When you say “spring”, I immediately think of Easter celebration, the most significant Christian holiday in my home country. I would like to share with you this festive tradition in a small country in the middle of Europe.

The Czech Republic is not a very strict religious country as you could say about Poland. Because of this, Easter mainly represents welcoming spring. There are many events going on during Easter in the Czech Republic. People can visit special exhibits in the castles and the palaces. Many people go to see an open air museum or craft fairs where they can enjoy the various culinary delights of Easter.

Easter is celebrated on a different date every year. It is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon. A baked sweet pastry called “Beránek” representing God’s herd, which led the Lord is considered as a symbol of Easter. Another symbol is a Cross, since Christ was sentenced to death by crucifixion. As a symbol of a new life, fertility and resurrection is represented by the egg. People ornately decorate and paint eggs in different styles.
A whip called “Pomlázka” is not a religious tradition but still firmly rooted in the Czech Republic and it has become an integral part of Easter. Very early in the morning on Easter, men and boys go from house to house and whip young women and girls with a whip made of willow wicker while saying different rhymes and singing songs. The girls try to defend themselves by pouring cold water over the intrusive men. This “whipping” is supposed to bring health and youth to the girls for the next year. As a reward, the boys receive colored eggs and colored ribbon that they put on the whip. The grown up men get some liquor in addition to the ribbon.

Easter used to be full of tradition, with events that began one week before the Easter itself. For example, “Květná neděle” (Palm Sunday) was last day of fasting. The name was derived from flowers the churches were decorated with. “Modré pondělí” (Blue Monday), represented last day of carnival. On “Sedivé úterý” (Grey Tuesday), the house was being cleaned from dirt. On “Škaredá středa”, which means on “Ugly Wednesday”, you should not be frowning. And if you did, you would be frowning every Wednesday for the next year! On “Zelený čtvrtek” (Green Thursday) you are supposed to get up very early in the morning and wash yourself with morning dew so you would not get sick in the following year. On “Velký pátek” (Big Friday), people used to go to wash themselves in a stream to keep healthy and well. Also people believed not to do laundry on Big Friday, not to work in the garden, and not to borrow anything from anybody. If you did, it would bring bad luck. On “Bílá Sobotá” (White Saturday), a cross was made from charred sticks and was brought onto a field so it would be fertile the following year. The houses were being cleaned, a braided whip was being made, and lots of traditional pastries were being baked.

Unfortunately, most of these traditions have not been preserved because Easter is now celebrated in a rather modern way. But people come to open air museums to remind themselves on these old traditions.

PS: I vividly remember that we used to eat hard boiled eggs for almost a whole week each year after Easter. So many eggs!

I wish you a very happy spring and hope you had great Easter!

### SPRING

By: Roy Tsai  
From: Taiwan

This is the first spring that I stayed in U.S. and I totally love the weather here. Compared to my country, the spring is cold, humid, and windy. Every day is rainy. Here in Seattle, the weather is cool and there is not too much rain. Almost every day, I can see the sunshine and the daylight is getting longer while the temperature is good for outdoor activities. Spring makes everything energetic: flowers are blooming, animals come out, in Japan they start the new semester during Spring, lots of my friends fall in love and start new relationships, and new students come to Highline. Spring means rebirth and is also the beginning of the year. In Winter the clouds are screaming and raining a lot over Seattle, the neighborhoods are silent because no kids are playing around, the sky is always dark and makes people feel upset, and the weather is too cold so no one wants go outside. Snow is the only thing people feel happy about especially the international students from Asia. Winter just makes people feel lazy and sleepy. I think most people will love the spring in Seattle, like I do. In spring, I can play tennis with my friends, walk to the Beach before dinner, enjoy the sunset, go to a picnic, watch a baseball game, and almost anything you can think of. But in winter, the only thing I can think about is sleeping, studying at home, eating hot pot, or going skiing. Enjoy the cool weather now, have fun outside, don't spend all day at home, and enjoy the spring.
The sunshine was upon the volunteers on early Saturday morning at West Fenwick Park in Kent. Some of us even yawned and rubbed our eyes, but the light beam above the sky reached through our eyes to wake us up. We planted trees and fixed things, and held tools for digging and planting. To be honest, I used to think that volunteer work was a waste of time, and that people do it hypocritically. But last summer, I had an encounter that changed my view of volunteering when a mechanic from a car store told me about Karma. He said, “Karma is that whatever you do will come back to you. —what goes around comes around.” Although my family religion is Buddhism, I am an atheist. But I started to believe in Karma, and since then I occasionally have given time out of my life for something good. One of my contributions is donating, and I have been donating to a boy from a poor area in Colombia every month. I do believe that the one day when the boy grows up, he may do something good to others or he may change our world. That’s why I took participating in the food bank or to change our environment for granted. Our main job was pretty simple: digging, taking out non-native plants seeded by some settlers from a couple decades ago, and replanting the original native nursery trees. I was actually confused by the process of replanting because it only seemed like substituting one plant with another. They are both plants, but the reason we replanted was because non-native tree, like the Blackberry, has more life force than the original plant and they invade the area which cause the death of native trees. After the hard work of planting the trees, my eyes were caught by a meaningful view. All the volunteers made a long line and passed water in a bucket to the next person to water the trees. My feeling was amazing because they all worked toward the same goal – to make a better world. The sky was still all blue and the sunshine was hitting my face, so I decided to walk back home. When you walk down a street, you see a road, the water you drink, the shoes and clothes you wear, the music you listen to, and utility poles or trees by the sidewalks. They are all created by workers, craftsmen, engineers or volunteers, and they have formed your life in some ways. I want to show appreciation for that. Also I want to thank you, volunteers. No matter your reasons for showing up (invited by friends or getting some credit for a class), dedicating your time was worth it and better than doing nothing for the world we live in.
Mosaic Editor
By: Reagan Keller
From: USA

To those reading this, my name is Reagan Keller. It is highly probable that none of you know who I am (one of the Mosaic editors) and so I’ll use this as an opportunity to tell you a little bit about myself. I am a seventeen year old Running Start student, which means that I am completing an associate degree while in high school. My interests are in Mathematics, Philosophy, and Art History. The Running Start program offered by Highline Community College served as a way to escape the severe boredom of attending a high school for two more years. Upon arriving at HCC, I was struck by the ethnic diversity in the student body and so I inquired around and found out about the International Student Programs organization.

It was through this that I met the chief editor of the Mosaic, April Chen. I expressed my interest in the various cultures around HCC and learned of the Mosaic. April responded to my enthusiasm by allowing me to help edit the international student newsletter. Editing the articles you guys write is very enjoyable as I get to read your reflections on living in the United States and your various other thoughts. Editing an international student newspaper, as well as working in the writing center, has made me very appreciative of your various cultures. The background each one of you bring to this campus makes it truly unique. It fascinates me to read the impressions HCC and the United States have made on you. I love to hear your thoughts, so it is my hope that you will keep writing articles! Lastly, I must thank April for allowing me this rewarding opportunity.

SPRING IN SEATTLE
By: Jennifer Wascher
From: USA

After months of overcast skies, we have pushed our clocks forward and finally made it to spring! There have been a variety of springtime ILSC activities from Mariner’s baseball to the Tulip Festival that Northwesterners take in when the sun is out. I consider myself a NW native having grown up on the Oregon Coast, attended a university in Tacoma, and spent close to 6 years in Seattle. The increase in daylight hours and sunny days during the spring allows you to explore your communities and enjoy the outdoors. Here are some ideas for getting out and about in the Seattle area...
• Parks! Whether you’re a biker, hiker, or just interested in a stroll, Seattle has many parks to explore. I spend my Saturdays running around Green Lake, the Sculpture Park and Waterfront, and Seward Park along Lake Washington. There are also many state and national parks east of Seattle, as well as Mount Rainier National Park. Just thirty minutes from Seattle, Mount Si and Tiger Mountain are popular destinations for day hikes, and after the climb up, offer great views on a clear day.

• SIFF! The Seattle International Film Festival is May 17-June 10. SIFF is the largest, most highly attended film festival in the United States, and it’s likely that there will be films shown from your home country. The 25-day festival includes over 450 features, short films and documentaries from over 70 countries annually. SIFF is a great opportunity to catch independent and foreign films, and with so many choices, I always make sure to plan ahead... Films and events will be announced on May 3.

• Ice Cream! There are more and more ice cream and frozen treats coming out of Seattle, and spring is a great time to sample. With five shops, Molly Moon’s is a local favorite with traditional and unique flavors, delicious toppings and waffle cones. My personal favorite is their salted caramel ice cream with hot fudge. There’s also Full Tilt Ice Cream for innovative flavors and pinball, and Parfait the ice cream truck on the go. If you’re looking for a variety of frozen treats (even vegan friendly), head to Capitol Hill for ice cream, frozen custard, frozen yogurt, and gelato.

• Seattle Center! This year Seattle Center and the Space Needle are honoring their 50th Anniversary of hosting the 1962 World’s Fair. On April 21st, Seattle Center kicked off The Next Fifty, six months of events and activities to celebrate the anniversary. From concerts to festivals, there is always something happening at Seattle Center and in May there are several Festál Cultural Festivals scheduled. Check out the API Heritage Month Celebration (May 6), Spirit of West Africa (May 12), Chinese Culture and Arts Festival (May 19), and NW Folklife Festival (May 25-28).
Past Events
Highline Community College 2012

SPRING EGGS PARTY
BASEBALL GAME
ARBOR DAY
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