

Eye on Campus

This spring, travel abroad, earn credits as you do

By SADE MITCHELL
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The Intercultural Exchange Program will be hosting a trip to Madrid during spring break.

"We're hoping to inform people they can take courses overseas and get credit for them," said trip coordinator and Human Development and Family Services professor Michael Madden.

Throughout the trip there will be tours and excursions that are optional. The base price is \$875, but with additional upgrades the price does increase. The price covers airfare, hotel, transportation to and from the airport in Spain and breakfast.

The program is open to all students and will run from March 5-12, 2005. Madden will be teaching HDFS 287W Writing Across the Curriculum Cross Cultural Diversity. The class will require students to keep a log.

Other courses available through the program are art history, taught by Asst. Professor of Integrative Arts Connie Kirker; Spanish 130 taught by Associate Professor of Spanish and French Alita Kelley (you do not need to be fluent in Spanish to be eligible); and Theater 105 taught by instructor James Symmons.

Students are permitted to take up to six credits for the trip. But they must get approval from the instructors in order to take more than one class because it is not



This is the Cathedral de la Almudena in Madrid. Penn State Delco students have a chance to visit in the spring.

always possible to fulfill the requirements for both classes on one trip. If you're unsure which classes to take, contact the professor for a syllabus.

If you are interested in going to Madrid and "...breaking out of your culture," said Madden, "then this is a great opportunity."

Contact Celestial Voyagers, the travel agency Penn State uses, by going to www.celestialvoyagers.com.

Students do not have to take a class in order to travel overseas with the school. But the classes do help you learn more about the country's culture, and help you navigate your way to the best sites, museums, and other places.

There will also be others available in the near future. Madden feels that "through travel, entertainment and cultural enrichment, students discover themselves away from their regional identity."

From Eritrea to Delco: Name is same, age isn't

By JULIA HAGAN
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When you began an interview, you don't expect the questions, "What is your name?" and "How old are you?" to elicit the most complicated responses.

But Meron Habte explains that although many teachers pronounce his name incorrectly, like the female name Karen, it is actually pronounced May-ROHN Hob-Tay.

You detect an interesting accent in Meron's pronunciation of his uncommon name, which leads to questions on his country of origin. Habte was born in the East African nation of Eritrea. When he was 6 years old, Meron's parents fled their war-torn native land (Eritrea was at war with Ethiopia for its independence) in search of a better life and more stable future for their children in the United States.

His family settled in Philadelphia and began its adjustment to American culture. Habte attended Philadelphia private schools, graduating in 2003 from West Catholic High School. During his high school years, he enjoyed writing and playing football and it was then that he started considering a career in journalism.

"I had been really interested in photography," he said, "but school pushed me towards writing."

Habte planned to attend Villanova University after graduation, but after comparing tuition costs, Penn State emerged as the choice.

"My sister goes to the University Park campus," he said. "But that's not the reason I chose Penn State."

He appreciates the smaller Delaware County campus of Penn State where there are fewer distractions and students are able to study. He resides with his mother and

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younger brother and sister in Philadelphia but does not mind the commute to school via SEPTA.

Although always on the lookout for interesting job offers, Habte will be concentrating on his 18-credit course load this semester. In addition to news writing, he is taking art, history, Asian philosophy and English 182.

"They're all tolerable," he said and added that he especially enjoys the courses with an international flavor.

The sophomore journalism major described his dream job as something similar to a position with the admired publication *National Geographic*.

"I always used to read it when I was little," he said. "The pictures just used to grab me."

Since moving to Pennsylvania, he has not traveled outside the eastern United States, but is eager to do so. Habte does not remember much from his early years in Africa but would like to someday return to Eritrea where many members of his extended family still live.

"It's not as dangerous now," he said, noting the country's large tourism business. Also on the top of his list of destinations is the Amazon rain forest in South America.

As for the question of his age, Habte's response was, "I'm 20... on paper." On paper?

Following the Orthodox Ethiopian calendar that his family has used, Habte explained that he'd still be 19. His family is also familiar with several different languages including Arabic and Amari. The combination of cultures doesn't seem to bother Habte though. Whether it's a choice of what language to speak or what music to listen to, he doesn't prefer just one.

"I'm just interested in variety," he said.

First rule of fashion: Comfort counts for nothing

By JANICE KUEHN
Special to the Lion's Eye

Recently, during an expedition to a mall the approximate size of Rhode Island, one of my adult daughters persuaded me to buy a jacket/blazer type thing. This set off a concatenation of shopping that I like to think of as "The Wardrobe Domino Effect." Since I did not have anything in my closet remotely compatible with this garment, I was doomed to additional purchases.

Having flunked "Fashion 101" many years ago, I had to rely on my female offspring for help. They, frankly, are "in charge of me," and they enjoy nothing more than taking me shopping and treating me like an aging, somewhat imperfect Barbie Doll.

In order to complement the other pieces of my ensemble, I was forced to buy a pair of high heels

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that were clearly designed by a sadist. Admittedly, I was acquiescing to "Fashion Rule 457:" If the shoes fit and they are cute, you must buy them, no matter what.

A few weeks later I gathered the courage to wear my new duds to class, as I had a presentation to make. With a mixture of resignation and dread I drove to campus, no small feat, as my new high heels were a real impediment to highway safety. The distance from the Route 352 parking lot to the Classroom building had never seemed so great; it increased in an exact algebraic progression to my podiatric discomfort. As I struggled up the stairs to the second floor, I made a mental note: If the fire alarm goes off, abandon footwear, run to nearest exit.

All too soon I was standing in the front of the

classroom. My feet were sending painful messages to my brain, but they were being returned "Addressee Unknown." It was then that I noticed something weird: I could not seem to make eye contact with any of the females in the room. They were all focusing on the 30 square inches of floor inhabited by my shoes.

After class, while limping to the Lion's Pit, I was constantly being stopped by other women exclaiming rapturously over my footwear. Halfway through my cheeseburger, I was seriously considering holding an impromptu auction for my new high heels, as they were attracting the attention of virtually every woman in the place.

"Hmm," I thought, "maybe there is something to this whole fashion thing!"

The next time I'm shopping for shoes, I'll remember the rules: ignore comfort, price and practicality. Just buy the cute ones.