

## CCIS Welcomes New Webmaster

by Karin Meiswinkel



CCIS has the distinct pleasure of introducing Paula Brown, its new and very qualified webmaster.

Paula comes with an impressive background, having worked as a Visual Designer at Xerox and Apple, as well as a Project Manager at Yahoo, Paypal, and Wells Fargo.

She has been working on the CCIS website over the past 7 months, redesigning and coding it.

Here are the salient points descriptive of Paula's work on the new site:

- All existing content, photos, forms, and applications were reviewed, then edited and revised as needed.
- The new site is "flatter", meaning it takes less clicks to navigate to information.
- The applications and related program forms were redesigned. They can be downloaded, filled in on the user's computer, then emailed back to CCIS.

She indicated that the biggest challenge was the change requests, which consisted of managing the feedback, photos, content, and form changes.

CCIS would like to extend a warm welcome to Paula and express sincere appreciation for her work on the website.

Everyone is encouraged to visit and enjoy the site at their earliest opportunity.

## Through a Volunteer's Eyes

by Anne Galli



Having participated in both the English in Action and Friday Morning Coffee programs for seventeen years, I have had an extensive variety of rewarding and interesting experiences. Each year I eagerly await meeting with my newly assigned English in Action (EIA) partner. Over time, each of my partners has been different and each has been wonderful.

In addition, as a Friday Morning Coffee (FMC) volunteer, one particular year, I met a couple from an Asian country who were disappointed by midyear when they had not been matched with an EIA partner. He was a visiting scholar, a journalist, with excellent English. His wife needed a little more practice in listening and speaking to improve her English skills. Because they only had a few more months before they would be heading home, I told them that I would be happy to meet with them informally. This turned out to be very interesting for me, as they would sug-

gest a topic to be discussed each week, such as "the role of women in America." This added a new challenge to the typical EIA format, so I often did some research to prepare for these interesting discussions that were not in my field.

In concert with this time period, I met a woman at FMC from another Asian country. As a District Attorney (DA) she had been sent to Stanford by her Justice Department as a visiting scholar for one year. Her country was experiencing (like so many other countries) a rise in sex trafficking and she was tasked with reporting back about US policies on this problem. For about six months she had been working alone in the Stanford libraries and felt now that her project was not proceeding. I asked her if she would like my help to get "un-stuck". She said she would. I knew that US Representative Jackie Speier had a staff member with responsibilities in the area of sex trafficking. An appointment was arranged and questions were carefully prepared. At the last minute, the DA asked me to serve as scribe during the interview. I was happy to oblige. Subsequently, she obtained interviews with an officer at a non-profit that provides shelter to victims, and then later with the San Mateo County DA (her counterpart). I had the privilege of serving as her scribe for those interviews. Hopefully, this access to the US protocols helped serve to protect victims and prosecute perpetrators in her home country.

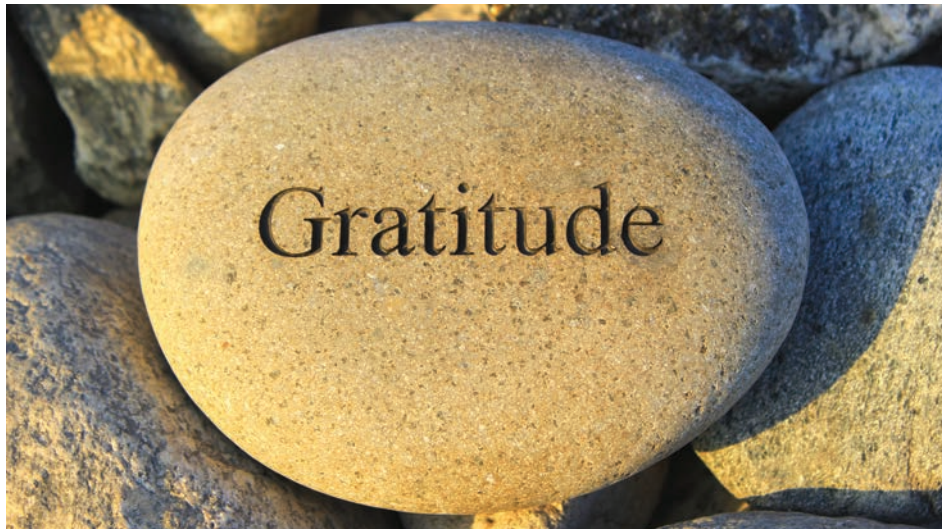
And, as usual, in the fall of the next year of 2015, I eagerly met my next EIA partner. She informed me on our second meeting that she was expecting their first child and she was feeling very far from home.

I met with her regularly during 2015 and 2016. She left for home this week with her husband and their wonderful baby boy, now almost a toddler!

I wonder what lies ahead for me in the fall of 2017!

# Communiqué Gratitude Column

by Karin Meiswinkel



*Members of CCIS who volunteer their time, talent and efforts to the various committees and programs often share stories and accounts of the rewards and benefits of their involvement in these programs. CCIS contributes so much for the International students who take advantage of the programs offered them. We would like to share some testimonies from several volunteers in this issue, as well as some of the same from some of the Internationals. Gratitude validates the rewards received and shared by both volunteers and students.*

## **Suzanne Shehadeh, EIA volunteer:**

"I so enjoy meeting with my English-in Action partner, who is a visiting scholar from South Korea. Our conversations vary from week to week, depending on news events and the everyday happenings in our family lives. Oftentimes, I find myself reflecting on my own years overseas, some 30 years ago, with my young family. Living in a culture not of one's own and communicating in a new language, takes courage. It's exciting and life-changing. My EIA partner reminds me and makes me think of these things."

## **Milena Russo, Italy:**

"I moved to California around 3 years ago. When I moved here I felt very lost. Then I discovered the EIA program. I met my tutor Marsha who has always been most supportive and kind. She helped me learn a new language. Learning a new language is an achievement anyone can be proud

of. But it's not just that. She shared with me my passion for Siena (the city where I lived in Italy). Even though we are not of the same age, she is my friend. It feels so liberating to know that I can talk to her about anything, without fear she is ever going to judge me. She is always there for me. Through EIA I met this wonderful American friend. She opened the door to diverse culture, tradition and perspective in this increasingly interrelated world. I will always be grateful for EIA and my introduction to this amazing person!"

## **Eisuke Hashizume, Japan:**

"I want to express appreciation for all the valuable advice and corrections I received from my EIA partner in the CCIS program during my time here at Stanford as a visiting scholar. I learned a lot and always enjoyed my conversations with her. Among things, talking about the Warriors was always very fun!

I believe all the programs CCIS offers are very valuable for many international students and their families.

One of the surprising things in the USA, is that there are lots of volunteers, especially in the field of teaching English. I respect all my teachers and deeply appreciate their kindness.

I am very grateful for all I have learned and hope to keep in touch with many of you here."

## **Gwynn Dukes, Friday Morning Coffee**

"For the past several years I've had the pleasure of being involved in the Friday Morning Coffee, a gathering of 50-70 family members of Stanford's international community.

Every week we welcome newly arrived spouses who face the challenge of creating a new life here while their partners are busy studying or doing research. Often this means a profound change, since many have put their former lives and careers on hold so that the couple or family could be together.

As Friday Coffee volunteers, we work with a team of spouses to create a sense of community where newcomers can find friends and learn about community resources that can enrich their time here. It has been inspiring and satisfying to connect spouses to local experiences that allow them to grow and develop in a new way. For example, a young journalist from India yearned to become an artist, and wanted to get instruction to become more professional. We connected her with the Pacific Art League, and through a grant from the Spouse Education Fund she was able to enroll a class. It was heartwarming to see how she blossomed when she showed us photos of her amazing artistic creations!"

## **Karin Meiswinkel, EIA volunteer:**

"A gratifying and happy reward was learning from my EIA partner's spouse that said spouse from Japan was overheard talking in his sleep... in English! Ah, the fruits of my labors coming to fruition!"

## Upcoming Events

**August 7:** Annual retreat

**Mid-August:** Ice Cream Social (date TBA)

**Sept 6-21:** Community Advisors Orientation

*Have a great summer!*



## A Fresh New Look for Bechtel Center by Karin Meiswinkel

There has been a flurry of activity over the past months with the remodel of the living room and the partial first floor of Bechtel. New paint everywhere, floors and ceilings spruced up, plus a clean look with new contemporary furniture replacing the former rather worn and dated pieces. The piano, which occupied the end of the room by the windows, was donated to a loving home where it will be put to good use and played often. This has created more space and the new design of the room affords a more utile working area for students and others using it.

Please feel free to stop by and take a look when you have a chance.



## A CCIS Wedding by Carolyn Gannon

Something wonderful happened recently that never would have occurred, if not for the EIA program. I have been very fortunate with nearly every partner I've had over the past 20 years, but this was extra special. My EIA partner from 2013, Mianmian Wen, asked my husband Terry and me to represent her parents at her wedding at Stanford Memorial Church. Terry walked Mianmian down the aisle and "gave" her away to her long-time beau, Long Chen. I served as her "mom."

In Mianmian's words: *"Thanks a lot for all the offerings, dear Carolyn and Terry! It's also our honor to have you as our American parents at our wedding! Actually, both of our parents are also very happy that we are loved in a country that far away from home."*

Mianmian and I (and Terry and Long) have remained close ever since my first meeting with her in October 2013. Fortunately, she works for a venture capital firm in Palo Alto (she graduated in 2015), and Long works in SF for "Square." Congratulations Mianmian and Long!



## Picnic on the <sup>Patio</sup> Oval by Karin Meiswinkel

A festive year-end picnic was held this year on the Bechtel Patio. Despite the not-so-hot temperature and a last-minute change in venue, a stalwart cohort of CCIS members, international grad students, post-docs and visiting scholars was in attendance. There were several first-timers who had never been to Bechtel before alongside long-standing volunteers and Bechtel "regulars."

The friendly atmosphere was enhanced by the shared offering of various ethnic food and dishes. This all led to the conventional concept of a good old fashioned "American Picnic." Many EIA partners came together to share this evening of food and fun. A finishing highlight of the evening was the hula hoop activity, led by an avid hula hooper who was joined by veterans and novices alike! What better way to work off a picnic dinner! Don't miss our next special event—watch the Bechtel website for details!



# CCIS Leadership

## President's column

**Karen McNay**



It is with very mixed emotions that I write this, my final column for the Communique. After three very busy, enlightening, educational and tremendously rewarding years as President of CCIS, I am pleased to turn over the gavel to Dave Gustavson. I have made so many wonderful friends within the organization and the community whom I will always treasure. I have had the opportunity to travel and to share the CCIS program with others around the country and the world. We are very unique and admired near and far. This could never happen without our tremendous volunteers and the unlimited support we receive from Stanford and Bechtel International Center. Approximately 60 members attended our 64th Annual Meeting on May 8th when the following new officers were elected: **President** - Dave

Gustavson, **Vice-President** - Bob Paugh, **Secretary** - Donna Shoemaker and **Treasurer** - Raj Khanna. The program chairs were also introduced. Shalini Bhutani, the new Director of Bechtel International Center, shared some of the changes and improvements at Bechtel and the challenges due to ongoing governmental rulings. Shalini was followed by guest speakers Begum Topac, a spouse from Turkey, who described her informative and positive experiences with almost every CCIS program, and Bob Paugh who spoke of his many years as a volunteer with several CCIS programs. Our keynote speaker, Vilma Palette, a Stanford alumna, spoke on the rewards of volunteering and her appreciation of what CCIS volunteers accomplish for the international community and for Stanford. A Q & A session, socializing and refreshments followed until 6:30pm.

We are all looking ahead to a busy summer as our many programs continue and we prepare for the new year in September. Please let the program chairperson know if you would like to host Homestay or Hospitality students, volunteer for Community Advisors (orientation) or English-in-Action in September. Membership renewals will be going out mid-summer so watch for those and please complete any programs you would like to volunteer for.

So, as we close out the 2016-2017 school year, I want to personally thank all of you for your support and encouragement. I look forward to seeing you around Bechtel and at Orientation in September.

Best Wishes,  
Karen

## Editor's column

**Karin Meiswinkel & Amanda Preece**

Greetings to the joyful season of Spring, known as the first "Kiss of Summer." Spring never skips its turn in the purpose and time for all seasons. It faithfully returns with its fresh scents and the earth reborn. Its awakening powers are prevalent on campus and in the air at Stanford as everyone emerges from a time of considerable change and challenge to the International community, in particular. The staff at Bechtel and the CCIS organization have done an exemplary job of working overtime to research, handle doubts, questions, and situations, presented as a result.

That being said and acknowledged accordingly with respect and pride, this Spring issue of the Communique will be bidding it's current editors, Karin Meiswinkel and Amanda Preece, adieu. Our current lives are such that we must turn the Communique over to new hands and

the decisions of the CCIS board. We have loved creating and publishing the quarterly issues for the audience of the CCIS membership. Many diligent hours of creative, thoughtful, and professional design acumen have contributed to the production of each and every seasonal issue. We hold a strong belief in the value of the support and plethora of programs CCIS presents to the community and the Internationals at Stanford University. Our thanks go out to so many who have made valuable contributions to our production of the Communique. Our issues have been proclaimed to present "very excellent and engaging publications" of the CCIS newsletter. Please wish us god speed and good luck in our future ventures. We carry you in our hearts.

Warm regards,  
Karin & Amanda

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## **Director's column Shalini Bhutani**



Dear Friends,

The 2016-2017 academic year has come to a close. We celebrated graduate students and their families who were seen everywhere on campus. As students get ready to leave the Farm, there is both excitement and nervousness about life ahead.

Baccalaureate speaker, Mariam Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund challenged the graduates to fight injustice and redefine success. Her message was to ask not 'How much can I get' but 'How much can I do without and share?'

Commencement speaker Mariano-Florentino "Tino" Cuéllar, California State Supreme Court Justice, focused on "more life, more health and more wealth". He encouraged students to make public service a part of their lives, to work for justice and peace, and to bridge the divides that separates cultures and languages.

Graduation is behind us, and now we look forward to the upcoming year. Spring is always a busy time at Bechtel, and the office is buzzing with activity – students, scholars and department administrators are stopping by to drop off or pickup visa

documents. Incoming students are emailing with questions about the visa process and life at Stanford. Bechtel staff are busy preparing for the new academic year. Orientation activities are being planned and over 900 visa documents have already been issued for students who will be joining us at the start of the new academic year.

We value our ongoing partnership with CCIS throughout the year, but never more than at the beginning of each academic year. Working closely with CCIS throughout the summer, we are able to offer a warm welcome to all our incoming international students as they begin life at Stanford. CCIS volunteers are often the first face of Stanford for international graduate students as they arrive on campus, and help set the tone for life at Stanford. Students appreciate what you do for them, and so do we. As we look at the year past, and the year ahead, all of us at Bechtel thank you for helping us make Bechtel a home away from home for our international students.

My regards,  
Shalini

