

Voices

University of Houston

Language and Culture Center

Director's Message By Joy Tesh

With this issue of *Voices*, it is my great pleasure to welcome Dr. Renu Khator, Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the University of Houston, to our campus. If you are a new student this spring, you arrived at the same time as our wonderful new president. Dr. Khator has brought new excitement to the university community, and we are very happy that students in the Language and Culture Center were among the first to meet her when she arrived.

On January 15, we were surprised and delighted to have Dr. Khator come by for a visit. Our registration in the Cougar Den of the University Center was one of her first stops as she spent her first day as president visiting people and places on campus. Some of you shook hands with her and perhaps did not know who she was. She was friendly, poised, gracious, and

truly interested in you. She asked me about your mission here and about the countries you represent. Your teachers, other administrators, and I were amazed to see her, to meet her, and to be able to introduce our program to her on her very first day at work. You were beautiful that day, and so was she.

Recently, I heard Dr. Khator speak at a forum on campus. I listened carefully to her as she outlined her plan for her first 100 days as president, and I was caught up in the excitement of the possibilities we all have. Our new president is in the process of collecting information from students, faculty, and staff during the first 100

days of her administration. She then plans to meet with the Board of Regents, university administrators, professors, students, and committees to begin the work necessary to move the university further toward the greatness that she envisions.

Spring of 2008 is an exciting time to be an international student at the University of Houston. We have a new president who understands what it means to master a second language and to do the hard work necessary to achieve



Highlights

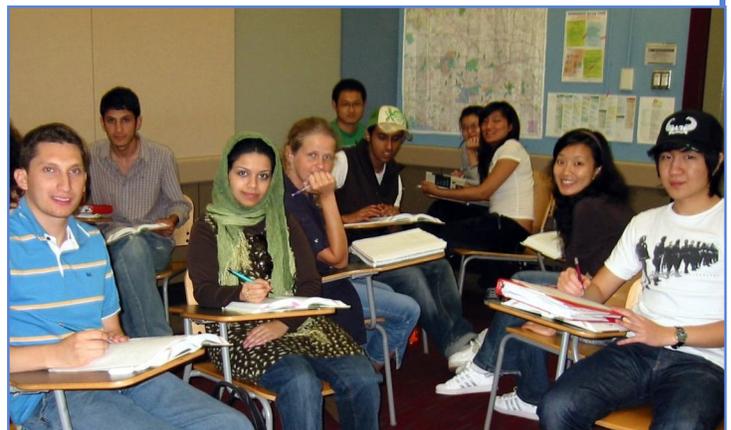
Scholarship Recipients	3
Restaurant Reviews	10
Culture Festival	18
Folktales	21
Poetry	27
Notes from the Student Advisor	32



Director's Message (continued)

great success. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Renu Khator as our new president, and we look forward to her continuing leadership and her inspiring example.

Again, I congratulate you on your decision to study with us this spring. You can be assured that you have chosen a dynamic university which celebrates and welcomes international students. In the Language and Culture Center, we never forget that working with you is a privilege. I wish you the best as you complete the spring term of 2008, and I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in May for summer in the Language and Culture Center.



Keumbi Noh, Bruno Togo, Georgiy Golovko, and Roberto Mauro López Receive LCC Scholarships

By Sandy Hartmann, Associate Director

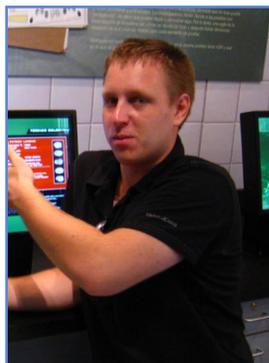
The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors Dr. Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the Language and Culture Center. A second full scholarship honors Dr. Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the fall graduation ceremony on Thursday, December 13, 2007, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Keumbi Noh**, the Davidson scholarship to **Bruno Togo**, and the two merit scholarships to **Georgiy Golovko** and **Roberto Mauro López**.



Keumbi (Jacqueline) Noh was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Noh**, who is from South Korea and who is currently studying in level five, was in level three when she received the scholarship. Her consistent hard work enabled her to progress two levels to level five. She has been a student at the LCC for three terms. After she completes her study of English, she plans to major in architectural design at the University of Houston. **Ms. Noh** says of receiving the scholarship, "It was the greatest pleasure! I deeply appreciate my teachers at the LCC. I have a good chance to advance my ability in English."

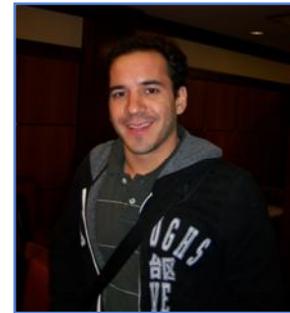


Bruno Togo was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Mr. Togo**, who plans to pursue a master's degree in economics at the University of Houston, hails from Mali and speaks French and Bambara. An LCC student for two terms, he is currently in level four. He was very surprised when he learned he had received the scholarship. In reflecting on his experience at the LCC, he says, "To mix with people from all around the world is very enriching. This experience will help me a lot in the future. I hope this scholarship will help many other students as it has helped me. I would like to thank my teachers and friends for the unforgettable moments passed together."



Georgiy Golovko was a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Golovko** is from the Ukraine and he speaks Ukrainian and Russian. He is currently studying in level six and intends to study for a PhD in computer science at the University of Houston so that he can pursue a career as a computer and video games developer. **Mr. Golovko**

said of receiving the scholarship, "It is a very good feeling when you get something that you haven't expected. I'm going to achieve one of my goals using my scholarship."



Roberto Mauro López was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. López**, who has been at the LCC for two terms, is currently studying in level five. He is from Mexico and his native language is Spanish. His future plans are to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology at an American hospital. He commented that the scholarship represents an opportunity to keep learning English, which is the first step in reaching his goal. He added that he would like to say "thank you" to those people who have helped with the success of every student that they have supported.

We congratulate **Keumbi Noh, Bruno Togo, Georgiy Golovko, and Roberto Mauro López** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the spring graduation ceremony.

About My Home

My Country: Colombia

Gina Paola Camargo Robayo, 2A

My country, Colombia, is a beautiful country. It has a variety of flora and fauna. It has a variety of music and food and the best coffee in the world. In addition, it is surrounded by two seas. It has wonderful, honest, hardworking people with many dreams. However, my country has been darkened by war. It is sad. Many people in other countries are afraid to come to Colombia because they think all the people in Colombia are bad and violent. But this is a wrong idea of Colombia. I want to invite everyone to visit Colombia and to see how wonderful it really is.



My Country: Vietnam

Kim Nguyen, 2D

My country is Vietnam. It is an agricultural country which is located in Southeast Asia and has a population of more than 84 million. Administratively, Vietnam is divided into 59 provinces, five of which are centrally controlled municipalities (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho City, Hai Phong City, and Da Nang City). There are 54 ethnic minorities in the country, but the Vietnamese people, also called the *Viet* or *Kinh*, make up the majority. Linguistically, the people of Vietnam speak Vietnamese as a national language. However, different ethnic minorities also have their ethnic languages. Nowadays, English is becoming more and more popular as a second language in this country. In most schools now students can learn English, even from the second or the third grade. As for religions, there is Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Caodaism, and Hoahaoism. However, the most popular religion is Buddhism.

In Vietnam the weather is different in different places. The average temperature is higher in the plains than on the plateaus and in the south than in the north. In the south, there are two seasons: the rainy season and

the sunny season. In the north, there are four.

There are a lot of beautiful places in Vietnam and if you ever go to Vietnam as a tourist, remember not to miss such scenic spots as Ha Long Bay, Nha Trang (especially *VinPearl Land*), Hoi An, etc. Vietnam is now the largest producer of cashew nuts and the second largest rice exporter in the world. Besides, this country also exports tea, coffee, and marine products. Last year, Vietnam was admitted into the WTO and this is good news for all people.



The Cities in Saudi Arabia

Abdulaziz Alkhatib, 2D

When I see the map of Saudi Arabia, I see a big country and many cities, and I see my city among them. I will talk about my city and about the big cities in Saudi Arabia.

The first city, where I lived and which I have always loved, is Dhahran. It is a small but very beautiful city. Also, it has Aramco, the biggest petroleum company in Saudi Arabia, and it has the biggest university in Saudi Arabia, which is King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals. The second city is Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. It is the biggest city in Saudi Arabia and has a larger population than all the other cities. It has the king's palace and the ministries, and it has an international airport. The third and the fourth cities are Makkah and Medina. Those two cities have the Holy Mosque and the Prophet Mohammed Mosque. Most Muslims go to visit those mosques. The fifth city has the greatest number of foreigners because the Holy Mosque is near it. This city is called Jeddah and is a very important city because nobody can go to Makkah except from Jeddah. It also has a big seaport and an international airport. The sixth and the seventh cities are the industrial cities of

Yandu and Judail. The eighth city is Dammam, which is very beautiful and has the biggest seaport and the most attractive seaside. But it also has many petroleum companies. Of course, it also has a big international airport. The tenth and the eleventh cities are the tourist cities of Abha and Altaif. Many people like to go to these cities for their vacation because the weather is very beautiful, especially in the summer.

I am very proud of my country and of the cities of my country!

The Night Market in Taiwan

Yin Chi Chen, 2D

I think the most well known market in Taiwan is the Night Market. I remember when I was a little girl, my father used to take me to the market for dinner or to buy something else.

Business people like to have their shops at the Night Market because they don't have to pay rent for the shops and they don't have to pay taxes for their businesses. Usually the shops open at 5:00 in the afternoon and do not close until midnight. Every night, there are thousands of people coming to the market to eat some delicious food or to buy clothing or something. Besides the food and clothing, there are also interesting games such as water polo, mahjong, and goldfish catching. The food, the clothing shops, and the games are attractive enough, but many people also like to come to the Night Market because it is very clean, has a lot of parking space, and is always brightly lit up with thousands of colored lights.

If you are going to Taiwan, don't forget to visit the Night Market. You will certainly fall in love with it!

A Significant Venezuelan Leader

Alba Pérez, 5A

Simón Bolívar was one of the most important leaders of Venezuela and South America. His complete name was Simón José Antonio de la Santísima Trinidad Bolívar Palacios y Blanco; he was born in Venezuela in 1783 and died in Colombia in 1830.

Bolívar is regarded as one of the

Liberators of Spanish America. The history of Bolívar has been considered one of the most famous Venezuelan myths. The Bolívar aristocratic bloodline derives from a small town located in Spain in the Basque country. This family settled in Venezuela in the sixteenth century.

Bolívar had many victories in battles and he achieved freedom from the Spanish control of countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Panama, and Peru. He created the Gran Colombia, in which he had seen his dream of creating an American Revolution-style federation among all the new independent republics; however, he had huge difficulties keeping control, and for this reason, the Gran Colombia was rejected and Bolívar was proclaimed a dictator.

Finally, Bolívar resigned his presidency and intended to leave for exile in Europe; however, he died before setting sail.

Bolívar had around seventy lovers. He married María Teresa, but she died less than a year later and he never married again.

The currency in Venezuela, the *bolívar*, was named in his honor; also, he has hundreds of statues around the world, including England, the USA, Mexico, Australia, Canada, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, and almost all South American countries. In Texas, there is a narrow strip of land in Galveston County that separates the eastern part of Galveston Bay from the Gulf of Mexico. It is named Bolívar Peninsula in honor of Simón Bolívar.

Bolívar's political legacy has been enormous. He is a very important figure in South American political history and his legacy continues through modern times. Unfortunately, some of the presidents in South America have been trying to use Bolívar's legacy in a cunning and dishonest way, merely to seek acceptance and reach their aims, which are not always well-intentioned.

King Faisal

Nawal M. Bugis, 3A

King Faisal was the ruler of Saudi Arabia for ten years. During his reign, his policy was to improve life in Saudi Arabia. The first important area was health. He opened hospitals and health centers and offered free medical treatment and Medicare across the country. Every time he met people, he told them he believed "Good community comes through good health." Second, he was very

much interested in general and higher education. There are now many schools for both boys and girls. He opened the door to the formal education of girls.

Moreover, he awarded a lot of scholarships to students to study around the world, particularly in the United States of America in order to get higher education in many different majors, like engineering, health professions, economics, and electrical engineering. Next, King Faisal endeavored to create petrol oil filters and promoted oil exportation around the world. In addition, he gave aid to farmers, poor people, the elderly, and widows. At that time, he was known as "the world man." In conclusion, he won native hearts, had a good reputation, and was popular around the world, especially in the United States.

A Legend in My Country

Tricia Thai, 5B

A legend who is admired and respected in my country is Ho Chi Minh, the first president of the Democratic Republic in Viet Nam.

Ho Chi Minh, whose real name was Nguyen Tat Thanh (1890-1969), was born in a village of central Viet Nam, the son of an official who had resigned in protest against French domination. During World War I, he lived in London and in the United States. At the end of the war, he went to France, where he became involved in the French Socialist movement and was a founding member of the French Communist Party. He had been in China, Hong Kong, The Soviet Union, and Thailand, where he studied, organized revolutionaries, and founded the Communist Party of Indochina before he returned to Viet Nam in World War II. Ho Chi Minh led the Viet Minh independence movement, which established the independent republic of North Viet Nam, and he reunited North and South Viet Nam in the Vietnamese unification.

Ho Chi Minh is considered the most well-known Vietnamese because of his leading role in the current Vietnamese Communist Party. Moreover, he is also regarded all over the world as one of the most influential political leaders of the 20th century.

The Unsolved Mystery in the Qin Dynasty

Mark Chuang, 5B

Almost everyone knows the Great Wall of China is considered one of the most famous view points in the world. It was built by a Chinese emperor whose name was Qin Shi Huang (which means *the first emperor of the Qin*), with the hope that his son would become the second one and his dynasty would go on and on forever. Qin Shi Huang was regarded as the most powerful and cruel leader at that time. He had combined all the little states in old China and used ruthless methods to force them all to be centralized. He was focused on standardizing legal codes, the forms of writing and coinage, and the pattern of thought and scholarship. Characters from the former state of Qin became the standard for the entire empire. At that time, he seemed unbeatable in the world. But the only anxiety in his mind was that his son couldn't control the whole empire as he did; therefore, he asked for help from Xu Fu, the court sorcerer who claimed he could find the secret of eternal life. Xu Fu sent three thousand virgin boys and girls to get the secret of life from the immortals that lived on Peng Lai Mountain in the eastern seas. Xu Fu brought with him enough daily supplies for years of living, and he sailed for several years but without finding the mountain. In 210 BC, when Qin Shi Huang questioned him, Xu Fu claimed there was a giant sea creature blocking the path, and he asked for archers to kill the creature. Qin Shi Huang agreed and sent him the archers. Hence, Xu Fu sailed again, but he never returned from this trip.

It has been alleged that Xu Fu landed in Japan and developed the ancient Japanese society. According to this theory, that's why the Japanese have so many similarities to the Chinese. Yet others say that there were storms in the year when he went out, and perhaps he just died in a boat disaster. In any case, there is no direct evidence showing where he went. Thus, the unsolved mystery in the Qin dynasty will probably always remain unsolved.

Cultural Pride

Hangeul: The Korean Alphabet

Hee-souk Kwon, 2D

There are many countries in the world and most countries have their own languages. But not every country that has its own language has also its own alphabet. Many countries use the Roman alphabet like English, French, etc. Though Korea is a small country, it has its own alphabet, called "Hangeul".

Hangeul is a great invention. A long time ago, the Koreans had their own language but they did not have an alphabet. Therefore, the Koreans at that time had to borrow the Chinese alphabet. However, it wasn't easy to use the Chinese alphabet to write the Korean language. The result was that many people were illiterate. Sejong the Great, who was the fourth king of the Joseon Dynasty of Korea, saw this problem and he ordered the scholars of the country to invent a new alphabet that was easier for the common people. Thanks to the King's and the scholars' efforts, the new writing system, called Hangeul, came into being in 1443.

Hangeul is scientific. It is composed of 24 basic letters. There are 14 consonants and 10 vowels. The shapes of the letters were made to look like the shapes of the speech organs and the three elements of sky, earth, and humans. The letters are uniquely put together into a meaningful syllabic block, and in this way it is different from the English word in which the letters follow one another in a line. Also, in Hangeul, there is what we call "perfect phonemic writing." In English, the spelling is different from the pronunciation. For example, the word 'bicycle' is pronounced /baisikl/. In Hangeul, however, the spelling and the pronunciation go well together, thus making it very easy for people to learn to write.

We Koreans are very proud of our Hangeul!

Burkina-Faso's Cinema Festival

Pegdwende Martial Marie Igor Kafando, 2A

Burkina Faso's Cinema Festival (FESPACO) shows movies from all over the world: Africa, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and The USA. Prizes are given for the best films. The judges are not only African but are also French and English. Last year, the first prize went to an African movie, *When the Elephants Fight*. Last year, there were about 200 movies, so many that they had to change the rules to show all the movies. Movies were shown on TV and in movie clubs. Many people watched these movies. People from many different countries travel to Burkina-Faso to go to our Cinema Festival; the FESPACO allows for the meeting together of people from different cultures and countries. In addition to the movies, there are concerts and exhibits of many artists from different countries.

Changes in Mali

Lamine Diane, 2D

Mali is a country of traditions and customs, and therefore, parents are very conservative in their attitudes towards the education and marriage of their children.

About forty years ago, parents were very strict and severe about the education of their children. They believed that it was their duty to raise their children as they had been raised by their parents. They educated their children in accordance with the traditions and customs of the country. For example, women had no rights, and in the family only the men could make decisions. Also, children were obliged to do everything according to the will of the father. Girls could not go to school and were obliged to marry the men chosen for them by their fathers. Even boys were not allowed to choose their own wives because marriages were always arranged for them by their fathers. The consequences of arranged marriages were certainly tragic. Because they did not marry their wives for love, some husbands would hit their wives every day, while others would leave their family and go to live in another country. Reactions by the wives were also negative. Some also tried to run away from the country and some even tried to poison their husbands. Of course, the young people of Mali knew too well about the problems that might come from some traditions and customs and for a long time they tried to use "diplomatic ways" to solve these problems. For example, they showed their parents research about the disadvantages of not giving the girls any education and of arranging marriages for their children.

Thanks to their efforts, many parents now have allowed their children greater freedom in choosing their own husbands and wives.

A Wedding in Mali

Sekou Coulibaly, 1A

In Mali, Sunday is the special day for a wedding. Two weeks ahead, people start to prepare for this event by distributing wedding cards. Four days ahead, the women organize nightly ceremonies for the future couple. On the wedding Sunday, everyone wakes up early and everyone does something. At 9:30 am, everyone goes to the city hall for the official ceremony. After the mayor finishes this ceremony, everyone goes back home and prepares for the religious ceremony at 4:30 pm. Then the party starts. The morello sings and the people dance. Everybody eats and drinks and celebrates the new marriage.

Marriage in Burkina Faso

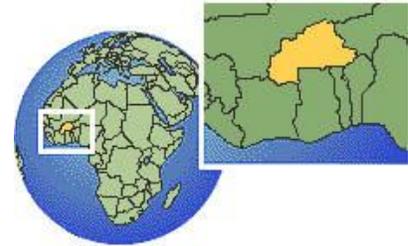
Serge Sirima, 2B

Marriage is a special relationship which unites a man and a woman. In different countries, marriages are celebrated in different ways. This is because different peoples have different customs. In my country, which is Burkina Faso, marriage always involves many different ceremonies.

First, the groom's parents have to meet the bride's parents to ask if their children can become husband and wife. When coming to the meeting, the groom's parents usually bring with them a lot of gifts, especially a sheep and some money. After receiving these gifts, the bride's parents will pray to God and ask God to give blessings to their daughter. After this first ceremony is done, both families will cook a special lunch and eat it together.

This special lunch means that the bride's parents officially agree to let their daughter get married. The groom can now take his future wife to their new home. However, before he can take his future wife away with him, he must make a deal with the women of the girl's family, who make a show of locking her up in her bedroom. After some time of persuading, the groom is allowed to come into the room to get his future wife. All this looks like kidnapping because after the groom has gotten the bride, he will immediately run away with her!

One week after this kidnapping, the bride and the groom will go to the city hall, and in front of both families and many guests, they will promise that they will love each other in both suffering and happiness. This ceremony is followed by a wedding reception, where the newlyweds share a lunch with their guests. At the reception, there is always a lot of eating and drinking. After the lunch is the honeymoon, which all the young people love, and very soon after that, the two families will be expecting a new baby.



The Seliba in Mali

Bakary Kouma, 2B

The Seliba in Mali is a special Muslim party day that happens about two months after the Muslim Lent month and lasts for three days.

In preparation for the day, each household must buy at least one sheep and some new clothes for the whole family. Early in the morning of the Seliba, the men in the family put on their new clothes and shoes and go to the mosque to pray, while the women stay home and make the preparations. When the men return home from the mosque, they slaughter the sheep so that the women can cook it for dinner. When dinner is ready, all members in the family, including grandfather, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and cousins, gather together to enjoy the food, the drinks, and the songs. After the dinner, the older members in the family will go to greet and talk with their relatives, while the younger members will go to the nightclubs. Most children like to go see a movie on this day.

The Seliba is always an interesting party day in Mali. Everybody looks forward to it so that they can eat and drink and have a lot of fun!





Friendship



Cross-generational Friendships

Rana Khalid Ibrahim, 5B

Friendships allow you to share your thoughts and feel comfortable with people. There are different kinds and levels of friendship. The one that describes my friend and me is called a cross-generational friendship. This basically means having a friendship with someone who is much older or younger than you.

I met my friend last semester when I was taking a level four English class at the LCC. She was one of my teachers. First, we got to know each other through copybooks in which students would write letters to the teacher, talking about our lives, our thoughts, our daily activities, and so on. Sometimes we would ask our teacher questions in these books. That teacher used to collect our copybooks at the end of each week. She would answer our questions and give us her opinion about what we wrote by writing back to us in our copybooks. In that way, we got to know a lot about each other.

During and after the semester, my teacher and I wrote each other a lot of email messages, especially on weekends. When I started writing to her last semester, I had a feeling that this woman advised me and talked to me not just as a friend, but as a mom. Day after day, that feeling grew stronger and led into the nicest and most respectful friendship I have ever had with a teacher.

Friends should meet each other from time to time to exchange thoughts, discuss many issues, and keep in touch. My teacher and I have met each other about once a week or once every two weeks. Our meetings depend on our free time. As I meet her, we talk freely about many issues, and as she is older than I, I enjoy hearing her perspective and learning about her life experiences. The most interesting thing is that when she was younger, she went through most of the problems I now face.

A friendship is a very important human relationship, but we have to choose our friends carefully. Choosing a suitable friend whose personality fits our own is essentially what makes a friendship

successful. I'm happy I've found that kind of friend in my teacher.

Meeting an Old Friend in the USA

Yerbolat Nazarbekov, 5E

I am from Kazakhstan and I lived in Shimkent. When I was a child, like other children, I used to play with a neighbor kid. We used to go to the swimming pool, play computer games, play soccer with other guys, and spend a lot of interesting time together.

Unfortunately, he and his family moved to another city, so I didn't hear anything about him from that time. After several years, I came to the USA to study English at the Language and Culture Center. On the first day of the semester, I was meeting my classmates in school. When I first saw him, I couldn't believe that he was the friend from my childhood. Then I approached him and asked his name. It turned out that he was exactly who I assumed he was. His name is Kadyr Kayupov and he is studying at the LCC right now. I was so happy when I met him because I hadn't seen him for ages and had spent the happiest days with him. After all these years, it seemed just like yesterday.

Do you keep in touch with old friends from school?

Eric Wang, 5A

I have a long-time friend, Allan, who is my best friend because I have known him since I studied in elementary school. Therefore, we have numerous valuable and distinctive memories from our childhood. Consequently, we always keep in touch and share many things with each other.

The first reason why I consider Allan to be my best friend is because he shares his experience with me. For example, he had a lot of maturity because of his job, which he acquired very early. As a result, he could analyze and make decisions quickly and properly. Thus, whenever I felt depressed or frustrated, I could discuss my issues with him. Allan is like my life coach, and I have learned numerous meaningful lessons from him

The second reason why I would like to keep in touch with Allan is because I believe that a long-time friend can comprehend me better than a new friend and we will not be competitive. We grew up together and spent a lot of time talking, playing, and encouraging each other. In addition, we shared many important life experiences with each other. How easy it is!

The third reason why I would like to maintain this friendship is because we have had so many amusing memories that have left long-lasting impressions on me. For example, when we were children, we once fell into a swimming pool by accident. It was funny because we hadn't paid any attention to our steps. Also, when we were teenagers, one time we spent around two hours just walking from school back home. Later, when I rethought this crazy thing, I told my friend, "Okay, been there, done that. So, let's not do this kind of thing again."

In conclusion, I really consider keeping long-time friends to be essential. Consequently, I cannot find any excuses to stop making contact with my old friend Allan. I will definitely always treasure our friendship.



Restaurant Reviews



Mi Pueblito

Héctor García, 3E

As an international student, to visit a traditional restaurant of your country may be a good way to keep homesickness away. Four months ago, I discovered a spectacular restaurant named Mi Pueblito. I felt homesick because I missed many things of my country such as the food, so I decided to look for a traditional Colombian restaurant. Mi Pueblito is located at 9425 Richmond Avenue, Houston, Texas 77063.

First, when I went to Mi Pueblito, I found a lot of things that I liked, so I felt better. In front of the main door of the restaurant, there was a Chiva (traditional Colombian car) parked in the big parking lot. Moreover, the parking was free. Upon entering, I noticed the very nice and comfortable interior. Its decoration reminded me of my father's farm. I was really excited. After that, my happiness continued because the dining room contained many traditional Colombian plates and beverages. For example, I saw Bandeja Paisa, Ajiaco con Pollo, Empanadas, Agua de Panela, etc. Then I decided to sit and place my order. I ordered Ajiaco con Pollo, and I was surprised because the service was very efficient and friendly. Furthermore, the prices of the food were reasonable. Finally, I drank a delicious cup of Colombian coffee and left Mi Pueblito.

In brief, if you are an Asian, African, European, or Hispanic international student, perhaps the best way to beat homesickness is to find a traditional restaurant which will make you feel much better.

Hunan Village

Hung-Yi Hsieh, 3E

Hunan Village, located off Westheimer and Shepherd, is one of the best Chinese restaurants I've been to since I came here. It is easy to find, yet parking is very limited.

When I went in, the first thing I realized was a very classy setting with nice plates, Chinese paintings, and dimmed lights; it seems to be a perfect place to bring a date. I was greeted by a middle-aged man and was seated at the window seats. The courses on the menu are mainly Hunan-style Chinese food, which is mostly spicy, sweet, and inexpensive. 12 dollars can get you a full-course meal. Another thing I realized while I was waiting for my food is that the chefs are actually Chinese, unlike in other Chinese restaurants that engage others to cook the food. So I knew my food would be authentic, and as it turned out, it really was. The food was quite delicious, so it made me feel like I was home. At that time, I didn't even realize I was actually in Houston.

Overall, the setting was classy, the food was great, and the service was nice. I would recommend Hunan Village to any Chinese food lover around the Houston area.

Bennigan's

Mama Samassekou, 3E

My first time to eat in a restaurant in Houston was at Bennigan's. First of all, this place is very chic and very organized. I like this place because it is perfect. Waiters and waitresses are friendly. Helping customers is the first thing they think about. Secondly, the place is easy to find. It is located in the Galleria at 4900 Westheimer. Finally, I like Bennigan's because the food is more affordable, compared to other restaurants in Houston. Eating at Bennigan's means eating better.

Dimassi's Mediterranean Buffet

Osama Mosa, 3E

Dimassi's Buffet is the biggest Mediterranean buffet in Texas. So far they have at least seven locations throughout the United States. They serve a variety of healthy food that's prepared with healthy products. It promotes a very healthy life for everyone in the family. Fresh products such as live oil, lemon, and garlic are used in their food. Furthermore, they provide a wide variety of rice dishes, fish, and chicken.

In addition, they serve a variety of desserts like baklava, semolina cake, etc. Dimassi's is a very special restaurant with a nice atmosphere that will allow you to enjoy your meal and feel good.

China Star Restaurant

Ya-ching Chu, 3E

I will introduce the Chinese restaurant that I went to for the first time five months ago in Houston. The restaurant's name is *China Star*. It is near the University of Houston. It is easy to find and has a parking area in front of the restaurant.

When you open the door, you see many tables around the restaurant and many students are eating their meal. The restaurant has many kinds of food to choose from, and the food is delicious! The menu is written in both English and Chinese. The restaurant's workers are very friendly, and they clean the table quickly. The prices of the food are neither expensive nor cheap.

The restaurant has a special lunch every day, and the price is cheaper than usual. I like Tuesday's lunch very much because the meal includes chicken and shrimp. In conclusion, I like the restaurant, and give the restaurant a four-star rating.

Hilton Restaurant

Yacouba Ouedraogo, 3E

The Hilton Restaurant is located within the University of Houston. It is one of the most beautiful and well-known universities in Texas. Everything inside the hotel's restaurant, from the decoration, the pictures of famous people, to the food they serve, is amazing. The Hilton Restaurant is always clean and has a reputation for good service. Everybody smiles and asks whether everything is okay or if you need anything else. Moreover, the Hilton Restaurant services start at its parking. There is always affordable parking available and to top that off, add the great prices. I recommend this restaurant to everybody. So, meet me at the Hilton, my favorite restaurant.

Taco Bell

Yoorim Kim, 3E

I went to Taco Bell on Fountainview Street. Taco Bell is the nation's leading Mexican-style fast-food restaurant. It serves tacos, burritos, signature quesadillas, Border Bowls, nachos, and other specialty items. Taco Bell has many branches, making it easy to find. It has large parking areas which are always available. The interior is not gorgeous, but it is clean and neat. I think it is comfortable. Taco Bell's food is tasty. It's delicious. The food is not greasy and fattening. The dishes have many vegetables, so it is good for your health and diet. The service at Taco Bell is good. All the cashiers are kind and smile. Of course, the price is reasonable there.



Level 6 students discussed and wrote about the first four of the five phases of culture shock: the pre-departure phase, honeymoon phase, increasing participation phase, crisis phase.

Pre-Departure Phase

Faisal Al-Towaijri, 6A

My first phase of culture shock was the pre-departure phase before coming to the United States. It was my first time to live so far away; it would be in the United States. I was really excited about this opportunity, and the only thing on my mind was getting the best out of it.

A couple of days before my flight, the adventurous feeling vanished, and sadness controlled me. Leaving your family is not an easy thing to face, especially when you'll be away for a long time.

When I moved to Dallas, I didn't know anyone. Adjusting there would have been hard but not impossible, but moving to another city was clearly the best solution to this problem. I chose to transfer to Houston because I know more people here, and it has a reputation as a multicultural city. As soon as I arrived in Houston, my friends came to pick me up. After that, I started adapting to the way people live here. Having friends has made it easier to be in a foreign country.

Laura Bahamón, 6B

Before I came to the United States, I was happy and excited. I really didn't feel that I fit in well in Colombia because some people there party too much and drink in excess. I was looking forward to learning from a new culture. I didn't feel that I was going to be sad or homesick here because I felt I would be comfortable. I liked the music, the organization, and the courtesy of the Americans. I also knew that communication with my parents was going to be frequent, and my brother would be here. I was excited to move.

Before my trip, I didn't say goodbye to many friends because I didn't want them to feel sad or cry. In fact, I usually found excuses to avoid meeting with them.

What encouraged me to move here is that I had already come here as a tourist, I loved the city, and I had met good friends here. Now I can say that I definitely do not regret my decision.

Georgiy Golovko, 6B

I was really excited about the opportunity to study in the United States. With a big list of things to do and places to visit in the "New World," I had no doubt about what was ahead, and I felt the support of all my relatives and friends in my goals. I couldn't wait for that day, August 13th, when my flights were booked.

I was dreaming about the opportunities that I would have in America. I had forgotten all my real goals of going abroad. The future seemed bright to me, and I was obsessed with the idea of easily finding a job and having a good income in a short time. I hoped that all the stupid people with a "Soviet" mentality would be left in Ukraine. I thought about the entertaining and friendly environment where people smile and are polite wherever you are.

Ting Ting Feng, 6B

While I was packing before I came to Houston, I was excited about exploring the new country's culture, ideology, and rules; on the other hand, I was sad about leaving my family, friends, and hometown. In fact, I didn't tell my friends about my plan to study abroad until two weeks before I left. I wrote the announcement on my blog, and when my friends saw it, they were angry. I had been scared to tell them the truth because I didn't want to see their crying faces or say goodbye.

I ate breakfast with my friends on the morning my plane was going to leave. We were talking as usual and making fun of each other even though we knew that we wouldn't see each other for a long time. We didn't cry until I got in the car and left my house. I knew they were crying, but I didn't turn around to look at them again.

When I was on the plane by myself, I wasn't excited anymore. I finally realized that I would be alone in a strange country, and I suddenly woke up from my illusion. I cried the first week I was in Houston, not going anywhere besides my room. However, I adapted to this city quickly, and now I've fallen in love with the wonderful weather in Houston.

Honeymoon Phase

Lisa Fornell, 6B

My first month here was filled with things to do and see. I found the shopping malls here incredible. They were huge and stylish, and I could find just about anything I wanted. In restaurants, I was shocked by three things: how good the service was, how good the food was, and how big the portions were. I took pictures of our meals and sent them to friends to show them how enormous the meals were and told them about the amazing restaurants.

My most memorable impression is that everything was huge, not only the meals. Houses are enormous, cars gigantic, and streets wider than any streets I have ever seen. On top of all this, everything is clean, at least in the nicer areas. Streets always seem to be newly swept and where the lawn meets the pavement, it is perfectly cut so that no grass touches the pavement.

I felt that everything I had heard about the United States was true, especially about shopping and the large size of everything. Now I guess I have gotten used to it and learned that I can bring the rest of the meal home in a doggy bag.

Minghao (Rainie) Zhang, 6B

When I arrived in Barcelona to attend Spanish classes, everything was wonderful to me, including the Gaudi-style airport and the old but fabulous University of Barcelona. There were a couple of days before the class began, so I went out every day with my roommate, a Chinese girl who had lived in Spain for more than a year. She took me around the city, telling me where the bank was, where the market was, where to buy cheap but fresh fruits, and where I could bargain with the shopkeeper. Every time we went to a new place, whether it was a famous church or just a small market around the corner, I kept asking how this city could be so magical and marvelous!

Even after I had started my class, I was still thrilled all the time. When I took the subway to school, I was always thinking about how Spanish people had built the subway long ago when there were no machines for construction. When I took the bus to school, I tried to remember all the names of the streets and bus stops, just for fun. On weekends, my roommate and I liked to take the bus to the beach on the Mediterranean Sea or to other famous sights in the city. I could not help being energetic and thrilled every minute during that first period of time after I got to Barcelona.

Increasing Participation Phase

Néstor Sánchez, 6B

One of the most interesting and important phases of culture shock is the increasing participation phase. This is the phase in which people begin to think realistically about their new environment. When I was at this point, I started to analyze the real advantages and disadvantages of being in the United States. After the honeymoon period, I saw the real panorama, which was positive in some cases, but not in others.

For example, since I lived in a new culture, very different from my own, language was one of the things I began to worry about. I also started to believe that if I wanted to succeed in the United States, I had to be as competitive as Americans to make a place for myself. Despite these facts, I thought this new society could give me the means and the opportunities to pursue quality education and work.

Crisis Phase

Othman Altwajri, 6B

My crisis phase was triggered the moment I realized I had left my wallet in a taxi after riding home from school. When I noticed my wallet was missing, I almost lost my mind.

After I had a chance to take a breath and soak in the loss, I started thinking about how to solve this problem. First I had to cancel my credit cards and file a police report. The bank would send me another credit card in the mail, but it would take an entire week to be delivered. This was troubling to a man who had no money in his pocket and had no car to visit the bank to get an emergency loan.

When I contacted the cab agency to get in touch with the driver who was driving when I lost my wallet, I ran into a wall of excuses; they would not take any action in response to my plea for help. I was frustrated, and I fumed about the circumstances of my unsolved situation. The escalating frustration led to a large dose of sleeping and homesickness, but things eventually got better.

Evgeniya (Jennya) Ryabova, 6B

According to researchers, there are five phases of culture shock. However, from my own experience I can describe only one of them, the crisis phase. I "successfully" skipped the other phases because I was not happy leaving my country to come to the United States.

When I came to Texas, the first few days my feelings and emotions matched those that are typically experienced by international students who are in the crisis phase of culture shock. I had strong feelings of aggression toward everyone, not because they were bad or had done something wrong, but just because they weren't my friends. Because I hadn't had a strong desire to move to the United States and I had nothing to do here, I became depressed.

I was sleeping until the afternoon and felt lonely when I woke up because I was staying at home by myself. Moreover, these emotions affected my relationship with my husband; we had conflict with each other almost every day. I didn't want to go out or meet with his new friends. I was alone.

I have been living here for almost one year now. I began to study in LCC about half a year ago and have found new friends. I believe that my way through the culture shock phases has only begun. Hopefully, I am finished with the crisis phase.

Life Lessons

A Punishment Deserved

Cynthia Mushira Traore, 4E

Teenagers' actions are sometimes very stupid and parents are right to punish them. When I was 14, the conflict between my parents and me was about the permission for me to go to a nightclub. Every single weekend I asked my parents for the authorization to go there and every single time it was the same answer: "NO." I was particularly tired of this answer, so I imagined a plan to achieve my goal: to go to the nightclub without my parent's authorization.

My cousin Ami is a great fan of nightclubs and I knew that with her I could fulfill my wish. So, at the beginning of the week, I asked my parents to permit me to spend the weekend with my grandmother. They found that a little bit strange, but agreed. So on Friday night, they got me to my grandmother's house and told me they would return to get me on Sunday evening. I was really happy, and my cousin Ami too. Thinking I had my parents' permission, she got me to do my hair and to go shopping for the night's party.

At almost 11 p.m., my cousin's fiancé came to pick us up with his car. When we arrived at the nightclub, named *Blue One*, he paid for the tickets to get into the nightclub. It was my first time and I enjoyed the music, dancing, and singing and was heedless of my parents' ban. MISTAKE!!!! It was at the highest point of my happiness that Ami's cell phone rang and guess what -- it was my dad! He was very angry and ordered me to get back home as soon as possible. I was frightened because I knew that I was going to be punished, but how I didn't know.

At home my parents waited for me in the living room. My cousin and her fiancé left me at the front door and went back. When I entered the living room, I saw my parents, who

were very angry. I tried to explain to them why I had done that, but they didn't care. They punished me and promised to never ever let me go out again, neither to go to my grandmother's house nor to anybody else's house.

Since that time, I have tried never to be hypocritical with my parents. I'll remember this punishment all my life because I deserved it.

An Unpleasant Experience at Work

Hye Hyun (Helen) Jung, 4C

In 2005, I had spent a hard time at work. I was so exhausted because of a strange guy. I really wanted to leave my job and have a lot of time to relax at home.

Before I got married, I used to work at a broadcasting station in Korea. I was a reporter who announced all kinds of news and local events. When I started my job, I was young and didn't know anything about the job. But I adjusted at work quickly and learned good skills for my job for five years. I became a professional worker in 2005.

In March 2005, I went to a high school to interview a famous teacher who taught music classes. He usually taught music to his students in the high school during the daytime but played the violin for poor and elderly people in the hospital at night. He was a very popular person in the high school and the hospital. In the hospital, he had lots of fans who wanted to listen to his playing. Absolutely, he looked so nice and perfect.

We had a good conversation in the interview. When I asked something personal, he replied that he was impressed. I didn't understand his words. I just asked whether he was married or not. It was a very simple question and didn't mean I had some special emotions. But he told me that he had had a good feeling for me from the beginning and

wanted to go out on a date. There were many students watching the interview and they all looked so sad when I was talking about that. Also, I was embarrassed and didn't know what to say. But I told him that my question didn't have any special meaning and I just wondered whether he was married or not because he played the violin in the hospital every night. If he was married, his wife might complain about that. Although I explained the reason for my question, he still wanted to go out on a date with me. He looked a little strange.

After this interview, I came back to work because I had to prepare to announce a story about him. The story of his life was top news on that day. I started to write about him and the news time was coming soon.

Suddenly, my boss came to me and told me that the teacher didn't want me to do the story about him. A few minutes before, he had called my boss and complained about me. According to my boss, he was very upset because I was impolite. Actually, I had refused his suggestion to go out on a date. I had told him, "I'm sorry, but I don't want to go out with you."

Anyway, he didn't want me to announce the story about him and I didn't announce the top news that day. My boss was also angry with me about this situation and I cried when I went back home.

After that day, the teacher hounded me for three months. He called me every night and said, "I love you." He called about eight times more. It made me crazy. Moreover, my boss wanted me not to work for one week.

I thought that it was not my fault, but I couldn't say anything to my boss. And also, I couldn't do anything about this situation. In 2005, I needed a long time to erase the bad experience at work from my mind.

How Much Is Too Much?

Michelle Bin Ahmed, 4 E

Could you imagine spending \$100,000 on your graduation party? It took me forever to convince my dad to participate in my graduation party because I had to pay \$2000 to the girl who would arrange this party for us. My dad's opinion was "why waste your money on a party which will last only for a few hours instead of putting the money in your account in the bank?" But I refused because I didn't want to feel less than my friends. There were only 50 girls who participated in our graduation party, so we collected about \$100,000. But before the party, we had our last exam on our last day in high school. Our last exam subject was writing, so we didn't study for that exam because we were excited about our graduation party.

So we went to our examination room and sat on our chairs. As the teacher was passing between us giving us our test paper, I saw the expression on my friend's face; she looked worried, and I wondered why she felt like that. It's only a writing exam. But I didn't take long thinking about it because the teacher came by me and gave me my test paper. I looked through it and I said, "Oh my God, they want us to write the grammar notes before writing our essay." Now I knew why my friend was worried!

As soon as I finished my test, I was sad because I knew that my notes weren't correct, and it felt worse when everyone asked me, "How well did you do?" I didn't answer that question that day. I went home to prepare for my graduation party.

Then when I arrived home, there was no one at home, so I decided that I would get some sleep before the party started, to freshen up my mood. As I went to my room I realized that it was my last day in the school. I wouldn't be seeing my teachers again. I wouldn't be dressing in my daily uniform. The tears

fell from my eyes. Then when I opened the door to my room, everyone shouted, "Surprise!" Every single member of my family was in my room and they had filled my room with all kinds of flowers, gifts, and balloons. They knew that I love chocolate, every single kind of it. I cried and realized that it was for sure my last day. I thanked everybody for their gifts and I felt so happy because they remembered me.

After they left, I took a quick shower and put on comfortable pajamas in order to sleep before the party started. So I set the alarm clock and went to sleep. After two hours, I woke up. First, I took a shower. Second, I did my hair. Third, I put some makeup on. Fourth, I got dressed in my evening dress. Finally, I took my bag and went to my graduation party.

Later, when I arrived at the party, it was quite crowded and noisy, so I wasn't as happy as I had thought I would be. The music wasn't my type, nor was the food, the environment, or anything else. So I sat on my chair regretting wasting my money on a party that I didn't enjoy.

After that, when I arrived home, I kissed my dad and thanked him for his advice from before, and I realized that when you have a special thing going on, you have to celebrate it with the ones who care about you and not just follow everyone else's needs.

The Most Embarrassing Moment in My Life

Dong Youn Lee, 4E

When living in Korea, I only drove my manual car. I had never driven an automatic car before. I had never driven other cars. A few weeks ago, my friend's car had problems, so she rented a car. When her car was repaired, we needed to pick it up. It meant someone needed to drive her car.

Before we went to pick up her car, she lectured me on how to drive an automatic car using the rental car. At

that time, it was not difficult because while I was driving, she sat in the passenger seat. But when we went to the car repair center to pick it up, I had to drive her car because she didn't want the rental car to get damaged in any way. Most cars' shift sticks are located on the right hand side of the driver's seat, but in her car it is on the wheel. Before we left the car center, I practiced how to control the shift stick. When I used the stick, it was very uncomfortable. It made me worried.

As she drove the rental car, I followed driving her car. At first, I was a little nervous, but it was not a problem. I saw the red signal and pressed the brake pedal. I didn't know why but the car stopped completely. I tried to turn on the car, but I could not. So, I pressed the emergency light button and looked around outside. I found a person who looked like he would help me.

I opened the door and approached his car. I asked him, "Could you help me? I don't know how to start the car." He didn't understand what I said because I used the wrong word. He got out of his car and sat in the driver's seat of my friend's car. He turned the key in the ignition. At that time, I was stuck the middle of road, and I didn't know how to turn on the car. I thought the car might have another problem. So, my two legs shook automatically, and my face became red and hot. After two green signals passed, I was able to drive home.

When I got home, I knew why I couldn't turn on the car. Before turning on the car, I should change the shift stick to parking (P), but I didn't. When I recalled the situation, it made me very embarrassed. The helper probably thought, "She is very dangerous and stupid." Sometimes, when I face embarrassing moments, I forget



Life Lessons (continued)

Shame on the Player

Ibrahim Oumar Diakite, 4E

I had always been glorified by my friends for my adventures with women until the days those adventures became very embarrassing for me. It was my third year in university. I had my associate's degree; in addition, I lived in Paris, the city of beautiful women. I thought that I was at the top of the ladder of success. Everything I did was about the women. I just thought about going from adventure to adventure. But one day, it all came crashing down on my head.

It was the birthday of one of my girlfriends, and of course I was the principal guest. I bought some roses and a beautiful watch as a birthday present for her. On the evening of the day, I went with some well-dressed friends to the party. The party was going normally until the moment she was to cut the birthday cake.

As it is by tradition, the DJ stopped the music and everyone paid attention to her because she was supposed to share the cake with her lover, "the king of party." Legitimately, I was ready to join her, and guess what -- she called another name! At that moment, I did not realize it until I saw all my friends, who were shocked. I didn't know what to do, I could not think and suddenly it was like someone had turned down all the lights. I didn't know if I should go out or stay, and finally I sat down and tried to organize my mind. I wished just

one thing: that I could disappear or someone could awaken me from this bad dream, but it didn't happen. This was the sad reality.

A few minutes later, my friends asked me to leave. I think they could no longer bear the shame. If I thought that was bad, it was not yet finished because we were going through all the room to leave the party; it was the longest minute of my whole life. When we were going back home, my friends argued to try to understand what had happened and why she had done that, but I couldn't say anything.

The next day, to my great surprise, she came to my apartment and wanted to talk with me. Of course I didn't want to share anything with her, but she insisted, so finally I decided to listen to her. She told me she did that to give me a lesson for all my adventures, but also because she had discovered that I went out with her cousin, who was her best friend, two days before. I couldn't say anything. Sure, I felt embarrassed and shocked about what she had done, but also many questions came to me.

Was she not embarrassed and shocked when she had learned about her cousin and me? Did I not do the same cruelty when I played with the feelings of all these girls? Finally, I thought life is a chain of cause and effect; everything we do has a consequence in the



LCC Night
at the
Rodeo
March 14,
2008



LCC students and teachers share traditional dance, music, and food from around the world at the Spring 2008 Culture Festival.







Folk Tales

A Traditional Animal Story

Chris Guiton, 3A

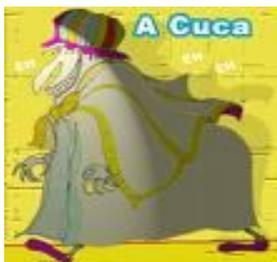
Many years ago, a Ghana tribe called Baoule migrated to the Ivory Coast to find refuge from the civil war. The only obstacle was crossing the Aby Lagoon River, which is the natural border between Ivory Coast and Ghana. Aby Lagoon River is popular because of fishing. The Aby Lagoon contains a great amount of fish, in particular the Silure. This is a fish that swims and sees better at night. As the Baoule tribe was crossing the Aby Lagoon River at night, the Silure fish helped them get to the other side of the river. Ever since then, the Baoule tribe has worshipped the Silure, and any Baoule who eats the Silure is rejected from the tribe. That's the story of this honored fish.

The Cuca: A folktale from Brazil

Fabiana Santos da Volta, 3B

Every country has its folktales, and they are part of our tradition and history. When I was a child, I heard many traditional Brazilian stories, but one of them made me very afraid. This story's name is "The Cuca." The Cuca is a very old woman with a scary face. She is skinny, curved, and has ugly, white hair. She is a nocturnal ghost and looks for children who are noisy and do not want to go to bed early. When she finds children awake, she puts them in a big bag and disappears immediately. So, when my mother told me this story, I was always afraid and went straight to bed.

It is clear that folktales can be a good way to educate children if they are told carefully and at a proper time. On the other hand, it can be dangerous if the child who listens to these stories is very sensitive. Nevertheless, these stories can help mothers to control their kids, but is very important to know how and when to use them.



The Sun and Moon

David Lee, 3B

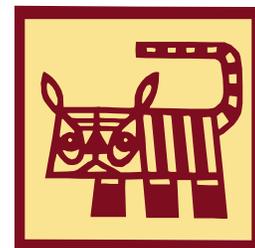
Once upon a time, there was a happy family: a mom, a son, and a daughter. The brother and sister didn't have a father, so their mom made money by selling rice cakes. One day, the mom met a terrible, scary tiger on the way home from a feast late at night. The tiger said, "I won't eat you if you give me one piece of the rice cake." So the mom gave him a piece of rice cake. He ate the delicious cake and kept asking for more until they ran out. Since there was no more cake, the tiger got angry and ate the mom. He put on her clothes for a disguise and went to her home. Although the tiger was disguised as their mom, the brother and sister noticed it was the tiger. So they hid in a big tree in the back yard. The tiger couldn't climb up the tree, so he asked the sister how to climb up. The young and naïve sister told him the secret because of the tiger's sweet words. The scared brother and sister prayed to God to send a rope while the tiger was climbing up the tree. Suddenly a strong new rope came down from the sky. The brother and sister went to heaven holding the rope. The tiger saw it and prayed for the same. However, the rope for the tiger was a rotten one, and he fell down on the way to the sky. In the end, the brother became the moon and the sister, who was afraid of darkness, became the sun.



Uncle Tiger and Uncle Rabbit

Gabriela M. García Santander, 3A

It was spring in a small woodcutter's neighborhood. All the animals in the forest were preparing a surprise birthday party for the little dog, Tabata. Uncle Rabbit and Lorenzo's Monkey were making their usual bad joke for their old enemy, Uncle Tiger. They prepared the only piece of meat that Uncle Tiger had with a spicy dip, but they did not know the consequences of this trick. All the community collaborated to prepare for the party, and all of them were so happy because they thought if each animal contributed one dollar, it would be the perfect way to end forever the old war between Uncle Tiger and Uncle Rabbit, who were natural enemies. During the festivities, they were drinking, dancing, and enjoying one another's company, but then it was time for everyone to sit down together to eat. When Uncle Tiger tasted his meat, he began to cry because his food was so spicy. Uncle Rabbit and Lorenzo's Monkey laughed and laughed. The entire neighborhood was unhappy about this trick, so they decided to teach Uncle Rabbit never to do anything like this again. Finally, Uncle Rabbit and his partner, Lorenzo's Monkey, learned the lesson, and they felt so uncomfortable about their bad behavior that Uncle Tiger forgave them. To conclude, this legend teaches a good lesson. Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you.

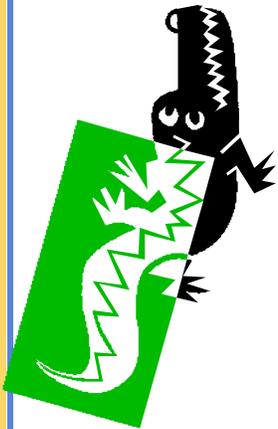


Folk Tales (continued)

The Taxes and the Alligator

Marcio Silva, 3A

One day, in a small town, a bad man had a bad and scary experience. He worked as a taxman. He always collected the taxes from his community without any concern about who couldn't pay or didn't have the money on time. No one liked him in that small town, not even the animals. People and animals were getting very upset with him day by day because of his attitude. One day, all the animals had a meeting and decided to send one of them to give a lesson to the taxman, so they sent the alligator. In the morning, the man opened his office, and his first client was an alligator. When he saw the alligator walk into his office, he was so scared that he couldn't move. He just stayed there staring at the alligator. Then the alligator told him, "I want to pay my tax too." As soon as the taxman heard that, he ran away, and never came back to that town again.



The Goat, the Sheep, and the Dog

Ali Mouktar, 3B

The sheep, the goat, and the dog want to travel to Ndjamena (Chad's capital city). The truck arrives. The sheep asks what the price of the trip is. The driver wants them to pay five dollars a person. So the sheep gives him five dollars, the dog gives him ten dollars, but the goat says, "I am going to pay when we arrive at our destination," and the driver accepts.

The truck leaves the village. When the truck arrives in Ndjamena, the sheep jumps out

and runs away. The goat doesn't keep his word and escapes from the truck without paying. Then the dog comes over to ask the driver for the five dollars change that he owes him. The driver answers, "Go ask the goat for your five dollars because he is your friend and he didn't pay me!"

Unfortunately, the goat escapes and the dog promises that when he sees the goat, he will kill him. Two weeks later, the dog goes to the gym and sees the goat sitting on the deck in front of the swimming pool. He looks scared. So the dog crawls quietly until he reaches the goat and catches him. "Let me go and I will explain why I escaped," says the goat. So the dog lets him go free. "I was in a hurry because my grandmother was very sick and I didn't want her to die before I saw her. Unfortunately, she died, but now I am scared," says the goat. Then he cries, "If you want your five dollars, I don't have any cash now, but I can give you my ring to make up for it." But the dog says, "It's not right to ask you for my money after this incident, especially when I think about the great times we have had together as friends. I will never ask you for the five dollars, and I'm sorry about your grandmother. You know what, I always rely on you to do some things and you're my friend too," says the dog. So the goat appreciates the dog's kind attitude and they go off to live happily together.

A Folk Tale from My Village

Palobde Nestor Konditamde, 3A

Mine is a real story which concerns my own family, precisely my grandfather. Once

upon a time, there was a village in Africa where some of our grandparents lived. One day my grandfather went into the bush to hunt. Unfortunately, that day he didn't catch anything, so he decided to return to the village. While he was walking, a piece of wood hurt his foot, so he couldn't walk. So he sat down under a tree because there wasn't anybody there to help him. Suddenly, he heard a noise of something coming near him, and a few instants later he saw a big turtle, which was sniffing around his body. Something in my grandfather's mind told him to climb on that turtle because maybe it could carry him back to his village. After a little reflection, he decided to try it, and, curiously, the turtle started to walk with him until they arrived at the village. When he arrived, his wives took care of him until he felt better. Moreover, the turtle stayed there forever with my grandfather. When my grandmother cooked for my grandfather, she didn't need to get him a chair to sit down because the turtle took it for him. So from that day when the turtle saved my grandfather, he decided to worship the turtle forever. That's why we don't eat turtles, nor do we kill them. The turtle is like a god for our village.

The Tortoise and Rabbit Race

Yue Liu, 3B

Once upon a time, a tortoise and a rabbit had a race in the animal world. The referee was a horse. In the morning, the tortoise got up very early, and it arrived first at the track. It did some exercise to prepare for the race. When the horse and rabbit arrived at the track, the tortoise was waiting. There

watch the race. Then the horse announced "go!", and the race began. The rabbit ran fast, but the tortoise ran very slowly. After five minutes, the rabbit was ahead of the tortoise by a long way. It couldn't see the tortoise anymore. The rabbit was quite arrogant and thought, "I will win; this is so easy." So it decided to take a rest under the tree. Later, it had a dream. Meanwhile, the tortoise was running with all its energy. It knew it was slow, but it never stopped. After one hour, the tortoise arrived at the finish line. It was the winner! When the rabbit woke up, the race was over. And the rabbit sat crying under the tree.

Callejón del Beso

Roberto Mauro López, 5B

Guanajuato, whose famous legends have attracted a great deal of national and international tourism, is one of the most famous places in Mexico. Among the many great legends in Guanajuato, there is one that particularly grabs my attention because it is a tragic romance story about a young couple. This is a tale which is told to every single person who visits "el callejón del beso" (the alley of the kiss).

Carmen, the only daughter of a very rich family, was courted by a poor young man whose name was Luis. They had been seeing each other for a couple of weeks on the way between the church and her house when suddenly her parents discovered them. During that time, it was considered very bad for a rich person to court a poor person; consequently, Carmen was locked in her house and was threatened to be married off to a rich old man in Spain if

she kept seeing Luis.

Carmen sent someone to notify Luis about the bad news. He tried many times to meet her so they could come up with a solution for their problem, but her house was completely protected. After considering many solutions, he noticed that Carmen's bedroom window opened onto an alley so narrow that it was possible to cross over to the window of the house on the other side. For this reason, he asked the owner of the house in front of Carmen's window to lease him that room. He had to save money for a couple of months before at last he could rent the room.

Because Luis had kept his plan secret from his darling, Carmen was shocked when she suddenly discovered she could meet her sweetheart as close as the balcony of the room in front of her own. They knew they could come up with a solution to maintain their romance and to keep Carmen safe from her dad's threats. Although Carmen knew her father was unfriendly and aggressive, she never thought he would hurt them.

After only a few words during the first meeting between the balconies, they heard the violent words of her father coming to the room. His fury was so strong that he plunged a dagger into his daughter's chest; then the silence inundated the room. Carmen's hand was still in her darling's hand as she was slowly losing her life, and she asked Luis for a final kiss.

Although this is one of the most famous stories in Mexico, the personages of the legend are still anonymous. For this reason nobody is sure about the validity of the tale. Still,

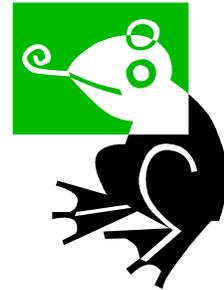
people who visit the alley are supposed to kiss their beloved to keep the tradition and to assure love and durability for their own relationship.

The Green Frog

Lina Kim, 3B

Long ago a green frog lived with his widowed mother in a small pond. The green frog never listened to his mother, and when she told him to do something, he always did the opposite. If his mother told him to play in the hills, he went to the river. If she told him to go up, he went down. If she told him to go left, he went right. If she told him this, he did that. The mother frog worried about what she would do with her son, for he caused her so much distress and embarrassment. "Why can't he be like the other frogs?" she asked herself. "Why can't he respect his elders and do what he is told?" She worried about what would happen to him when she was gone. She knew she would have to do something to break his bad habits.

Day after day, week after week, the mother frog scolded the green frog and tried to teach him the proper way to behave, but he continued to ignore her and did just as he wished. The mother frog was growing old, and she worried so much that eventually she became sick. But even then, the green frog did not change his ways. Finally, when the mother frog knew she was going to die, she called her son to her side. She wanted a proper burial on the mountain, and since she knew that the green frog would do the opposite of what she told him, she chose her words carefully. "I don't have much longer to live," she said. "When I die,



Folk Tales (continued)

do not bury me on the mountainside. You must bury me on the bank of the river." The green frog looked at her forlornly with his head bowed. "Promise me," said the mother frog. "You must promise." "I promise," said the green frog.

Four days later, the mother frog died and the green frog was terribly sad. He blamed himself for her death, and he was sorry for the heartache he had caused her. He knew it was too late to undo all of his past misdeeds, but he could become a good frog for her now. He resolved finally to listen to his mother's instructions. "I always did the opposite of what she told me when she was alive," he said to himself, "but now I will do exactly as she told me." So, even knowing that it was unwise, the green frog buried his mother by the river. And when it rained, he stood watch, praying to heaven that the water would not rise. But when the monsoon rains came that summer, the river rose higher and higher, until it flowed over its banks and washed his mother's grave away. The green frog sat in the pouring rain by the river bank, crying and crying for his mother. And that is why, to this day, the green frogs cry when it rains.

The Mid-Autumn Festival in Taiwan

Hui-Wen Chen, 2B

Taiwan has a lot of holidays such as New Year's Day, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. Every holiday has its own story behind it. I remember that when I was a child, my mother told me lots of stories about these holidays, but the stories that impressed me most were those about the Mid-Autumn Festival. A long time ago, there was an emperor who was called Hou Yi and who was very tyrannical. One day, he asked his Mandarins to find a kind of medicine

that could give him longevity. He wanted to be an emperor forever. The Mandarins were able to find the medicine at last. However, the king's wife was a kind-hearted woman and she was worried that if her husband had longevity, people would have to suffer and grieve for a long time. Therefore, she stole the longevity medicine and took it herself. After she took the medicine, her body became lighter and lighter, and at last she saw herself flying to the moon! On the moon, she became a fairy called Chang E, and ever since then, she has lived in a beautiful palace called Guang Hang Gong.

Besides the story about Chang E, there is another story about the rabbit that people believe is now living on the moon with her. The story is like this: A long time ago, in the forest there lived three animals, which were a rabbit, a monkey, and a fox. They were good and kind-hearted. At that time, there were wars in many places in the country and many people couldn't find enough food to eat. One day, an old man who hadn't had anything to eat for many days fainted in front of a house. The owner of the house brought him into the house and fed him and brought him back to life. After that, the owner of the house himself couldn't find anything to eat. Learning that the good man was going to die of hunger, the rabbit gave itself to the man as food. The rabbit's self-sacrifice moved Emperor Jade deeply, so he decided to make the rabbit into a divinity and put him on the moon to live with Chang E.

The stories about Chang E and the rabbit are still very popular in Taiwan, and every year, when the Mid-Autumn Festival comes round, Taiwanese children are very happy because they can have a good time, eating BBQ and mooncakes and looking up at the Moon to see Chang E and the rabbit while, at the same time, listening to their mothers and grandmothers telling them the stories they love.

Two Brothers and a Bird

Minha Pyo, 3B

In my country, Korea, we have an old story about a bird. Once upon a time, there were two brothers, but after their father died, they were separated. The older brother had a really bad personality, so when he was given all the money, he didn't divide it with his younger brother. So, the older brother was rich, and the younger brother was poor. The younger brother and his wife had many children, but since they were poor, they couldn't eat and their clothes were dirty. One day, he decided that he would have to go to his older brother's house and beg for some food for his family. When he went there, his brother ignored him and even hit his cheek. So, the younger brother ran away from him.

A couple of days later, the younger brother was walking down the street when he found a bird with a hurt leg. He picked it up and cured the bird's leg. The bird said, "Thank you!" and left. The next day, the bird brought him some seeds. The younger brother planted the seeds, and after the plants grew, they started to bloom. It was amazing! Inside the flowers, there was a lot of jewelry and food. So, the younger brother and his family now became rich.

The older brother, who was very shrewd, heard that story, so he found the bird and broke its leg on purpose and then cured it. The next day, the bird again brought seeds, which the older brother's family planted. However, when these seeds grew and bloomed, it was terrible. Inside there was a ghost and some strong men. They broke into the older brother's house and stole his money and food. Now, the older brother was poor and he was really depressed. But the younger brother, who had a kind heart, heard that story, and he went to his brother and took care of him and his family. The older brother cried and apologized, and they all became happy.



Comparisons

Differences Between Jordan and The USA

Fatima Mahmoud Aloueedat, 2A

In America everyone lives alone. Neighbors don't sit outside and talk together, but in Jordan all the neighbors know each other and sit outside and talk together. Next, in America people talk in many languages, but in Jordan everyone speaks only Arabic. Third, the weather in Houston is very changeable; on the same day it can be rainy or cold or hot. That's annoying because people don't know what to wear. Houston has heavy rain in the summer, but in Jordan we have no rain and our weather is not changeable. Fourth, American teachers give a lot of homework, allow students to ask questions, talk with students during break times, and don't punish students who don't do their homework. But in Jordan teachers punish the students, even beat them. I don't like that; it's very hurtful. Finally, in America people work and work and work because living is expensive here. In Jordan life is very different from life in America.

Police Officers in My Country and in North America

Silga Sandrine, 2C

There are many interesting differences between police officers in my country and in North America. First, police officers in Burkina Faso don't have enough special cars like those in North America. In fact, in North America police officers have some computers in their cars that permit them to know if someone might have bad things like drugs in his car. We don't have this kind of computer in Burkina Faso. Next, there is more corruption with our police officers because their incomes are bad. North American police officers get more money than ours. In addition, in North America, people are afraid of police officers and respect them. It's different in our country. People disrespect them. In conclusion, police officers in North America have a better life than those in my country because their country is more developed than ours. There are these differences because North America is a world of scientific and technical progress.

Traffic Laws: North America vs. Vietnam

Thanh Chu, 2C

There are some similarities and some differences in traffic laws between North America and my country. First, North America has laws about wearing helmets when driving a motorcycle. Similarly, in my country, everybody who drives a motorbike wears a helmet. If you don't wear a helmet, you'll be fined and you must pay the police. But in North America, the police will give you a ticket, and then you go to court and pay a fine for not wearing a helmet. Next, in my country, you can drive when you become 18 years old. In North America, the traffic law allows 16-year-old people to drive. If are caught driving and are not old enough, you'll be punished with a very high fine in my country. In conclusion, there are both similarities and differences in traffic laws between my country and North America.

Traffic Laws: North America vs. Mali

Youssef Coulibaly, 2C

Traffic laws are a set of rules to regulate traffic. There are some similarities and differences between my country's traffic laws and North America's traffic laws. First, there are some laws that relate to the possession of a driver's license and fastening seat belts. In my country, you must have a driver's license to drive. It is not compulsory to fasten your seat belt when you drive. Similarly, in North America, you must have a driver's license to drive. However, it is against the law to drive without fastening your seat belt. Next, there are laws about driving on the right side of the road and taking cell phone calls. In both North America and in my country, the traffic is on the right side of the road. Taking cell phone calls in cars is forbidden in my country, but in North America it is permitted to talk on a cell phone when you drive. Next, laws about wearing helmets are different in the two countries. Wearing a helmet is a strict law in North America; however, it is optional to wear a helmet in my country. In conclusion, there are some similarities and differences in these two countries' traffic laws.

Poetry

Get What You Want

Yassine Zarome, 5A

Get what you want.
 Do what you need
 Not to be ashamed tomorrow,
 Not to have any regrets,
 So that when you sleep
 Twenty years later be able to say
 That you did everything you could have done.
 We can't predict the way our life is going to go.
 We can't avoid failing.
 We can't control how lucky we are,
 But definitely, we do control the ways
 That must be taken to succeed.
 We don't control our destiny;
 However, we do make our choices.
 Use your experience and make it your advisor.
 Use your failure and make it your strength.
 Use your hope and make it your goal.
 Use your faith and make it your soul food.
 Your destiny might not depend on you,
 But make it your best friend.
 Do not be frustrated by what you are going to see,
 By what you are going to hear.
 Do not feel ashamed of your own memories.
 Live your life today in a way
 That you won't be ashamed tomorrow.

Nelson

Webabe Mantoro, 3B

Nelson
 Determined, intelligent, kind, peaceful
 Husband of Ms. Braca Machel
 Lover of family, country, children
 Who felt afraid, but also joy and love
 Who needed patriotism, democracy, change
 Who feared violence, segregation, racism
 Who gave new ideas and assistance
 Who wanted to see unity, freedom, peace
 Resident of South Africa
 Mandela



After the Midnight Rain

Jinhee (Jinny) Jung, 5A

After the midnight rain,
 The scent of the rain from the soil
 In the morning, when I open my eyes from the mysterious forest dream.
 Wet, but not humid,
 The scent of the blue-green trees from the forest.
 Refresh my soul, gaze into a new day.
 Would it be different from yesterday?
 Would it be different from tomorrow?
 My hundred dusty windows blur my sight to see you out there over the far-
 way sea.
 But I scented you, I scented you.
 After the midnight rain,
 Search for you and reach you,
 From the mysterious wet forest dream.



How to...

Necessary Steps to Drive a Teacher Crazy

Amporn Laosing, 3B

Driving your teacher crazy is very easy if you follow these steps. The first step is to wear a disrespectful outfit to the class. Second, do not come on time. Give your teacher the time to teach, and then interrupt him or her by knocking on the door. The next step is to disturb your teacher in the classroom. Do not pay attention while your teacher is teaching. For example, look in another direction, draw pictures, sleep on the desk, and yawn. When your teacher asks you a question, do not respond at all; just sit and stare blankly. Of course, never complete homework on time! On the other hand, be a talkative person by talking to your classmates instead. Next, play around with your friend by throwing pieces of paper across the classroom. The last step is to break the classroom policies. Keep your cell phone turned ON and answer calls loudly. This will surely drive your teacher crazy and maybe even out of the room.

How to Kill a House Plant

Lina Kim, 3B

Growing a healthy house plant may be a challenge to some people because it takes a lot of time, care, and patience. But killing one can be the opposite, and it is fairly easy to do.

First, take the plant and put it on a shelf. This will block out all sunlight and prevent the plant from getting energy and nutrition. Second, do not give the plant any water. This will make the plant thirsty and unable to grow. Then, chop off all the leaves so energy cannot go inside the plant. Finally, take a cup of Coca-Cola and overflow the pot. After you take these steps, the plant will not be able to get any sunlight and food, so surely it will die. This simple way to kill a house plant is guaranteed to be successful, and everyone should give it a try.

How to Lose Ten Pounds in Two Days

Cheng Yi Chang, 3B

When I saw the title, I thought losing ten pounds was an impossible goal to achieve because losing weight is a difficult task for everyone. Moreover, there are only two days to lose ten pounds. I think only God would know the secret to this extremely fast weight lost plan.

Overall, we must eat less food for each meal and more meals per day. We have to avoid eating extremely high calorie and sugar-rich foods at each meal, as much as we can. We should eat fresh vegetables, fruit, and fish because those foods include rich vitamins and protein. We also have to exercise regularly in the gym and get enough sleep every day. In addition, it is more efficient to do jumping sports such as jogging and playing basketball. If we follow this routine, we would lose weight healthily and quickly. Recently I started to exercise and drink a lot of water and eat without sugar in order to lose weight. Not only can I keep my physical strength and pay more attention when studying, but also I increased my memory ability. Moreover, I lost weight quickly and now I fit into more handsome clothes. I feel that my body will become healthier and healthier if I continue this routine. Finally, and most importantly, this could prevent many diseases from developing in one's body; plus, these activities could help us live longer. It is like killing two birds with one stone. I will tell my friends my best ways to lose weight and we can share experiences with each other when we have gatherings.

However, if a person wants to lose ten pounds in only two days, the only possible way is by a miracle.

University Registration in Colombia

Zulma Yineth Leon Varila, 3A

Applying for admission to the University of Villavicencio requires patience and a little good luck. The first step is to begin before the registration day. You should be sure that you have everything that you will need. Remember, you are not going to a party, so you should wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

On the registration day, you have to come early. However, you should arrive only about three hours before the process starts. When you arrive, you have to go and wait at the end of the line. Do not worry if you are not sure where the line comes to an end. You can ask any one of the hundreds in front of you, while you breathe deeply and count to ten.

The third step is to take out your umbrella while you ask yourself, "Why did I miss the forecast last night?" After that, pray the registration office opens on time.

The fourth step is to hope that the employees do not return your documents because you forgot to sign or fill some form out completely. Otherwise, the next step will be to go back to the second step.

If you do not forget anything, you are able to move on to the next step. Go to the treasurer's office to choose the financial method that you prefer. If you pay in cash and they have the right change, you are a very lucky person. However, it is smart to carry your piggy bank. The last step is to go back to the registration office. Now, you have to show the receipt, choose your schedule, as well as sign your admission form. Soon you will feel calm and sure that you will be able to start your classes without any more problems.



Unforgettable Experiences

A New Life

Amer Mneimneh, 6A

International students take a new kind of risk in their lives. They leave their country so they can study overseas, and here in the United States there are many international students. Unfortunately, international students encounter many challenges like interactions with others, financial problems, and emotional difficulties.

Being an international student is like being an Arctic bear in the desert. Moving from your native country to the United States is a big step. In fact, international students have a hard time interacting with other international students and, of course, Americans. They find it hard not only to speak English well, but also to make friends; thus, they are partially unable to create a social life of their own. In addition, most countries differ in the way they teach their students. In fact, coming to the United States and studying in an American university is hard because most of the students are not familiar with the educational system here.

Furthermore, aside from the social and educational problems, students who come from all over the world to study in the American universities encounter financial problems. The high tuition fees of the universities make it difficult for students to pay attention to secondary needs. Plus, they can feel forced to work on campus for many hours so that they can pay their tuition fees and manage their expenses. They are under the pressure of having to deal with keeping their grades up and working also, which sometimes leaves little room for fun and relaxation.

As for what goes on inside their minds, international students tend to be emotionally weak because they are thousands of miles away from their family and friends. In other words, they can no longer see the ones that they love every day like they used to. Unfortunately, international students feel lonely at

the start of their new educational process. They do not have friends at first. In addition, if they get in trouble for whatever reason, there is no one here to help them but themselves; it is up to them to manage this part of their life.

In conclusion, international students consider this step the hardest of their life. However, all of this is a challenge, and at the end of the road, difficulties and challenges make you a stronger person.

I Have Learned to Be Confident of Myself

Mshail Ahmed, 2D

I have studied English at the LCC for two months now. During these two months, I have learned a lot about reading, grammar, writing, speaking, and listening, and I have tried hard to memorize everything my teachers taught me. I still remember that at the end of Week Six we had the midterm test. This was the first test I had ever taken in the U.S. and, therefore, I was very worried because I didn't know if I had performed well on the test or not. Worrying about test results has always been my big problem since my high school days. After the test, we had a day off and the next day we returned to the school for a conference with our core teacher about the progress we had made and about the scores we had received on the midterm test. When I saw the teacher coming into the classroom with the test papers in his hands, a chill ran through my body. Because my name was first on the list, I had to talk with the teacher first. After all the other students had left the room, I sat down in front of my teacher and he started to talk about my test result. He said that my writing was good and my grammar was good too. What he said surprised me, but it made me very happy too. I was able to get high scores on my first test in the

U.S.! Ever since, I have learned to be confident of myself and of what I can do after long days of hard work.

Something Unusual that Happened at Work

Raquel Soriana, 4C

I will never forget my second working day. It was almost two years ago. At the end of May 2006, my friend called me to say me that there was a vacant job as a receptionist at the office where she was working. At that time I had been looking for a job for three weeks, so when she told me about the job, I quickly prepared all my documents and applied for it.

The day of the interview, I was very nervous because I really liked the job and I wanted to do well. The person who interviewed me was very nice and made me feel more relaxed, so the interview finished with success.

The next day, I was working at the headquarters office of the perfumery chain. My duties were to welcome customers, answer the telephone, deal with internal workers, and make sure I received all the r orders from the stores. I was also in charge of opening and closing the office, leaving everything ready for the next day. I was very happy because it was a very active job and I love that.

On my first day, I met all the people working at the office. My partner, the other receptionist, taught me everything about the system I would be using every day. At the end of the day, my boss gave me the office keys. That meant I was ready to start. My working day was from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The rest of workers started one hour later, even my boss.

The next day, I arrived at the office 15 minutes early. I took my keys and tried to open the door. To my surprise, it wouldn't open. I tried again and again, but nothing. I needed to do something. I decided to call my partner and ask what I could do, but she didn't answer the phone. I started to get nervous. In one hour everyone would be there and the

office was closed. I tried to open the door again, but it was worse; the alarm started to ring. "I wish I were not here," I thought.

It was my second day at the office and I had started in the worst way. It was 8:15 a.m. when the alarm stopped. I tried to open the door again and that time I did it without problems. I got in the office and called the security company to say everything was fine, but it was too late; they had already notified the police and they were coming. After that, I decided to call my boss to explain what had happened. After a while, he came to the office and told me that had never happened before. When the police arrived, we explained to them that everything was okay. We signed the report and they left. My boss told me again that had never happened before. We decided to close the door and try again. Everything worked perfectly. I couldn't believe it. My boss looked at me and it seemed like he was thinking that something was wrong with me. But he didn't do anything. We started to work and never talked about it again. For me his reaction was strange, but I didn't ask.

After that, my days were very good. I liked my job and I realized my boss trusted me. After all, if you do your duties well and show you are a hard worker and responsible, your boss can't scold you.

Spring Break Service Project

Dong Wook (Henry) Kim, 6A

During Spring Break I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity to reconstruct buildings that were damaged by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. I had to go because I could not resist the voice from my heart that said I should help our neighbors living in New Orleans.

Our group from the University of Houston had twenty-two people, including two pastors. Eleven of us were international students representing six countries: Korea, China, Mali, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and India.

I slept in the van all the way to Louisiana because I was nervous and didn't know what to expect. That night, we finally arrived at the church where we would stay for the next six days.

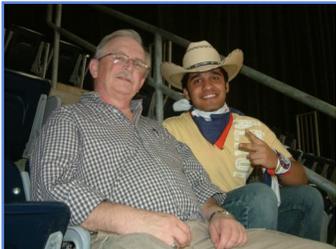
The next morning, we got up around six and went to Habitat for Humanity to meet with the other organizations that had come to help. When we got there, there were more than four hundred people. It was a breathtaking scene, and I was able to feel the volunteer spirit from all over the place.

The first project was the renovation of an old building. We painted, installed a door, and fixed the ceiling. We worked from eight to five every day.



NOTES FROM THE STUDENT ADVISOR

By Dave Burns



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Our first trip of the semester was during registration week, when we went to the Rothko Chapel and the Menil Collection art museum. Students found the paintings in the Rothko Chapel interesting. We also saw many works of art at the museum. Afterwards, we went to the Galleria, where we had lunch and shopped. We ended the trip at the Waterwall, a very large fountain by the Galleria. After taking some photos, we returned to UH.

The next event was the class photo followed by the LCC Sports Tournament. Everyone had a good time. Winners were as follows: **Bowling:** 1st – Delwende Natacha Compaore, 2nd – Dymtro Sadovych, and 3rd – Monzon Traore; **Billiards:** 1st – Shu Po (Kenny) Yu and 2nd – Phuc Le Nguyen; **Table Tennis:** 1st – Héctor García and 2nd – Yuan (Danny) Sun.

On March 14, many students, teachers, and guests enjoyed a real Texas experience by going to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, where they saw prize-winning animals, visited the carnival, and watched the rodeo, which included competitions such as bull-riding. The rodeo was followed with a performance by the popular Texas singer Clay Walker.

The LCC Culture Festival was another great event. We got to share each other's cultures as we tasted dishes from around the world prepared by our own students and staff! We were entertained by music provided by LCC students who also danced. Many students wore clothing from their countries. We enjoyed seeing clothing from many places, including African countries, Vietnam, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

We will end the semester with a trip to Sam Houston State Park near Huntsville. This is a day when we can relax with classmates and teachers, have a picnic, and enjoy being out by the lake. The day after the trip, we end the semester with the graduation ceremony and a reception. We wish good luck to those students who will be leaving us. For those who will be returning, start planning for the summer and for welcoming the new students who will be joining us.

SOCCER TEAM

The LCC was represented this term by the LCC Eagles. Ali Al Yami, our former student who is now in the university and works in the LCC office part time, was the captain of the Eagles. Our thanks go to Ali and the players.

LCC PHOTOS

Photos for the spring term will be posted on the LCC web page. You can copy the ones you want. Unfortunately, we lost most of the photos from the Class Photo and Sports Tournament, as well as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, because the LCC camera disappeared before we

could download the photos. If you have photos of these events, please share them with other LCC students.

IMMIGRATION

If you are in F-1 student status, you need to make sure you maintain your status. SEVIS, which stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is an electronic tracking system that keeps student records. We have to update it at the beginning and end of each term. It is very important that we know what you will be doing in the summer so that we can keep your records current, thereby enabling you to keep your F-1 student status.

If you will be transferring to another school, it is important that you see Dave Burns or Sam Long so that you can follow the proper procedure and have your transfer recorded in SEVIS and can get a new I-20 from your new school.

If you are planning to take a summer vacation, see Dave or Sam first. You must fill out a vacation request form (get one in the LCC office).

The rules for intensive English students are a bit complicated in regards to summer vacations. If spring was your first semester to study, you cannot have a summer vacation UNLESS you are planning to leave the U.S. during the summer OR you have finished your English studies at the end of the spring semester and will be entering a college or university for fall semester. If you do not qualify for a vacation and you plan to stay in the U.S., attending only

maintain your F-1 status. It is very difficult to get your student status back if you lose it.

If you are traveling outside of the U.S., you must have your current I-20 signed on the back by Dave or Sam. Your visa must also be good.

Students who made the Special Registration when they entered the U.S. must check out at the airport with Homeland Security when they leave the U.S. See Dave or Sam if you need to do this and get the instructions on how to check out.

If you move to a new apartment, house, or even dormitory room, you must fill out a change-of-address form (get one in the LCC office) so that we can update your SEVIS record. This is required by immigration law.





My Life in the United States

My Life in Houston

Sekou Diane, 2A

My first month was terrible because I didn't know anyone and everyone in my apartment complex stays inside their apartments. I was so stressed and I missed my parents. I watched TV every day but sometimes left the apartment to walk along the road. Now I'm feeling happy and not stressed because I have many friends.

My life in Houston is more expensive than in my country. The traffic is good to see and there are freeways. The police control the traffic situation better here. If you do something wrong, you get a ticket; they don't take your money. There are great schools in Houston. The school system is different from ours; the teachers are friendly and encourage discussions in class. Some food is delicious, but too many people drink alcohol. I think that marriages don't last in Houston and that relationships between boys and girls are not good when they live together. In Houston, everyone is moving fast. Some people work 12 hours a day. Some people take good care of their health and go to the gym every day. One of my teachers is 70 years old, but she still drives her car. How wonderful! I'm so glad for her.

Where Are the People?

Gokhan Seyhan, 1A

Why don't the people walk on the Houston streets? I'm interested in knowing the answer. Why don't children play outside on the streets? I see streets quite empty. I don't understand. In other cities, many people are outside on the streets, walking, running, joking. In other cities, children play a lot of games outside on the streets. I don't like the empty streets of Houston. I like to see the people in my neighborhood.

Challenges in the United States

Majucet del Cardenas Castro, 6A

Since I arrived in July 2006, the most difficult experience has been searching for my son's elementary school because I was not familiar with the educational system or the schools. This situation made me feel hopeless and desperate. I was finally able to find a good school near our home; fortunately, he could walk to it with friends that he had made.

My best experience so far has been my job, for it gives me the opportunity to interact with native English speakers, is convenient because it's on campus, and offers me a great chance to learn new things. This helps me deal with culture shock in America, so I would strongly recommend that someone who is homesick find a job or become a member of a social club in their new country.

What I Have Learned This Term (Both in and out of Class)

Sanata Traore, 3A

This term, I learned many things both in and out of class. In my class, I learned new skills and improved my listening. When I came to the United States, I didn't have any notion about English and I couldn't understand anything from my teachers' speaking, nor could I express what I wanted or needed. Now, however, I understand every word the teachers say, and I can even talk with my classmates. I learned how to be very polite with my teachers and classmates. In addition, I learned many things about other cultures because of "working in teams" in the class. In addition, I learned many other things outside of my class. I learned about American culture and what is important here and what is not. At first, I didn't like American behavior. I found it very tough. No one has time, and Americans seem to be very solitary. It is very different in my country. But now I have learned to accept it and I like it. I also have learned about many people around the world because in the United States there are a lot of races. In my class, there are people of twelve nationalities! I think that learning English in the United States means both learning language and learning about the world.

An Phan, 3A

This term has been my first since I came to the UH, and I have learned more than I had expected, both in and out of class. In class, I am able to talk a little with my friends, and I feel happy when talking with them. I have learned good things from them. Now, I am more talkative and happier. My English grammar is improving every day, and my listening skill is improving too, but not enough for me to listen to native speakers. Out of class, I learned the way to go to school by bus. I also learned how to find the way on the map, so I can go anywhere without fear of losing my way. Moreover, this term, I have learned how to cook. Everything I have learned has helped me to change myself a lot.

Khalil Abu-Sharekh is an LCC student in level 4D. He is from Gaza, Palestine. This semester he has contributed some of his works of photography to the *Daily Cougar*, the University of Houston newspaper. Khalil has been interested in photography for about four years. He discovered his hobby when he took a photography class while pursuing his degree in graphic design at the Islamic University in Gaza. After he completes his English studies at the LCC, he hopes to fulfill his dream of studying documentary filmmaking at the New York Film Academy.

Here are some examples of his work.



Houston sports events



Houston Rodeo



LCC Students

Voices

Editors: Geneva
Awad and Judy
Kleeman

Language and Culture Center

University of Houston
116 Roy Cullen Building
Houston, TX 77204-3014

Phone: 713-743-3030
Fax: 713-743-3029
E-mail: lcc@uh.edu

On the web at
<http://lcc.uh.edu>

