

Different ways of celebrating Christmas around the world

By Dina Di Maio

Yes, there is more to Christmas than wassail, caroling and the yule log. At least, that's what Meredith's international students shared at their final meeting of the semester last Friday.

Nancy Harikian, who is Armenian, shared a Christmas tradition. She said that Armenians have a special celebration on the night of January 5th and on the 6th, or Epiphany. In her family, they traditionally eat rice and salt fish. They also eat unleavened bread dipped in wine.

Yurie Oshila of Japan said that Christmas is celebrated in Japan not as a religious holiday, but in "imitation of America." She said that more young people celebrate Christmas. They decorate trees, and they give gifts only to younger children. They eat cake

and drink champagne and have a "quiet, family day."

Pooja Jindal, who is from India, said that at midnight on Christmas Eve, children get new dresses and clothes and go to church. They rest after, and on Christmas Day, they cook "a huge meal" for family and neighbors.

Many of the international students at Meredith are not Christians, so they do not celebrate Christmas. However, they shared some holidays that are celebrated in their countries.

Nadia Dadas, who is from Morocco, told of a Muslim holiday. This holiday celebrates the birth of the prophets. Children dress up in new clothes and are given presents. The day before the holiday, as a trick, the children throw water at people for

good luck. This holiday is celebrated at different times every year. Next year, it will be in July.

In Bangladesh, people celebrate Korbani, a holiday which lasts for three days. According to Shamsia Shafi, people sacrifice a cow that they then distribute to poor people. This is symbolic to show that people need to be responsible for others. Children receive new clothes from their relatives. They go from one relative's house to the next and eat. In the morning, men go to the mosque. On this day, if you bow down and kiss someone's feet, a sign of respect, they will give you money.

In Taiwan, they do not celebrate Christmas, but they do celebrate New Year's in February. According to Evelyn Chen, they eat traditional foods. It is a

custom to give children money on this day to show that they are growing up and are old enough to have money.

Yurie Oshila mentioned two interesting holidays of Japan. March 3rd is Girls' Day. This day is for little girls. People usually decorate their houses with dolls dressed in kimonos. May 5th is Boys' Day. On this day, the family flies a flag sporting different fish that represent a father, a mother, and a boy child. They put the flag in the window so that everyone will see it and know a boy lives in that house.

All of these customs are unique and special to the people who celebrate them. They remind us of what a diverse, wonderful world we live in. When you think about it, we're more alike than we are different.

Tips for exam stress

By Sarah White

English papers, newsletters, final presentations, unfinished shopping lists—Yes, it's that time of year again—EXAM TIME. And with the studying for exams and papers and presentations comes stress. Stress is hard on your mind and on your body, so when you are feeling stressed, you must take care of yourself. Dr. Cindy Bross, a Meredith physical education professor suggests the following things you can do to control stress:

- *Take time for yourself. Do something you enjoy.
- *Go for a walk.
- *Listen to relaxation tapes.
- *Practice progressive relaxation: relax from your toes all the way up to your head in a peaceful environment.
- *Eat healthy by maintaining a balanced diet.
- *Avoid foods high in fat and sugar. Sugar is a downer because it causes you to be tired.
- *Make sure you get enough SLEEP!

"Getting enough sleep is important," said Dr. Bross, "Exam time is a period in which we become so rundown that we do not sleep well. But right now is the time where you should sleep, otherwise when you go home for Christmas break, you will get sick."

No one wants to be sniffing or coughing when she opens her presents or kisses under the mistletoe, so it is important to take care of yourself during this stressful exam time.

If you think of it in broader terms, all you have to do is get through the next two weeks and then it will be smooth sailing into the new year. The best part is that you will not have to

think about English papers, newsletters, final presentations, and unfinished shopping lists anymore. Happy New Year!

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