

Organizations offer foreign students guidance, friendship and activities

By Beth Thompson
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

Among the several thousand American students at UNL, a minority of foreign students tackle language problems and unfamiliar American habits while earning degrees and making friends.

Two organizations, International House and the International Education Services, help foreign students overcome these barriers.

For Korean-born Young Sig Kwon, his inability to speak English fluently was "a major problem." Living in I-House, on the first two floors of the Neihardt Residence Center, helped solve this problem. Kwon lived with an American roommate and other foreign students who helped him practice his English.

"They made me talk a lot," Kwon said, adding that this helped him solve his problem.

Like Kwon, Werner Oberholzer, a Swiss native raised in Honduras, said he met most of his friends in I-House, where each American resident is paired with a foreign resident.

Through I-House activities, Oberholzer said he has tasted foods from all over the world.

Besides dances, parties and international dinners, Ed Kaczmarek, head resident, said I-House is planning a retreat in early November to Little Sioux, Iowa. About 50 I-House residents will get to know each other and learn

more about each other's cultures at the retreat, Kaczmarek said.

When foreign students aren't participating in social activities, they develop one-to-one relationships with their American roommates.

Piper Student Assistant Cheryl Buzzell said that although Americans and foreigners are "really different," they are similar in some respects.

As an example, Buzzell recalled how she would read a book from left to right, while her former Japanese roommate read the same book from right to left. Although they accomplished the task in opposite ways, Buzzell said they reached the same goal.

In such an environment, Kwon said he feels more comfortable. In fact, welcomes are written in different languages above the doors to make foreign students feel more at home.

Oberholzer said I-House "is more like a community. This is our home."

Because this "home" is related to foreign students, Kaczmarek said some American students don't realize that I-House is available to them too.

American unawareness also is a problem for International Education Services, Program Coordinator Rod Merta said.

Merta said he wants to make American students more aware of their possible involvement in IES.

The English Conversation Program is one IES activity that needs Americans in order to flourish.

In this program, one American and one international student meet for one hour each week to talk and ask each other questions.

According to an English Conversation Program flyer, "The function of the American 'tutor' is not to teach formal English grammar, but to expand the student's existing use of English by lending an ear and by offering a leading question or comment to keep the student talking."

IES also involves foreign and American students in other activities. It will sponsor small-scale Olympic Games featuring soccer, volleyball, table tennis and other sports in October or November.

In early October, Merta plans to take two van-loads of American and international students on a weekend trip to Kansas City.

On Oct. 20, the UNL International Student Organization will sponsor an international banquet and cultural show. Merta said last year's event attracted about 600 people who tasted many international foods and viewed ceremonies and traditions from all over the world.

Two weeks before school started, IES was busy with foreign student orientation.

Grace Njogu from Kenya said, "They (IES) really helped us out a lot."

Police Report

UNL police responded to a different type of bed-wetting problem Sunday when someone reported that several buckets of water were thrown onto a bed in a Schramm Hall room.

The people responsible have not been located, but would be given a citation for criminal mischief if found. Criminal mischief is a misdemeanor.

The following incidents were reported to the UNL police department between 1:11 a.m. and 12:28 p.m. Sunday.

1:11 a.m. — Person reported tampering with emergency phone in Parking Area 3 near 14th and New Hampshire streets.

1:21 a.m. — Fireworks reported discharged near the Lutheran Student Center on 16th Street.

2:21 a.m. — Emergency phone reported damaged at Hamilton Hall.

2:32 a.m. — Noise disturbance reported at Neihardt Residence Center.

2:36 a.m. — Person reported tampering with emergency phone near Architectural Hall.

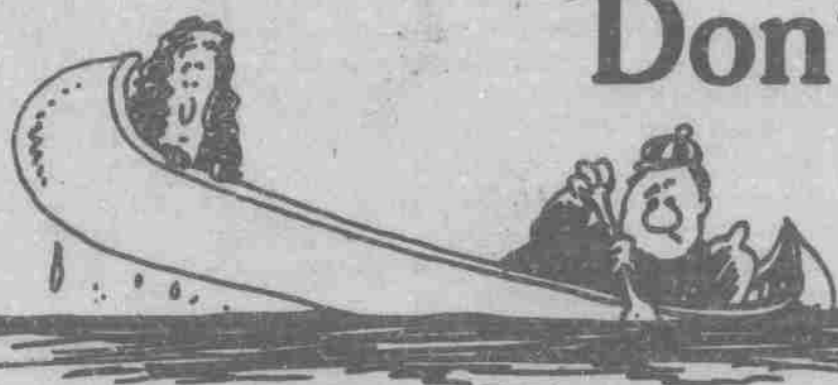
2:38 a.m. — Hit-and-run accident reported at 18th and Vine streets.

3:20 a.m. — Noise disturbance reported at 635 N. 16th St.

3:25 a.m. — Purse reported stolen from the Culture Center, 1012 N. 16th St.

7:18 a.m. — Criminal mischief reported at Schramm Hall. Water reportedly was thrown onto a bed in a room.

12:28 p.m. — Two-car accident reported in Parking Area 3 near Harper Hall. No injuries were reported.



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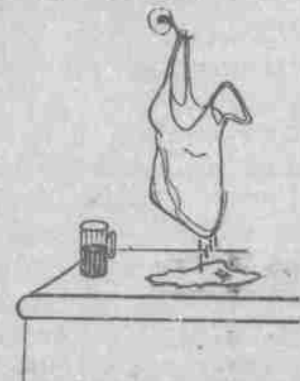
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