

“Homeland” In-security

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If you've ever wanted to know what the people on Survivor go through, don't bother signing up for reality television; just spend a day in Vietnam. And I don't mean staying at a hotel in Saigon with air conditioning, toilet paper, and all those other good stuff. I'm talking about the countryside—one hundred percent all natural fun, excitement, and parasites baby!

It's a jungle in every sense of the word! The heat is blistering, the sun is scorching, and it rains almost every second of every day. Everywhere you



Da Nang Beach, a bustling tourist attraction

turn you see scores of rice patties, starving water buffaloes, turbulent rivers, daunting hills, and more rice patties. You can actually SEE the rain coming! First, the rainwater gently sprinkles lightly against your parched skin, and everything seems cool and calm enough.

Then suddenly, the sky opens up and just starts pulverizing the soil and everything else underneath it! Eventually, you're drenched from head to toe and it rains for the next three days! Turn your attention to the sky and you'll probably see lightning bolts zigzagging wildly in all directions and hear deafening sounds of thunder.

To the city-dwellers, prepare to face the most unpleasant time of your life! Thick vapors and billowing clouds of smoke will batter your face to a pulp. However, there is a bright side to this because you'll eventually huff in enough car exhaust and sewage fumes to make a tree jealous. What's more, cars everywhere

in Vietnam use cheap and unclean diesel (start petitioning environmentalists!), so if you're going to stick your head out the window to get a bit of fresh air, expect a full serv-

ing of pollution instead. As for the insanely congested traffic, it's not rare for some people to overreact. What does this mean for the average American on a peaceful getaway? Well, he'd better be willing to take or dish out some punches—how's that for exotic? Of course, travel-

ing isn't entirely that bad. I mean, aside from the complete lack of traffic lights, seat belts, functional roads, the concept of “not going in the opposite direction”, or any sense of the word “safety” as a matter of fact, nothing beats a slow and uncomfortable ride on a crowded, broken-down, two-lane street on top of a scooter speeding fifteen-miles per hour with no shirt on. All the while, you're dodging frantic kindergartners and picking bugs out of your teeth! But I digress—Vietnam isn't entirely horrendous. In fact, it's horrifically entertaining.

Most of the sceneries, however, are surprisingly gorgeous. The landscape is so green and luscious, and the oceans are just jaw-droppingly beautiful! Fishing boats are within feet of swimmers, and the shores are just bustling with activities. Then there are the endless successions of lush mountains that span north to south—from crowded cities to tranquil beaches to desolate countryside. But if you want relaxation, there is nothing like a stroll on the warm, sandy seashore. Cool breezes softly fluttering to and fro, the dark heavens illuminating with gleaming stars, waves gently rolling, and the ocean softly whispering in the still quiescence of night—nothing is as serene and calm.

As for the living conditions, human rights, poverty, and myriad of other problems, I'll save the philosophy for actual philosophers.

The Samoan Culture

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“Aren't you supposed to be big?” “What's a Samoan?” “Samoans are intimidating.” These questions and comments are just a few of the many a Samoan would receive when walking through the halls of Bolsa. Sure, some Samoans you know are slightly overweight and/or tall and “tough”

looking; however, it is these stereotypes that prevent one from recognizing the traits that truly identify the members of this rich culture.

Within the island of Samoa, located halfway between New Zealand and Hawaii, pride carries its inhabitants. Pride of culture, pride of family, pride of self. And being the first island of the Pacific to gain its independence in 1962, these citizens are rightfully proud.

Though Samoans are often mistaken for Hawaiians, there are major differences between the two. For one, while the Hawaiian culture features Hula dancing, Samoans don't even wear grass skirts. In ad-



Samoan girls always ready with a smile and a ukelele.

dition, the Samoan language differs from the Hawaiian language. For example, the greeting in Hawaiian is normally “Aloha,” but in Samoan it's “Talofa.”

Most importantly, however, the widespread assumption that all Samoans are overweight is false. The Samoan's common big build is due to his genetic heritage. Having been raised in a culture that emphasizes discipline, hard work, and strict

adherence to tradition, a Samoan has features that are normally viewed as rugged and “tough.”

Far from being stationary, however, Samoans are extremely active—they enjoy spending time in the sun and playing sports like rugby and cricket. Though these two are the most popular sports in this country, Samoans have also been known to hold a good game of smash-mouth, which is another name for American football.

In addition to their characteristic frame, Samoans are considered to be the “happiest” people of the Polynesian islands. This arises from the values of the culture, which teach its citizens to have pride, but remain humble, to welcome friends and ideas with respect, and to love with no boundaries. In fact, it should be hard to find a Samoan who isn't often smiling.

So, when a seemingly intimidating Samoan passes you in the halls of Bolsa, don't judge him on the basis of circulating stereotypes, but by the brightness of his smile. And remember, Samoans are not Hawaiian, so grass skirts really aren't their thing.

Fierce fashion: Fall Trends

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For Bolsa Grande students, back to school does not mark just the beginning of a new school year, but rather a great opportunity to sport some new fashion trends. And just because it's fall certainly does not mean their only options are lumpy sweaters and tennis shoes. For the ever-fashionable Matadors, walking down the hallways or entering a classroom is almost as fun as walking the catwalk during Fashion Week as they make bold statements with some of this season's new styles.

The prints that seem to be criss-crossing their way around campus is the plaid and



Maiying Her (12th)

tartan. But be wary: Don't overdo it. Remember that too much plaid is definitely bad. One plaid or tartan print per outfit whether in the form of a scarf, handbag, or jacket is enough and trendy. But plaid pants, top, and scarf would definitely land you on the fashion “Don't” page.

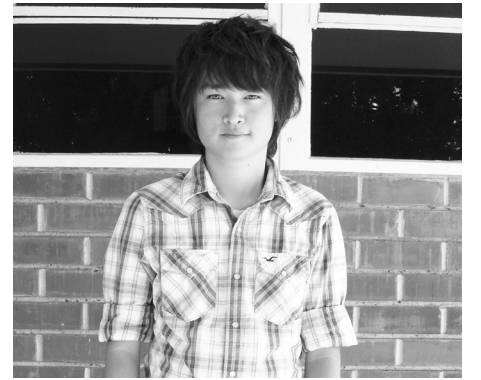
Bored of the same old leggings? Do not fret. Replace your cotton leggings with leather leggings or tights. This look is no longer just for bikers, it's a new wardrobe essential that can be worn under a long sweater or any long top. Either way, it's a statement that is sure to turn more heads than your Puritanical, everyday black tights.

“Punky Schoolgirl” is the name for this season's new hot look. Give punk a new twist by mixing some bright accessories with boarding-school basics, such as the tartan pleated skirt. The essential idea to remember about this look is to mix traditional preppy looks with some “punkish” accessories such as purse, jewelry, hair, and/or shoes. But don't go too crazy with the mixing of the two styles or you just might look like some wannabe fashion model who fell off the runway and into a big vat of fashion confusion.

The “schooly” look is always a fashion trend. Wearing a sweater vest, a tie, and a pair of jeans will not only prep up your look but will also make you look clean and casual.

With the cooling

weather, it's almost an essential to have scarves! And this fall, you can never go wrong with a scarf. It can make a formal dress look more casual or it can dress up a simple tee. Don't be afraid



Huy Tra (12th)

to experiment. There are many ways to wear a scarf. What's important is to find a comfortable style that best complements the rest of your look, not wear it in such a way that appears as if you're simply trying to cover up a hicky.

And finally, jeans, jeans, jeans. It's no longer chic enough to just buy organic groceries or drive a hybrid car. The new trend this season is to buy all-natural clothes. Eco-friendly designers have introduced jeans made from 100% organic denim. Considering that it takes one pound of fertilizer and pesticide to grow the conventional cotton required to make one pair of jeans, organic clothes can play a major role in saving the planet while still keeping the fashion conscious guy and gal look grrreat!

You can never leave the house without accessories. From sunglasses, to necklaces, you name it. Accessories enhances your look and give you more of a unique style among others. Throw on a pair of earrings or wear that pair of silver-rimmed aviators. Your look is “the” look, so be creative and let your clothes do the talking.

Mix and match, there's no need for waiting for trends to



Tuan Vu (12th)

start. Start your own trend and let your clothes and ideas be seen. Whatever you wear this fall season, wear it with confidence and you'll be sure to “make it work.”