-22. Mimicking Asian Olympics, an asian-interest sports competition, EASA wants to gain presence on campus. If you are interested in competing contact Matthew Moore at mmoore@smu.edu. Come and check out the game and watch teams from all over Dallas battle it out for the \$500 cash prize and brag-

ging rights!

ISA's Talent Show

Check out ISA's outstanding Talent Show March 21 at the McFarlin Auditorium. Dubbed Rhythm and Dhoom, doors open at 6:30 and the event starts at 7p.m. From singers to dance groups, ISA selects a handful of worthy opponents ready to duke it out for the \$1500 cash prize. Daniel Nainan, a comedian from Comedy Central will be the opening act and guest MC. Watch out for more details to come.

Spring Break!!

March 9 - 13. Have fun and Stay Safe!!

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