



Welcome to the New Semester and New

Language System International Newsletter

Language Systems International

January 2012

Notes From The Program Coordinator

Welcome to a new term. For continuing students I hope you had a nice vacation and are ready to get back to work. If you are a new student, welcome to Language Systems and welcome to Los Angeles. The beginning of the year brought record warmth and good weather. This month there is a rock concert, courtesy of the Rocket Queens, a rockin' band fronted by two of our students! Show them your support by head-banging at the House of Blues on Monday, January 30th at 8:30pm. Have a great term!!!!

Test Schedule: Institutional TOEFL 01/20, 2:00pm; TOEIC L&R 01/14, 10:00am; iBT TOEIC 01/14, 10:00am.

CHARLIZE THERON

BY MILA

Charlize Theron grew up on a farm outside Benoni, South Africa, as an only child. She got an education as a ballet dancer and has danced in both Swan Lake and the Nutcracker Suite. At the age of 18 her mother made her go to Los Angeles to try a career in the movie industry. She came to LA without knowing anyone in the city but after two weeks when she was standing in line on Hollywood Boulevard an agent gave her his card. After eight months in LA she got her first part.



Since then she has taken acting lessons and her career has skyrocketed,. She even won an Oscar for her portrayal of Aileen Wuornos in 2003's "Monster". Her new movie that we can see now in theaters is "Young Adult ." "Young Adult" is a drama about a beautiful but superficial writer who returns to her hometown in hopes of reuniting with her high school sweetheart, who is now happily married to another woman.

# The Traditional Christmas Tree

By Emi and Sinia

The tradition of the Christmas tree inspires warm memories of Christmas. Evergreen plants and trees had a special meaning for mankind in ancient times. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine trees, ancient humans hung evergreen branches over their entrances. In many places it was believed that the tree would keep away bad spirits, witches, illness and even ghosts.

Thus decorations of evergreen plants and trees have been a part of the celebration of the new season and the religious services of god. The use of a Christmas trees indoors seems to have been begun by German Christians. The modern Christmas tree tradition eventually spread throughout Europe. Ger-



man Prince Albert, husband of the popular British monarch Queen Victoria, decorated the first English Christmas Tree with candles, candies, fruits, and gingerbread at Windsor Castle in 1841. German immigrants who went to American also took their Christmas tree tradition. The invention of the light bulb and electricity in the 20th century enhanced the sparkle of Christmas trees and solidified their images.

Now, everybody joins with their neighbors in decorating their homes and their trees in their yard. It becomes a night tour attraction where people drive to see all of the lighting spectacles in the street.

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# The Japanese New Year

By Satoru

January 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> is Shogatsu in Japan. Most Japanese people eat special dishes which are called Osechi-ryouri during Shogatsu. It's a Japanese tradition to eat osechi-ryouri throughout the New Year's holidays. Traditionally, people finish

cooking osechi dishes by New Year's Eve so they have food for a couple days without cooking. Colorful osechi-ryouri



dishes are packed in layers of Japanese lacquer boxes, called Jubako. Each dish and type of food in osechi has a particular meaning. For example, prawns for long life, kuromame (cooked sweet black bean) for health, tazukuri (small sardines with a teriyaki flavor) for a good harvest, kurikinton (sweet

chestnuts and mashed sweet potato) for happiness, and more. Nowadays, many people in Japan buy osechi at stores instead of cooking them at home so they can have many kinds and varieties of osechi-ryouri. It is also traditional to

eat mochi (rice cake) dishes on New Year's Day. Zoni (rice cake soup) is the most popular mochi dish at this time. The ingredients vary depending on region and families.

In addition, it is traditional for Japanese people to visit a shrine or a temple during the New Year's holidays. People pray for safety, health, and good fortune. The first visit to a shrine or temple in the year is called Hatsu-moude. It is not a very religious event, but rather a custom.

# Everybody likes Chocolate

Do you want to drink hot chocolate in winter? It is one of the most favorite sweets for many people. Today, chocolate is used in many foods, for example, candy bars, milk shakes, cookies, even cereal and medicine. In fact, it



ranks as the favorite flavor of most Americans. The story of chocolate spans more than 2,000 years and now circles the globe. The tale began in the tropical rainforests of Central and South America where cacao (kah KOW) first grew. Chocolate is made from the seeds of the cacao tree.



The first people who knew how

to make chocolate were the ancient cultures of Mexico and Central America. These people, including the Maya and Aztecs, mixed ground cacao seeds with various seasonings to make a spicy, frothy drink. It was not a sweet drink.

Later, the Spanish conquistadors brought the seeds back home to Spain, where new recipes were created. Eventually, the drink's popularity spread throughout Europe. Since then, new technologies and innovations have changed the texture and taste of chocolate, but it still remains one of the world's favorite

flavors.