

VOICES



Fall 2005

Dr. Joseph Davidson Announces Retirement

After over two decades of service to the LCC as its director, Dr. Davidson will be retiring in the spring. In this article he reflects on the many significant changes that occurred during his tenure.



Director's message

A Retrospective: 1983-2005

In September 1983, when I became Director of the Language and Culture Center, the Cen-

ter had no personal computers, no email, no high-speed copiers, no fax machines, no computer lab, no compact discs, and no internet. It depended on mimeograph machines, tape recorders, a language lab, and an individualized instruction workshop. It was a time when the technology we know today was either unknown or in its infancy.

Much has happened in the past 22 years, and not just with technology. LCC intensive program enrollments have ebbed and flowed more than once, totaling nearly 11,000. Over 100 instructors have taught classes. The Center has hosted several contract programs; it has awarded 120 student scholarships. The individualized instruction workshop has become the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) lab.

The Language Laboratory has been converted into two high tech classrooms. Semester textbook choices, once the same for each term, have tripled, so that each term has a separate list. The curriculum has changed. Committees have been established to ensure that teachers and administrators share in program governance. Staff members have published textbooks, presented papers or workshops at professional conferences, and served on local, regional, and national committees or commissions. The program has undergone a rigorous self-study, resulting in accreditation by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA).'

But most important, the program has been faithful to its mission and goals -- teaching academic English as a Second Language to international students; ensuring that all programs are administered with excellence, responsiveness, and integrity; supporting the related enrollment and academic priorities of the University of Houston; and maintaining an office and classroom environment that is positive, humane, service oriented, and friendly where all participants feel welcome and want to return. (*cont. on p. 2*)

A Retrospective

(cont. from p. 1)

In December 2005, as I approach my retirement, I wish to thank the many Center employees (teachers, administrators, program assistants, and substitutes), and my colleagues in the Department of English, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and various other offices and departments at the university for their collaboration in making the Language and Culture Center what it is today.

Dr. Kathleen Linnes



Dr. Kathleen Linnes, who has been teaching classes in level 5

in the intensive English program this term, has announced her retirement effective January 16, 2006.

A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, Dr. Linnes was originally interested in politics and journalism, but decided to major in political science and European history, receiving a BA and an MA respectively in those fields. Later, she relocated to Hannover, Germany where she spent the next nine years teaching EFL and social studies at Johannes Kepler Gymnasium, and courses in American area studies at the Uni-

And to our fall 2005 students, I extend my best wishes for a productive and peaceful future. With growing expertise in intercultural communication and increasing fluency in spoken and written English, you have valuable tools in today's world marketplace. These tools can be of great benefit to you, your family, and your nation. Use them wisely.

Good luck to all!

versity of Hannover. After her return to the United States, she earned an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Houston and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin.

The LCC thanks Dr. Linnes for her important and highly valued contribution to its teaching program.

She spent 10 years teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses in linguistics in the UH Department of English, while also supervising the ESL credit classes for international students. Later, she was hired as a teacher in the Language and Culture Center. Dr. Linnes has been an outstanding addition to the LCC teaching staff. She has shown dedication to her students and to her work, and the LCC thanks her for her important and highly valued contribution to its teaching program.

Congratulations!

Raymar Ramirez, Saida Atic, and Ruba Alhindi Receive LCC Scholarships

Sandy Hartmann, Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards scholarships each term to the returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. The Joyce Merrill Valdes scholarship honors the founder and first director of the Language and Culture Center, and it covers the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition to the Valdes scholarship, the LCC offers merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 11, 2005, LCC scholarships were awarded to Raymar Ramirez, who had successfully completed level four, to Saida Atic, who had successfully completed level four, and to Ruba Alhindi, who had successfully completed level three in the Intensive English program.

Raymar Ramirez



Raymar Ramirez was the recipient of the Valdes scholarship. Raymar is from Venezuela and her native language is Spanish. She is now studying in level five, and she has been a student at the LCC for four terms. After she completes her study of English, she plans to enter

the Master's program in Business. When she heard her name called as the winner, she could hardly believe that she had finally won the scholarship for

which she had applied each term. Winning the scholarship has strengthened her belief that, "If you persevere, you will triumph." She hopes that "...all of the students will keep this phrase in mind for the rest of their lives."

Saida Atic



Saida Atic was the other recipient of a merit scholarship. Saida is from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and her native language is Bosnian. She is now studying in level five and wants to pursue a degree in geology after completing her studies

at the LCC. She has already completed two years of study at the University of Tuzla and plans to attend the University of Houston. Saida thanks her teachers for recognizing her potential and says, "There is nothing better than being able to enjoy the benefits of your own efforts." She encourages all students to try harder because in doing this "...they will reach their dreams."

Ruba Alhindi

Ruba Alhindi was the recipient of a merit scholarship. Ruba is from Palestine/Gaza and her native language is Arabic. She successfully completed level three and her final scores allowed her to skip level four and to be placed in level five. Her intended major is Information Technology, and she plans to complete her degree after she leaves the LCC. When she received the scholarship, she was very surprised. She says that she thought an Arabic student would not have a chance to win "but that proved to me every student gets the same treatment and the same chance in the United States." (*cont. on p. 4*)

Scholarship Winners

(cont. from p. 3)

We congratulate Raymar Ramirez, Saida Atic, and Ruba Alhindi 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. These students tell us that they were totally surprised to receive the scholarships and now encourage their classmates to apply. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the fall graduation ceremony to be held on Thursday, December 8, 2005.

The LCC Celebrates Diversity in its Culture Festival



PARTICIPANTS ENJOY NEW FOODS

AND SHARE GOOD TIMES WITH FRIENDS.



THE CULTURE FESTIVAL IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE CUISINES AND CUSTOMS OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED BY THE LCC'S STUDENTS. STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THEIR COOKING SKILLS, AND LUCKY PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE A VARIETY OF CULINARY DELIGHTS.





AT THE FALL 2005 CULTURE FESTIVAL, LCC STUDENTS LEARNED SQUARE DANCING, LINE DANCING, AND THE THE COTTON-EYED JOE. THEY ALSO SHARED MUSIC AND DANCE FROM THEIR COUNTRIES.



Hurricane Rita

The Fall 2005 Semester was rudely interrupted by a hurricane. Students, staff, and teachers were faced with painful decisions, and, although Hurricane Rita did not hit Houston directly, it did impact our lives. Each of the students in Levels 4A and 4B wrote about his or her experiences during the hurricane. The following are samples of their stories. You may read all of them on the web at <http://uh.edu/~douglas>

Some students decided to evacuate, and, like many Houstonians, they became embroiled in horrific traffic jams. Eventually, they all made it to safe areas, including Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Mexico, and New York City! Here are some of their accounts.

Both my wife and I heard about the hurricane on Monday, the 19th of September, from the TV, but we did not take the issue seriously because we did not receive any warning from both our schools, so we did not take any ac-

tion. However, on Tuesday, the 20th of September, before starting class, my teacher talked to us about the hurricane and what we should do if the university closes.

On Wednesday, September 21, at 8:00 AM, I took



Bandar Alkahlan

my wife to her school, and I returned to my house to spend some time reviewing and studying. At 11:45 AM I received a call from my teacher regarding hurricane Rita, and she told me that there was no school that day until Sunday, September 25. She also told me to find more information about school on the UH website. In addition to that, she requested that I post a message on the LCC (4A-4B) Yahoo group. After I finished

posting the message, I called my wife to inform her that we had to evacuate today. As a result, I went to pick her up and we went together to buy some water, food, batteries, and a flashlight. We spent an hour finding some water because many shops were out of stock. Finally, we found some water.

We returned home to prepare ourselves to evacuate. Meanwhile, we had to search the Internet to find a hotel room. However, all the hotels in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio were sold out; finally, after six hours we found one hotel in Greenville, 55 miles from Dallas. After we found the hotel, we started our trip at 7:00 PM, and we spent 25 hours on the highway. We spent 20 hours inside Houston and 5 hours to reach our destination.

On the way at 3:00 AM the evacuees started sleeping because they got tired from the very slow traffic—bumper to bumper. In other words, it was like a parking lot. As a result, many cars were starting to hit the cars in front of them. I worried about something like that

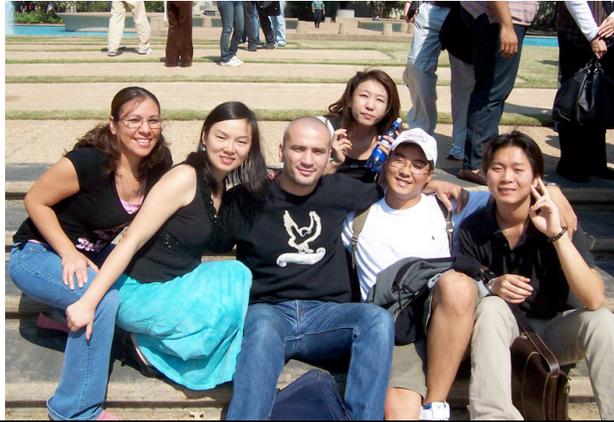
happening to us. I asked my wife to sleep and take a rest, and when I felt tired I woke her up and changed seats so she could continue to concentrate on the road while I had some rest. In addition to that, we turned off the AC of the car to save gas because all the gas stations on the road were empty. I also asked my wife to open the map and start searching for a shortcut to get out of the traffic, and she found another way we could use. After we reached this exit, everything became normal, and after 60 miles we found a gas station and we filled up our car with gas (thank God).

When we arrived at the hotel in Greenville, we were totally tired and we wanted to go to sleep. We stayed there for three days and kept watching the news to find out when we could return. After we got instructions on when we could go back to Houston, we thanked God for the good news.

Finally, I want to explain the advantages of this hurricane. For one thing, we now know how to deal with the same situation. And another thing we learned is how to read

a map and find shortcuts without heavy traffic.

Xiaofen (Angel) Wang, 4B, kept "My Evacuation Diaries." Here are some highlights.



Liliana Colunga, Xiaofen (Angel) Wang, Eren Demet, Chiao Ying (Ashley) Kao, Youngjun You Chun-Wei Tseng

9/21/2005 Wednesday I was studying at the library that morning when I heard the emergency announcement about Hurricane Rita. "UH has been closed from 12:00 am Wednesday until next Monday morning." I was worried about our safety. I went to the LCC, and I didn't see one of my teachers or classmates. Then, I came back to my apartment to watch TV and got Donna's message. First, I called my husband and asked him

what we were going to do. He was still working and he was relaxed. He said, "Don't worry be happy. Let's see." Then we can plan to do something. At that time I was very scared because I called my many friends.

They all planned to evacuate to other cities. I tried to find a partner family to evacuate with because our car is very old, and I worried that it couldn't be driven far. I asked them too late. Nobody had enough seats for us. I

cried a lot because I was afraid of the hurricane. Secondly, my friend Ash helped me to get some money from the bank for my evacuation. Then, I came back home waiting for a chance to evacuate. My husband was still working in his lab at that time. I thought I would go crazy. At 11:00 pm, Wednesday, my husband told me that one of my church sisters had called and said we would go to Austin with many church sisters and brothers together the next

morning at 6:00 am. I was so excited because if God closes one door, he will open one window for me. I let my husband sleep and I prepared belongings for us to evacuate.

On Thursday, at 5:00 am, we woke up and took our many suitcases in our old car to meet church sisters and brothers in front of our building. I had slept just 2 hours, but I didn't feel tired because we could evacuate to a safe place. We started going with 5 other cars. Unfortunately, after only 5 minutes, my car couldn't follow them, and we didn't meet again until we arrived in Austin. There were too many cars on the roads, so the traffic was bumper to bumper that morning. We drove very slowly. All the cars looked like turtles crawling on the freeways to North and West. We took 12 hours to go outside of Houston. We drove on Interstate 10 for about 20 minutes. After that, we crawled again. We wanted to get some gas. Unfortunately, we didn't get any gas in many gas stations, and our old car broke down on the cement roadside curb. Our car wouldn't start. I wanted to cry. Our only

recourse was the police, and we prayed to God to help us. The police found a tow truck, and we paid \$70 to the driver for towing our car. Then a nice person helped us to jump our car to start it. Our old car didn't have enough gas, and we were still driving on the evacuation road.

Sometimes I heard my husband shout, "Why is our car going back?" because he was so tired. He got a bad hallucination. I was worried about our safety very much.

On Friday at 3:00 am, we stopped in a gas station because our car couldn't move without gas. From 3:00 am to 6:00 am we took a nap because we were too tired and were waiting for the gas. At 7:00 am, the police told us we wouldn't get gas because Hurricane Rita was coming, and we had to go. I cried and we continued to go. I begged Jesus to help us on the way. At 7:30 we found a lovely gas station. Even though there were many cars that were waiting for the gas, we got enough gas and drove away quickly on highway 71.

At 9:30 am on Friday, we arrived in Austin finally. When we saw a church brother who was waving his hands for us, I cried again because I felt we had come back to our own home. We slept and ate very well during our stay in Austin.

On Sunday morning, we arrived in Houston safely. We only took three hours coming back home. When we went to our home, we saw nothing had happened. We watched the TV report about the evacuation. There were 2.5 million people who were evacuated from Houston. It looked like a catastrophe movie. It was sad and scary. Now it is over, and we have come down.

You know, I didn't believe in any ghosts and gods in China. Now I have changed. Oh, we have to thank God for helping us to have the experience of evacuation because we will believe in God more, and only he can help us to ride out all trouble. God bless us!

Some students rode out the hurricane in Houston.

Liang-Yin Chen (Alice)
4A

Even though I was not scared, my roommates wanted me to go out of Houston. They cared about me and wanted to bring me to their home. I was so appreciative when I heard my roommates say that because they treat me more like a friend than a roommate. In this experience, I decided to learn how to care about people and to appreciate God that gives us the wonderful life we have

Chun-wei Tseng

My homestay family told me they were planning to flee the hurricane to Dallas. I was excited about that because I hadn't been to Dallas. At midnight, I put some clothes and some important things in my baggage, and then I went to sleep. Thursday morning, my homestay family told me they had changed their minds. Oh! I felt so upset about that. We just watched news about Rita and relaxed at home. Finally, Rita changed its path and be-

came weakened. Nothing happened in Houston except traffic. Rita didn't come to Houston, so we were lucky.

Some students had advice for government officials and suggestions for everyone the next a hurricane comes.

Chiao Ling Kao (Ashley)
4B

In Taiwan, we have maybe 15 to 20 typhoons every year, so we get used to it. The residents in Taiwan just stay at home when a typhoon's coming. After typhoons leave, we go to school or work as usual. If there is some damage, the army will help people. But in the United States, the army was too late to help the suffering people leave the danger zone. But I think this is a new experience for Americans, and if the U.S. government can learn something from it, it's good for the people in the United States.

Liliana Colunga 4B (Liliana went home to Mexico during the hurricane)

I think evacuation is good when the zone is at risk, but in Houston, the TV made the people feel

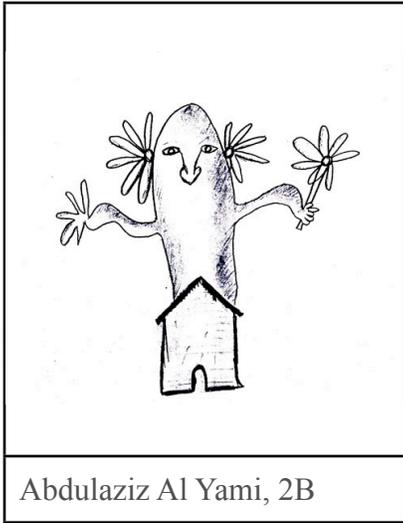
nervous and worried, and many people evacuated although their zone was safe. Maybe the government needs to give information about the risk zones. For example, in my country the government sends buses and establishes safe areas for the evacuated people, and it doesn't permit people to build homes or other constructions in risk zones.

Mark

Truly speaking, the seriousness was more than I could have imagined. On every road leading north and west, thousands of cars were stuck on the side of the road, out of gas after sitting in traffic for 18 or 20 hours, even longer. Some people were overheated in high temperature. The scene looked like the movie *The Day After Tomorrow*. I wonder why the government didn't require people to fill their gas tanks. In my opinion, that would have been an effective way to improve the traffic. Although Hurricane Rita did not cause the same loss as Katrina did to New Orleans, I still believe that we should pay more attention to the weather. The planet we live on—Earth—has

changed faster than the

experts could forecast.



Abdulaziz Al Yami, 2B

Visit to the Blaffer Gallery

By Sabine Kone, 2B

On October 28, Level 2 of the LCC went to the Blaffer Gallery,

the art museum of the University of Houston. It is located in the Fine Arts Building on campus. We saw James Surls's art exhibit, The Splendor Years.

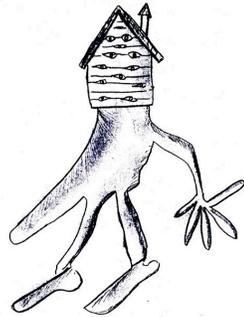
James Surls is an American sculptor. He uses some materials like knives and wood, and some colors like black and bronze. Surls

thinks that there is energy between two people and between male and female. For example, when he drew "Sunshine Through Our Window Made the Morning Sing" and I think that the moon rose forever.

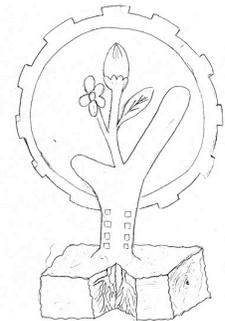
Surls uses many symbols. For example, he thinks that diamonds symbolize intelligence and flowers symbolize communication. He likes to give his sculptures many eyes and many legs. He thinks that his sculptures are intelligent and they can communicate but that they can't speak.

His work made me dream. I think that Surls is different because when I saw his sculptures I can't think that diamonds mean intelligence or flowers mean communication. I interpret Surls's sculptures like fiction because they aren't real. I think that he is an interesting artist because he is so different.

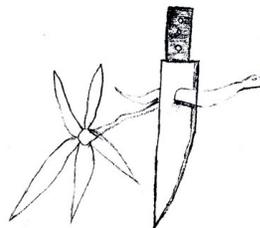
Abdulaziz Al Yami 2B



Ahmed Alsinan 2A



LEVEL 2 STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO CREATE INTERPRETIVE SKETCHES OF WORKS BY JAMES SURLS. THE DRAWINGS HERE EXHIBIT A VARIETY OF INTERPRETATIONS.



Abdullah Al Salem 2C



Abdulaziz Al Yami

Level 2 students demonstrate their drawing skills and their depth of understanding of the artist's works.



Self-Confidence

Jingting Chen, 5C

Recommendations and encouragement from others fills the heart with an energy different from the normal, at least that has been my experience.

I remember that when I was studying in the United States high school, I had a hard time. At that time, I couldn't understand my teachers, I didn't know how to do my homework, and I even had no interest in drawing, which was my major when I studied in China. Day by day, I still didn't find a right way to solve my problems. Then I lost my confidence. But one day, I changed just because of my art teacher.

One day, I had her class, and she told us to draw something that we liked. After her regular talking, everyone started drawing, including me. It was usual for her to walk around and help her students to draw. When I was seriously drawing my picture, she stopped in front of me and looked at it carefully. However, I didn't feel comfortable when she was looking at the picture because I didn't have any confidence to show my pictures to anyone. So my face suddenly turned so red that I looked like a ripe apple. I wished she couldn't see my apple face or my picture. Then I tried to pray that I hoped God could help me to skip that time. Of course, God didn't help me, but the good thing was the teacher said I did good job; she liked it very much. After that, I found my confidence again. I enjoyed learning and completing my American high school. Also I got the Tomball Art Festival Outstanding Student Award and second place at the Houston Livestock Show And Rodeo art show.

I believe that self-confidence is the most important factor in success. It enables people to take risks, try again when they fail, and enjoy their accomplishments when they win. With these abilities, a confident person can succeed easily at school.

Ramadan

Class 1B



Hakeem AlGabare

Ramadan is the best month of the year. It lasts thirty days. Allah gave the Koran to Mohammed in this

Saudi and American Culture

Ally Alyami, 5A

Saudi and American Cultures are changing from one place to another according to such things as the geographical locations and religious beliefs of the people. Each society has its own unique culture, so Saudi culture is different from American culture. However, no one has the right to judge people because of their culture. As a matter of fact, some-

month. Ramadan is a test for your life.

During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat for one month in the year. We do not drink. Fasting Muslims do not eat until sunset. The Muslims in Ramadan must fast twelve hours in the day from sunrise until sunset. Charity is something that is necessary in Islam. We must think about things such as helping the poor and giving them money. The Muslims at Ramadan read the Koran and pray more.

From around the twenty-first day of Ramadan until the week after Ramadan, we have a holiday. After

times people in the American culture or in my culture misunderstand the others' culture or behavior. There are a lot of examples that show these misunderstandings.

In Saudi culture there are some behaviors that considered as bad or unacceptable in American culture. For example, when men in my culture meet friends or relatives they greet each other by shaking hands and touching cheeks. Such a behav-

the last day of Ramadan, we have a special day called Al Eid when we break the fast. For five days we can eat, dance, and play, or do anything to enjoy life. We also do fireworks every night. We visit our friends and family. We wear new clothes. We also visit people who are sick in the hospital. We can travel to a beautiful city.

This is not everything about Ramadan but there is much more. Ramadan is an interesting month. We feel it is good and it is better than any time in the year. It makes us feel happy. All Muslims thank God for this month.

ior in the American culture may be misunderstood. This same misunderstanding can happen sometimes when friends walk together. They hold each other's hands to show that this friend is like a brother or the best friend, but usually for adult people in America this behavior is again not acceptable. As an example, when King Abdullah came to America he held Bush's hand while they were walking outside. In my country we said that King Abdullah

and Bush are real friends and they like each other. Nevertheless, some people in American culture and newspapers tried to make some problems and questioned what this meant. A further example illustrates another type of misunderstanding; in my culture you can visit your friend in his house without calling him before you arrive, whereas in the American culture this is impolite. You have to call before you come. In addition, in my culture when you see small babies or small and cute children, you can go and kiss them or play with them. In other words, you show you like them. In fact, it's rare to see parents who would disallow or reject such actions. Actually, people will say you are a good and a kind person. However, in American culture if you do such a thing, people will call police and you may go to jail. I mean, they will say that you have issues and you will have problems.

In contrast, in the American culture there are behaviors that aren't acceptable



Standing, L to R: Hamad Al Salem, Mohsen Al Yami, Hadi Al Yami, Hassan Al Salem, Hussain Al Yami, Hussain Aldighrir, Hakeem AlGabare, Yahya Jbara. Seated, Mary Ho

in the Saudi culture. For instance, when I was with my American friends we went to a restaurant, as we were about to leave I went to the cashier to pay the bill, but they said eve-

rybody should pay for himself. If I do that in Saudi Arabia, my friends will say I'm a stingy man. Another example occurs when you meet your friend's friends, you can just stand away from them, or ignore them if you encounter them later. However, In Saudi Arabia you can't, because this is less polite behavior.

In conclusion, cultures are different. We shouldn't prejudice people from other cultures by our cultures' standard. What's more, we have to try to fix these misunderstanding in order to be fair and just people.



Weddings

Wedding customs vary around the world. Here are descriptions of practices and suggested behavior in weddings in China, Kazakhstan, and Venezuela, as explained by Level 4 students.

Attending a Wedding in China

Yiyu (Allen) Wang, 4A



Yiyu (Allen) Wang and Thanet (Zia) Thongthanet

In China, if you have many friends, attending a wedding should be a very common thing in your life; as a result, there are some rules for guests. One of the important things is you must bring something valuable as a gift for the couple. People used to send presents such as jewelry and paintings. However, nowadays people prefer to give money because money is easier to

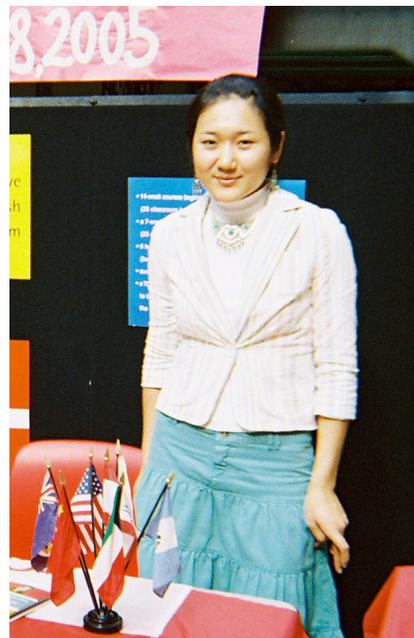
prepare, and the new couple can use the money to buy something they like. Before you go to your friend's wedding, you had better dress up to show you are polite. It is not a good idea for you to dress all in black because people always dress in black when they attend a funeral. The host will prepare food for visitors, but you must not eat until the hosts finish their speech and allow you to eat. During the meal, the bride and groom will come to your table and drink with you to thank your at-

In China people used to send presents such as jewelry and paintings. However, nowadays people prefer to give money . . .

tending. You should stand up and send your best wishes to them. Sometimes at the end of the wedding, all the people will take a picture together. So, you can see, dressing up before is very important.

A Wedding Party in Kazakhstan

Ulbossyn Imangaliyera, 4A



Ulbossyn Imangaliyera

A wedding in Kazakhstan is most exciting, but if you want to attend a wedding, you should know some details. First of all, you have to prepare clothes for a party, but if you are a girl, you had better not dress in white because the bride's dress will be white, too. Then you should buy a present. It doesn't have to be very expensive, just what you can afford. Also, you can prepare a speech expressing a wish. You are supposed to express your wishes to the just married in a wedding party.

In Kazakhstan, a wedding party lasts a whole day. Usually in the morning the couple go to the Wedding Register for official confirmation of their relation. And then they go to the special places where all just married couples traditionally go.

Before opening the bridal veil, the bride has to bow to every close relative to show her respect . . .

By the evening they are accompanied by their friends to the restaurant where all of the guests are waiting for them. Whoever celebrates the wedding party usually hires a specially educated person (he has to be an orator and singer) who leads the party. First of all he has to open the bridal veil by singing because the bride's veil is closed. Before opening the bridal veil, the bride has to bow to every close relative to show her respect for them while the singer is singing the traditional song. When the bride is bowing, the singer by song invites the person to whom the bride is bowing and whoever gets the bow has to put money in a special place. It is a tradi-

tional part of the wedding party.

Then guests go to take their places in the restaurant to eat, and they are served by special staff of the restaurant. While guests are eating and listening to music, the person who leads the party invites guests to express their wishes and give their presents to the just married. This part has two break times and during the break times guests dance, or the staff organize interesting games to amuse guests.

At the end of the wedding party, the bride throws her bouquet of flowers like Western style to girls who are attending the wedding party, and the girl who can catch it is assumed to be next.

In Kazakhstan a wedding party is a good time to meet with relations and friends and enjoy the party with them.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that you participate in a wedding party if you are in Kazakhstan and see all of it with your own eyes because it is exciting and includes both Western and Eastern customs.

Attending a Wedding in Venezuela

Adriana Castro, 4B



Eren Demet and Adriana Castro

Have you ever seen the movie “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”? If you have, you can have an idea of what a wedding in Venezuela is like. Before you can think more about this, let me confirm your suspicion: Yes, it is a crazy experience! The celebration is so stressful, and the wedding preparation too. For example, if you go to a wedding in Venezuela, you must give a gift to the newlyweds, and that gift should be money in check or cash and not less than 100.000 Bs. (50 US\$). Also, if you're a woman you must not repeat the same dress in any other wed-

ding, even if it is with different people. On the other hand, every wedding celebration must have a “Crazy Hour.” In this hour, a musical group, such as a drum or samba group, arrives at the party, and everybody must go to the center of the saloon and take their carnival stuff and dance in a group for one hour or a little more. In fact, during this hour the groom must take off the garter from his bride with his teeth and then one of the guests (a single man)

wins the garter in a game. Another very popular custom is when the bride throws her bouquet and one female single guest catches it. Then, the guy that won the bouquet must make a “little show” in front the rest of guests. In addition, the wedding party always has a big cake and inside it is hidden a medal for one of bride’s female single friends. The way to get that medal is winning a game where all female single guests take one number and then some-

body says the winning number and gives the medal to the winner. When the party is almost finished, each guest receives a soup, and you can see almost everybody without shoes (most are women). Finally, the newlyweds never enjoy their party because during the whole night they must attend everything and stay for a while at each guest’s table. Their real party is after the wedding, when they go to rest and sleep.

How Unwritten Rules Affect Lives in China

Hong Wang (Lisa) Fee, 5A

Unwritten rules are determined by culture, society, history, and even economic level. However, the way that people respond to unwritten rules tells you a lot about them.

I often ask myself why America has so many good unwritten rules, and why my mother country has totally different

unwritten rules, which have affected or are affecting Chinese lives.

In China, to be successful in business you must spend a lot of money on people who you need favors from. First, you should identify the important person who can help you achieve your goal, and research what kind of persons they are, including their favorite habits, the brands they like, which club they prefer, and so on. Once you know these things, you must look for an opportunity to meet them. Then, after that first meeting, you should contact them often, buying them good brand gifts, taking them to clubs, and the like. Little by little, you will have become “good” friends. Only at that point, can you tell them what you



Rinko Watanabe, Hong Wang (Lisa) Fee, and Xiaofen (Angel) Wang

need them to do. In most cases it works out; but if it doesn't, the only reason will be that you haven't given them enough money. The Chinese have a proverb that says money can even make ghosts your servants. So you should continue to send your "friend" more and more money, until he or she is satisfied. Nobody forces you to do this, but you still have to. It's a very common unwritten rule; it's key to achieving your goal--even though this unwritten rule has led to a lots corruption in China.

Similarly, although every woman wants to be beautiful, sometimes beauty brings you bad luck. For example, your male manger may be a lustful man and one day he insults you. You feel very sad and angry, but you can't tell anybody or go to court because people will blame you. It's assumed that you flirted with him, which caused him to insult you; it's entirely your fault. Chinese people have a stereotypic opinion about beautiful women:



Front row (L to R): Jong Ho Lee, Hsiu-Wen Yu, Chien-Chi Liou, Lu Ding
 Back row (L to R): Mohammed Al-Khuraim, Salem Al-Otaibi, Su Taek Im, Mohammad AlZahrani

they believe that they are all swinger types. It tears women up inside, and it happens often, especially in government companies. That's why we seldom hear about women suing for sexual assault in China, not because there are no sexual assaults.

Actually they are quiet common, but the unwritten rule is that the victim keeps this secret forever.

We have a name, so that people can identify us; yet In China, it's impolite to call someone by their name. If they hold an important position, you should also use their title.

For instance, a teacher, professor, boss, small leader, big leader, should be called Teacher Zhang, Professor Li, Small Leader Wang, Big Leader Zhao, or Boss Wu. If we address them by their name directly, we will offend them. Maybe you can't understand this unwritten rule, but it's valid.

On the other hand, another unwritten rule is that children are expected to support parents. If we see an old person who is starving, other people will curiously ask where their kids are and why they don't support their parents; it must be their kids' fault. So we often ask our parents if they

have enough money for living expenses and see what problems they have. We don't want to wait until bad things happen that other people will blame us for. This is a really good unwritten rule that is called "filial piety."

Unwritten rules occur for many reasons. Some are good, some are very bad. But whether it's bad or good, people in China all have to obey them now, and maybe forever.

Gender Conflicts

Rinko Watanabe, 5A

Men and women have a different way to communicate in Japan. These different communication styles sometimes cause a conflict between them.

First, when a man and a woman talk about daily things, the difference appears. If she says that the washing machine didn't work, but after she hit it, it did, and then he says that she should buy a new washing machine. She, however, doesn't want a new one because the machine still works. She just wants to laugh with him about the incident. So, she says "No, I don't want a new one." He is confused about why. Thus, women usually think how they communicate with men. On the other hand, men usually think what the conversation means.

Secondly, there is the difference when men and women use e-mail. One day, the man and the woman had a date. The next day, she sent an e-mail to say thank you.

After she sent it, she didn't get his reply. She was disappointed because she thought he didn't like her. After one week, he sent e-mail asking for a



date without the least hesitation. She was confused. Accordingly, women send e-mail messages even when they are trifles, and she also wants to get an e-mail from a man frequently. On the other hand, men don't send anything except when it is necessary.

As final example, the woman talks with the man about a problem of human relationship in the office. She says that she doesn't like her boss because the boss is a really mean fellow. He says that she should talk with the boss and solve the problem quickly. But she

doesn't talk with the boss. She just wants to share her feeling with the man. Women talk about what they feel about a problem, but men talk about how to solve it.

Consequently, there are a lot of conflicts between men and women in Japan, but also in the world. In my opinion, the different communication styles between men and women are one of the causes of conflict.

Conversational Styles

Chang Keun (David) Kim, 5A

When I came here in 2004, I lived with American people for six months. We spent a lot of time together, and while we were talking about something, I realized that Americans and Koreans had a few differences in conversational styles.

First of all, the conversation rules are completely different in both countries. A Korean should wait for his turn during the conversation.

Conversational Styles

In contrast, Americans have a tendency toward interruption. For example, I was waiting for my time to speak when we were talking about TV programs. However, I couldn't ever say anything because the family members constantly interrupted me.

Furthermore, there is a different attitude toward conversational turns. Ko-

reans need a lot of time before speaking. However, Americans can speak more easily and freely about their opinions. For instance, Koreans anticipate someone's response, so they choose a word carefully, after consideration. On the other hand, Americans usually speak bluntly, so sometimes they upset the other person.

Moreover, Koreans are thinking about their next

comment while someone is speaking to them. As a result, Americans will sometimes feel insulted because they require their partners to pay attention, like with eye contact, throughout the conversation.

In accordance with the each culture's attitude toward conversation, I can't say if one style is better than the other. However, I know that the differences are there.

Children's Day

in Japan

Yayoi Shimazaki, 5B



Children's Day in Japan is held on May 5 annually. The purpose is to esteem children's personalities, promote their

happiness, and appreciate their mothers.

On Children's Day, we hoist up a "carp streamer" in our yards. A carp streamer is a flag shaped like a carp. Each one represents a child in the family. If the first child is a boy, you hoist a black-carp flag; if you have a girl as a second child, you hoist a golden red-carp flag. The sizes of the carp streamer become smaller starting from the oldest child to the youngest.

On Children's Day, hoisting the carp streamers in the yard is less frequent nowadays. Although, this traditional custom is dear to me. I want to be proud, and to observe and preserve Japanese traditional customs. In addition, I like the purpose, "to esteem children's personalities and appreciate their mothers." I think this is significant to the relationships between parents and children in today's Japan. For these reasons, if I have children, I'd like to do this even if I live in a small house. Moreover, every year in May, I wish I could find thousands of carps swimming gracefully in the sky.

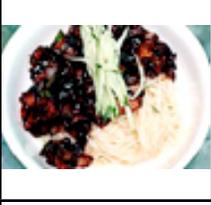
Korean 14th Day

Hyukwoo Lee (Sean), 5B

Young people in Korea have a special event every 14th day. These events are

not Korean tradition. Not all people enjoy these special events. Maybe it is a trick of the trade, but it is interesting. I think that the purpose of having these monthly events is to im-

prove one's relationship with another. Many young Korean people enjoy every 14th day, and have a fun time. I hope that you can enjoy every 14th day like Koreans.

	Diary Day (January 14) – You give your friend a special diary as a gift		Silver Day (July 14) – You present a silver ring and promise your love.
	Valentine's Day (February 14) – Girls give chocolates and gifts to boys whom they love.		Music Day (August 14) – You listen to music and go to club to dance.
	White Day (March 14) – Boys present candies and gifts to girls.		Photo Day (September 14) – You take a picture together on this day.
	Black Day (April 14) – If you did not get chocolate or candy, you have to eat Ja-jang myeon (noodles with bean sauce). Actually the bean sauce's color is black, so we say Black Day.		Wine Day (October 14) – You take your lover to an elegant restaurant, drink some wine, and talk to your lover sweeter than wine.
	Rose Day (May 14) – If you received chocolate or candy, you decide your mind to her or him. And you give a rose for answer. A white rose means a parting, a yellow rose means friendship, and a red rose means love.		Movie Day (November 14) – Boys usually take their girlfriends to the movies. It is the day when they relieve stress from watching fun or romantic movies.
	Kiss Day (June 14) – If you got a red rose, you can kiss your sweetheart on this day. In some restaurants, all the lights are turned off for several minutes, so couples are allowed to kiss each other even in the public.		Hug Day (December 14) – This is the day when lovers hug each other more firmly than usual, assuring how much they love each other.



Dining in Thailand

Thanet Thongthanet, 4A

Thailand is renowned for its variety of food. In general, people have meals, especially dinner, out on the weekend. Thus, the eating in a restaurant is important event that we should know about.

Firstly, you have to choose between sharing

or individual eating. When you look at the menu, you will find that there are both “one main dish” (served with rice) and “only dish” (served without rice). Ordering many “only dishes” is more suitable and less expensive than “one main dish” in case there are more than 4 persons.

Secondly, seafood should be prior ordered. Many kinds of seafood, such as fish, squid, shell, etc., require much more time to prepare than live-

stock meats. They will be served after the other dishes if not ordered ahead of time.

Thirdly, fresh fruit is the best dessert. According to the climate, Thailand has a variety of fruit which grows in every season the whole year. Some nutritionists have adapted fruit into many alternative menus.

Different countries have different eating styles. Knowing the custom in each country will be helpful.

Celebrating Eid

Jasmine, Mesha, and Mohammed, 3B

Islam has two Eids each year; one is called Eid Al-fater and the other one is called Eid Alothan. Eid Al-fater comes after Ramadan. In Saudi Arabia, the government gives a two week vacation. However, here in Houston, Mohammed came to school to celebrate the Eid with his 3B classmates. He brought a cake and some cokes. After eating, we took pictures. He also explained about Eid Alfater. His classmates wished him Happy Eid.

Until that time, we had never met any Muslims. We are meeting them in Houston now. We are followers of different faiths, so sometimes religious troubles occur. However, we had to forget this for a short while and share with pleasure Mohammed’s religious ceremony.

Jasmine
Mesha
Mohammed



Level 3 B celebrates Eid Alfater.

Culture Bump

Mohammed ALKHALDI and Yolanda ELA, 3B

On Wednesday, October 5, 2005, class 3B had a special class about Culture Bump. From 11:00 am to 1:00 pm we discussed three pictures from three different cultures. During our discussion, we realized that the pictures evoke different emotions in each of us. During the class, we heard from classmates from various cultures who were closely involved with each of the pictures.

Mecca



For example, a classmate from Saudi Arabia explained to us about Mecca Almkramha, where all Muslims gather to do the prayer.

Korean Bow



Another classmate from Korea explained to us the picture that shows a traditional wedding in Korean culture.

Finally, we realized that culture bumps are very important to make people very friendly with each other.

Pictures are from the Toolkit for Culture and Communication © University of Houston 2002

Cheerleading Lesson

On Friday, November 11, we learned yells and the symbol for the University of Houston Cougar football team. Two cheerleaders from the University of Houston came to our LCC classes – 1A, 1B and 3B – to teach us. First, they taught us the Cougar symbol. We put our thumb on the nail of our ring finger and wave our hand. This action symbolizes the Cougar paw. After that, they demonstrated different yells. For example we learned,

“We are”
(clap hands twice)
“Houston”

and

“Go Coogs go”
(clap hands twice)

and

“Whose house?”
“Coog’s house.”

Finally, we were happy and surprised (and maybe a little confused) by these activities. Thank you to Melissa and Paul, the University of Houston cheerleaders. Nice to meet you.

Go Coogs!!

Class 1A

- Alanazi , Faisal
- Alghabani,, Mohsen
- Alyami, Hussaid,
- Corona, Miguel
- Lin, Ying-Ping
- Nykholat, Mykkola
- Park, Jungmi
- Shin, Sungil



DAVE'S PAGE by Dave Burns

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, before you go 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 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. Probably the DHS inspector will not ask for these additional documents, but students should have them available in case they are asked for these documents.

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.

(cont. on page 22)

(cont. from page 21)

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 now to avoid problems later.

F-1 Student Status

Students need to be *very careful* to obey the immigration laws. Under the current laws and rules, students who go out-of-status (don't obey the rules) 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 because of the reason 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 semesters, taking vacations only when you are permitted to.(2)You can not work, except on campus, unless you have special permission from Immigration.(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 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 **10** 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 successfully in your studies at the LCC.

What are you doing next semester?

Under DHS' new SEVIS tracking program for F-1 students, at the beginning of each semester we have to enter into the SEVIS system the data of what you are doing. If you are continuing in the LCC, we will have that information from your registration. *However, if you are transferring to another school, returning to your country, having an authorized vacation, or doing something else, it is **very important** that you let us know so that we can enter the correct information in the SEVIS system.* If we do not know and we enter you into SEVIS as, for example, "completed," and you are still in the U.S., you will have problems getting your record corrected and pursuing your next goal in the U.S.

When your teacher asks you at your final interview what you will be doing next semester, please tell her or him so that we can put the correct information into SEVIS. *There are vacation forms in the LCC office that you must fill out if you are going to take a vacation next semester.* If you are not sure yet, 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.

Student Activities

The time has passed quickly this semester. After the orientation trip to the Museum of Fine Arts and The Galleria, 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 Namgoong; 2nd: Mi Joo Hwang; 3rd Byung Hyo Lee. **Billiards** 1st: Po-han (Taiffalo) Chiu, and 2nd: Shin-hyun Lee. **Table Tennis** 1st: Thanet Thongthanet; 2nd: Emad Al-Saleh, and 3rd: Hsu-Hsiang Wu.



Po-han (Taiffalo) Chiu--1st Place, Billiards

But wait! Before we had the Sports Tournament, we had another big event, although it wasn't planned. Does anyone remember Hurricane Rita? Many students left town. I know that some of our Saudi Arabian students went to El Paso. Where did you go?

After the hurricane scare and a week off from classes, it was back to school. If the hurricane



Table Tennis champions: Hsu-Hsiang Wu, Emad Al-Saleh, and Thanet Thongthanet

didn't scare you, maybe Halloween did. For Halloween, many students went to Astroworld's Fright Night to enjoy the Halloween shows, ride the rides, get scared, and have a great time. This was a bittersweet trip as Astroworld is closing forever. LCC students have been going to Astroworld for a long time. We will miss it.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the Culture Festival a big success by bringing all the delicious food. We had a good time tasting the dishes of different cultures and learning about each other by sharing this Thanksgiving lunch together. We also had a good time learning to dance Western. Who can still do the "Cotton-eyed Joe?" Thanks to the African students and the Saudi Arabian students who also danced for us and showed us how to do their dances.

On December 7th, we have our final field trip. By the time you read this, you will probably know that we plan to go to San An-

tonio. 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.

LCC Soccer Team

The LCC was fortunate to have students representing us in the UH intramural indoor soccer games. Thanks to all the guys who played on our team, the Eagles, and a special thanks to Nick Sakdanuwong from Thailand, who is a former LCC student now in UH and was the captain and organizer for the team.

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 to personal.

In addition to Dave Burns, there is Sam Long, a LCC program Assistant, who can help you.

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

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**We're on the
Web!**

lcc.uh.edu



Back Row - Standing: In Moon Kim, Mohammed Khalele Alkhaldi, Maria Yolanda Ela Nguema
Second Row - Hien Duc Khuu, Dr. Carol Archer, Angele Gouba
Third row in front: Teresa Wang, Yasmine Kim, Rebecca Pack, Mesha Lin

