Chinese Lunar New Year

Last Monday, the Chinese program and the Language House threw their yearly celebration for the Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year. Celebrated in the hope of the arrival of a prosperous and lucky new year, in China the Spring Festival is arguably the most important holiday.

Marked by extravagant decorations, huge family gatherings, and the creation of homemade meals, in 2016 this 16-day celebration recognizes the year of the monkey. In honor of this event, the Chinese department invited everyone out to the Language House Multipurpose Room to enjoy an afternoon of Chinese traditional music, dance, and most importantly, making dumplings.

To bring in luck for the new year, dumplings (饺子) are traditionally prepared by the whole family, and some will include coins to bring luck to the one who finds it (but hopefully not eat it), good luck! Even without the money, all in attendance made great efforts...
to join together in making food. Students from the Chinese language cluster, those in Chinese classes, members of UMD’s project Pengyou, Chinese teachers and other JMZ faculty, along with friends all tried their hands at wrapping dumplings. Lined up from one side of the room to the other, preparations were made, and once completed, a banquet of dumplings and other snacks were ready for all. In addition, each Chinese class presented the crowd with a dance or song. One group even went out of their way to form a mini orchestra playing traditional music. With the effort of everyone there, this year’s Spring Festival was a great success. From the food to the people, the energetic and engaging atmosphere could rival that of a traditional New Year’s festival.

In Cannes

Quiet on set! Check the gate! We’re rolling in 5…4…3…2…1…

It’s the most wonderful time of the year – awards season. The stars of the world all descend upon the theatres of Hollywood. Designers are being inundated with alteration, publicists are scrambling to book one last interview before Academy votes are due, and nominees are carefully crafting their speeches. Cinema has officially taken center stage in the U.S.

Although the enormity of the Academy Awards (February 28) is impossible to deny, most of the world looks to the Cannes International Film Festival in Southern France to find the crème de la crème of new cinematic
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pieces from around the world. It is hard to compare Cannes with the Oscars. Firstly, the Academy Awards and its relatives are discrete and separate events. Just when the hype peaks, it ends. Cannes is a week of preparation for the jury-selected awards. Days and days of screening and film immersion lead up to the final award ceremony.

The Academy is exclusive, Cannes is all about accessibility. The fans are involved from the onset. Unlike American film festivals where people don impractical winter gear to brave Sundance or take expensive travel to remote locations, Cannes is warm and inviting and encourages visitors to partake in screenings and celebrations and is easily accessible thanks to a rail station a few blocks from the action.

Sure sometimes you end up meeting Gerard Depardieu and not Blake Lively (as you so carefully had planned), but Cannes is a way to engage in cinematic experiences that are hard to come by in the United States.

However, the best part about Cannes is that it can give you a solid leg up in your office pool on all the awards. Using Cannes results can give serious insight into the battle for the illustrious Oscar.

In the category of Best Foreign Language Film, three of the five nominees were featured at the last Cannes Festival in May 2015. *Son of Saul* (Hungary), *Mustang* (France), and *Embrace of the Serpent* (Colombia) all won major awards.

*Son of Saul*, the directorial debut for Hungarian László Nemes, however, was selected for the main competition for the Palme d’Or. It won the Grand Prix which is the second most prestigious award. *Carol* (USA, UK), currently holding six Academy nominations, was eligible for the top prize of Palme d’Or as well as taking home the awards for best actress for Rooney Mara’s performance and the Queer Palme.

Based on these results, it is normally very easy to foresee which films the Academy will nominate. We can probably even take a leap to picking the winner when there is one solid standout performance, such as with *Son of Saul*.

The one thing that the Academy Awards and Cannes International Film Festival will always have in common is the love for the cinematic process.
Over three years after the 2012 New Delhi gang rape that threw India into an uproar over violence against women, the state has made little progress in eradicating the crime—towards wives, sisters, and even children. The 2012 rape and murder of Jyoti Singh, better known as “India’s daughter,” brought other such incidents to the surface of Indian news. As a result, citizens rallied against the state to protest the practice of violence against women and the blaming of victims rather than assailants.

In the 2012 case, the accused were charged with sexual assault and murder. People’s voices appeared to have been heard by law makers and enforcers – Indian women began to hope for the beginning of real change.

Rape in the United States is under-reported because of the social stigma. Rape in India is under-reported because the fear of consequences for the victim’s family (shame, emotional and physical persecution by neighbors) and her future outweigh any existing hope for justice. While state law is meant to preside over all of India, localities interpret and implement the law differently all across the subcontinent (The Indian Institute of Ahmedabad). This trend complicates the system and process of conviction, leaving victims with little expectation for equality or justice under the law.

Gender roles have become particularly established over centuries of male superiority, which gives women a small chance for equal treatment in the courts.
ed her because she was out after dark with a man who was not her relative. They claimed that had she been wiser, she would not have allowed herself to be in the situation that led to her victimization. Although Singh’s case resulted in especially loud protests, most cases such as this one go unheard of, therefore arguments that blame the victim often prevail.

Since 2012, people have been more readily coming forward with allegations against child rapists, but laws against the practice have been “poorly implemented” (The Washington Post 2016). As reported by The Washington Post, “Nearly 14,000 of the [36,900] victims [of rape in 2014] were children, a 151 percent increase since 2009.”

One of these victims was Sanjeev Ojha’s four-year-old daughter. He “thought his... daughter would be safe at the neighborhood preschool” (The Washington Post). Just as Singh was blamed for being out after dark, Ojha felt “as if [he] were the [culprit]... [The police] asked, “Why did your child wander off?” As reported by The Washington Post, Ojha’s daughter was lured away by a toy-salesman and raped in the closet.

Activism has gained momentum and attention from the media, but a broken system can do little to improve the institutional process of investigation. And rape is only part of the problem. Child abduction, poorly trained police, and failure to follow through on court procedure before, during, and after trials are a few more of the elements that

American governance is world governance

As the 2016 presidential elections approach, tensions rise. Voters assess candidates and their platforms in the hopes of making the right choice come November. Candidates tear into each other’s pasts and put forward their best ideas on how they hope to lead America. But most voters, and more than one of the candidates, fail to consider another dimension of American governance. That dimension being world governance and the role U.S. plays in it. There is a near universal understanding among scholars that the state of international affairs today is due, in large part, to American leadership and tenacity in establishing a liberal world order. There is a lot of doubt, however, as to whether or not the U.S. will continue to be a prominent figure in world affairs. Voters and candidates must properly understand, and emphasize during their campaigns, that American governance and its interests are directly tied to how it impacts world governance. Withdrawal is not an option and