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from LETTER BOX
the editor

Broadening Our Horizons

Growing up in Midwest suburbia, I had very little exposure or experience with cultural diversity beyond reading about it in a book. My travels outside the States were limited to Canada. My high school was pretty much homogeneous. I can count on two hands the amount of diversity that filled our halls. The positive was no one seemed to alienate those who looked differently. They were our friends, our tennis partners and football pals, but no one seemed to ask about their life outside of school, including me. Chalking it up to young ignorance, I thought everyone was essentially raised the same. Very few of my peers were considered well-off. For the most part we were like the show “The Middle” (perhaps better cooks than Frankie Heck).

The first time I experienced that cultures were truly different was during a computer assignment my freshman year. My genius friend Cheong was my savior in my Pascal coding class — yes, I’m old. One evening after pulling my hair out over an assignment, I gave up and called him. Oops. Apparently few people spoke English in Cheong’s home, and they certainly were not impressed with a young lady calling him. I apologized profusely and he explained that in his culture women did not phone men, especially the ones in high school. I would no longer assume that cultures were one and the same. I would take the time to learn before launching. This would become my guiding principal.

In this issue you will find two wonderful opportunities to experience worlds beyond your own. The Florida Film Festival (page 16) has an abundance of films that help bridge the cultural divide, as well as filmmakers who hail from around the globe. It’s also time for summer cultural camp planning (page 22). Children have the opportunity to learn about artists, the theater, science, history and much more — all of which are culturally enriching. Isn’t life more colorful when we experience new things? We are so fortunate to live in a community that not only embraces diversity, but also celebrates it. Here’s to broadening our horizons and learning before leaping!



PHELAN M. EBENHACK

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy".

Cindy Bowman LaFronz
Editor
Orlando Arts Magazine