



"I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in January for the spring term of 2010 in the Language and Culture Center."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Director's Message

LCC Scholarships	02
Our Cultures	04
Special People	07
Our Problems	08
Cultural Adjustment	10
Sports Activities	14
Renaissance Festival	15
Dickens on Stage	21
The Sound of Music	23
Sweet Memories	26
Weather Stories	28
Going on Trips	30
An Indian Necklace	32
The LCC Falcons	33
Immigration Update	34
Student Activities	36

Voices

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

FALL 2009

From the Director

We always like to know why students decide to study at the Language and Culture Center. We like to know who you are, where you come from, and how you found your way here. Therefore, Week Ten of every term in the Intensive English Program of the LCC is usually survey week. We seek input from students regarding teaching, curriculum, marketing, and student services. Various committees look over the survey results every term. I am always interested in the results and especially interested in two questions that we always ask: How did you learn about the LCC? What do you like best about the LCC?

How did you learn about the LCC? Without fail, the answer on the survey indicates that most of you learned about the LCC from a friend or a relative. We love this answer. This

means that your friend or relative had a good experience in the LCC and believed that you would, too. When the marketing committee looks at the survey results, we realize that the best marketing tool for the LCC is a happy student, a student who had a good teacher and a great classroom experience and who learned what he or she came here to learn.

What do you like best about the LCC? Invariably, the survey indicates that the greatest number of students like the *teachers* best. We love this answer, too. When the marketing committee looks at this response, we are not surprised. We know that the reason students choose the LCC and return to the LCC is that we have the best ESL teachers they could possibly find anywhere.

What else do you like about the LCC? The second survey response indicating what students like best turns out

to be *friends from all over the world*. We love this answer, too. LCC students enjoy the best teachers and amazing and unforgettable classmates. No wonder we are experiencing skyrocketing enrollment.

This fall, we have been delighted to have 348 students from 47 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 our classes and on the University of Houston campus. I wish you the best as you complete the fall term of 2009, and I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in January for the spring term of 2010 in the Language and Culture Center.

Joy Tesh



DON'T FORGET

Jan.

Tuesday 19: Registration and tuition/fee payment
Wednesday 20: Testing
Thursday 21: Student activities
Friday 22: General meeting for all students, orientation, assignment to level/class, meet teachers
Monday 25: Classes begin

Mar.

Monday 15 to Friday 19: SPRING HOLIDAYS

Apr.

Thursday 22: Final Exams
Friday 23: Final exams & End of Classes
Monday 26: Final Michigan & Writing sample
Wednesday 28: Final student activity
Thursday 29: Student-Teacher conferences (morning)
 Graduation ceremony (afternoon)



Highlights of the Fall Semester 2009



LCC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Sandy Hartmann
Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors 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 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 13, 2009, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Sochenda Tonn**, the Davidson scholarship to **Dragan Stojanovski**, and the two merit scholarships to **Mahamadou Dessoh**, and **Andre Soares Lemmos**.

Sochenda Tonn was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Tonn**, who is from Cambodia and whose language is Khmer, is currently studying in level six. This is her third term at the LCC. After she completes her study of English, she plans to pursue a master's degree in hotel management. **Ms. Tonn** said of receiving the scholarship, "I am very happy to receive one of the LCC scholarships. It's very helpful for me to continue my studies. This scholarship encourages me to study harder."

Dragan Stojanovski was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Mr. Stojanovski** is from Macedonia and speaks Macedonian. After beginning in level three, his academic achievement allowed him to skip to level five where he is now studying. After he completes his English studies, he plans to pursue an undergraduate degree in business management at the University of Houston. **Mr. Stojanovski** remarked, "It was an honor and pleasure to be the winner of the LCC scholarship. It was one of the proudest experiences that I ever had in my life. I'm grateful to the LCC, especially to my teachers for their great teaching."

Mahamadou Dessoh was a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Dessoh** is from Mali and speaks French. He began in level one and, by virtue of his diligence and hard work, skipped to level three where he is now studying and serving as the student representative for his class. After completing his English studies, he will pursue a master's degree in economics. **Mr. Dessoh** said, "It was fantastic to receive the LCC scholarship. I was so glad to receive it. It can help me for the rest of my studies."

Andre Soares Lemmos was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Soares Lemmos**, who is from Brazil and speaks Portuguese, has been at the LCC for two terms. He is currently studying in level five. After he completes his study of English, he plans to return to his country and will pursue a degree in business. Upon receiving the scholarship **Mr. Soares Lemmos** commented, "It was very surprising to receive this scholarship because it was a great opportunity to improve my English and especially to make more friends and know new cultures. It is the best experience that I have ever had in my life."

We congratulate **Sochenda Tonn**, **Dragan Stojanovski**, **Mahamadou Dessoh**, and **Andre Soares Lemmos** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the spring graduation ceremony.



Village Life in My Country

Boubacary Sogoba, 3D

There are many interesting things to discover about village life. My father and I traveled to his original home to visit his family two years ago. It is a small rural area with not many houses and a small population, so everybody knows everybody else, and it is really far from the capital and is without electricity. To get to my father's village you need to take slow public transportation, so it took us two days to get there. In this small rural area, fishing and farming are considered the principal activities of the people.

The trip was really wonderful and an experience for me because it helped me learn how my father's life was before and what my culture and traditions are. One marvelous thing was that the lifestyle there was very different from the lifestyle in the capital. The first activity that I really enjoyed was what they do after their daily activities of

fishing and farming. At night, people gather around the fire singing and dancing, and they discuss the village's future and what they need to do to make their businesses grow. Another remarkable thing was that the trip let me make contact with other members of my family: cousins, aunts, nephews, etc. One surprising thing was when I saw some of my younger cousins with two wives and many children. The drawback of this situation might be considerable because they are not able to offer support to their children. Most of their children don't attend an elementary school, and their health is not guaranteed. Most of them are treated with traditional medicine, which is very often ineffective.

The other marvelous and interesting thing that I found was how a wedding is celebrated and what traditional clothes and masks are worn by people for events. In sum, this was a really remarkable and wonderful trip for me that I will never forget.



A PAGEANT OF CULTURES

between living in the city and living in the country, such as the lifestyle, education, and cultural differences.

First of all, it's obvious that the pace of life is slower in the country than in the city. A clear example of this is that city people walk faster than those in the country. In addition, after seven o'clock at night in the country, it's not easy to find people or cars on the street. However, in the city you can see many people who just finished work and ate dinner at restaurants. Although you can earn more money in the city, there is more pressure there than in the country. Indeed, different lifestyles give you different feelings and experiences.

Another difference between the country and the city is the environment. The country has more nature to enjoy; you can see mountains, trees, and lakes beside your school. If a town is located near the ocean or fields, peo-

ple can eat fresh fish, vegetables, or fruit. On the other hand, in the city there are more high-rises and cars, so you can't breathe fresh air in the morning or greet the birds. However, there are a number of stores in the city, which makes life more convenient. There are also more medical facilities in the city, so people receive better health-care there.

Not only are there environmental differences, but also educational differences. In the city you can choose from a number of schools and universities. Because city schools usually have more books and facilities, you have a better chance of getting into a prestigious university.

To summarize, it's more relaxing to live in the country than in the city. On the other hand, city life provides you with more options for shopping, education, and medical care. Which lifestyle do you prefer? Pursue it and enjoy it!



Shanghai and a Small American Town

Lin Ma, 4B

My hometown, Shanghai, is an international city. After living there for eighteen years, last year I moved to Conway, a small town in Arkansas, to study English. There were sharp contrasts

Hong Kong

Xiao Yuan (Sharon) Zhang, 4B

Last year, I had an amazing vacation to Hong Kong with my father. Hong Kong, which is the special administrative region of China, is not large, but it's flourishing. When we arrived after my first plane ride ever, I was immediately impressed with its beauty. Lights everywhere decorated the entire city.

Since Hong Kong has excellent public transportation with subways, buses, ferries, and taxis, it was easy to get around. Shopping in Hong Kong is also convenient. Because foreign products there are duty-free, I could see many people buying clothes, shoes, and other products. I made some purchases, too.

My favorite part of the trip was going to Disneyland. When I was a child, I liked Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. That theme park experience granted me my wish to meet them, and it brought back memories.

Traveling in Hong Kong was an excellent vacation. I hope I have an opportunity to visit Hong Kong again soon.

I am Brazilian

Antonio (Camilo) Ribeiro Santos Souza B. Duarte, 4B

The Olympics is one of the most exciting competitions in the world. For many years, I have watched the Olympics on different continents such as North America, Australia, Europe, and Asia. However, I have never seen them in South America, my own continent. In fact, the Olympics have never been in South America. Until now.

Since the recent decision to hold the 2016 Olympics in Brazil, not only my fellow Brazilians—but all South Americans—have been proud and excited. This is an opportunity for every Brazilian to show the world

who we are and let people learn about South America. We still have problems to solve before the games; our cities need be prepared to receive thousands of visitors and offer the best accommodations possible. I am sure that we will work to accomplish this because Brazilians want to prepare a beautiful and magnificent show. We like to please our visitors.

Like Americans, we believe, "Yes, we can." Or, as we say in Brazil, "I am Brazilian and never give up."

This fall, we have been delighted to have 348 students from 47 countries in our vibrant and growing program.

Visit Vietnam!

Thanh Phuong Huynh, 4A

Why should you visit my country, Vietnam? You can relax or visit some interesting and surprising places. One place you can go to is the market on the river where people sell vegetables, fruits, and meat from their boats. You can also go to the fruit garden by boats which go from the big river to smaller rivers. When you go there, you can taste fruits that are so fresh that they are still on the trees!

If you do not like a tour of the countryside, you can take a tour of the long beaches with soft white sand. If you enjoy adventure, you can scuba dive to see the coral reefs or fish in the deep ocean. If you like silence, you can sunbathe on the beach. In the evening, you can stroll on the streets to eat or shop.

Vietnam is a peaceful place with friendly people. You can enjoy your time there and have a carefree vacation.





Wonderful Beijing

WenYing (Nicole) Wu, 3D

In 2008 I took a wonderful trip to Beijing. It was my sixth time to go to Beijing, but this time was different from before.

As we all know, Beijing is a very old city. There are many famous places to visit, such as splendid palaces, the Great Wall, and so on. But in 2008, Beijing added two new places for visitors. One was named the Bird's Nest; the other was named the Water Cube. These sites were where the Olympic Games were held. This is the reason why I think this trip was wonderful.

In order to give visitors a great Olympic Games, the government did many things, such as curbing automobile emissions to reduce air pollution, planting trees to improve the environment, and increasing highways and subways to decrease gridlock. These measures gave Beijing a new look.

I had the pleasure of seeing the opening ceremony in the Bird's Nest. It was great! In the opening ceremony, the organizers used a lot of beautiful smoke, flowers, and computer graphics to condense about 5000 years of Chinese cultural history. The whole ceremony was modern, exciting, and wonderful.

I think I am lucky because I had the opportunity to see such a great opening ceremony in person. It was a wonderful trip in my life.

Come Try Colombian Food

Harold Ariza Cortes, 3C

Colombian food is well-known not only in Latin America but also elsewhere in the world. This is because Colombian food is varied and has a wonderful taste that many people believe is indescribable. What we can say, however, about Colombian food is that it is always prepared from a mixture of meat and various kinds of vegetables.

We're proud of our culture!

Of all the different kinds of food we eat daily in Colombia, the two best-known are sancocho and bandeja paisa. Sancocho is a kind of soup prepared from chicken, vegetables, potatoes, plantains, and beans. This soup is very popular, but it has a different taste in different parts of the country. Different from sancocho, which is a liquid, bandeja paisa is solid and is therefore usually served on a big plate where we can see rice, beans, eggs, beef, avocado, sausage, plantains, and arepa (a kind of round bread made from flour and cheese). Everything is on the same plate! Bandeja paisa is famous for its high protein and fat and is therefore often eaten by farmers after a long day of work.

If you want to have a taste of different flavors all in one plate of food, just come to Colombia!

The Tet Holiday in Vietnam

Thao Thu Nguyen, 4B

In Vietnam, we don't have Christmas, New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving, or Halloween. One of our most important holidays is the Lunar New Year, called Tet Holiday. We have at least ten days of vacation from work and school to enjoy the holiday with our families.

On the first day, all of the relatives go to a party at someone's house to celebrate this holiday together. The children always receive lucky money from adults. There is an old story to explain why adults give this lucky money to children. A long time ago, there were devils that abducted the children who were sleeping at the beginning of the year. Because parents were afraid of the devils, they decided to put a gold coin beside the children while they slept. The brightness from the gold coin blinded the devils so they could not take the children away from their parents.

Also, the Vietnamese believe that what happens at the beginning of the year will happen regularly throughout the entire year. Because of that, they do not sweep the house until the third day of the new year. They believe that sweeping the house at the beginning of the year will cause all the luck for the whole year to disappear.

I am proud of the Vietnamese Tet Holiday because it distinguishes our culture from others.



The People That Are Special to Us

My Grandfather

Mamadou Berthe, 3B

My grandfather was the most important person in my life because he was my adviser. His name was Bakary and he was 74. He was kind, helpful, and very wise. I usually walked with him around his farm, and he taught me a lot of things. For example, he taught me how to survive when I was left alone in a forest. He taught me how to go hunting and how to build a fire. One day, I hit my sister and he called me out and gave me some advice. He said, "You should treat every woman in the same way you treat your mother. You should also learn to respect every woman because you will get married one day. If you get into the habit of hitting women, you will hit your wife one day, and it is weak people who hit their wives." He also said, "If you want to be a good man and be respected by the people around you, you have to respect yourself first." I always enjoyed walking around the farm with my grandfather because each time I walked with him, he would give me some advice about life that I would never forget.

My Grandmother

Thanh Phuong Huynh, 4A

We all have relatives, friends, or someone else whom we love, admire,

and respect. The person I love and respect most is my grandmother. Although she is seventy-six years old, she has good health. She cooks well, and I love the food she makes. She loves to travel to famous places or the pagodas every year. When she returns from her vacations, she brings me souvenirs.

"You should treat every woman in the same way you treat your mother. You should also learn to respect every woman because you will get married one day. If you get into the habit of hitting women, you will hit your wife one day, and it is weak people who hit their wives."

I like the way she takes care of my siblings and me, but sometimes she takes care of us too well. For example, when we go out for fun, she often calls to ask us where we are and what we are doing. It is a tradition in my country for grandparents to be concerned about the young people in the family, but sometimes it makes me feel uncomfortable.

My grandmother is a kind person who takes care of her relatives. Wherever I am, I love her and think of her every day.

My Brother, My Hero

Mariko Fujita, 2C

My brother is the hero of my life. Of course, he is not famous, but he is famous in my life. He makes me happy. I am going to tell you three reasons why he is a hero and what makes him a hero for me. First, when I was a child and sick with the flu, my parents were working and couldn't stay home with me. My brother stayed home and took care of me. He gave me medicine so I could sleep, and he stayed nearby, reading a book. After I woke up, I felt better and was happy. Second, while I was in high school in Japan, I wanted to drop out, but I couldn't because my mother opposed this idea. My brother gave me friendly support; we talked about this problem for one month. I explained everything to him, and I did not drop out. Finally, when I came here, he helped me in many ways with study, life, and friends. He always gives me good advice. He makes me happy and not nervous. He is my best hero. My hero is not Superman or Batman. My brother is my best hero. I am so happy that he is my brother. He will always be my hero.

The Problems That Are Ours The Problems That Are Ours

Jordan

Omar Jwai'd, 2C

Jordan is a very nice place. The people are very friendly and always helpful to each other. Jordan has many nice customs, but it also has some problems. One is the **pollution** in the water. Jordanians must buy water for drinking and cooking, but some places in Jordan do have clean water. The government should solve this problem. Another problem in the Middle East is that people do **not stand in orderly lines**; this usually makes problems between people. The government should solve this problem by using advertisements to explain the importance of standing in line.

Saudi Arabia

Ali Al Alshayk, 2D

Governments should make improvements whenever possible. One problem in Saudi Arabia is **pollution** because of industrial factories in western Saudi Arabia. They are close to cities and cause diseases to the people there. The government should solve this problem. Another problem is automobile traffic. Drivers drive too fast. In 2008, 1200 people died in traffic accidents on one highway, Jubal-Adammam. The government should solve this problem of **speeding** in villages and cities and on highways.

Angola

Ilda Teixeira, 2C

The first improvement I would like to make in my country is to clean the environment because there is a lot of **pollution**. The second thing is **better education** so students won't have to attend college or university far from home. Another improvement is to help the needy people because many people live on the street, using **drugs** and doing violent things. Moreover, we **need honest people in government**. I think that Angola will solve many of these problems in the next ten years.

China

Jing Lin, 2C

China has many problems because it has **too many people**: 1,300,000,000. The air and the water need to be cleaner. Many buildings are needed for people to live in. Every family has at least one car, so traffic is very difficult. **Too many cars on the road** means slow traffic. Public transportation is better than using private cars to go to school or work. China **needs free education** so children from poor families can go to school. If these changes are made, China will be stronger.

South Korea

Seung H. Wang, 2D

Important improvements for South Korea are less **corruption** and less air pollution. "Black money" is a serious problem in South Korea. I have heard of parents who pay money to teachers to get special attention for their children. Sometimes, government people go to jail because of corruption. Another problem is air **pollution** because of a lot of cars on the highways. The best idea is less use of private cars. South Korea has campaigns to help people use buses and subways. However, not many people have joined this campaign.

Too bad.



Changes in University Education in Vietnam

Hang Bui, from 5A.

Have you ever heard that the same textbooks could be used in a major university for more than ten years? This was a fact at my university thirteen years ago. When I got to the National Economic University, the most famous university in business in my country, I could use the books that my sister used to study ten years earlier. Now when I look back, I am so surprised because there are many changes in University education in Vietnam.

YES, WE CAN.

The first change is in the textbooks that are used to be the main book for students. These books are edited and updated every two years. The content of textbooks also has major change. Before, the textbooks were full of theory but lacked information and examples for the real issues or did not show how to apply this theory. Moreover, students didn't have many choices for textbooks--just one or two books for one subject. Now students have many

opportunities for additional textbooks. The library has various collections of books from other countries.

Beside the changes in textbooks, the study process has shown significant improvement. Thirteen years ago, to enroll in a university was difficult. The admission test was so hard, but when students were selected it meant that almost of them were smart. Then the study process was easier with less homework and tests and only one final test for every subject. That is why students just studied before the test, not the whole semester. Almost 100 percent of students would graduate. This circumstance causes student not to study hard to acquire knowledge. Now this process has changed. The opportunities to enter a university in Vietnam are wider, but students have to study harder to graduate.

In addition to the changes in textbooks and the study process, students are educated better about the facts than before. Many universities send students from the second year to participate in projects with real companies. This training helps student be able to work immediately after they graduate from school.

In summary, University education in Vietnam has changed in many ways although these improvements need to be sustained and developed more to approach the standard of education in other developed countries. These changes give us hope for a better future of the country.

Adjustment to a New Culture

Hang Bui, 5A

Starting to live in a new country is always accompanied by new experiences. Some people find it exciting to acquire new knowledge and get ready to integrate into the new culture. Others have to face many difficulties in assimilating into the mainstream of society. For everyone, studies have shown that there are five steps to adjust to a new culture although they are not the same for every person.

The first step is called the Honeymoon, and it happens when people first come to a new country. They are interested in new things and are eager to explore the new culture. For example, they explore by eating new food, enjoying new entertainment, and trying new activities.

However, the Honeymoon period does not last forever. People soon go to the second step. It is the step of Culture Shock. Eating new food the first time makes them excited, but the second and the third times may give them different feelings. Then they begin to compare it to their traditional foods. They go to the restaurant that serves their country's dishes, but it is not the same as in their country. In addition, they find it difficult to deal with everything and feel uncomfortable in the new culture.

As time passes, people become familiar with some customs. In the third step, they understand that they can't expect everything to be the same as in their country, but they can adjust to it. They cook their food at home, contact people in their ethnic community, and try to learn the language as well as the culture of the new country. They may feel better, but not yet confident.

The fourth step is the Mental Isolation period. It happens when people have some experience and knowledge about the new culture. They sit down and start questioning: Why do they have to do everything by themselves? Why didn't the bank notify them about the due date instead of charging a late fee? They become upset, suspicious, and irritable.

Finally, people get to the last stage when their ability in the new language has improved, and they feel more confident to make contact with people, make new friends, ask for more information, and speak up if they experience discrimination. After their initial successes, their self-esteem grows. They understand that they cannot change the culture. Then, they start to accept it, adjust to it, and integrate with the new culture. They can eat many dishes and enjoy them; moreover, they know how to deal with the bank to avoid the late fee.

In conclusion, the process of adjustment is not exactly the same for everyone. Each step may take a longer or shorter time depending on each person. But, finally people learn how to accept and assimilate into the new culture.

The Life of an International Student is Not Easy

Wathunya Boonpairote, 3C

Many people who have never left home to study in America often think that the life of international students in this country is wonderful. They may be right, but few of them realize that the life of international students in America is also very difficult.

First, there is the language problem. Most international students do not speak English as their first language, but while they are in this country, they have to speak English all the time to communicate with others. For example, they have to speak English when they want to order food, to buy study equipment, and to talk with friends and teachers in their class. This is very difficult because English is not their first language. Even when they know enough English to understand what people say to them, they often find it difficult to make others understand them because their accent is strange to Americans. Of course, when you speak English with a different accent, native speakers will not understand you or will misunderstand you, and this is not very pleasant.

Second, there is the problem of changing lifestyles. As international students have to live away from their home country, they have to adjust their customary lifestyle to suit the new place. As a result, they have to take on themselves more responsibilities than when they were living with their parents. For example, besides having to do homework (there is always a lot of homework), they have many other things to do by themselves. They have to cook. They have to make the bed. They have to clean the house. They have to do the washing. Sometimes, they even have to find a job to earn some money to pay the rent!

To sum up, the life of international students in America is wonderful because when in America they can learn many interesting things. However, this kind of life is also difficult because they have to use a new language and to adjust themselves to a new way of life.

Going to School by Bus

Ahmad Zareei, 3B

When I came to Houston, I was worried about how I would get to the University of Houston for class each day. I didn't have a car or a driver's license, and the university was very far from where I was living. The only choice left for me was to take the bus, and I hated taking the bus to school. However, after going to school by bus for a couple of days, I started to enjoy it. This was because, when taking the bus, I was able to learn a lot of things.

The first thing I learned was the value of time. Every day, I had to get up at exactly 5:40 a.m. Then, I had to catch the 6:40 bus. Whenever I didn't get up at 5:40, I would miss the bus and be late for class. I hate being late for class!

The second thing I learned when riding on the bus was the system of freeways in Houston. I discovered that there are five main freeways in Houston. Interstates 59 and 45 cut across each other at the center of the city and form an X while the 610 Loop and Beltway 8 are like two circles that run around Houston. I also discovered that when we are on Interstate 10, we can easily get to Beltway 8, 610, I-45, and even I-59, as this freeway cuts across all the other four freeways.

I believe what I have learned about the value of time and about the system of freeways in Houston will be very useful for me in my future years as an international student in this city. First, I will try to make the best of my time at the university so that I can learn as much as I can. Second, when I have a driver's license and a car of my own, I will not lose my way in this huge city. Taking the bus to school is really a blessing in disguise for an international student!

Surprises at the LCC

Tien-Kai (T.K.) Ou, 4A

Before I came to America, I knew it was a country where many cultures are fused together, but I was still astonished by how many cultures are joined together in the LCC. At UH, we can see all kinds of skin colors and hear all kinds of languages. For example, in my LCC class, there are students from at least six different countries. We love to chat with each other and learn about each other's cultures.

Another surprise at the LCC has been the education style. In Asia, I was accustomed to schools where tests verified what we had learned. In contrast, the American system requires that students discover answers by themselves and discuss them. Although that made me feel a little anxious at first, it has been a positive experience that has helped me develop my skills more independently. I have learned a lot from my challenging classes.



A Big Challenge

by Rosario Simao, 2C

When I first came to Houston last spring, it was a big challenge in my life. Before, I had always lived with my parents and did not have to do anything by myself. My parents, especially my mother, took care of me. However, when I came here, I began to do everything by myself: paying bills, cleaning the apartment, cooking, and using the bus system. One big deal was the weather because Angola is very hot, but Houston was cold when I arrived. Language was another challenge because I couldn't speak any words in English. After my studies began, I made many new friends and began to learn English. Changes began to happen. At first, I called my mother every day but later only twice a week. I am fine now and the weather feels okay. I will never forget my first week in Houston.

Hard Times

Malikath Balogoun, 2D

When you leave your family to study far away from home, it is a very difficult time. It is a hard time for me because my parents are everything for me and my sister. I feel alone in Houston. I have friends here but only one cousin as family. It's a hard time for me because I am always sad. My cousin will finish her master's soon and will return to the Ivory Coast in December. It will be even harder for me, but I will learn to appreciate this life here.

I Miss Homemade Food!

Aziz, 3E

It is really hard for me to live alone in America. I miss all of the things like my family and my good friends. Here, it is a big change from home, nothing is the same, and I don't recognize anything. In America I experienced culture shock many times. People are not shy when they do something bad or something that is not permitted in Saudi Arabia. I hope I can adapt my-

self to the American way of life. The biggest thing for me is the food. How I miss home-made food! This is a big stress for me. In Saudi Arabia, we always cook on a gas fire, but here in America they cook on electric stoves! There are many things I need to say, but it is making me feel disturbed.

I Wanted to Go Home!

Uyen Nguyen 3E

I am going to tell you about the cultural adjustment cycle, and what I experienced when I come to The United State. For the first month, I felt very happy. Everyone was very nice and they were all ready to help me when I had a problem. I travelled around Houston with my aunt's family. It was exciting for me. In the second month, I missed my home where I was born and where I grew-up. I felt homesick and lonely. I thought of my family and friends. I had good memories of them. At that time, I wanted to go back to Vietnam so that I could see them all again. And time passed! I gradually got used to living here. I was in tune with the new way of life. I learned a lot of good things from the American culture. I had gained advanced knowledge which would help me to get a good job in the future. Now, I enjoy myself here.

In Houston, people eat, drink, sleep, work, have fun like in other cities.

I Have Started to Make Friends

Maria R M Ebe Eyenga, 3E

I think I am in the Initial Adjustment for several reasons. First, I miss my family, but I am beginning to understand a little about Houston now. For example everything in

Houston works like a machine. Secondly, I am not too excited like I was when I first came; for example, in Houston people eat, drink, sleep, work, have fun like in other cities but with a lot of comfort because it is a more developed city. Thirdly, I am beginning to be more comfortable and happier because I have started to make friends and I can speak with them. In summary, I think I am starting to integrate into this society.

I'll try my best to study and enjoy my new life here, and share my new feelings, not only my tears, with my parents!

I'm Trying to Like It Here

Zhang Jin, 3E

This is the first time I left my parents so far away and for such a long time (maybe one year or almost one year).

On the first day I arrived in Houston, I felt sad. Because I missed my family, I didn't want to try any new activities that I saw. After about one month, the LCC's classes started, and I made many friends. I attend full time classes. Everyday I have many things to do, and I feel I want to do a lot of things. I am beginning to understand a little about here, and I'm trying to like it here, too. For example, last night my friends and I went to Toyota Center to watch the basketball game. That was fun! Every little thing began to change my mind.

I believe in the future, I'll think that everything in the new country is going to be perfect. I'll try my best to study and enjoy my new life here, and share my new feelings, not only my tears, with my parents!



Sports Activities Make Living More Fun!

My Favorite Sports

Jose de Jesus Rico Jimenez, 4A

My family has always encouraged me to practice sports, and those sports have played an important role in my life. For both fun and health, sports are the most the amusing activities I have ever done. Since I was a child I have practiced soccer, volleyball, and basketball.

My father, who also played soccer, enrolled me in a soccer tournament when I was young, and I can barely recall my first game. What I do remember is that I made friends and learned what competition is. My team, “Los Pumas,” wore blue and gold jerseys. I was thrilled when I made my first goal by hitting the ball with my head. What an amazing feeling! I played soccer for many years until I went to high school.

Early in high school I started to play volleyball because I liked a girl who played volleyball. However, volleyball became an enjoyable sport, so I decided to play it seriously and participated in tournaments. I never did as

well as I wanted, but I had fun at every game.

Later in high school I began to play basketball, which has become my favorite sport. Because I admired Michael Jordan, who I consider the best basketball player in history, I tried to imitate him and played every single day. I played basketball even when it was raining, too hot, or too cold. The friends I made on the basketball court are still my friends today.

My life has definitely been influenced by sports. I learned to compete and do my best every day. I see sports like a challenge, similar to school and work, where I also want to be challenged and do my best every day. In sports I learned how to work with a team to share roles and responsibilities. Sports activities have also made me healthier, so I would recommend them to anybody. With sports, living is more fun!

What Only Surfers Know

Pablo Ruggeri, 5A

It’s kind of hard to write about surfing for people who don’t understand the hobby. Some people consider surfing a lifestyle, and that is my case. I have been surfing since I was five years old, and I have been travelling around the world looking for “the perfect wave” and almost every day I want to go surfing more and more. I will try to explain why the sport is so special to me.

Since I was very young I have been surrounded by a surfing environment. My dad was the National Surfing Champion for five consecutive years in Venezuela. When I was born, one of my first gifts was a surfboard. When I

turned five, I started to go to the water and catch some waves. I will always remember my first good wave. I started to paddle, stood up on the board, and then this indescribable feeling came over me of sounds, movement, natural power, and everything turned to slow motion. After this wave, I got “surf fever” forever.

When I was ten years old, I took my first surfing trip. My dad and I went to Costa Rica for thirty days, just to surf. We repeated this routine: surf, eat, surf, eat, surf, and the whole time we were there. Now that I am getting better and better at surfing, I want even bigger challenges.

I Watched a Hockey Game

By Suparat Phokapan (Meansy), 3B

I had a very good time last week when I went to see a hockey game. I had never seen one in my country. The people who played the game were children, and they played it on an ice ring. Each child held a wooden stick in his hand, and he had to hit a small ball into a small goal. What surprised me most about the game was that the children were able to hit the ball with their wooden sticks while at the same time skating very fast on the ice! When a goal was scored, the players raised their hands. During the game, I saw one of the umpires say something and all the players stopped playing. Later, I found out that a player had been injured. The injured player was taken out of the ring, and the player who had injured his rival had to leave the ring, too. He was not allowed to take further part in the game. Hockey is an interesting game, but the rules of hockey are so strict!



Noblemen, Ladies, Knights, Soldiers, and Jesters

Arouna Sangare, 3C

RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL: THE PAST RELIVED

LCC students experienced the
greatest Renaissance Festival in the
U.S.



Last Saturday I went to the Renaissance Festival with many students from the LCC. I was very excited, so I went to the University Center very early because I did not want to miss the trip. At 9:30 we left the University to go to the Renaissance Festival on three buses. When arriving there, a teacher from the LCC said that we could do whatever we wanted to but that we had to come back to our buses at 6 pm because the traffic was bad in the evening.

There were so many things to see and do at the Renaissance Festival! Because not everyone wanted to see and do the same things, we split into small groups. In my group, there were Arol, three other students from different levels, and me. As we went past the entrance into the festival ground, we had a feeling we were walking into a medieval town. The place was so big! And there were so many wonderful things I had never seen before in my life! There were many noblemen, ladies, knights, soldiers, and jesters walking in the streets wearing vintage clothes. There were shops where you could buy antique drinking glasses and swords. There were also jousting tournaments, executioners, and a lot more!

I took a lot of pictures with the new camera given me by my mother. Unfortunately, after some time, I lost my camera. I was very angry when I discovered I had lost my camera. I rechecked everywhere I had been sitting but I couldn't find it. When somebody told me that if you lost something, you could go and ask for help from the information center, I immediately went there to check. I didn't find my camera. Finally, it was getting late, and I gave up looking for my camera. Actually, I was angry, not because I lost the camera itself, but because there were a lot of pictures in it which I could show to my children and grandchildren.





IT SEEMED LIKE I WAS IN ANOTHER WORLD!

SOULEYMANE KOUMA, 3D

ON NOVEMBER 7, 2009, THE LCC ORGANIZED FOR ITS STUDENTS A TRIP TO THE RENAISSANCE FAIR IN MAGNOLIA. THAT DAY I WAS AMONG THE STUDENTS WHO TOOK THIS TRIP. IT WAS AN EXCITING EXPERIENCE FOR ME BECAUSE I DISCOVERED MANY THINGS. WHEN I ENTERED THE RENAISSANCE VILLAGE, IT SEEMED THAT I WAS IN ANOTHER WORLD. I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE VINTAGE COSTUMES IN THIS MODERN SOCIETY. FIRST, I SAW PEOPLE RIDING A HORSE AND MEN DRESSED LIKE KINGS OF PAST TIMES. I ALSO SAW HOW SOLDIERS FOUGHT EACH OTHER IN THE PAST. THEN I VISITED SOME PLACES WHERE PEOPLE SAT TOGETHER AND LISTENED TO A STORYTELLER. I ALSO SAW LIVING ANIMALS, SUCH AS ELEPHANTS, CAMELS, GOATS, AND SHEEP. IT WAS MY FIRST TIME TO SEE LIVING ANIMALS HERE. THIS TRIP WAS WONDERFUL FOR ME BECAUSE IT WAS LIKE A REAL EPISODE OF SOME STORIES THAT I HAD READ IN BOOKS.

THEY HAD SWORDS AND LOOKED LIKE REAL RENAISSANCE PEOPLE!

JAEWOO KIM, CLASS 2A

I WENT TO THE RENAISSANCE FAIR WITH MY LCC FRIENDS ON NOVEMBER 7TH. THE FAIR WAS DECORATED LIKE THE TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE. MANY PEOPLE WITH RENAISSANCE CLOTHES WORKED AROUND THE FAIRGROUNDS. ALTHOUGH I DID NOT WEAR A COSTUME, I FELT AS IF I WERE LIVING IN THE TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE. I SAW MANY PEOPLE WHO WORE AWESOME COSTUMES. THEY HAD SWORDS AND LOOKED LIKE REAL RENAISSANCE PEOPLE. ALSO, MANY KIDS WORE COSTUMES. THEY WERE SO CUTE.

I ATE A TURKEY LEG WITH MY CLASSMATE, REX. IT WAS HUGE, SO WE BET ON WHO WOULD EAT IT FASTEST. FINALLY, REX WON. I WAS DISAPPOINTED. WE HAD A FUN LUNCH TIME WITH OUR FRIENDS.

IF I HAD A COSTUME I WOULD GO THERE AGAIN. IT WILL BE MORE FUN BECAUSE OF THE COSTUME. I LOVE THE MIDDLE AGES, SO I HAVE READ BOOKS ABOUT THAT TIME. THAT IS WHY I LOVED THE RENAISSANCE FAIR SO MUCH.



FRIENDS FROM ALL FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD



CULTURE FESTIVAL FALL 09





EXPLORING HOUSTON



SHOPPING AT THE GALLERIA



HALLOWEEN "TRICK OR TREAT"



A TURKEY FOR THANKSGIVING



EXPERIENCING THE RENAISSANCE



Dickens on Stage

If you feel passion for any form of artistic expression, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, is an excellent option to enjoy the amazing world of the arts. It is currently playing at the Alley Theatre in Houston.

Jenny Quijada, 5B

The performance of this traditional piece proved to be almost perfect, not only for the quality of the actors' performances, but also for the conjunction of sounds and visual effects that together make this performance a unique experience for the senses.

The actors showed the ability to transmit feelings and take the audience to a high level of emotion and entertainment. In addition, the sounds, visual effects, lights, and colors supported the environment. While the audience enjoyed the performance, they seemed to be transported to another time and place where history was being replayed.

A Fantastic World

Hsiano-Ting Ni (Tina), 5A

I seemed to enter a whole new world when I saw the stage at the Alley Theatre. The big clock above the stage was the first thing that caught my eye. It is golden and beautiful. The stage is not big but still looks good. The scene let me guess what would happen on this stage. I immediately felt interested and full of expectation for the show, *A Christmas Carol*.

When the lights were turned off, a lot of smoke was blown out from the middle of the stage. Suddenly, there were six ghosts who came out and started dancing. It was so amazing and exciting when I saw the lights change color and reflect on the ghosts' white clothing. Every movement of the dancers matched the spirit of the atmosphere to let you think they really came from the hell.

"What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

Charles Dickens

Scrooge, the main character in the story, was an odd and cranky old man who loved to work to earn a lot of money.

Even on Christmas, Scrooge still preferred to work than take a rest, though Christmas should be full of happiness. Selfish Scrooge even demanded that those people who owed him money give him something. Thus, he got a doll, a bottle of wine, and a clock and those things turned into three ghosts in his dreams in order to teach old Scrooge the sharing spirit of Christmas.

This is a wonderful show which gives us memories, and I really want to see it again. It's amazing.

Dickens's Scrooge

Goktug Kalayci, 5B

First of all, the most impressive part of the play was the decor. Although it looked simple, it was not. You could see every detail in the decor, but they tried to show that it was simple. Besides, the actors used every part of the set. I tried to find an object that was not used during the play, but I could not.

Moreover, the players' roles impressed me very much. The kids in the play were performed as well as twenty-year veteran actors. I could not believe they were just kids. I believe they will be successful actors. Furthermore, the

performances of the other actors were awesome. Sometimes, although I guessed what an actor would do, the actions always surprised me. They were so successful that I believed that they were not acting, but that they were living in the play.

Finally, the Alley Theatre amazed me. I felt that it was not just built for acting, but also it was the home of the play. The play was living inside the theatre. Every audience member could hear, see, and feel the play.

I can say "A Christmas Carol" is such an important play that it should be seen. You should go and not only watch it but also feel it in your heart.

Even on Christmas, Scrooge still preferred to work than take a rest, though Christmas should be full of happiness. Selfish Scrooge even demanded that those people who owed him money give him something.

Enjoy Your Life

Wei Li, 5B

Yesterday, our class went to the Alley Theatre, and we watched the performance of *A Christmas Carol*. I thought a lot after watching it and realized that it let me know that we need to enjoy our lives. In my mind, I think everyone should have a wonderful life and that depends on each person's own mind. Scrooge spends his whole life getting money, but he didn't have a good life, and he didn't know how to enjoy it. In his life, he was really a poor man. In conclusion, everyone should enjoy life. Even if sometimes, life is not good, you should try to enjoy it anyway, and then your life will get better and better.

My Impressions

Margarita Beilina, 5B

I'm passionate about theatre performances. A real life play is always more interesting than a movie because you can feel all those feelings that are expressed on the stage. You see live people who show a small piece of average life by playing only one time in front of the audience.

They don't have a second chance to make another shot like movie actors have. *A Christmas Carol* was a mind-blowing performance. Even if I already knew the story, I was watching it like I had never seen it before. The most favorable aspect was the way the actors played, how they expressed their emotions and how they held the audience on a hook. Not only the actors, but also all those decorations and special effects were awesome. Another good part of the show was the way they involved a lot of small children.

In conclusion, I like to watch live performances because I like to feel the life and the feelings provided by the actors. I want the theatre to be even more popular than it has recently been because it is so important for us to enter to the unreal world and experience the situation for ourselves.

Scrooge spends his whole life getting money, but he didn't have a good life, and he didn't know how to enjoy it. In his life, he was really a poor man.

Alley Theatre Performance

Barbaros Guneri, 5A

The performance at the Alley Theatre was the first time that I went to a theatre in the U.S. Before we went there, I was already excited, and after the performance, which was perfect, I was amazed.

First of all, the sounds, lights, and costumes were very successful, and the performers worked so hard for the show. Especially, the main actor, Mr. Scrooge, was perfect and hilarious. Moreover, the director did a very good job.

Although all of these were brilliant, I want to say that the workers who we didn't see were really successful. I mean, there were some people behind the scenes that controlled many things. The success of this performance is not only about the actors, but also about the people who worked backstage. If they hadn't worked well, the performance wouldn't have been this successful.

Although it was hard for me to see a show that was not in my language and not similar to my culture, it was a beautiful performance. After seeing this show, I'm more curious about seeing other theatre productions.

Even if sometimes life is not good, you should try to enjoy it anyway, and then your life will get better and better.

An Amazing Performance

Laila Alhadab, 5B

Yesterday, I went with my class to the Alley Theatre, located in downtown Houston. I watched a story which was written by an English writer many, many years ago. Both the movements and the speaking of the actors were quite outstanding. To see actors move rapidly without falling and pass quickly through a small area was just unbelievable. Men, women, and children were so wonderful; they seemed like live characters. In addition, the actors were dressed up in beautiful clothes. Both the style and the colors were awesome. Such things I have never seen before. All of this made me feel the story. In conclusion, this performance was really amazing, and I will never forget it.



The Music of My Life

Feng Guo (Leo), 5A

I love music; music is my life. Every day when I go back to my apartment, I turn on my audio and turn it up until the sound is loud enough.

Music came into my life when I was sixteen years old. For some people, that is an older age to make contact with music, but I don't think so. I started flute lessons when I was sixteen. From that time, I became very fond of classical music. I try to listen to different types of classical music.

I like listening to music because of the emotions it conjures up. Sometimes I listen to oldies because they are nostalgic. It brings me back to a time when I was just a child. The music I cherish is usually related to good memories or a time that is particularly sweet to me.

Music is for every age. Mothers sing lullabies to their babies in order to put them to sleep. They think that babies in the womb hear music. Music is therapeutic. It has been used in medical settings as a way to soothe

and help heal victims of post traumatic stress syndrome. It also helps people grieve when music is played

I enjoy music every day. At times I listen to the same music, and then I understand it better than before. Music heals everyone on earth because it is a part of the earth and of nature.

Now it is class time with easy music playing and my memories come flowing back to me of these last two months of study with my dear teachers and my good classmates. I have already been here more than two months. For me, it is a new world; it is a new start. When I first came, I did not know anything about this new world, even how to talk with people or where to buy clothes. Many things in my brain were like white paper. However, I was very lucky because here I have my aunt. She gave me a lot of help in many ways, and I appreciate her. Moreover, my teachers have taught me lots of information, and I think I have made good progress. In class, we celebrate birthdays and different

countries' festivals. Finally, I have never been happier than on last week's field trip to the Renaissance Festival. We students took lots of pictures, enjoyed different kinds of shows. We laughed together.

In the future, when I hear easy music, the memories of my studying and living on campus during these two months will appear in front of my eyes as if it happened yesterday. I hope music will help me hold these memories forever.

The Oldest Music Notation in the World

Wesam Alwohoush, 5A

By chance, I found something amazing on "youtube" – it was the oldest music notation in the world which was discovered in Ugrait, Syria. It dates back to 3400 B.C. I was stunned when I heard it for the first time. I couldn't believe how beautiful it was! I played it more than fifteen times, and each time astonished me more than the previous one. It touched my spirit like a spring breeze, full of the aroma of every wildflower. It stimulated my soul with every love story I had ever lived. It reminded me of my mother's coffee in the morning and even the smell of my grandmother's bread in her old oven. Listening to this music, every good memory relived in my spirit, no matter how deeply it had been buried in my soul.

It touched my spirit like a spring breeze, full of the aroma of every wildflower. It stimulated my soul with every love story I had ever lived. It reminded me of my mother's coffee in the morning and even the smell of my grandmother's bread in her old oven.



LCC students performing music at graduation ceremonies

There is A Song for Every Moment

Domingas Neto, 5A

I always have the feeling that music is the best work of God's hands. What is music? The dictionary defines it as the arrangement of sounds made by instruments or voices in a way that is pleasant. Through the years, I have realized that it is impossible to find someone who does not like music even though we can find people who like different styles. The common sense is that music fills up the mind. A perfect song makes your soul revive. After a long day of hard work, it's wonderful to lie down on your couch and listen to your favorite CD or singer. Many people believe this is the best way to relax.

There is a song for every moment. Sometimes you feel that your day begins in the wrong way, that your body has the imperfect shape, that everything and everyone is wrong and you can't see yourself in this world, for it doesn't exist for you. Then, you turn on the radio, and you find yourself listening to the perfect melody which fills up your heart, body, and mind, and ensures you that everything will be OK and that you can handle anything.

My grandmother passed away the best way that anyone could (if there is a perfect way). She was over a hundred years old, and she was singing her favorite song with all her relatives surrounding her and singing with her until the moment that she closed her eyes.

The slaves used to sing when they were working hard in the fields. They sang during bad times; they sang to spread messages; they sang to the babies. Karl Paulnack, the Pianist and Director of the Music Division at the Boston Conservatory, is right. Music is not only entertainment. It is food for our soul. It heals us and helps us recover from our daily battles. I wonder if composers and other musicians realize how powerful and generous their work is? Do they realize how pleasurable and beneficial music is for the rest of humanity? We couldn't live without the lovely sound made by the perfect melody.

My grandmother passed away the best way that anyone could. That is, if there is a best way. She was over a hundred years old, and she was singing her favorite song with all her relatives surrounding her and singing with her until the moment that she closed her eyes.

If We Listen Attentively

Miyeon Kwon (Mio) 5A

We need music to survive. When do people listen to music? How does a composer create such great music? Can you imagine no music in the world? When people feel happy, music makes them feel happier, and when people feel sad, it gives comfort to them. A lot of great music was inspired while suffering, such as during war, starvation, oppression, handicap and so on.

We know a lot of well-known artists who suffered from their circumstances or obstacles. For instance, Beethoven lost his hearing, Ray Charles lost his eyesight, and Mozart suffered from depression.

Music helps heal us, and it also helps people restrain their emotions. It has been played in some form since the beginning of time. When a baby cries, a mother may sing. When people celebrate something, they always play music. Music can give comfort and relaxation.

Unfortunately, people frequently don't realize how significant music is for life. We can be touched by music, and sometimes a musical instrument or song laughs, cries, and talks instead of me. Every sound in the world can be music like a bird that begins to sing before the sun rises. We can appreciate both a natural sound and music if we listen attentively.



Sweet Memories Are Unforgettable

I remember the day I dated my husband for the first time. The weather was perfect: sunny, cool, and a little windy. It was almost four and a half years ago. However, I can remember the beautiful moment vividly.

Min Young Yang, 6A

I cannot forget that wonderful day in Canada; the weather was sunny and shiny. I met my lover when I studied English in Victoria, Canada. Victoria was the nicest place to stay because I wanted a place to study English where it was warm, beautiful, peaceful, and safe. Victoria was the place I was looking for. Victoria's weather was especially awesome in spring and summer. I met him in May. Every tree was green, and the leaves were shiny. I couldn't open my eyes because of the glaring sunshine and the brilliant blue sky. The sky seemed very high. The sunshine was a dazzling white. I felt a little dizzy.

I wish I could go back to that first date with my husband; the weather was cool like I wanted it. It was not too hot or cold. It was just perfect. Victoria's spring was different from my country, Korea. The sun was strong, but you could feel cool in the shade of a tree. I was walking the tree-lined street with him. I felt

"...He was waiting for me at the bus stop with a big smile. When I got off the bus, I felt a little titillation. While we were walking on the street, I felt a little fever on my cheeks. However, the wind blew softly, and it brought down my fever and the pinkness of my cheeks. It was a great feeling that I'd never had before..."

that I was walking on the clouds. We had a spring to our step. I should, I thought, control myself not to hum with joy.

We promised to meet near the bus stop in downtown. I was a little late; I needed more time to prepare to look pretty for him. My heart slightly fluttered with the first date. He was waiting for me on the bus stop with a big smile. When I got off the bus, I felt a little titillation. While we were walking on the street, I felt a little fever on my cheeks. However, the wind blew softly, and it brought down my fever and the pinkness of my cheeks. It was a great feeling that I'd never had before.

Whenever I remember my first date with my husband in Victoria, I remember the gorgeous. I think that I can never again have the feeling like that day in my life. I miss the day I dated my husband for the first time in Victoria because the weather was beautiful.

The Girl Who Wouldn't Be Quiet

Fatimah Abdulhadi Alhaddad, 4A

When I was child, I was talkative, and no one wanted to be near me. I sang all the time and commented about every single little thing. For example, when somebody was talking, I would interrupt his conversation and begin a long boring conversation. I don't know why I did that; maybe I wanted to seem older than I was. They told me to stop talking, but I didn't care. Sometimes I talked to myself because I couldn't find anyone to listen to me. However, when I was about ten years old, I finally started taking my mother's advice to listen more. Suddenly everyone liked me and enjoyed talking with me because I knew when I should talk or not. My mother was delighted because I had changed my personality. In sum, parents who have a child with a problem like I did should not feel hopeless. There is always a possibility for change.



After walking over the valley, I found Tracy was waiting for me in the distance. I felt pleased, but a little upset.

Making a Good Friend

Kaier Liang, 5A

Once I attended a summer camp on my own. During those days, I made a friend named Tracy. She was considerate and kind. We gave each other a hand wherever we had difficulties. I still remember the day when we had to climb mountains on foot. I thought it was so tiring that I didn't feel like advancing anymore. As one of my best friends, she preferred to teach me a lesson rather than persuade me. So, she pretended to leave me alone. I was afraid at that moment, but I had to go on by myself. After walking over the valley, I found Tracy was waiting for me in the distance. I felt pleased, but a little upset. Later, she told me that I should learn how to face and overcome difficulties with bravery and determination. Since then, we have been getting along well with each other. I learned that friends are both companions and critics. Companions will give us advice, while critics will teach us values. From this incident, I learned that the friends who offer us encouragement as well as advice help us the most.



It suddenly rains It suddenly shines And all for no reasons at all

Rainy Summer Nights

Luis Mendez, 6A

My hometown, Guanajuato, is a small ancient city surrounded by mountains in central Mexico; it is the capital city of the state with the same name. The weather in that area of Mexico is mostly constant. Spring is very warm, summer is rainy, with windy-cold mornings and afternoons in autumn and sometimes cold in winter. We have had snow in the forest north of the city in some past winters, but not in the city. In general, I can say that weather is extremely friendly in Guanajuato.

Rainy days bring good memories to my life everywhere I go.

I do recall especially the summer season after school—vacation time, of course. I remember the long walks through the city and jogging in the “Panoramic Way” that surrounds Guanajuato. Those were very good times to experience rain. It was exciting to run at night (sometimes very late at night) while the city

slept under the sweet semi-organized noise of thousands of raindrops hitting the roofs, the trees, the stone streets, the paved roads, our shoulders and cap-covered heads. Those were moments of reflection, self-assessment, and self-knowledge, praying and appreciation, growth and re-enforcement, thankfulness... and a feeling of never-ending freedom that unfortunately I have ceased to experience.

Rainy days bring good memories to my life everywhere I go. As time goes by, responsibilities arrive and priorities evolve, but those sweet moments of learning, under the warm rain on any given summer night in Guanajuato, have definitively shaped the person I am now... and long to be.



How Weather Can Affect Our Moods

Umaimatu Munkayila, 6A

Weather is one thing that is not stable all around the world. It does not matter where in the world you are. It differs from one place to another and different kinds of weather have different effects on people depending on their personality.

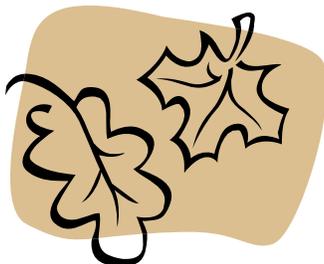
It can be cold in the morning and warm in the evening; the reverse is also true. Changes in weather can affect individuals differently; for instance, when the weather is terribly warm, I become so restless that no matter where I am, I just feel like getting undressed to get more fresh air. This puts me in a very bad mood and I get angry at the slightest mistake and at the one who makes that mistake. Other times I just get angry for no reason.

One day I was at home when my best friend called me and told me that she was coming over. I thought it was going to be one of the happiest days because it had rained earlier that morning and the weather was cool, which already made me very excited. I said to myself that today I would not be restless and uncomfortable because



the weather was good and also because my best friend was visiting. So I cooked her favorite dish and her preferred fruit juice. I also baked a cake as a surprise and had it ready and waiting for her. At about twelve noon, the sun started appearing, but little did I know that it was going to get very warm, considering the cool weather we had had after the rain. Soon the whole place became extremely warm, and I began to feel restless. When my friend arrived, I managed to welcome her with a smile, but I lost my appetite and so I offered her the food and the drink but I did not touch anything. Even chatting with her was a problem and the good time I thought I would have was lost due to the heat.

So you see that the weather can easily change one's mood from good to bad and from bad to good in a very short time.



The Dawn in Summer

Vincent Chuang, 6A

I do not feel good when I wake up early because I have to go to class, catch the bus, and endure a hungry feeling every day. It is a particular time that I do not like. Especially when the weather is cold and wet, I hate school and everything I encounter. But if the weather is warm, I will have good energy to deal with everything. Therefore, I like the dawn in summer. There are two reasons why I like the dawn in summer. First, it makes me feel hopeful. Second, I can have an energetic attitude toward that day.

First of all, the sun at dawn can make me happy and hopeful. In particular, when the sunlight shines on me, it recharges my body. Similarly, it has the same effect on the earth. Everything starts its day in the morning; thus, a good daybreak plays an important role in everything. So if the sky is cloudy at daybreak, it is a boring day to me. What is more, if there is no sun at dawn in winter when I get up, I feel like doomsday is coming. That breaks my heart. I feel hopeless. That is why good weather at dawn is so important to me.

Secondly, it makes me energetic and passionate. When the sun shines on me at dawn, I have endless passion. However, if there is no sun at daybreak, I feel lonely and apathetic. Everything I face always lets me down and I lose passion for it. Therefore, the sun determines whether I am in a good mood or not that day.

To sum up, I like the dawn in summer for two reasons. First, I'm always hopeful when the weather is good at dawn. In addition, it makes me energetic and full of passion. I do not know whether you can succeed or not, but I am sure that if I do not have a good mood, I cannot succeed.



Going on Trips Going Astray

A Trip To Our Teacher's House

Jenny Pingdwende Nassa, 2B

Last month we went to our teacher's house. It was a great time for us. We played different kinds of games including football and other new games. The football game was very interesting, and we all played. We also played piano in our teacher's house. After that, we experienced making our first jack-o-lantern. We learned how to make them from pumpkins. Mr. Vincent, our teacher, divided us into teams by counting off by six. We used knives to cut the pumpkins and to carve something from our imagination. We presented the pumpkins to our friends, and our teachers judged our work. The party was amazing and fun, and we enjoyed ourselves.



At the Houston Zoo

Hoai Nguyen, 3D

Two weeks ago I went to the zoo with my cousin and my niece and her boyfriend. We had planned to go to the zoo for the whole day because we all love the zoo. When we got to the zoo, I was really surprised that almost everybody was in costumes and masks of many kinds. We didn't realize that we had arrived there on a special day: Halloween. Some people were ghosts, and others were goblins, monsters, pumpkins, vampires, and so on. The children were especially in costume, as monsters, mummies, zombies, princes, and kings. Then we went inside the zoo and began to visit many animals. I was curious about the animals. In my country, I had only seen animals on television. My cousin has



a wide knowledge of animals in the world, and he explained them to me. They were from everywhere: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and so on. There was even an exhibit of threatened animals that are protected by the U.S. government. Some animals were dangerous, others were lovely, others were enormous, and others came from the sea. It took us about six hours to walk around the zoo looking at the animals. Even

though we felt so tired at the end, we were happy and found the trip interesting. That trip is a good memory in my life.





Enchanting Fireflies **Ya Ling (Irene) Yu, 4A**

I am from Keelung, which is a rainy city in north Taiwan. Except for the rain, I love this city. During my childhood, we lived near an ore deposit on a mountain, and most people who lived there were miners. Because we lived on a mountain, we were in close contact with nature. I remember that the air was filled with fireflies on summer nights. They made the nighttime more beautiful. My sister and I tried to catch the fireflies because we wanted to use their light to make our bedroom beautiful like outside. How stupid we were! We caught a few fireflies, but my sister fell down in a big mud puddle on the way home. She cried loudly. I was scared because we had not gotten permission from our parents to go outside. I was afraid that they would get angry since they had taught us not to leave home without telling them. I begged my sister not to cry, but she sobbed louder and louder until my parents arrived and took her home. When we got home, we found out she was only slightly injured, and we were punished. After that I always let my parents know where I was going.

An Adventurous Childhood **Jinho (Antonio) Kim, 4B**

I was an adventurous child who liked to visit new places alone. Even when I was nine years old, I would ride the subway and buses by myself to get to my grandparents' house in Seoul, which was about two hours from my home. When I arrived in Seoul, I usually visited the largest bookstore and went to McDonald's for a strawberry milkshake. However, one day, instead of going to my grandparents' house or my usual places in Seoul, I took another subway line so I could view different scenery. I didn't get lost, but my mother and grandparents were worried about me. On the other hand, my father praised me.

When I was in high school, I planned a secret trip to celebrate the completion of a test I had been dreading. I reserved train and ferry tickets to travel to Jeju Island, where the largest island in Korea is. Instead of telling my parents about my trip, I just left a note and then turned off my cell phone while I was away from home for six days. When I returned, my father praised me again, and my mother surprised me by cheerfully exclaiming, "Why did you go alone? You should take me next time!"

I'm in Houston now because I'm still an adventurous person and like to go to new locations. Some people believe that my adventurous spirit is dangerous, but I'll continue to explore new places.

From India: A Wedding Necklace

Dragan Stojanovski, 5E

The gold necklace exemplifies the richness of traditional Indian art. The black color is to help ward off the evil eye and the gold is to symbolize the power of the woman as Laxmi, the goddess of wealth.

Art is a topic I thought I would not be able to discuss until about a week ago. As a part of a school project, thanks to my teachers, we had a chance to spend a couple of days in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. We were divided into small groups, and every group had a task to pick and explore one piece of art displayed in the museum. My classmate and I chose a stunning Indian wedding necklace from the 19th century. We spent a few days analyzing it the way our teachers taught us.

The golden necklace consists of 22-carat gold beads on a black string. It has a symmetrical form and has five golden pendants, two on each side, with five fingers and one central piece with four fingers. It is a huge and heavy necklace, and it is hard to imagine that a woman could possibly wear it every day. The texture of the gold beads is rough. The focal point of the necklace is the central pendant, which catches your eye first. This pendant noticeably differs from the other four. The whole composition is very well balanced with five pendants, one in the center and two identical pendants on each side. All pieces are unified into one beautiful work of art.

The gold necklace exemplifies the richness of traditional Indian art. The black color is to help ward off the evil eye and the gold is to symbolize the power of the woman as Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. This marriage necklace was given to a bride by her family as part of her dowry. The central pendant, however, was a gift from the groom. The necklace represents the Hindu god Shiva and his partner, Parvati. They represent celestial marriage and the hope that the young bride and groom will have a happy union. The two pendants on each side represent the hands of a groom and a bride and the central piece represents Shiva. The groom is supposed to place this necklace around the bride's neck during their wedding ceremony. The thread is tied with three knots around the bride's neck. In some of the weddings, the groom ties the first knot, while his sister ties the remaining two knots. This is a unique piece of jewelry, very impressive in its beauty. It represents the Hindu culture well, as a symbol of a Hindu marriage. The wedding necklace is known by many names, one of which is Mangala Sutra. This piece of Indian traditional art has a lot of significance to a married Indian woman. It is a holy thread of love and goodwill worn by a married woman as a symbol of her marriage, until her husband's death. The wedding necklace is comparable to a western wedding ring.

I like the combination of gold and black on the necklace. It has a traditional, elegant, but also modern, look. I think that this piece is very attractive.

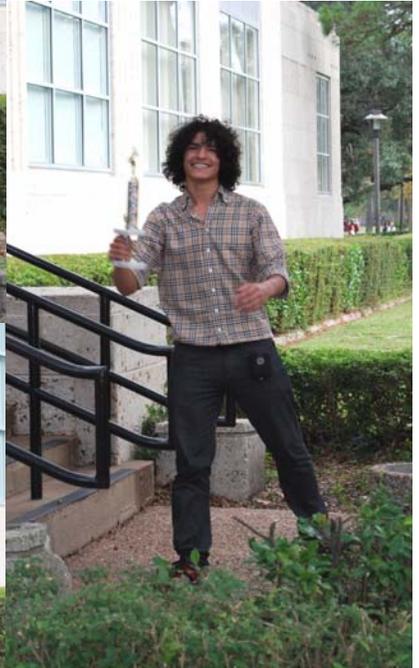
Although I have been in many museums around the world, I have to admit that I did not know how to analyze and interpret art when looking at it. Thanks to my teacher and my classmates, who did a great job with their choices, I think that I have learned something about art. It was a great experience for me.

THE LCC FALCONS :

We Are Proud of You.

Once again the LCC had a winning team in the Falcons. They were cleaning up in their games and moved easily into the tournament. Unfortunately there were difficulties in the second game of the tournament. Although the Falcons won, both teams were eliminated. We hope returning players next term will be the core of another successful team. Thanks to all the players, including Servando Hernandez, who was in charge of the team as well as playing, and to Sultan Alanazi, who provided great leadership.

The LCC falcons and their captain Servando Hernandez



IMMIGRATION UPDATE

If you are traveling outside of 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 in order. Remember that to re-enter the U.S., you must have an I-20 for the school you will attend and 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 DHS (the Department of Homeland Security). In addition to their passports, visas, and I-20's, 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 asked for these documents.

Remember, if you obey the immigration laws, you will not have a problem. If you have any doubt 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.

Many U.S. embassies and consulates are very busy during the Christmas and New Year holiday season and are even closed on the holidays. 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 will need 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 will be 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 is 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 cannot work, except on the UH 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 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that you changed schools. See the advisor at the new school if you are going to transfer in order to make sure you get your new I-20 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.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT SEMESTER?

Under 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 that we can enter the correct information in the SEVIS system. If we do not know and do not update SEVIS, the SEVIS system will automatically terminate you, which means you will 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 yet of what you will be doing after the break, then please let us know by the start of spring term so that we can enter the correct information about you in the SEVIS system.

THE LCC 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 to personal. In addition to Dave Burns, there is Sam Long and Servando Hernandez to help you. Come see us if you have a question, have a problem, need information or advice, or just want to talk!



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
CENTER

116 ROY CULLEN BUILDING
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77204-3014

Phone: 713-743-3030

Fax: 713-743-3029

E-mail: LCC@UH.EDU

The Voices editors Kitty Barrera and Thong Dang wish to thank everyone who contributed articles and photographs to this issue, especially Sam Long.

The University of Houston is an
EO/AA institution



Student Activities in the Fall Semester 2009

The time has passed quickly this term! Our first trip was to the Museum of Fine Arts and The Galleria. New students and returning students from summer got to know each other a little better.

In only a few weeks 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 – Manuel Abascal Gonzalez, 2nd – JinHo Kim, 3d – Hamadahou Sylla. **Billiards:** 1st – Saleh Aldakhil , 2nd –Mesha Alenazy;. **Table Tennis:** 1st – Feng Guo, 2nd – Abdulmajeed Aldakhil.

On Saturday, November 7th, we went on a trip to the Renaissance Festival. This festival is held each fall in a recreated English village of the Renaissance time period. The village is located in the woodlands north of Houston. Many people

dress in costumes of that time. We were entertained by different musical groups and other performers such as jugglers and dancers. There was also a jousting contest where knights riding horses fought each other. We had an interesting and fun day.

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

On December 9th, we have our final field trip. By the time you read this, we may have already gone to San Antonio! It's a great way to end the semester, joining your 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.

