Hello again, to the second edition of our super tight newsletter (that’s me trying to be Nor-Cal). I just wanna give a quick shout out to everyone who came to last week’s meeting. I hoped everyone enjoyed our lovely and gay (as in happy) little meeting and video as much as we enjoyed planning it. Well, on to this week’s agenda. So, this week is all VCN, all the time, for me, for staff, and for you members!

This newsletter is a bit less picture friendly than the previous ones. But, there’s still a lot of educational stuff to be found here, mostly about VCN and...VCN. That doesn’t mean it’s any less tight. Everyone should try to learn something about VCN and hopefully, by the end of today’s meeting, you’ll feel compelled to audition, or just dance. So, go! Get edumacated, get cultured, and have fun!

What is VCN?

Vietnamese Culture Night, or VCN, (VCN) is the biggest of VSU’s annual programming that has with more than 100 participants, all of whom are who are VSU members and UCLA students. VCN aims to educate students on campus about issues affecting the Vietnamese American community. It also works to promote awareness for issues affecting the greater Vietnamese community beyond UCLA. The event also attracts an audience of 1,800 members coming from the Vietnamese-American community and the greater UCLA community. The show production promotes Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese-American experience that aims at enriching the cultural diversity of UCLA. This year’s VCN will delve into many different current issues and enlighten many audience members. Culture Night works to inform the greater UCLA about the Vietnamese-American community, and is the definitive manifestation of VSU’s cultural objective.

Did You Know?

1. VCN is in its 28th year in production
2. Over 1600 people came to watch the show last year (and some people had to be turned away!)
3. There were 180 participants last year
4. It’s all student directed and produced
5. Includes a diverse group of participants every year.
6. The 1st Vietnamese Culture Night of the year!
7. Most dances ever in this year’s VCN.
8. It’s a large budget production at Royce Hall (costing over $15,000!)
An Evening With Karen

So I had some time this past week so I decided to sit down and have a chat with our Cultural Coordinator, Karen, our big cheese for VCN this year. So, it began with a late-night chat which went something like this....

Me! Do you wanna write something for this week’s newsletter?
Karen: I guess I should.
Karen: Um...
Me!: "Why you should join VCN?" or, "VCN according to Karen"?
Karen: Let’s do it interview style, so it’s quick and to the point.
Me!: Alrighty! ......Right now?
Karen: sure
Me!: Alrighty, let me get myself ready. You should primp yourself up or something.

Me!: So, how long have you been in VSU?
Karen: This is my third year as a VSU board member.
Me!: But beforehand, you were in your high school’s VSA right?
Karen: Yes I was the VSA president my senior year for Fountain Valley High School and VCN Chair for VAHSA the same year.
Me!: Wow, so that’s...4+ years in a Vietnamese organization?
Karen: Yes, probably explains why I act a bit too mature for my age
Me!: Feel old sometimes?
Karen: Hell yea! Ready for retirement soon (I think haha).
Me!: What made you decide that you wanted to do VCN this year?
Karen: But I guess my experience with VAHSA’s culture night really motivated to take it to the next level
Me!: What did you do in VAHSA’s culture night that was so inspiring?
Karen: It was perhaps the most challenging that ever happened to me by far. Unlike college students, high school students are very indifferent about the Vietnamese culture, not to say we lacked so much more resources to pull together a production. Our budget for that year was barely $3000 no where comparable to VCN’s $20,000. It took us a year to prepare for a June show. Frankly, as stressed as I was on how the audience would react to what they saw on stage, that night I realized what truly made me happy was not hearing compliments about how great the show was from the audience point of view. One of my greatest memories was when a participant came up to me I said, "I’m so sad it’s all over now, but I can’t wait to do it again next year!"
Me!: Well, hopefully, someone says it to you again this year.
Karen: Haha, I hope so too.
Me!: So, what are you hoping to achieve with this year’s VCN? Or, simply put, what do you want viewers to walk away with after seeing it?
Karen: Well this year’s VCN slogan is “making the past a part of your present” It’s simply an attempt put a fresh perspective on how we view our history and understanding why we are here today as Vietnamese-American. Believe it or not that’s a very big hint.
Me!: So this year should be very educational then?
Karen: Yes that is my main vision for this year’s VCN. Because as fun as VCN can be with all the performing arts aspect, I really did not want that to overshadow that fact that it is also an educational program for not just audience but for all participants as well. Though with the title of Cultural Coordinator, I’m not ashamed to admit that there are a lot of things about our culture and history that I don’t know and just like everyone else, I’m also learning as I go.
Me!: So this will be a learning experience for all of us then. Nervous at all?
Karen: Nervous? As of right now, I’ve been running around so much, I really got no time to get nervous.
You Know It's VCN When...

10. You know it's VCN when people learned a few words in Vietnamese, even though it's just "Đi đi mau"

9. You know it's VCN when all of a sudden you have more Vietnamese friends than any other time in your life (except the part where you grew up in Vietnam).

8. You know it's VCN when you begin to notice all the "weird" things that your family does...turns out they are not so "weird".

7. You know it's VCN when all you can sing in the shower is the VCN song...yeah, the one that you dance to, sing to, and listen to...well, every week =)

6. You know it's VCN when you try on that áo dài or áo tún than or áo bà ba for the first time in your life...and well, you actually like it.

5. You know it's VCN when you suddenly forget the chorus line, or the dance move, or the acting line, yet...it didn't seem matter as much.

4. You know it's VCN when you finally have that 15 seconds (or more) of fame that you always want to have...and well, you deserve it after all the work that you have done.

3. You know it's VCN when your family and friends cheer for you on stage...no matter what part of the show you are in.

2. You know it's VCN when you eat, sleep, and breathe...well...VCN

1. You know it's VCN when as soon as the show over, you wish it all happens again...and again...

Love,

From someone who truly loves VCN for what it is...

Thanh Nguyen, VCN Production Adviser, Alumni, Resident Grandma
Contact her for more at littleonevn@yahoo.com

Did you know? Thanh played a rat during her culture night in 2004. It's entitled "Farewell Indochina."
Meet the VCN Coordinators...

Name: Tinh Nguyen
Position: Acting Director
E-mail: Tinhvn@yahoo.com

Name: Van Duong
Position: Traditional Dance Coordinator
E-mail: vanduong29@gmail.com

Name: David Nguyen
Position: Modern Dance Coordinator
E-mail: dxnguyen@ucla.edu

Name: Viet Le
Position: Martial Arts Coordinator
E-mail: vietle87@ucla.edu

Name: Yvonne Hoang
Position: Chorus Coordinator
E-mail: Yvonne_hoang114@yahoo.com

We're still looking for:
- Ballroom Coordinator
- Stage Crew Manager
- Stage Manager
- Dragon/Lion Dance Coordinator

Contact Karen at vsuvcn2008@yahoo.com for more info!

UCLA Vietnamese Student Union
Office: Kerkhoff 412
Phone #: 310-794-9546
E-mail: vsu@bol.ucla.edu

We're on the Web!
http://vsu.bol.ucla.edu

Missed our little video last week about Daniel Potter's epic quest to stop the evil Dark Lord Diamort? Or, wanna watch it again, and again, and again? It's on Youtube!
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nN_xcPb3Uk

Got a joke, story, poem, or call-out you wanna show off? Wanna pop the question in a special way? Send it in to your PRR at flyinghobbit@ucla.edu and be published in Vang Tiem!

Upcoming Events

Wed, October 11: VCN Info Session! 7-9, SAC 100D. Auditions for Drama and Chorus to follow after! Show off your skillz!

Thurs, October 12: VCN Auditions for Drama and Chorus! SAC 100D @ 7PM. If you can't make it Wednesday, come Thursday!

Thurs, October 12: Ignition: The SEA CLEAR Mentorship Bonfire. Come out to the first SEA CLEAR Mentorship Event and get the fire started right. Meet your potential Mentor or Mentee, learn about what Mentorship has planned for the rest of the year, and come have fun with SEA CLEAR! 5-11PM @ Dockweiler Beach (12000 Vista Del Mar, Playa Del Rey, CA).

Sun, October 14: UVSA (Union of Vietnamese Student Associations) College Fair in Westminister Civic Center (8800 Westminster Blvd, Westminster, CA 98683) from 11-5PM. Please join us in a day of fun and excitement as we explore the challenging world of college admissions. Meet current students from a variety of colleges across Southern California as well as college graduates that make up UVSA Staff and Alumni. Contact Alyssa Nguyen, ICC Rep, 310-308-1727, for more info.

Tues, October 16: VSU Internship Meeting. Come get closer with VSU and learn more leadership skills with our Internal VP, Tyler Phan. Contact him at tylerphan05@hotmail.com for more info!

Wed, October 16: HOPE High School Conference Meeting. It's not too late to get involved and learn how you can help high school students learn more about college! Contact Jimmy Dao for more info at daojimmy@gmail.com for the next meeting location!

Wed, October 16: VSU Banh Mi Sale. Miss home? Hungering for some Viet food? Stop by the VSU table starting at 10 AM and get some sandwiches for lunch (and dinner!)

Sat, October 19: UVSA Bonfire! Get to know people from other UC's across Southern CA. Spend a day mingling at Corona Del Mar from 10AM-10PM. Rides will be provided. Contact Alyssa Nguyen, ICC Rep, 310-308-1727.