

THE STENTORIAN

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics

VOLUME XXXI | ISSUE FIVE

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JANUARY 2012

AsiaFest a success on earlier date

By: MADELAINE KATZ

AsiaFest 2012 was met with fear and anticipation at the prospect of putting on two performances at such an early point in the year. With 17 acts, AsiaFest was able to celebrate Asian culture for parents, faculty, students, and alumni.

AsiaFest began with the March of the Flags, followed by the fashion show, which included small dance performances to represent

Asian subpopulations, such as hip-hop, sporty, and nerdy.

The Secret Piano Battle, showcased two piano players, Chelsey Lin and Caroline Vilas, who showed off their variations on some classical piano pieces.

The first dance performance of the show was Shivalinga by 1C2D1C, NCSSM's Indian dance club that fuses classical Bharatnatyam and ballet.

Enthalpy Break Dance, Chinese, Yo-yo, Korean Rap, Ribbon Dance, and a guest

performance by UNC's Chalkaa concluded the first act. Chalkaa showed a mix of various Indian dances and modern hip-hop.

Bhangra began act two, followed by Lunar New Year Quartet, Martial Arts, and Unichords, who sang an a capella performance fusing Chinese and English.

The Asain Halfies video followed Tinikling, a Filipino dance that involves people beating bamboo sticks on the ground while others dance over

them. Chinese Karaoke, and KWave concluded the show.

"I was a performer as well as a stage manager, so doing tech along with costume changes made for a very rushed show backstage," said senior Mae Davis, one of the co-stage managers in the theater program.

Davis continues, "We were in the theatre from 4:30PM to 8PM Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and on Friday and Saturday from 5PM until 10PM. The Asia Fest officers were very nice to the tech crew!"

The ACC officers spent months to ensure that the performance would run smoothly. They had to handle ticket distribution, food donations, auditions, and communicating with act leaders efficiently to put the show on

three months earlier than it had appeared in previous years.

"It was stressful the last week [of rehearsals] because we had dress rehearsal everyday, but it was definitely worth it. You have to commit yourself as an act leader to AsiaFest, because it is an event that demands quality and it's a time to show off all that you've worked on," Bhangra captain Gayatri Rathod said.

Not only was AsiaFest enjoyed by upwards of 1000 audience members, but the event was also streamed live

Junior Logan Herrera, as an audience member said, "AsiaFest had a profound impact and it completely changed my perception about Asian culture. I hope that future cultural events can affect my psyche in this way."



ICIDIC performance at AsiaFest 2012

Courtesy of Phoebe Castelblanco

US safeguarding the South Pacific

By: MOLLY BRUCE

President Barack Obama attended a summit in Australia where he met with the visit Prime Minister Julia Gillard to announce a troop deployment of 2500 Marines to the local area in Nov. 2011.

Obama insists that the strategic military move is intended to safeguard the shipping-lanes in the South-Pacific region, an area that accounts for nearly half of the world's economy.

However, Chinese Defense Minister Geng Yansheng criticized the United States, arguing, "That any consolidation or expansion of military alliances is a manifestation of a Cold War mentality."

The security alliance between the United States and Australia has been a long-standing and widely known coalition and the recent force movement underlines that partnership.

As Obama noted, "We're

going to be in a position to more effectively strengthen the security of both of our nations and this region."

Obama stated that he "made a deliberate and strategic decision — as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future."

Many supporters of this decision have argued that the announcement communicates to the rest of the world that the United States of America intends to support her Asian-Pacific interests, seen as a necessity during an era in which China is rapidly gaining power.

While United States government officials have maintained that the deployment was an attempt to secure the region and ensure safe shipping-lanes, Liu Weimin, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman posed, "It may not be quite appropriate to intensify and expand military alliances and

may not be in the interest of countries within this region."

Many international leaders believe that China's recent increase in military funding and modernization — long-range aircraft deployment, update of the naval forces, defensive claims to islands flung across the Pacific — caused the United States to become guarded with respect to Chinese military and territorial ambitions.

While the deployment of 2500 Marines may seem innocent, countries in all parts of the world will more than likely be feeling the further implications of the decisive strategic move for decades to come.

All the while, China insists that the move was inappropriate. The country insists that the United States should have discussed the military move with the international community before making a decision that will may cause a global tidal wave.

Adapted from Associated Press.

North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il dies

By: CAROLINE DESAUSURE

Kim Jong Il died at the age of 69 after having ruled as dictator of North Korea for 17 years. His death was met with absolute despair and grief from the people of North Korea and security concerns in South Korea.

Kim had suffered from a stroke in 2008 and was believed to be in decreasing health until his death from either a heart attack on Dec. 18, 2011. The death of North Korea's "Dear Leader" sent waves of fright and shock throughout Asia and across the world.

South Korea immediately armed its forces to be prepared for an unpredictable outcome of the abrupt change in leadership. North Korea was rumored to have tested short-range nuclear missiles the morning after Kim's death. North Korea claimed that the missiles were fired before announcement of the dictator's death.

North Korea kept news of Kim's death secret for about two days. Perhaps the North Korean government was trying to prepare itself for a possibly dangerous transition of power.

Kim's chosen successor was his youngest son, Kim Jong-un. North Korea released a statement about its new successor, calling him "the eminent leader of the military and the people."

The Workers' Party of North Korea stated that, "Under the leadership of our comrade Kim Jong-un, we have to turn sadness into strength and

courage, and overcome today's difficulties."

Little is known about the new successor except that he is young and has little experience. This is upsetting for other countries that fear that North Korea will collapse, after having avoided doing so under the rule of Kim Jong Il and previous leaders for decades.

Although the collapse of North Korea would create utter chaos in much of Asia, the fear of nuclear weapons still remains huge. It is estimated that North Korea has enough fuel to create a nuclear weapons.

Although the US has had meetings with North Korea to discuss the nuclear program, the meetings were preliminary and unfortunately did not provide a gateway for solid communication since the death of Kim Jong Il.

To monitor the situation, leaders in both the US and South Korea have been communicating frequently to assess the state of affairs. Keeping up this high-frequency dialogue is the US's number one priority and best option, given the circumstances.

North Korea declared a national mourning period from the announcement of the leader's death until Dec. 29. The funeral took place on Dec. 28, where Kim was placed beside his father in a glass coffin for viewing. Visitations to the grave site were permitted for North Koreans, but not for any foreign delegations.

Adapted from Associated Press.