

VOICES

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CENTER

FALL 2007

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE BY JOY TESH



On Friday, October 26, LCC students traveled to Galveston, Texas, to visit Moody Gardens and enjoy a program-wide field trip on a truly beautiful fall day. This trip was planned for several reasons: 1) Students always enjoy a trip to Moody Gardens. 2) We were very sorry that our first planned field trip was canceled because of an emergency

closing of the university, and we wanted to offer the Galveston field trip in its place. 3) The field trip was carefully timed so that LCC teachers could attend the Texas State Convention of Teachers of English as a Second Language (TexTESOL) while their students were engaged in a meaningful and worthwhile activity. The convention was in Galveston and began on the same day as the field trip, so we were all enjoying the beautiful Texas Gulf Coast on the same amazing day.

The TexTESOL Convention brought teachers, authors, publishers, and

presenters together to explore best practices in the field of English as a Second Language and to exchange information and ideas for practical use in our classrooms. The Language and Culture Center was well represented at this conference with excellent teacher attendance and with important professional presentations. I attended every LCC teacher's presentation and came away feeling inspired and assured that our teachers are among the best in our field. They certainly are interested in their own professional development and in bringing back to you, our



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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

students, current research and proven strategies related to teaching English as a Second Language.

Fall is the season for conferences, and in early November, the LCC was again well represented at the NAFSA Association of International Educators' Conference in Austin, Texas. This particular conference brought together educators and counselors from NAFSA Region III, which includes Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Dave Burns, International Student Counselor, Sam Long, Program Assistant in the counselor's office, and I

attended presentations, workshops, and U.S. State Department updates. Dave and I were fortunate to be invited to be on the program, and Sam received important training in F-1 student regulations. We have been busy.

Staying current in the field of teaching and advising international students is essential in an intensive English program. I am happy to report that ongoing professional development is clearly important to those who make up the professional and administrative staff of the Language and Culture Center.

This fall, we have 315 students

from 43 countries in our vibrant and growing program. We are working hard to make sure we give you the best program possible. LCC teachers, counselors, administrators, and I hope you have had great experiences in your classes and on campus. We wish you the best as you complete the fall term of 2007, and we look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in January for spring, 2008, in the Language and Culture Center.



Auta Maria Silva Campos, Taegil Kim, Paweenoot Chaiyases, and Bagdat Konopyanov Receive LCC Scholarships

By Sandy Hartmann, Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards several scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. One full scholarship honors Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the Language and Culture Center. A second full scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in February of 2006. These two scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition to the Valdes and Davidson scholarships, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 9, 2007, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Auta Maria Silva Campos**, the Davidson scholarship to **Taegil Kim**, and the two merit scholarships to **Paweenoot Chaiyases** and **Bagdat Konopyanov**.



Auta Maria Silva Campos

was awarded the Valdes scholarship. Ms. Campos, who is studying in level four, is from Brazil

and her native language is Portuguese. She has been a student at the LCC for two terms. After she completes her study of English, she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in accounting. When asked about her reaction upon receiving the scholarship, she remarked, "I was very surprised and extremely happy when my name was announced. I believe

learning English is very important to my future and my baby's future." She added, "I consider LCC teachers and classmates as part of my family in the U.S. Thank you very much."

Taegil Kim was awarded the Davidson scholarship.

After completing study at the LCC this term, Mr. Kim plans to finish his bachelor's degree in economics in his home country of South Korea and subsequently will return to the University of Houston for a master's degree. An LCC student for three terms, he is currently in level five. He said of his time in the program, "I tried to be an active participant in my class and participate in all kinds of events at the LCC; moreover, I got along with a lot of friends. It's very important not only [for learning] English, but also [for] friendship."



Paweenoot Chaiyases was a recipient of a merit scholarship.

Ms. Chaiyases is from Thailand and is currently studying in level four. She intends to pursue a master's degree in hotel and restaurant management at UH. She said, "Thank you so much [to] everyone in the LCC especially my teachers and my friends in



level three and four for giving [this] wonderful opportunity to me. I am glad to be part of the LCC."



Bagdat Konopyanov was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. Mr. Konopyanov, a student in level three, is from Kazakhstan and his native language is Russian. His chosen field is petroleum engineering and he plans to study a master's degree at UH. He commented that receiving the scholarship was an exciting event in his life. He added, "I have learned a lot of new things. I have made friends from all over the world. The LCC provides not only an intensive English program; it provides a way of life."

We congratulate **Auta Maria Silva Campos, Taegil Kim, Paweenoot Chaiyases, and Bagdat Konopyanov** 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 fall graduation ceremony.

RETIREMENT OF PAUL LUSSKY

BY JOY TESH

The Language and Culture Center announces the retirement of Mr. Paul Lussky, famous teacher in the Intensive English Program and Program Manager of Testing and Placement. Mr. Lussky began teaching in the LCC in the fall of 1979. He was a much-loved friend, teacher, and colleague in the LCC for twenty-eight years.

Paul Lussky was born in East St. Louis, Illinois, and lived and worked in many parts of the world, including Point Comfort, Texas; Perth, Australia; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Gainesville, Florida; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He visited and lived in more than twenty-two countries before and during his career in the LCC but chose to call Houston home.

Educated in the United States, Mr. Lussky received his B.A. degree in East Asian Languages and Literature from the University of Pittsburgh. His work toward that degree provided him a working knowledge of Chinese. He later received an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Florida. Shortly after receiving his master's degree, he began his illustrious career as a teacher in the Language and Culture Center.

I once asked Mr. Lussky why he chose to teach in the Language and Culture Center. He answered: "I like teaching. It's fun. It's the right combination of excitement and routine. I like what I do and I like whom I do it with. I don't mind getting up on a Monday morning and going to work. How many people can say that about their jobs?"

As Mr. Lussky said at his retirement party, "It's been a great ride." We will miss seeing him every day, but we are happy to announce that he has just agreed to serve as a substitute teacher in the LCC, and, therefore, students will continue to benefit from his talent and experience as one of the world's great teachers of English as a Second Language. We will call him back often.

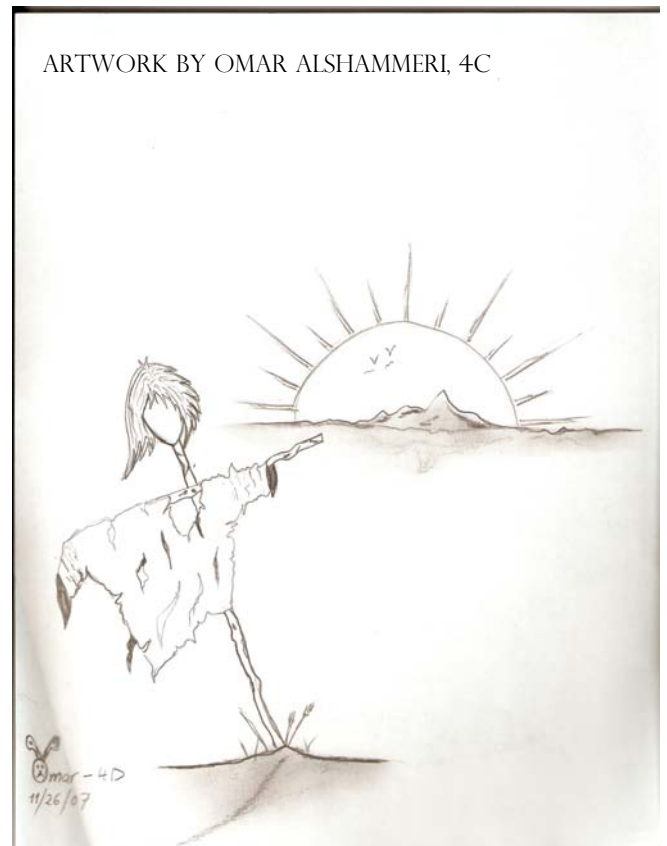
We congratulate Paul Lussky on his retirement, and we thank him for his many good years of teaching and testing and placing students in the Language and Culture Center. All of his friends, colleagues, and students wish him a happy retirement and a happy life.



ARTWORK BY MARIA GRZEGORZEWSKA, 5A



ARTWORK BY OMAR ALSHAMMARI, 4C





Peruvian Cuisine

By Alvaro Samiento, 5C

Peru is a country considered to have one of the tastiest and most varied cuisines in the world. Its cuisine has been influenced by the immigrants who arrived in Peru during the twentieth century. They established many styles and traditions from four different continents. The Peruvian cuisine has more than 3000 types of dishes that come from the three regions Peru has. First, we can find the coastal cuisine, where the most famous dishes are those with seafood. The most popular is called “ceviche,” made with slices of raw fish, onions, lemon, chili, sweet potato, and corn. Another one is the “tiradito” that is a mix of “ceviche” and the Japanese dish “sashimi.” Furthermore, the national drink, pisco, which is a brandy and a derivative of the grape, comes from this region. Second, the Andean cuisine, located in the mountains, is known because of its hot dishes. The basic ingredients are potatoes, tomatoes, corn, chili and different types of meat. Meals like “pachamanca” and the “anticuchos” are some of the most important from the area. Finally, there is the Amazonian food, which is prepared with products native to the region like vegetables and hundreds of kinds of fruit. The most representative fruit Peru has from the rainforest is called “Lucuma,” and the typical dishes are “tacacho” and “jaune.” In short, the richness of the Peruvian cuisine could be attributed to two basic factors: the uniqueness of the Peruvian geography and the mix of races and cultures. Peruvian cuisine has been very appealing for a long time because of its colorful dishes and innovation.



The Judo Champion

By Maria Grzegorzewska, 5A



He is the master of Judo, Yerbolat (Eric) Nazarbekov. Since Eric left his country, Kazakhstan, he has been studying English in the Language and Culture Center at the University of Houston. He took part in many competitions in Texas although he has been here only one year. He fought in San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, and College Station, winning first place in one competition after another.

Eric’s career didn’t start here in America. He has been training eight years now. His interest in this type of wrestling began at the age of thirteen. His father suggested Eric and his brothers practice martial arts. In Kazakhstan, Eric trained for two hours a day nearly every day and also attended competitions. He also competed all over Europe—in Poland, Germany, Holland and the Ukraine. He attended the World Cup in 2006 in Moscow. He also fought in Shanghai, China. In addition to Judo, Eric does Sambo, a type of unarmed combat, and Jiu-Jitsu.

It is not rare for athletes to get hurt. Eric, too, had an injury in 2003. That’s why he had to take a break for half a year. Afterwards, he decided to continue his career. He won approximately twenty-five first place medals in Kazakhstan and in the United States, he has won seven first place medals. Here in Texas, Eric plans to study Finance after he finishes his hard work of learning a second language.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Thoughts on Life in America

By Nina Tsai, 6A

Tick tick tick! Tick tick tick!
Tick tick tick! Stop yelling at me!
I know that is time to wake up!
But let me lie down just a little bit more...

I stood up, looked around me as if I had come from planet Mars. I was in my bedroom, in my apartment, located in Houston, Texas. I am in the United States. I am not in France anymore; I am not in my native country anymore; I am not in the bedroom I used to have since I was little. I am away from my country, a foreigner in America.

Do you know that feeling that tells you that you should have stayed where you were and not come here? This country doesn't "belong" to me, which makes me feel uncomfortable, wherever I am, whatever I do, whenever it is. Of course, I stay in touch with my friends from home, but I don't have the same feeling I could have if I were there. Phone calls, e-mails, letters, and instant messages are okay, but I miss being with them and talking face-to-face. I especially miss my mother's kindness, her affection, her talks, her cooking, and her presence.

I'm not ill-treated here, I'm not miserable, and I don't hate this place. It's just that sometimes I felt suffocated; I don't feel like myself.

But what is this breakdown leading up to? Feeling worse and worse every day. Who wants to feel sadness every day? No one, I guess. So, let's be a little more optimistic!



Instead of doing nothing, I've found that reading or listening to some music or even trying to finish the homework is a good alternative for avoiding the bad situation I described before.

For those who miss their native country, I would offer this advice: look at the sun. It's still there, right? Look at the clouds and the blue sky; they brighten your day. But if you still want to express yourself, go ahead; someone will listen to you. Don't be disconnected from the world around you, though, or you'll go crazy. Do some activities, such as playing sports, reading, or watching movies. Make the most of it! Go see the world!

Culture Shock

By Auta Maria Campos, 4C

I have been living in Houston since March of this year. My first week here I was in the honeymoon stage because everything, people and buildings, was different and beautiful. I was delighted with my new city and country. However, after this period, I felt homesick, isolation, and sometimes I cried because I missed my family, my friends and my job. It's hard for a person who is accustomed to working and always has her mind on business to stop and change everything to live and study in a new country.

I think the isolation is connected with culture shock because after the honeymoon, I began to recognize the differences between the two cultures and compare them. When people compare two cultures the first time, they think their culture is better than the new culture. Sometimes people spend a long time trying to understand the

new culture and find both good things and bad things. When I can stop trying to make changes and accept the differences, I can begin the integration into the new culture.

Now I have lived here for seven months, and I feel comfortable because I have a lot of things to do, I have found good friends, and I am expecting my first baby. I'm sure I will keep on trying to reach acceptance and integration.

Language, Religion, and Time

By Chen Cai, 4D

My experience with cultural adjustment is one that has not ended. Adjustment depends on experience and not time. I am still experiencing many things that teach me about American culture.

Language is a big part of culture. Since I am still learning English, the cycle of language is still growing. American English is very different from what I learned in China.

Religion is another part of American culture that I am getting familiar with. People go to church every week and I am still learning about my religion.

The way Americans view time is another part of my cultural adjustment. Being on time is important, but I am used to being late.

In conclusion, cultural adjustment is something everyone experiences. I am still learning about language, religion, and time. The experiences I have will help me understand.

My Cultural Adjustment

By Zafar Yilmaz, 4C

When I decided to come to the USA, I knew some difficulties were waiting for me. There are a lot of different things such as language, culture, and lifestyle between Turkey and the USA. So, when I came to the USA on September 1, my cultural adjustment cycle started, and it hasn't finished yet. At first, I wanted to adapt to the new environment.

The weather is very hot and humid in Houston, so I had to get used to the climate. In my country, Turkey, I have never seen hot weather such as Houston's weather.

When I first arrived, I stayed at my uncle's house for two weeks before my school started. I was very bored while

I was living there. I lived by myself because he and his wife were working all day. I didn't go anywhere, and I didn't see any area in Houston. We went out just on the weekends with my uncle's family. When my school started, my problem decreased. I met new people that came from all over the world.

My lessons began and I started to study English. I have to improve my English because I want to get a master's degree in the USA. Now, I am living in an apartment on campus. I use some areas of the campus with my classmates. For example, we go to the recreation center two or three times a week. I have an exciting time there.

On the other hand, some days I feel bad and tired. The cultural adjustment cycle is difficult for me. Nevertheless, I

am a challenger and I can tolerate some difficulties in order to accomplish great things.

"A person who can not tolerate small difficulties can never accomplish great things."

—Chinese proverb



CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Latin American Influences on American Culture

By Paola Contecha, 5A

One of the main characteristics of the United States is the diversity of cultures. It is the country with the most immigrants in the world. Latin Americans are the largest group of immigrants in the United States. This fast-growing population has been impacting American culture in many ways, especially in the areas of language, food, and art.



First of all, most of the Latin American countries speak Spanish. Many Hispanic immigrants want their kids to learn English in the school and at the same time keep their native language. In many states Hispanics are a large percentage of the population; therefore, the schools have to offer bilingual education. Several TV channels offer programming and advertisements in Spanish to catch the attention of these groups of immigrants.



Moreover, food has a big impact on American culture. Latin American food is part of the diet of U.S. citizens. For example, there are more than eight hundred Mexican restaurants just in the Houston area. Americans add ingredients to their recipes, like tortillas and jalapeños. In this culinary exchange, Tex-Mex food was born.

In addition to language and food, art is another area with a huge influence from the Latin-American culture. The contribution from Latin-American immigrants can be observed in music, painting, and dance. The audience for Latin-American music has been increasing through the years; nowadays, the market for Latin music is so big that there is a Latin version of the Grammy Awards.

In short, Latin-American culture is part of the landscape of life in the United States. U.S. citizens can very easily enjoy a Mexican enchilada while listening to Shakira in the heart of Washington D.C.

Cultural Influences on Mali

By Abdoul Macalou, 5A

Mali, my country, has been a junction of different cultures and civilizations, as have most African countries, due to colonialism. Therefore, it's not surprising to see all the sociopolitical, cultural, and even religious changes that my country has been subject to.

Since the times of empires and kingdoms, Mali has had a very well organized social and political structure. It used to be

a monarchy with a hierarchical social class division. Colonialism brought what we felt to be a kind of oppression, and left as its heritage the Republic, a democracy with some confusing human rights and tendencies, as well as equality between sexes, which is still difficult for some to swallow.

It took quite a long time to accept this chaos as our own customs, as bigger waves of revolution attached to our culture. It began with the foundation of modern education, where we could discover other forms of learning and new subjects like mathematics, biology, and astronomy. This was drastically different from our traditional school where boys were educated by fathers and girls used to stay home with the mothers to learn women's virtues. These new schools affected our ancient concepts of the world and natural phenomena. I remember when I was once explaining to my grandfather that the earth turns around the sun by itself, he just looked at me, laughed, and said, "All I know is that my window has always faced the south."

We discovered music in the finest way. As a result, we no longer need our griots, our famous storytellers who used to sing our pride and praises in public places and who have entertained centuries of generations with their traditional drums, guitars, and the big kora with its twenty-one strings. Nowadays, we all live to the rhythm of Michael Jackson, Madonna, 2Pac, James Brown, and so on.

Along with the fury of music came TV, the cinema, fashion, celebrities, and so on. Today, we do not listen to the stories our ancestors used to tell us by the fire each harvest. Instead, we all dream about the scenarios made in Hollywood and our new names are James Bond, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, and Angelina Jolie.

Another major aspect of my country that has undergone enormous change is religion. Animism, our first faith, has died under the weight of Eastern and Western religions, especially Islam and Christianity. This can be seen even in our names. For example, my father's name is Idriss, a Muslim name. However, if our previous religion, animism, had been practiced, his name would have been N'Golo since he was the first child of his father.

To conclude, let's just say that there's always a big chance for African countries to have an open window on several cultures, but no culture is perfect. We should take an opportunity to live our modest culture, not to give it up. It's really sad to see how fast we are going, and I wonder... to which destination?

The Influences of American Culture on Thai Culture

By Kanokkarn (Kate)
Yodpummarin , 5B

Thailand is located in Southeast Asia. It has been established for many years and has never been colonized by any country. That makes Thailand unique. However, through globalization, Thai

people can absorb other cultures easily, especially by going on the Internet and watching movies. Even though we have been exposed to many foreign cultures, American culture has been the major cultural influence on Thai culture in many respects.

First of all, American culture influences Thai fashion, especially amongst teenagers. In the past, Thai teenagers used to dress modestly by wearing long pants and neat clothes to show respect. These days, however, they are braver and show up in shorts and tank tops and see-through clothing as Americans can do, which sometimes doesn't look appropriate in public. Also, many Thai teenagers now use modern accessories such as big sunglasses, long necklaces, diamond earrings, tons of bracelets, and ankle chains, in addition to wearing what we consider to be crazy hairstyles. For Thai teenagers, showing how high-class and rich they are can make them fit in with their friends easily. Therefore, teenagers in Thailand today try to have expensive merchandise, which is imported from America. For example, there are Louis Vuitton bags, Guy Laroche pouch, Coach shoes, Levi's jeans, and Abercrombie T-shirts. These items serve as status symbols.

Furthermore, American culture also encourages Thai people to use more technology. Before, Thai officers usually used papers to record data, draw pictures, and write letters. Nowadays, they use computers to do everything. Moreover, America keeps updating

computers to be more compact. That pushes Thai people to get extra accessories to install, such as headsets, microphones, and webcams. Also, there are a lot of new imported cell phones which have radios, cameras and the Internet. All of those options attract Thai people to buy unnecessary items. Many advertisements use American cars to present high technology to support busy lifestyles. Thus, these items were brought to Thailand to sell to businesspeople. In addition, some of these businesspeople try to fit everything in the same place by installing a TV, DVD player, CD player, computer, telephone, and an eating table in the car.

Finally, American culture affects the eating style of Thai people. Whereas Thai people traditionally ate more fresh fruits and vegetables, they now eat fast food, such as McDonald's and KFC, a lot more than before. So, it takes less time for Thai people to associate while they are eating. Nowadays, Thai people go out for dinner more often than they have dinner at home. Also, they eat meat more than vegetables and herbs.

In conclusion, American culture has greatly influenced Thai fashion, technology and eating habits. It may encourage or discourage Thai culture in the future. However, Thai people should do their best to preserve their original Thai culture so new generations can know and respect it.



The Evolution of Colombian Culture

By Nestor Sanchez, 5B

Before the European conquest, the territory today known as Colombia was occupied by indigenous peoples. These groups of people had their own languages, religious beliefs, and customs. Colombian Indians kept their traditions for thousands of years with small variations. The most significant changes in their culture began when the Spanish took control of the of the Indians' territories. As a result, the ancient traditions were influenced by different cultures, which came principally from Western Europe, and in some cases, radically changed their culture and way of life.



The first aspect affected by another culture was the language. The original inhabitants in the Colombian territory were organized in groups with different dialects. Some examples of these dialects are Witoto, Piapoco, Chibchan, Buglere and Caribian. As a consequence of the Spanish conquest, a new language was imposed during the colonial period. As a result, most of the indigenous groups began speaking Spanish as a first language; therefore, ancient languages and dialects died out very quickly. In brief, the Spanish achieved not just influencing the language, but imposing a new one.

Besides changing their own language, the Indians' religious beliefs were also heavily influenced by the Spanish. For several centuries before the Spanish came to America, indigenous people had had a polytheistic culture. Hence, they believed in many gods: Thomagata, the god of the

thunder, Bochica, the protector god, and Bachue, the farming god. These beliefs changed in the sixteenth century when the Spanish priests came to evangelize and plant a new religion that was called Christianity. After that, the Indians began to follow the new beliefs and started being monotheistic. Due to their great efforts, the Spanish were able to establish a new religion in ancient Colombia that to this day remains the most common religion in that region.

Another aspect that was absorbed into Colombian culture was architecture. In the early fifteenth century the architecture in Colombia was very simple. With the passing of the years and thanks to the influence of Western European countries, the architecture in Colombia has been improving. For example, architecture from the seventeenth century is clear proof of the influence of Spain, reflected in many churches. Moreover, in the nineteenth century, architecture was influenced by Greek, Roman and Renaissance art that could be created due to great skilled artisans. Throughout the twentieth century, modern architecture was evidence of the influence of Europe and also North America, reflected in modern buildings and big suburban houses. So far, architecture in Colombia has evolved in an interesting way, thanks to the interaction with many cultures.

The influence of diverse cultures can have positive and negative effects; therefore, it depends on how the country can manage these influences to its own benefit. Many aspects of the culture can be

influenced by another country, so it is very interesting to think how our own cultures in the future might influence other cultures.

Cultural Influences Between Korea and Japan

By Min Su Kim, 5B

Korean people usually say that Japan is the nearest country. It could also be the furthest country because even though both countries are geographically close, they have difficulty being friendly to each other since the cultural interchange between Korea and Japan is still difficult. The Korean government is reluctant to be too friendly because of the historical problem that Korea was a Japanese colony before. Even so, the two countries cannot avoid influencing each other. Those influences are especially evident in fashion, entertainment, and martial arts.

One influence is fashion. It is difficult for people to understand the meaning of shaggy cut, wolf cut, or minimal shaggy cut, except for the Japanese and Koreans. Those cutting skills, which were invented by the Japanese, are the most popular hair styles among Koreans. The cutting styles usually require whiskers and side hair, and have layers. They usually make the hair spiky with hair wax. If you did not know the names of the styles when you had your hair cut in Korea, you could still find them easily because every Korean beauty shop has Japanese hair magazines. Moreover, many famous Korean beauty shops have advertised that they have hair stylists who have studied in



Japan. Another example of fashion influence would be clothes. Even though the Koreans' style of clothes, such as wearing jeans, polo shirts, and even shoes has been influenced by America, their styles have relied more heavily on Japanese styles. For example, if American people wanted to buy Levi's jeans, which is the most famous jeans in America, in Korea, they would not find the same design as in America; furthermore, they would not make sense of the N3BP series, Atlantis series, or Engineered jeans series. Korean people also might not find those series of jeans in America. Those jeans are designed in Japan and can be found in Asian shops. The reason is that Asians prefer specific colors, and their figures are also different from the Americans. Therefore, Levi's gave Japan the authority to design Asian versions. That means although they are the same brand, their designs have been independent from the original company. Hence, whether Koreans like it or not, their styles have been influenced by Japan. This situation is true not only with Levi's, but also with many global clothes companies such as Tommy, Puma, and Adidas. Another influence is entertainment. Actually, Korea has interchanged media officially with Japan for just a few years; even so, the Korean media, especially comedy shows, have been adopted by Japan for a long time, even though it has sometimes created a controversy in Korea because they are copied or imitated. Korean soap operas are very famous in Asia now, including Japan. For example, *Winter Sonata*, which is one of the Korean soap operas,

started to make Japanese wild with enthusiasm. After this drama showed up in Japan, many Japanese productions have tried to make soap operas with Korean productions or Korean actors.

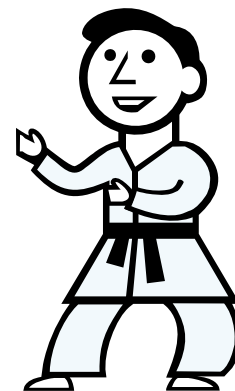
Karaoke is a good example of Japan's influence on Korean entertainment. Everyone knows karaoke was invented by Japan. Koreans really like karaoke. Whenever Korean people meet together, going to karaoke is the best choice before they return home. However, Korean karaoke is a little bit different from Japanese. There are two types of karaoke in Korea. One is called "karaoke." It means "pub" and can be sung with a real band and is in a place where people can drink alcohol; therefore, only adults can go there. Another is called "nole-bang." Their system is the same as the original karaoke, but people cannot drink alcohol there, and teenagers also can attend. Therefore, Korean families or teenagers usually go to the nole-bang.

The last example of entertainment is PC-bang which was founded by Koreans. PC-bang is a kind of café which has high speed internet or networking games; their purpose is to use the internet and the computer, not to eat. Teenagers usually go to PC-bang and play networking games. PC-bang helps the game industry advance because they make an environment where enjoying networking games is easy. As a result, even Japanese or American game companies always test their games in Korea, and Korea is usually ranked in the top ten in any game network game ranking. While PC-bangs were

taking off in Korea, Japan was being influenced, and they now have PC-bangs everywhere.

Martial arts are also an important part of culture for both countries. Tae-kwon-do is a symbol of Korean martial arts. Even though it is less famous than karate, which is a Japanese martial art, tae-kwon-do is one of the Olympic sports. However, many people who know tae-kwon-do and karate are confused about what the difference is. Actually, they are similar, for tae-kwon-do was adapted from karate. People may be surprised to know that karate was started by a Korean whose name was Baedal Choi. Thus, that is why these two martial arts are so similar to each other. Another example is kendo, which uses swords. Korean swordsmanship is different from Japanese. Even so, Korean kendo uses Japanese swords and follows Japanese kendo rules in competitions.

Even though these two countries have had many problems, this evidence shows that they have influenced each other. If Korea and Japan figured out their problems, they would influence each other even more. On the other hand, if Korea and Japan continue to influence each other so much, it might help them figure out their problems. No one can predict which will happen first. However, one thing that is true is that Japan is not the furthest country for Korea anymore because they have already started to influence each other and thus embrace each other's cultures.



LIFE EVENTS

A New Life Start

By Hadi AlHokash, 5C

It was 10:00 at night when my neighbor, who was nine-months pregnant, came knocking frantically at my front door yesterday. I heard her screaming and crying. As fast as I could, I hurried to open the door. I saw her in a horrible situation. She looked very tired, and she couldn't stand on her feet. I held her and asked what happened. She didn't answer but she pointed to her abdomen. I understood what she wanted to tell me. I took her to my car and drove to the hospital as fast as I could.

In the hospital many people were waiting in the emergency room. I saw a nurse who took information about new patients. I ran to her and asked her to help my neighbor. She gave me permission to go to an operating room. In that moment, my neighbor held my hand, and she told me to listen to her carefully. I was shocked because of the way that she talked to me.

She said, "If I die, could you tell my husband and my son that I love them?"

I didn't answer her question, but she held my hand again. "Promise me you will do it," she said, with tears falling down from her eyes.

"I promise you I will do it," I told her. I tried to let her know that everything was going to be okay. She went to the operating room, but her words were still in my head.

After three hours, I heard a new sound. It was a very beautiful sound. It was the first

sound that the new baby made. I was very happy, and I couldn't wait to see him. After his father came to the hospital, he held me as a brother, and he said he appreciated what I did. Finally, the father decided to name the new baby Hadi after me. I was touched by that. I will remember that day always.

Saying Goodbye to Helena

By Susanna Hornlund, 6A

October is starting to be well recognized all over the world as "Pink Ribbon Month" as a way to raise awareness about breast cancer. In my country the pink ribbon campaign was launched by my dear friend and colleague, Helena.

Neither one of us could at that time imagine that Helena herself would later be diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2005. We knew that the survival rate is high, especially when discovered early, so during our conversations and moments of crying, we stayed positive. She would win this battle. She was young with two small children and a husband, so she had to win. She always said, "I have cancer but the cancer does not have me."

The treatment went well and she went back to work happy to be feeling better again after a long and difficult treatment, just shortly before finding out the cancer had metastasized and was very aggressive.

During her fight for life that included chemotherapy and radiation for a year and a half, she always kept her beautiful smile, her laugh and her amazing joy for life. Although I

knew that she was getting worse, I hoped and prayed that she would win her battle against this horrible disease. Nevertheless, her condition quickly worsened and she became paralyzed because the cancer had spread to her brain.

I will always remember that moment when I was told that the doctors could not do anything more; there were no other available treatments. We know that life is fragile and that someone close to us could one day not be there anymore, but knowing that those days can be counted and that it is a matter of days or weeks is impossible to grasp.

On Thursday, July 28 I went to the hospital to see Helena, hoping that it would not be our last goodbye. How can you say goodbye to someone knowing it is for the last time? But Helena was ready to leave her life on earth and two days later she left us, and we miss her every day.

Would You Risk Your Life to Achieve Your Goal?

By Haneoul Kang, 6A

Would you risk your life to achieve your goal? When I came to Houston, I did.

In January 2006, I was going to study in Vancouver. After my plane had been flying from Korea for a few hours, I felt uncomfortable breathing in and out, as if the air in the plane did not have any humidity. The plane was flying over the Pacific Ocean, and I suffered from the condition until we landed at the airport.

A month later, I needed to board a plane to return to



Korea. I had forgotten how uncomfortable I had been on my last trip, but I had to go through it again. I felt my throat and airway were like the earth during a drought. I could not breathe well. The condition continued, and I was afraid that I could die.

As soon as I arrived home, I told my father about my symptoms. He said, "Perhaps you experienced a lack of oxygen. If you had adapted to the atmospheric pressure in the plane, you could have breathed comfortably." To solve the problem, I would need some portable oxygen canisters when I went to Houston. On the day of departure, I was ready with the canisters, but the airline would not let me board the plane with my new life support system. So my parents and I met the flight attendant and discussed the problem. He told me not to worry about it. "We have already prepared emergency oxygen bottles, so if you need them, we have them for you." I was assured that the attendant's comforting words meant that everything would be fine.

However, I faced another problem. I had to transfer to another airline in Tokyo, and the second carrier hadn't made the same preparations for me, so they said I could choose to go back to Korea or board the plane as I had originally planned. To be frank, I was afraid of having the same problem again, but I did not want to give up because studying English in the United States was one of the best chances I had to change my life for the better. I was tense until the time of boarding again but even though I was bothered by my symptoms, I was determined to tolerate them. I thought this was a kind of

challenge that was testing my will. Preparing myself for this ordeal, I felt brave, so I trusted myself to endure the flight on the airplane. Fortunately, the symptoms never occurred.

I learned the importance of trusting myself through this event. This decision is one of the best ones I have ever made. I was a timid rabbit, but now I have survived this. It gives me the courage that I can do anything I want.

How I Resolved My Conflict With My Brother

By Awa Dosso, 5C

Recently, I have had a violent discussion with my brother, who became angry with me. To resolve this embarrassing problem, I undertook three actions. First, I explained this situation to my mother and asked her to discuss it with my brother in order to calm him down. Second, as I didn't want to be confronted by him while he was still angry, I called him three days after our discussion occurred and spoke with him about many subjects other than our problem. In fact, I proceeded in this way because I knew that if he were still angry, he would shorten our discussion. Finally, when I was aware that my brother wasn't as angry with me as he had been, I called him again and decided to speak openly about our problem. As a result, each of us has been able to express what he feels and to break the wall of misunderstanding that had occurred. My brother's anger towards me has been ended, thanks to this three-step method that I used to gain forgiveness.

Housework

By Georgiy Golovko, 5C

I hate to do housework. I don't think that only women should do it or that I don't need a clean apartment and dishes. I just don't like doing it. Every time I do housework, I feel like I waste my time. I can help with it, but not do or be responsible to do it. On the other hand, I have one thing that I like very much: cooking. I've been cooking since I was eleven years old and continue to do it now.

I live with my girlfriend, and we are trying to share housework responsibilities. My "throne room" is the kitchen. I am responsible for cleaning the dishes, filling the fridge, and cooking. I think that all these things are related. I can make a tasty dish only if I have the right ingredients. Also, I can make a good meal only if I have clean instruments for preparation. They should be completely clean. The cooking itself is a very complicated process. You cannot just get vegetables and make something from a recipe. When you cook something, even an ordinary dinner, you should put soul into your meal. I try to remember something very pleasant while I am cooking a meal. A good mood in cooking is as important as the spices and sauces you put in.

The kind of meal you consume is very important. The more good meals you prepare in a good mood, the happier people around you will be.

Triplets

By Ana Lucia Rueda Ardila, 5C

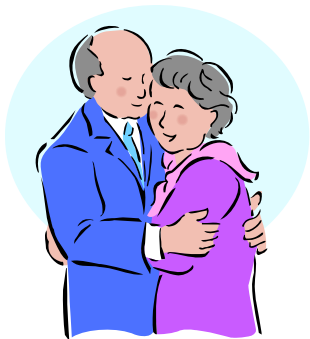
One of my aunt's friends from Bolivia couldn't have babies because she has endometriosis. All the doctors told her it was impossible. But she didn't give up and decided to have in-vitro fertilization. It was a success, and she got pregnant with triplets. It was a very difficult pregnancy. A few months after she got pregnant, she couldn't walk, and it was very difficult for her to move. However, eight months later, she gave birth to three beautiful babies: two boys and one girl. Their names are Cesar, Isabela, and Benjamin.

I met them last week. It was the first time I had seen a newborn. It was great, and they were very little. Because they were premature, they were put in an incubator and have to stay there until they gain more weight.

This story shows me that not everything is impossible although sometimes you might think it's the end. When you fight and try really hard to get what you want, you can get it. Now I know that everything is possible, if you persevere to make your dreams come true.



What are some of the factors that lead to a life-long marriage? Level 6 students pondered this question. Here are some of their thoughts.



MARRIAGE ADVICE

Until Death Do They Part

By Da Hye Kim, 6C

Have you ever seen the movie *The Notebook*? This movie starts with a beautiful and peaceful sunset full of bright red colors. It is about an old couple. An old lady has dementia. She likes to spend time with an old man who always visits her to read a love story. In fact, the story was their love story. Even though she can't remember any single moment they spent together happily, he and she like to share time together every day. What makes people like them love each other so faithfully for a long time? How could they maintain the bright pinkish love "until death do they part"?

The first factor for maintaining a long-lasting marriage is, of course, love. The word "love" has various meanings. Intimacy, faithfulness, respect, and trust can be some of the examples. Loving your spouse with faithfulness and trust forms the basis of a good relationship between two people. Spending time with their spouse with intimacy and true feeling makes them feel closer even though they don't utter any sweet words. These attitudes toward their life-lasting partners can lead to maintaining the long-lasting marriage.

The second important point for the ever-lasting marriage is conversation. People can have different points of view; hence, that results in a fight sometimes. However, solving problems with conversation can be a good solution. Instead of yelling, nagging, and throwing something at each

other, conversation brings about reasonable and logical points of view. They're able to understand the situations, reasons, and results through conversation. Of course, sometimes they raise their voices expressing how they felt. Even these moments, however, can help them to express their inner feelings. Just talking to their spouse and expressing their thought frankly can be a solution for many people. Moreover, with these conversations, they can have a chance to know more about each other.

The third thing that leads to a successful life-long marriage is being a companion in any circumstance. The truth that someone is behind me to support me and to hold my hand as I need them can make people more comfortable and more confident psychologically. If the person standing behind me is my spouse, that will be wonderful—the person I married, have spent most of my time with, and who also knows me better than anyone else in the world. Even in the hardest time and the saddest time, people can have strength to face the world bravely and confidently with the truth that they have a good companion and advisor who will be with them all the time. Sharing time together, being with them anytime, holding their hand firmly, and supporting them by giving a simple comment like, "I know you can do it. I'll be with you." Simple advice can build a strong foundation of wonderful ever-lasting marriage.

With these factors—loving

each other, having conversations often, and being a companion in any circumstance—people can acquire a successful long-lasting pinkish marriage through their lives.

Trust and Communication

By Aline Nzenze 6C

Marriage today does not have the same connotation as in the past. Every woman wants to get married with the first man that they think they love. As a result, we are confronted with an epidemic of divorce. It is difficult to find a couple who has already spent more than ten years together. In fact, most of those couples who are very excited at the beginning tend to be less enthusiastic after two or three years. Both wife and husband have to work for a long-lasting marriage. They have to love and trust each other.

First of all, to be married is a very important decision. The couple has to be sure about what they really need or want. "Love" is the principal factor in a marriage. In fact, this strong feeling will help couples to find a solution to any problems they confront. Most couples who make a quick decision to divorce are not in love. They think they love each other in the beginning, but they realize afterwards that it was a mistake, a simple attraction.

Also, the husband and wife have to trust each other and be totally open. Of course the key word is "communication." They need to talk to know each other in detail. Indeed, it has to be natural, not forced. The result of communication is

trust. When a husband and his wife build this strong relationship like best friends, it is always a very good thing. Nowadays, in a lot of magazines, women complain about the fact that their husbands don't listen or even talk to them. As a result, we can easily see that not having communication is one of the causes of divorce.

Finally, a boring relationship can also lead to divorce. The couple needs to have fun to give their union something exciting. Trips and gifts are always welcome in a marriage. In the beginning of a relationship, excitement is very common, but couples, old or young, don't have to lose this feeling. In fact, a good point is that the relationship can be as new as in the first days.

Getting married is an important decision to make. A lot of couples do not know the real importance of this act, so today we see a big number of marriages end in divorce. Communication, harmony and fun are necessary to build and strengthen a relationship.

How Not to Do It

By Maxim Overdijk 6C

Another factor in a good marriage is how you treat each other. When one of the two people feels a lot of pressure, he or she might want to get out of the relationship. In some cases, abuse is a factor in the relationship that also leads to a long-lasting marriage, but in a very negative way. One of the two people in the relationship is often scared to leave the other person. This is not a good kind of long-lasting

marriage.

In short, a good marriage will last long if you know each other very well before getting married and you treat each other well in the marriage. The important reason to try to make a marriage work again is the children. Make the right choice of who to marry. A lot of people don't have a choice at all.

The Importance of Patience

By Agustin Velasco 6C

Another factor, once you are already married, is patience. We need to understand that men and women are completely different, and you can try hard to understand your wife or husband, but in some cases you will never be able to understand your spouse. In those moments, you should just be patient and understand that you both love each other but are different.

In my opinion, the most important factor is to never argue about more than one problem at the same time. When you have a discussion about the dishes, just do that, and don't bring to the discussion the dirty clothes, or your mother-in-law, or how your parents did it. By reducing the topics of the argument, you will be able to reduce the time of the fight and minimize the hurt feelings.

Being successful in a relationship is not easy at all. It requires a lot of everyday work, but the benefits are huge: someone will love you forever and be with you the rest of your life.

Respect and Freedom

Yu Jin Chang 6C

Respecting each other builds a foundation for a long-lasting marriage. It seems to be easy, but it might be the most difficult to do. For example, many families in my country think that wives should support their husbands and the traditions and rules of the husband's family. If a wife does not want to accept her new role and does everything like before, the wife, the husband, and his family may be in trouble. It might result in divorce. However, some couples and their families think they are all equally important, and they should respect each other. As a result, when they have different opinions and thoughts, they listen to each other and discuss together what decision will be better for them.

Second, a little freedom produces a happier marriage. People think that after getting married they have to do everything together, but sometimes people need time for themselves, not for family and children. Men might want to enjoy time with their friends, and women might want to join some clubs to learn for themselves or to volunteer for others. Couples could enjoy time together, but if their preferences are different, they could follow them separately. They should let their spouses spend and enjoy their own time. Then they could share experiences that they have gotten.

A Strong Foundation

By Javier Cardona 6C

Marriage is like a house. Consequently, we should spend a lot of time on its foundation. If we do a good job, we will enjoy a long-lasting marriage. Nevertheless, even if we have a strong foundation, we should not forget to take care of the house. Once in a while, the house will need paint, a new picture on a wall, a new plant with flowers in its yard. Many of the troubles that modern couples may be facing are a result of the couple's laziness. After the marriage ceremony, a sense of a finished product may easily flourish. Consequently, the couple may become engaged in a financial race, forgetting the most important thing: their spiritual needs.



VALUES

My Three Top Values

By Bruno Togo, 2A

In the life of each person there are some values that he tries to follow in any situation. The values that I consider most important are tolerance, honesty, and courage. First, I like tolerance because I think that without tolerance, we cannot build anything good in society. An intolerant person will live alone because he won't seek to understand other people and will fight with everybody. The second value I respect is honesty. Without honesty, everybody will live in lies. Everyone must speak the truth and not say bad things about other people without proof. The last value I respect is courage. I very much admire people who are courageous. Courage helps people to not be afraid and to accomplish great things. Also, courage helps you to not give up when you fail. A famous person said, "It is easy to fall down, but it is difficult to stand up afterwards."

For me, these values are most important, but all other values like goodness or loyalty that help people to live well are not less important.

Important Values

By Webabe Mantoro, 1A

I think that men and women are about the same and can do the same jobs because in several countries of the world, women do the same jobs as men. This is a time of emancipation. For example, Liberia, in northwest Africa, has a female president. There are many police officers who are women in my country, Burkina Faso.

I also think that a busy life is good because laziness is not good. If you are busy, you can earn money and help yourself or others. For example, now we are students in order to have good jobs one day. A busy life will help us to move forward, to meet new people, and to learn about other cultures.

Women's Roles in Two Generations

By Zichen (Yama) Zhang, 6A

Because China is a fast-developing country, many shifts having occurred in Chinese people's lives. Women's roles in the last two generations differed in terms of education, dress, and entertainment.

First, women from the last two generations have received different educations. The women in my mother's day usually graduated from high school and they could get a good job easily. If they could use basic English, they could work in high positions. A few of them had the opportunity to study in the university if they were outstanding, and most of them could work for the

government. Unlike older women, young women today cannot have a good job unless they have graduated from a famous university and mastered English. Some of them even go abroad to acquire further education because of the competitive job market.

Second, the type of dress that the last two generations like is different. For example, in the summer, older women like to wear a top with sleeves because it is believed that women who expose too much skin are not decent. For the same reason, they only wear long skirts. However, young women prefer wearing sleeveless shirts and miniskirts or jeans to be more fashionable.

Third, the entertainment the two generations prefer is different. Playing cards at home and having dinner in a restaurant are common activities for older women. They do not like to stay out late because this is offensive to decent Chinese women. However, young women prefer playing computer games and going to the pub at night. It is quite popular for young people to stay out late.

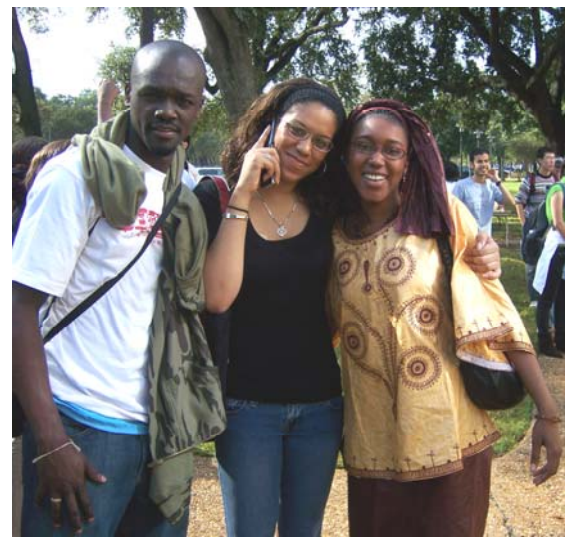
The differences in women's roles we see between the last two generations have led to arguments between mothers and daughters; they cannot understand each other as a result of growing up in different environments and receiving different educations. To avoid family dissension, mothers should acquire new ideas as fast as their children do, and the young should not forget traditions left by their ancestors.



Students explored Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas.

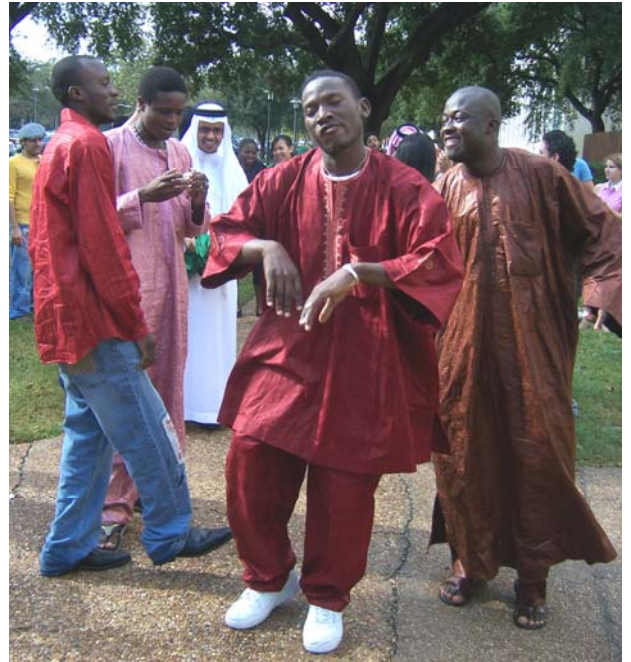


Students and teachers sampled international cuisine at the Fall 2007 Culture Festival.





Students showed off their dance moves at the Culture Festival.





HOLIDAYS

Tabaski

By Ahmed Sylla, 2A

Tabaski is a great event in the Muslim community and is celebrated three months after Eid Mubarak. This event consists of making a sacrifice for God, especially the sacrifice of a sheep. Before the day arrives, people feel nervous and overwhelmed because they want to plan a big party at home. They start shopping about two weeks before the event. Tabaski is like Christmas because the children receive gifts. When I was a child, I loved this party because I knew that my mother had bought me a present.

On the day of Tabaski, everybody is busy. Early in the morning, Muslims go to the mosque. When they come back home, they eat some food but the special meal is at 2:00 p.m. While the men drink tea and wait, the women take a long time in the kitchen.

We typically eat lamb on Tabaski. There are many ways to cook lamb. My mother likes to cook a spicy lamb sauce with rice or "attieke," an African food. She also cooks a famous grilled lamb with french fries. It's my favorite dish.

Tabaski is an interesting holiday because we eat and talk together with our entire family at our grandparents' house. But the following day, everybody has a stomachache and no one goes to work.

Naming Ceremony in Mali

By Bruno Togo, 2A

In Mali, the naming ceremony

is a great holiday. It generally takes place one week after the birth of a child. On this day, early in the morning at six o'clock, everybody meets at the new parents' house for the naming ceremony. Killing a sheep for this occasion has become a tradition in Bamako. Women use this meat to prepare the holiday food. Young men also have a barbecue with this meat. While women are cooking "zameh," the usual holiday food, men play cards, drink tea, and discuss sports. Zameh is cooked with rice, onions, and lamb. After eating at noon, everyone drinks many kinds of drinks like cola, beer, and "dolo," a traditional beer made from millet. At about 3:00 p.m. women wash the dishes before changing into their beautiful African clothes for dancing to the sounds of drums and tom-toms. After women finish dancing, they give gifts to the new mother. These gifts can be bars of soap, money, or clothes for the baby or the new mother. In Mali all holidays are celebrated with a lot of enjoyment.

How to Celebrate Spring Festival in China

By Fei Gao

Spring Festival, which means Chinese New Year, is the most important of the traditional Chinese holidays. Everyone in China holds the opinion that Spring Festival is the most important time of the whole year. The festival begins on the first day of the New Year on the Chinese calendar and ends with the Lantern Festival,

which is the fifteenth day of the New Year. The celebration of Spring Festival continues to that day from several days before the first day of the New Year.

Before the first day, people buy new clothes and prepare traditional New Year's foods. All of this is to get ready for the coming celebration. On the day before the New Year, people clean their houses. It is believed that the cleaning will sweep away the bad luck and get their home ready for good luck. Then they decorate doors and windows with paper with Chinese phrases. Finally, they have dumplings for dinner, which they believe can bring more fortune.

On the first day of the year, people wear new clothes to signify a new year. After breakfast, which is also dumplings, Chinese families begin to visit their neighbors until lunch. A married man should take his own family to his parents' house to have lunch, which often includes a whole fish, a whole chicken, noodles, and other meats or vegetables. The whole fish is to represent abundance, the chicken is to represent prosperity, and the noodles, which should be uncut, are to represent long life.

On the second day of the year, a married woman must take her own family to visit her birth parents and have lunch there. After lunch, people pray to their ancestors and all the gods. Then, from the third day to the fourteenth day, people in China visit their relatives, as well as their friends, to bless each other. On the fifth day, people once again have

dumplings for breakfast. Some of the dumplings have coins in them. Those who eat the dumplings with coins will be wealthy for the whole year because the fifth day is the birthday of the Chinese god of wealth.

Finally, on the fifteenth day of the New Year, people eat "Tangyuan," a kind of sticky rice ball. At night, everyone walks to the street carrying a lighted lantern. The fifteenth day, which is celebrated as Lantern Festival, marks the end of Spring Festival.



Chuseok of Korea

By Keum Bi No, 3B

Chuseok is a big holiday in Korea. Koreans celebrate this day in fall. It usually starts at the end of September, and they get together with their family. They share traditional food, which is called songpyun; it is made from rice cake. Also, they do an original dance that is called kanggang suwolle. They dance holding each others' hands and turn around with singing. Thanks to this holiday, they can have a chance to be with their family.

El Dia De Los Muertos

By Jorge Alberto Bernal Velazquez, 3B

El Dia De Los Muertos is a special day in Mexico. It starts on October 31st and it finishes on November 2nd, and we celebrate it to honor friends and families. According to the tradition, the spirits return to their families, and enjoy things they liked during their life— for example, bread, wine, and other special foods. Many families construct shrines in their homes and decorate them with flowers, photographs, and candles. Mexican families have a big party on this day.



Favorite Holiday

By Ya-Ching Chu, 2A

Chinese New Year’s Eve is a very important day for all Taiwanese and it is my favorite holiday. When this day arrives, people leave their homes and go back to their grandparents’ home. Naturally, my parents take me, my brother, and sister to our grandparents’ house. When we get there, everyone is very busy. Someone is cleaning the house. Someone is preparing food in the kitchen. Children are playing cards and games, watching TV, or singing songs. My mother and I go to the kitchen to help

Grandmother cook the many delicious dishes of chicken, pork, seafood, and vegetables. The traditional dishes for this holiday are more special than our everyday meals. In the evening, our grandparents call everyone to eat together and to say good wishes to each other. Everyone enjoys a fantastic meal. After the meal, our grandparents give their grandchildren red envelopes filled with a cash gift. Grandchildren who are married or working do not get a red envelope. Although I am a student now, I won’t get a red envelope this year because I will be in the USA and will miss my family on this holiday. On the day after Chinese New Year’s Eve, when everyone is out walking on the streets, people say, “Happy New Year” to each other.

AUTOBIOPOEMS

By Maria Poggioli, 4C

Maria
 Friendly, happy, outgoing, kind.
 Sister of two brothers.
 Lover of family, Venezuela, and love.
 Who feels happy when she shares with her friends, sad when she is far from her family.
 Who needs peace for her country, all the family together , and a boy friend.
 Who fears being lonely, not to be reach her goals, defeat.
 Who gives love, happiness and good moments to her family and friends.
 Who would like to learn English very well, reach success, and find a good love.
 Resident of Valencia,Venezuela.
 Poggioli

By Changwon Choi, 4C

Changwon
 Diligent, smiling, positive, passionate
 Husband of Youjung
 Lover of Jesus, soccer, dreams
 Who will feel happy when he passes the TOEFL, feels angry in heavy traffic, and felt sad when his father died
 Who needs love, encouragement, a good TOEFL score
 Who fears flashes of lighting, becoming lazy, failing anything
 Who gives love, hope, the Gospel
 Who would like to see his son, good movies, unification in his country
 Resident of apartment in Houston
 Choi

Tam Luu

Enthusiastic, generous, energetic, faithful.
 Brother of a kind, elder brother.
 Lover of tasting delicious dishes from other countries, improving my physical fitness by doing exercises, and decorating my house on special holidays.
 Who feels happy when his mother cooks for him , romantic when someone gives him a warm hug, optimistic when he helps others.
 Who needs chicken soup to get more motivation in life, a true hand to help him overcome barriers at work, and a simple meal to fight hunger.
 Who fears facing challenges and difficulties, revealing bad secrets, someone who is competition.
 Who gives an economics book and a law book to a friend to start her business, gives her a red rose to get along well again after arguing, and money to charity to help orphans get well-educated.
 Who would like to see the moon in mid-autumn, white snow in winter, flowers blooming in spring.
 Resident of Vietnam.
 Pham

How to Charm a Woman

By Awa Dosso, 5C

Women are anything but a long and very calm river that is always predictable. Charming a woman is sometimes so complex that people used to claim that seduction is an art. A man looking for a long-term relationship should own all the rules of this art. However, it is not always easy to challenge a woman's glance and introduce yourself for a conversation that will lead later to scheduling a rendezvous. So, is there a miracle solution to charming a woman? It would be erroneous to believe that there is an unflinching method to charm a woman; however, there is a series of three techniques that can facilitate this process that seems so difficult, especially for novices.

First of all, always feel confident and tell the truth when you want to charm a woman. Indeed, women love men who feel serene, confident, and relaxed because that reassures them. It is important to get rid of your entire complex and feel at ease both in your mind and in your body. So, even if you don't have the body of Brad Pitt or the sex appeal of Richard Gere, be positive and feel blessed about what nature gave you. The secret is to be what you used to be without trying to do too much or denaturalize your personality. It is certain that at least one woman on this earth will be interested in you and will want to know you for what you are and not for what you pretend to be. As a result, keep in mind that seduction is a matter of real life, so when you decide to charm a woman, the

first element is to be true and remain the same because your real personality will come up sooner or later.

As soon as you start up the conversation and begin to speak with confidence to the woman you have decided to charm, the next step is to have a good conversation and gently put forward with humor your positive aspects without bragging about yourself. In fact, even if you are shy, it should be interesting to talk with you because you must be able to captivate her attention. For this second step, be attractive, caring, interesting, and show your interest in her. Women's most boring first-date conversation occurs with men who feel paralyzed by fear and can't carry on an interesting conversation. Moreover, try to know more about her so that you can have clues about what she likes or dislikes, and you can direct your conversation accordingly by showing that you are interested in the same things and that you have many things in common.

Finally, never forget to make a woman laugh at a first conversation! Don't underestimate the power of humor because it allows you to break the barriers and make people feel at ease. Indeed, women easily remember someone who makes them laugh during a conversation. Using humor to transmit the message that you are under the charm of a woman is more likely to be accepted like a compliment than being very formal in such a situation. In addition, making a woman laugh doesn't always mean

telling a lot of jokes but rather makes situations less dramatic, proves that you understand her, and shows that you are so open-minded that you can turn yourself into an object of derision if needed.

Shortly, seduction is so complex that it is difficult to know and master all its rules. No miracle solution exists to guarantee total success when charming a woman. However, with a lot of patience and the combination of these three techniques, the path to the seduction of your ideal woman is well-mapped and you will be likely to obtain the woman's phone number and to be scheduled for another date without too much difficulty!

My Life

By Cheng Yi Chang, 2A

I was born in the countryside of Taiwan. When I was a child, I had many friends who always played with me. During this time, I began to learn how to read, swim, and so on. I had a happy childhood. When I was young, I was intrigued by everything and I wanted to try it all. I had a capacity for learning well and doing everything effectively. When teachers told me I was very smart, I believed that I could get better scores and would graduate from high school. During high school, I studied hard the whole day and night because I wanted to enter a great college. I wanted to attend institutions of higher education. Finally, I was successful and got into a good university where I majored in material engineering and studied about lithium batteries.

I applied for scholarships and listened to lectures. When I had free time, I joined associations with my friends and exercised in the gym. Those college years provided wonderful memories. When I graduated, I found a job. I acquired more skills and professional knowledge at the company. Furthermore, I saved some money because I wanted to experience foreign life and to learn to speak English well. Now those dreams have come true. I am an international student enjoying a new life. After one or two years, I might go back to my country and get married. I expect that I will have a happy, fun-filled life with a wonderful wife.

LANGUAGE AND TRAVEL



Do You Want to Dye?

By Rana Ibrahim, 4B

Not knowing a language can sometimes cause problems in communicating. Two months ago, I faced a very embarrassing situation when I was in a big store trying to buy a suitable hair product because I had finally decided to change my hair color. While I was there, a woman was standing next to me. She asked me, “Do you want to dye?” Actually, she startled me, for I thought that she was asking me whether I wanted to die or not. I got really scared and upset.

I thought that she was odd or maybe a crazy person. My fear pushed me to run away from that store. The next day while I was in my class, our teacher started talking about her hair color and how many times she had changed it. When she was talking, she mentioned the word “dye,” which I later on realized means “change the color.” After my class was over, I returned to the same store for the same reason, but the difference was that it was combined with a new word, which was so important to me to start a conversation with a nice lady at the same store. She was also looking for a suitable hair color when I asked her, “Do you want to dye?” Later on, that lady became one of my best friends and has helped me a lot to communicate with people.



Shopping in a Foreign Language

By Alimzhan Shalbayev, 4A

Last summer holiday I was in China. I'd been visiting

Urumqi city, which is a big city and good for shopping. I like Urumqi city because there are a lot of places to bargain, trading centers, and restaurants. My trip was not only about relaxing, but also about buying some things my relatives and me. Prices in Urumqi are much lower, especially for things like computers or televisions, than in my country. So I had a list of what to buy, and it was long.

To shop I had to communicate with the sellers, so this was a huge problem because most of them speak only Chinese, and a very small percentage of people speak English or Russian. I bought some items from English speakers, but their English was so bad that I had to ask them twice to understand them. Then I realized that if I wanted to do my shopping faster, I had to speak to people who spoke only Chinese! It was really funny. We were saying words to each other, but we couldn't understand each other. Then I tried to speak with my hands; I mean, I was using my hands as signs. I showed one salesman a TV and then took a piece of paper and drew him the dollar sign (\$), and then he took his calculator and typed me the price, but I knew that in this city I had to bargain, so I took his calculator and typed the price that I wanted. After a few minutes we had a deal, which was profitable to both of us.

When I was in China, I was not only shopping, but also I was trying Chinese cuisine. One day I entered some restaurant and sat on a seat; then a waiter came and asked me in Chinese if I wanted to order something to eat. What I heard was like this: Kuan tchi

tzin shii. I looked at his face and he understood that I didn't understand even one word of what he had said. Then he took the menu and showed me pictures of meals that I could order. I put my finger on one of them, which looked very good in the picture, and then he asked me about size, and then explained it with his hands. So finally I got my meal.

There are a lot of problems if you don't know language, but at the same time solving these problems is really funny.

Different Dialects

By Kun-Long (Karen) Zhang, 4A

A lot of different languages exist in the world. Also, we have a lot of very different dialects in China; some dialects have almost the same pronunciation but the words and the meanings are completely different. Therefore, not knowing these languages can cause a problem in communicating.

Ten years ago, I took a business trip to Guangzhou. Their dialect is hard to understand for a tourist. Fortunately, I could understand and speak a little bit. One day, I rode on the bus. The bus was full of people. Suddenly, the bus stopped and then I heard a woman exclaim, “Don't touch me!” in the Guangdong dialect.

A man's voice responded, “I don't love you!” in Mandarin. What had happened? I caught sight of the woman and man. They stood body-to-body, no more room in the bus for them, for anybody. The man couldn't stand up well when



the bus suddenly stopped, so he had to catch the woman to avoid falling.

“Don’t touch me! I told you!” the woman said angrily.

“I really don’t love you!” he replied. Most people on the bus began laugh. The pronunciation of “touch” in the Guangdong language is almost the same as the pronunciation of “love” in Mandarin. The man didn’t understand the meaning.

This shows how not knowing a language can cause problems in communicating. Sometimes, it also can make a create a funny situation.

The Wrong Word

By Paenoot (Becky)
Chaiyases , 4A

There are many problems in communicating if you don’t know the language pretty well. It can make you confused and make you misunderstand. So language is the most important thing for foreigners and students who desire to study abroad.

I am going to tell you a true story that happened to me when I was in Longmont, Colorado as an au pair. The first time I went there, I was startled and nervous because I had never stayed far away from home like this before.

Moreover, I was homesick because I had to stay with an American host family that had a different culture and different language. Therefore, I needed someone to talk to. There was another Thai au pair who lived in my neighborhood. I decided to ask my host mom for permission to sleep over at my Thai friend’s house on a

weekend. But later, I was so embarrassed because when I had asked my host mom, I had said, “Can I sleep with my friend?”

When my host mom heard that, she was suddenly confused and shocked. So she asked me back immediately “Who is your friend? Where do you know him from?” and “How can you know him?” and many, many questions. I tried to explain it to her for a long time. Finally, I understood that I used the wrong word. I should have used “sleep over” instead of “sleep with.” I almost made my host mom misunderstand and get mad at me. But the most important thing is it made me so embarrassed that I will remember this phrase until I die.

Learning a New Language

By Alan Nimch, 4B

Using and learning a new language is not easy. It may cause many problems in communicating with native speakers. People who move to another country should be careful how they use the language. While they are learning, they make many mistakes, especially when they hear one thing and understand something else.

For example, when I came here, I had a job as a waiter, and as we all know, the waiter’s job is communicating with people, so I made a lot of funny mistakes. One of these mistakes was that one day I had a table with three customers. After they finished their lunch, the woman asked

me, “Do you have American Express?”

I said, “Yes, we do. How many do you want. Three?” I thought she was asking about espresso (the coffee), and they started laughing.

In fact, not only people who move make mistakes, but also visitors. I heard from my friend a story about a guy who went for a vacation somewhere. At the airport, the police asked him, “What are you doing here?”

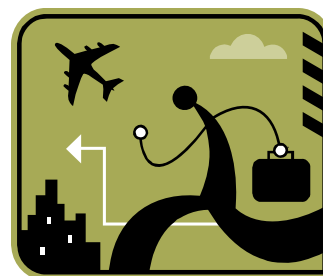
The guy answered, “I’m a terrorist.” He wanted to say, “I’m a tourist,” and the police got scared and called the other policemen, and they arrested the guy and held him for two days until they found that it was a misunderstanding.

It’s easier to go to another country if you know about it and a little bit about its language, but what about the people who travel to a new country and they never heard even a little of that language? That is what happened to a friend of mine who is from Syria when he traveled to Russia to study. When he went back to Syria for a visit, he told us how many mistakes he had made. He said, “One day I went with a friend of mine to the store and we took a taxi; when we got inside the taxi, the taxi driver asked us to close the door. We said yes because we didn’t do anything because we didn’t understand what he was saying. The taxi driver asked us three times to close the door and we answered yes. After that, the taxi driver got angry and threw us out of the taxi.”

Here’s another story my friend

told us about. He said, “One day I went to a store to buy chicken and I didn’t know what chicken was in Russian, so I started acting like a chicken by moving my hands and making sounds like a chicken until they understood what I needed.”

Everybody makes mistakes and it’s not a big problem, but the problem is if we don’t learn from our mistakes.



Traveling in Turkey

By Dong Wook (Henry) Kim, 5C

Have you ever been to another country? I took a journey to Turkey with my father when I was eighteen years old. Even though it was not my first journey in my life, the trip made me excited and also at that time it was near my birthday, so I considered the trip a birthday gift from my parents. During the traveling days I had to be absent from school and my friends envied me. Before traveling to Turkey, my father and I studied about Turkey; the country's religion is Islam. Turkey is one of the big marble production countries, and in this country people rarely find Christians.

On the first day of my trip, we went to Istanbul. That city was cool. I mean I have never seen a scene like that before because it was my first time to see a mosque, which is a Muslim meeting place. Then Father and I ate kebab, which is an old and popular traditional Turkish food. The second day, we moved to Kamuckale; it used to be one of the Roman Empire cities and has an old spa. The spa place was covered with white. I don't know why, but it was beautiful. The third day we went to Turkey's capital city, Ankara. On that day Father and I woke up earlier than on the others because we wanted to walk around the city in the early morning. Father and I went out at around six, but still the city was dark. My father told me Ankara seemed like a back-in-the-80s Korean scene.

When I was walking on the street I found some used Korean buses and cars. The buses had not changed appearance, and I often found Korean letters on the bus. After traveling in Ankara, we moved back to Istanbul, and then my father and I went to Istanbul's downtown, which was the most developed place in the city, and we watched belly dancing. If I have a chance to go on a trip overseas I would like to take a trip to Turkey again.

"Yes" to Everything

By Bich Huynh (Vivian), 4B

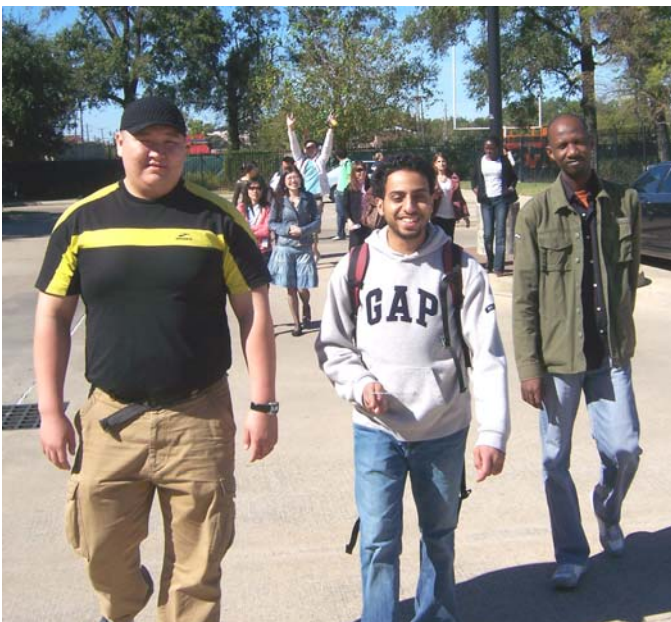
Not knowing a language can cause problems in communicating.

On a beautiful day, a lady cat and her son walked in the garden which was near her home. Suddenly, a dog appeared, and he wanted to fight with the lady cat. The young cat was scared, because the dog was gigantic. However, the lady cat was really smart, so that she fought against the dog using the dog's language. Finally, the dog ran away until he heard the barking of another dog. If the cat hadn't known how to use the dog's language, she couldn't have scared the dog. This was the first story that my teacher told me when I began to study English. Knowing a language is very important in communicating.

In my country, there are a lot of people

who are very rich, but they cannot speak English. Therefore, some of them have problems when they go overseas. Three years ago, my uncle traveled to Singapore. When he met the security guards at the airport, he had trouble because he only knew a little bit of English. He answered "yes" to all of their questions although he didn't understand them. Unfortunately, they asked him whether he had drugs and wine. After that, he had to stay in the jail about twenty-four hours before the Vietnamese embassy in Singapore helped him. My friend was also denied when he went to the American consulate to ask for an F1-Visa. When they asked him "Do you want to stay in the United States?" he confused "stay" with "study," so he answered "yes."

Nowadays, there are more and more people who realize the role of studying language especially the role of English. I cannot study anything in the United States if I don't study English. Moreover, I cannot get good jobs in the future without English.



STUDENT ADVICE

Choosing a Major

By Pedro Zendejas, 5C

Students face some problems when they want to choose their major. They have to think about three factors: types of schools available, personal interests and skills, and future job opportunities.

There are a lot of schools or academies in every country, both public and private. Students have to check the costs of each school and the majors they offer. Moreover, universities always have a limited number of students that can enroll. In fact, schools give applications and some tests before students can get into the school. The reputation of the school is very important because companies are paying special attention to that; when you are interviewed by someone from a company, one of the first things that they read is what school you graduated from.

Each student has different skills and personal interests. Some students have the ability to create or paint things, and others have the ability to sing. Some of them are not good with mathematics or chemistry. That means they have to know if they choose chemistry as a major, they will have a lot of problems with some assignments. Some people just keep their dreams and follow them; they don't have problems choosing a major.

Furthermore, students have to check and find out about job opportunities because now a lot of students are graduates, so the job market is very competitive. You can combine studying and training because some companies are giving that option so they can see which student would be a good employee for the company in

the future.

In conclusion, students who are going to study a major need to think before they choose it. This action can change their lives for good or bad. The major is the thing that you're going to use to earn money for the rest of your life.

My Journey to Level Six

By Kei Ishii, 6A

Have you thought that English is difficult or that it is hard to master? I am going to graduate from LCC at the end of this semester. However, I have had many difficulties learning English during my whole LCC experience .

After I graduated from a university in Japan in 2005, I had to decide what I was going to do for a living. One day, one of my friends from the university invited me to go a conference that was offered by a world-famous sports company. When I went to the conference, I was surprised because presenters from the company were using only English even though they were doing the conference in Japan. Everyone spoke English, including the Japanese. When I asked one of the Japanese representatives how often she spoke English, she answered that she used it at every conference and that she speaks English every day at the company even though it is located in Japan. She also told me that English is a very important skill to get a better job and to communicate with people from different countries. Her comments touched my heart deeply. That was when I decided to learn English. The decision was really hard for me because at that time my English level was zero; I did not even know how to make a sentence in English.

My first LCC experience started with bad results. The Michigan test, which is used for placement in levels of English classes, placed me at level two for my first semester in the LCC. I was embarrassed because I thought I was stupid. However, the LCC teachers taught English to me in a kind and friendly way. They did not make me feel that I was stupid.

My LCC Experience

By Chun-Hsiu (Hugo) Ting, 6A

I have been at the LCC for a year. When coming on the first day, I was nervous. My quiet and shy personality led me to worry that making new friends and adapting to new places might be difficult. However, friendly and funny teachers and classmates proved that I should not have worried too much. Even though we have different backgrounds, such as our countries, culture, age, or education, conflict between students has not happened because most of the students respect other cultures.

The LCC takes trips to San Antonio, Sea World, and Galveston with old and new classmates. These activities have helped me discover my classmates' real side that I couldn't see in class. In addition, at the Culture Festival, students can enjoy food from different countries. I have created many happy memories since I came to the LCC.

The Enemy in the House

By Majucet Cardenas Castro, 5C

It might seem great technology is changing our lives; however, this sometimes disturbs peaceful homes. The majority of people possess more than one of a particular unnamed item in their homes, and this causes them to forget to share and communicate with their relatives. Furthermore, this item not only contributes to disruptive behavior in children,

addition, according to the news, but also generates disagreements between husband and wife. In some research, it has been proven that many people waste a great amount of time watching this particular object.

As you can guess, this enemy is called television, and I, particularly, do not have much time to watch it. Nonetheless, I do have a husband and son who love to watch it. Therefore, I have concerns because this object interferes with my son's time. For example, he wants to do his homework with the TV on, which seems strange because he says he is able to concentrate better. Of course, I do not believe him, and despite his excuses, I turn it off and sit with him to do his assignments. On the other hand, my husband's behavior is not much different from my son's, for the first thing he does when he arrives home is turn on the TV (of course, after he kisses me). He reaches for the remote control and not only starts changing the channels constantly but also records movies at the same time. Sometimes we get into arguments, but then I just ignore the situation and move away to do something else.

Recently, I decided I would rather be a friend of the enemy than be against it because I love my family and like to spend time with them. Furthermore, I also did my own research, and after I asked most of my friends about the TV, their answers were all the same. They had had similar difficulties with their families.

Indeed, I would say that technology has its advantages and disadvantages; the key is to know how to balance time and accept the enemy in the house as a part of the family because it will be in our lives forever.

FIELD TRIPS



Trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science

By Ahmed Sylla, 2A

My classmates and I went to the HMNS on Tuesday, October 17. There were two classes together: 1A and 2A. Our teachers, Ms. Fallin and Ms. Wilson, were

with us. There were three cars and one van for transportation. Min Ha Pyo and Hussain Alsugoor drove their cars, Hector Garcia drove his truck, and Sam Long drove one of the LCC vans.

At the HMNS, we started our visit on the third floor, where we looked for the Eskimo “raincoat” and the Incan “cape of feathers.” Next, we went to the main floor to see the Energy Hall. We took many pictures together and spoke English together because this museum was very strange to us. Finally, we went to the second floor to see the beautiful gems and minerals and the gem vault also. The second floor also has many kinds of interesting animals, African and Texan. After that, we ate McDonald’s fast food and bought some souvenirs.

This trip to the HMNS was fun and interesting because we learned about other cultures and gained new knowledge.

My Meeting with Lucy

By Bruno Togo, 2A

Accompanied by our teachers, my classmates and I walked to the parking lot close to the LCC office where we boarded three cars and one van. Our destination was the Houston Museum of Natural Science to

return to the past. I was excited because it was my first time to go to a museum and because of the thought of seeing Lucy with my own eyes. After visiting some of the other exhibits, I went to a second floor hall reserved for special exhibits, this time for Lucy and Ethiopian history. Lucy is the nickname given to this fossil, about 3.2 million years old, discovered in Ethiopia in 1974. With fragments of 52 bones, she represents one species of our human ancestors.

After observing many objects about Ethiopian history, I finally arrived at the entrance to the area accommodating Lucy. On the left wall are illustrations of various prehistoric human ancestors. In the middle of the area is a display cabinet containing the authentic Lucy. I saw a skeleton with missing bones but enough to see a mandible, a skull, some bones of the arm, a part of the pelvis, and a femur. A nearby police officer provided surveillance for this priceless fossil. Also, there is a replica representing the female Lucy with hairy skin, small eyes, and long arms. I said to myself that I am seeing one of our ancient ancestors, but she looks more like a chimpanzee than a human. At the sight of Lucy, many questions came to my mind. How did she live? Did she think she would be famous one day? After several minutes of contemplating Lucy, I decided to leave but not without sadness. However, I had many other things to discover with my classmates. When we returned to the university, everyone was smiling because we had learned many things, all the while

having fun. My satisfaction was great because I met Lucy.

The Heart of the University

By Wael Daij Aldossary, 2A

One afternoon, we visited the most important part of this university: the M.D. Anderson Library! We met our classmates and teacher in the lobby. We activated our Cougar Cards for library use after filling out some information forms at the reception desk. Next, we looked at the selection of CD’s and DVD’s. Then we went to the third floor of this huge and nice building where we saw many, many shelves with many books. Finally, today, we discovered the HEART of this university. I call it the Museum of the Book because there are a lot of books from way back.

Trip to The M.D. Anderson Library

By Hildy Melisa Endako Ikambouayat, 2A

At 1:00 in the afternoon of October 19, I entered The M.D. Anderson Library, where I joined my classmates. We went to the checkout counter with our CougarOne Cards to activate our accounts in this library. This is something that LCC students must do at the beginning of each term.

Next, we went to the CD/DVD shelves where most of us chose the allowed number of two DVDs each. During that time, we spoke a lot of English with each other.

Finally, we went to the third floor. We learned about the “brown box” where we can put books when we don’t remember their real places on the shelves. After that, we went



to the juvenile collection and chose books to read at home. We are allowed to check out as many as 99 books for three weeks. Books in the juvenile collection are easy to read without using a dictionary. In this way, we should learn English easily. This trip was very interesting. I hope to go back there soon.

History of Houston

By Abdullah Tatir, 2C

I learned a lot of new information about Houston. In 1836, the Allen brothers bought an area in Texas and started to build a new city, Houston. It became the capital of the Republic of Texas. Houston's economy improved and the population grew. Houston took its name from Sam Houston, a popular general in Texas. Houston was used like a coordination center during the Civil War. Today Houston has a population of around 4 million. Every kind of nationality lives here. There are a lot of African-Americans and Latinos. People in Houston are usually helpful and friendly.

NASA

By Sherin Habib, 2C

NASA means National Aeronautic and Space Administration. It was started on July 29, 1958, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. President John F. Kennedy focused on NASA and sent astronauts to the moon in 1960. Now NASA conducts science experiments and has the space station. There will be a robotic mission to the moon in 2008 and NASA will

put people on the moon by 2020.

The Texas Renaissance Festival

By Diana Ospina, 2C

For a long time the Texas Renaissance Festival has tried to bring the best in Renaissance fun, food, and merchandise. It began with only three stages on 15 acres where vendors put their wares on blankets under the trees. Now there are over fifty acres, lots of stages and thousands of vendors and performers. More than 300,000 people visit the Renaissance Festival. You can wear wonderful costumes and eat delicious food. It was a great experience in my life. The people are very friendly, and the people have organized each event very well. The Texas Renaissance Festival is a good option to enjoy with your family.

“Failure is Not an Option!”

By Musaad Alsubhi, 5C

When I visited Johnson Space Center, I was impressed by their achievements. I quote this title from them. I was wondering why students fail. There are many reasons and the most important one is staying out late at night. Sleeping late is the leading cause for absences. If students come at all, they might come late and exhausted, and they will not be able to concentrate and participate in class activities. So go to sleep early and remember: “Failure is not an option!”

Weather Information in Houston

By Weilun Chang, 2C

I reported about the weather information in Houston for my classmates. I searched the Internet, watched TV news, and asked my friends how to find out about the weather. I found a lot of information about weather, so I want to point out how to find out about the weather in Houston: It is as follows:

1. We can check online with www.weather.com or www.click2houston.com and enter our zip code or the city to search. If you travel to another state, you can do this.
2. When you go to school every day, turn your radio to Sunny 99.1 to listen. They have a lot of reports about the weather, traffic, and news in Houston.
3. We can watch the local news on TV.

I think this is important because sometimes the weather in Houston is crazy. When you go to school in the morning, the sun is shining, but it is suddenly raining heavily in the afternoon!

When Will Winter Come?

By Georgiy Golovko, 5C

When will winter come? This is the main question that has been disturbing me every morning since the beginning of September. When I was in the Ukraine, I dreamed about hot weather the whole year. So, I am in Houston now. It is the middle of October and the temperature on the street is about 30°C. I should probably be satisfied. However, I feel so tired of hot weather, and I really miss cold weather. I want to feel cold autumn rain. I want to see yellow leaves falling down from the trees. We even have light morning frost at this time in the Ukraine. I want to wear an overcoat.

Every day, I open the door of my apartment and I hope to feel fresh, cold wind blowing in my face; instead, I feel hot air, which can hardly fill my lungs with fresh air. I had never thought before that I would miss the winter so much.

When will winter come?



Elementary School Visit

By Yu (Candice) Wang , 5A

My class and I visited an American elementary school, the University of Houston Charter School last Thursday. It was a very exciting experience. Since I was involved with the Education Consulate in China, I very much enjoyed this trip. I noticed some similarities and differences between American schools and Chinese schools.

When I first entered the UH Charter School, I was impressed by the messy classroom. The classroom there looked like an artist's workshop. Beside the entry door, there was a small lab with some bottles, machines, and computers where students could do some basic experiments. In China, classrooms aren't equipped with lab facilities. There were five tables in the middle of the classroom. Each table had four students sitting around. In China, every student has his

or her own desk. I was shocked by how disorganized the students' desks seemed to be at the UHCS. In China, it was not possible for students to make their study area so messy.

These American students participated in their class activities by volunteering. They could answer the teacher's questions freely. In China, if students intend to give a reply to the teacher, they should raise their hands and get permission to speak. The classroom in China is quiet when the teacher does the teaching. It is a requirement for students to concentrate completely on the books and teachers. The teacher in China is so strict that the students don't dare do their own business in class. On the contrary, the UHCS teacher was so casual; he made the students have the main role in their learning. To a Chinese teacher's eyes, the UHCS might seem

like a busy market that was disorderly and noisy.

The curriculum at the UHCS was very similar to Chinese schools. Both school systems include math, science, biology, history/civics, and literature every day. Physical education, music, art, and computer classes meet twice a week. Many students at UHCS have arranged some extracurricular activities, such as piano, guitar, foreign languages, soccer, or basketball, for evenings and weekends.

America has an excellent education system, as does China. They have their own features, but they are both successful in teaching students and encouraging talents.



Level Five students visited the University of Houston Charter School's fifth grade class to share traditional folktales from their countries. Here are some of their stories.

The Four City Musicians of Bremen

(a traditional German folktale)

By Maria Grzegorzewska, 5A

A long time ago there was a donkey that had been working his whole life for a farmer. But then the donkey got older and his owner didn't want him anymore and decided to kill him. The farmer was a very poor man and he didn't have enough money to buy food for an old donkey that couldn't work anymore. The donkey was afraid of being killed and he ran away. He dreamed of being a musician in Bremen.

On the way to the town he met a dog, a cat, and a rooster that were in a similar situation. The donkey asked them if they wanted to go with him. Bremen was far away and they had to spend a night in the forest. There they found a small house of three robbers. The robbers were eating a big dinner as the animals passed the house's window.

The animals were so hungry that they made a plan to scare the robbers away. The plan was to make a big pyramid and to sing as loud as possible. The dog stood on the donkey, the cat on the dog, and the rooster on the cat's head. As the dog started to bark, the cat to meow, and the rooster to crow like a raven, the robbers were so scared that they left the house thinking they had seen and heard a witch. The animals could eat as much as they wanted and fell asleep, each of them in a familiar place. The cat slept on the heater because it was still warm in the night, the dog behind the door like he had slept his whole life, the rooster outside on the house's gutter and the donkey next to the patio.

All the animals slept very deeply, but the robbers came back to see if there was really a witch in their house. One of the robbers was sent to check the house, while the others waited for him in the forest. The night was very dark and the robber wanted to light a candle in the house, but he mixed up the cat's eyes with the hot coal inside the heater. The cat got such a fright that she jumped on the robber's face and scratched him. Then the robber wanted to get out of the house, but behind the door the dog was sleeping and got afraid, too, so that he bit him on his leg. Outside the donkey gave him a hard kick and the rooster began to crow like a raven again.

Shocked and very frightened, the robber went back to his friends and told them that the witch was still here. Since then the bad robbers have never come back.

The Goddess Chang'e's Flight To the Moon

A traditional Chinese folktale
By Yuanfang (Kelly) Feng 5B

Long, long ago, there were ten suns in the sky. The ten suns rose and set at the same time every day, and the earth was like a microwave. The seas were almost dried up; the crops in farmlands were mostly dead, and others were burnt. The people would not be able to live much longer in that situation.

"I can't keep sitting back any more; I have to do something," Houyi was thinking. He was a hero good at shooting arrows. The next morning, he went up to the top of the highest mountain, pulled the bow with all his strength and aimed at one of the suns. Fire! The arrow reached the center of the sun perfectly and the sun dropped. In this way, he shot down nine suns. People were so happy and thankful that they lifted him up and down to celebrate. God gave an anti-death pill to him as a reward; if he took the pill, he would not really die, but rather become a deity who could live forever. After his magnificent feat, Houyi became very famous. Many teenagers started asking him to be their teacher. One of them named Mengtian joined the group but not for learning skills like the others; he actually had designs on that magic pill.

Not long after he began teaching, Houyi got married to a kind and beautiful woman, Chang'e. When he was not teaching or hunting, he was always with his wife. He loved her so much that he even became afraid of taking the pill because if he took it, he would go up to heaven and could never see Chang'e any more. One day, before going hunting with his students, he decided to ask Chang'e to keep the pill for him. Chang'e stored it carefully by locking it into a box and hiding it in the cupboard.

Unfortunately, Mengtian had secretly observed Chang'e hide the pill. He pretended that he was sick and didn't go hunting with Houyi. After Houyi left,

Mengtian burst into Houyi's house with a double-edged sword and tried to intimidate Chang'e into giving him the magic pill.

"Where's the pill? Give me the pill, or you will die!" With these words, he put the sword to her throat. Chang'e was scared. She kept swallowing as she tried to stay calm.

"Hurry! I won't be lenient, you know. I am really going to kill you here," he shouted at her.

When she finally cried out for help, he laughed at her. "Ho, ho, ho. You think there will be anybody to come help you? Ha, ha! Don't be so silly, dear. Your hero husband is probably running after rabbits in the forest forty miles away right now. And I've killed all of your bodyguards. You can shout as loud as you want, but nobody will hear you.

"Ho, ho. You'd better obediently give me the pill. Maybe then I'll think about leaving you alive."

Chang'e became aware that she was no match for Mengtian, and she also knew that it was time to make a choice even though it seemed there were no choices. In a moment of desperation, she decided to take the pill to prevent that evil guy from getting it. At first, she pretended to unlock the box for him. After that, while she was opening the box, she gulped up the pill as fast as she could. At the same time, her body floated up away from the ground and rushed out from the window and flew into the sky. She was actually unwilling to leave, so she chose to stop on the moon, which was the closest place to the earth. She thought she would probably still be able to see Houyi from there. She became the deity of the moon.

At nightfall, Houyi came back home. A maid told him what had happened in the morning. He took out a sword and ran to catch Mengtian, but of course Mengtian had run away much earlier. Houyi felt so sorrowful that he cried out his wife's name toward the sky like a wounded animal. At the same time, he suddenly found that the moon

was especially brighter than any night. When he looked more carefully, he was surprised because he saw a shadow in the moon and it looked like Chang'e's silhouette. Since then people view the moon every Mid-autumn Festival (15th day of the 8th lunar month) to commemorate Chang'e.

The Red Watermelon

a traditional Vietnamese folktale
By Ly Nguyen, 5B

Ly wishes to dedicate this story to her friend who loves watermelon.

Many decades ago, there was a little boy who lived in a small village and usually followed the hunters and fisherman. When he was eight years old, he had a chance to meet the king. The king took him as his son because of his intelligence and named him Mai An Tiem. The more Mai grew up, the smarter he was. He got married to a nice girl. The king gave him a large piece of land to work. In a short time, Mai and his wife became very successful by working hard. He built his house and made a lot of rice.

However, some courtiers lied to the king and said that Mai had looked down on the king and gave his thanks only to God. The king was very angry about what he heard from the courtier without checking. The king promulgated a decree that grounded Mai to a desolate island in the East Sea. He was allowed to bring enough food for a few days, a knife, and nothing more. From then on, Mai and his wife lived there alone.

His wife cried, but he encouraged her by saying, "We have our brains and hands, so nothing is impossible." The next day, he used the knife to dig a deep hole to find water for drinking. He and his wife built a tent by using the branches of the trees and sticking rocks together. His wife caught some fish from the sea to make a meal. Fortunately, he found big stones and he hit them together to make a fire to cook on. After some days, he saw a bird eating a piece of red fruit, which had black seeds. He drove away the bird to keep the seed. He thought if the bird could

eat it, so could they. He tried to plant that seed in good conditions, and soon there were creepers spreading over the land. They were round with a green covering and red inside. He shared the new fruit with his wife. They realized that the fruit was sweet and juicy. Therefore, Mai planted more of this kind of fruit. He carved symbols on the fruit and let it float on the water.

Some fisherman found these fruits and tasted them. They realized that the fruit was good, and they tried to find Mai. They asked him about exchanging their goods for his fruit. The king became aware of the popularity of this fruit. The king then recognized Mai's talent and he apologized to Mai for his mistake. Then, Mai An Tiem taught the farmers how to plant and take care of this fruit. He named it "watermelon." Nowadays, thanks to Mai An Tiem, many people love watermelon and can enjoy this wonderful fruit.



DAVE'S PAGE



Immigration Update

If you are traveling outside the U.S. over the Christmas break, you should talk to Dave Burns, the LCC Student Counselor, or his assistant, Sam Long, before you leave in order to make sure your I-20 and visa are correct and valid. Remember that to re-enter the U.S., you must have an I-20 for the school you will attend, as well as an unexpired visa. Your I-20 can be either your current I-20 signed on the last page (page 3) by the student advisor or a new I-20.

When students re-enter the U.S. for the spring semester after having gone home for the Christmas break, they should be prepared for questions and an inspection by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In addition to their passports, visas, and I-20s, students should have with them copies of their school records such as their grade reports and proof of their financial resources and sponsorship. Usually the DHS inspector will not ask for these additional documents, but students should have them available in case they are needed.

Many U.S. embassies and consulates are taking a long

time to process visas. Students whose visas have expired may face time delays when trying to renew their visas over the Christmas break. You can check the web site of the U.S. embassy in your country to get the latest visa processing information. You may want to change your travel plans if your visa has expired and the U.S. embassy in your country needs too much time to process your visa renewal. If you have any questions, check with the LCC Student Counselor's office now to avoid problems later.

F-1 Student Status

Students need to be **very careful** and obey the immigration laws. Under the current laws and rules, students who go out-of-status (don't obey the rules for students) may find that they are unable to get their status back while in the U.S. This means they may have to return to their country, and in some cases, get a new visa to return to the U.S. to study. There is a possibility that a new visa will not be granted if the student got out of status.

Remember the basic immigration rules you must follow. For F-1 students, among the most important rules are: 1) You must be a full-time student during regular terms, taking vacations only when you are permitted. 2) You can not work, except on campus, unless you have special permission from DHS. 3) You must make sure your I-20 is up-to-date and issued by the school you are attending. 4) If you transfer to another school, you must get a new I-20 from the new school and have it processed in a timely manner in order to notify

Immigration that you changed schools. See the advisor at the new school if you are going to transfer so that you make sure your new I-20 is processed properly and within the time allowed.

Also, remember that the law requires you to report any **change in your address** within ten days of the change. Please bring your address changes to the LCC, and we will change it in the UH system as well as notify DHS.

Other visa categories such as J-1, B1 or B-2, A-1, L-2, etc., have their own rules, which students in these categories must obey. Remember, if you obey the immigration laws, you will not have a problem. If you have any doubts or questions about the rules or about what you must do, see the LCC Student Counselor, Dave Burns, or his assistant, Sam Long. We are here to help you and we want to make sure you are successful in your studies at the LCC.

What are you doing next semester?

Under the DHS SEVIS tracking program for F-1 students, at the beginning of each term, we have to enter the data of what you are doing into the SEVIS system. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you let us know what you will be doing next term so we can enter the correct information. If we do not know and do not update SEVIS, the SEVIS system will automatically terminate you, which means you can lose your student status! Your teacher will give you an "End of Semester Student Plans" form before you finish your classes



this term. It is **very important** that you complete this form and return it to your teacher. If you did not get one, go to the LCC office to complete the form before you leave for the winter break.

If you plan to take a vacation for the spring term, you must fill out a "Vacation Request" form. These forms are in the LCC office.

If you are not sure what you will be doing after the break, please let us know by the start of the spring term so we can enter the correct information about you in the SEVIS system.

Student Activities

The time has passed quickly this semester! Our planned orientation trip to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Galleria were cancelled because UH was closed due to the threat of a hurricane! We apologize to those students who came to the University only to find it closed. Fortunately, it was only a few weeks until we had the LCC class photo followed by the LCC Sports Tournament. Students had a good time and a break from their studies. Winners in the games were as follows:

Bowling:

- 1st – Son Trinh (Kenny)
- 2nd – Nestor Sanchez;
- 3rd – Keun-Woo Park;
- 4th – Nestor Alvarez.

Billiards:

- 1st – Shu Po Yu (Kenny)
- 2nd – Gustavo Franco
- 3rd – Ihsan Umit Akyazici and

Souleymane Zampaligre.

Table Tennis:

- 1st – Andres Burbano;
- 2nd – Hasan Eken.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the Culture Festival a big success, despite the rain, by bringing all the delicious food. This was a special time as it was the same week as the American celebration of Thanksgiving. Not only did we have the traditional American Thanksgiving turkey, but also we had a good time tasting the dishes of different cultures and learning about each other. Thanks to the students who brought their music, danced for us, and dressed in traditional clothes.

On December 12, we have our final field trip. By the time you read this, you will probably know that we plan to go to San Antonio! It's a great way to end the semester, joining friends, classmates, and teachers and having a Mexican lunch at Casa Rio on the famous Riverwalk. After lunch is the time for exploring the rest of the Riverwalk, visiting the shops, going through the Alamo, and enjoying San Antonio. I hope everyone sees the Riverwalk after dark when all the Christmas lights are on. It's very beautiful.

The LCC Soccer Teams

The LCC was fortunate to have students representing us in the UH intramural indoor soccer games. We had two teams: the LCC Eagles and the

LCC Falcons. Both were excellent teams and both teams went to the play-off tournament. The Eagles made it to the semi-finals, but, unfortunately, lost in a goal that was made with less than one minute left to play in the game. It was a real heartbreaker. But there is always next season! We are very proud of both teams. Thanks to all the guys who played, and a special thanks to Ali Al-Yami from Saudi Arabia who is a former LCC student now in UH and was the captain of the Eagles and organizer for the teams. Special thanks as well to Kei Ishii our level six student who also helped organize and captain the teams.

By the way, Ali is now working part-time in the LCC office. We are very proud of his accomplishments.

The LCC Student Counselor's Office

The Student Counselor's office is here to help you with your problems, to help you find information you need, and to advise you about your concerns, ranging from immigration to academic concerns to personal problems. In addition to Dave Burns, there is Sam Long, LCC Program Assistant, who can help you.

Come see us if you have a question, need information or advice, or just want to talk!



ART CRITIQUES

Conjurer

By Kenny Yu, 4A

What is art? There's no exact answer to this question! In fact, whatever you think about it, that's art! After I saw the Conjurer picture, which was drawn by Amy Sillman, I felt I was in the picture.

I think the woman in the picture is trying to avoid the disordered things that invade her mind. She uses her hand to build a field to stop those disorderly things. She wants to stay in a place that is really peaceful and quiet, just like paradise. The place where she's standing is white, but on the other side, it's really messy. In this generation, there are too many things to bother us in the world! Every day is tiring! Every day is busy! Everything is bull...! Every year is the same! I need the shelter of my own protection to be with myself, center, and find clarity, peace, and serenity! I hope that I can have the same hands--like hers! However, that's impossible to be done! The thinking can only exist in dreams! After I saw the picture, I felt I was in the view.

Jean Luc Mylayne's Photograph

By Li Ye, 4A

Jean Luc Mylayne is interested in commonplace birds and natural landscapes in his photographs. In his photograph I see a person who is wearing blue jeans and cowboy boots. Especially the boots are very dazzling because the main colors are red and black. But there's a little white at the side of the boots. It

looks perfect. If you look beyond the tree, you can see a cottage in the distance.

This work of art is so peaceful because there is no car or horse in the photographs. Also the trees stand along the cottage. But the main part of the photograph is a bird and the boots which a person is wearing. That attracts the bird to stand on the stone and look. I think the person is tired of city life when he has become famous. The city gives him a lot of pressure and inconvenience. So he desires to go back to a natural and peaceful life. The red boots that usually a woman wears attract the bird because it knows that boots could belong to a famous person's wife.

I like this photograph because of two points. First, the red boots are picturesque and glaring. Second, I like the village landscape because nobody can disturb you there.

No. 358 – Jean Luc Mylayne

By Mungtra Chusilp, 4B

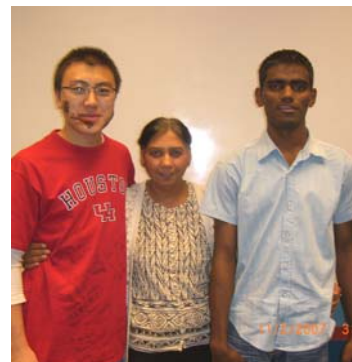
Between December 2005 and January 2006, Jean Luc Mylayne was taking a vacation from France to the west of America and produced his color photographs on the concept of birds. His photo "No. 358," illustrates a few parts of a pond. Six birds are standing at the edge of the pond. There is a little waterweed floating on the water. The water is dark blue and turbid. When I see this photo, especially the water and waterweed, I feel like I'm looking in the sky with a few clouds. The most interesting

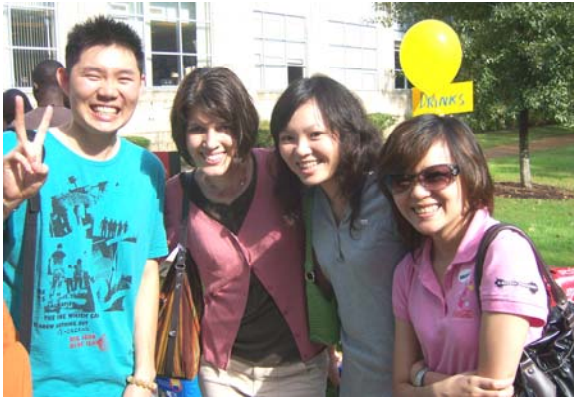
thing in this photo is that it's turned over from the top to the bottom. The image of birds I thought was real is their shadows.

Jean Luc Mylayne divided proportionately his photo with 80% water and 20% birds and the edge of the pond. The photo shows a balance between the group of birds in the left bottom, a group of connected waterweed in the middle and water on the top. The contrast between the water and the edge of the pond makes the birds' shadows become clear to see.

I think he first tried to capture the bird picture, but when he looked at it from a different side, he was probably surprised. When turning over the photo, it gave him another feeling.

I love this wonderful photograph because it makes me feel happy and relaxed. Moreover, I appreciate Jean Luc Mylayne's trick and how he captured this artwork. I hope "No.358" will be your favorite color photograph the same as me.





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