



*"Do your homework and study for your tests, but don't forget to take the time to look around and realize that you are in an extraordinary place at an extraordinary time."*

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## From the Director: Happy Holidays and Happy New Year

As the fall term of 2011 closes, the teachers, administrators, and support staff of the Language and Culture Center (LCC) wish you happy holidays and a safe and productive academic break from our program. The LCC office will be open through December 22, 2011, and then will close for the Winter Break and open again on January 2, 2012. We look forward to seeing many of you again in the new year.

If you are leaving our program for any reason, we encourage you to stay in touch with us through email or through our website. We love to hear from you. We are eager to hear from students who continue their studies at the University of Houston or at another school in the United States or who return to their countries to continue their journey. We have a great network of former LCC students all over the world.

On the NAFSA: Association of International Educators' website ([www.nafas.org](http://www.nafas.org)), you might read: "Since early civilization, students and scholars have traveled to other lands to join scholarly communities outside their own home countries." The site goes on to quote former presidents of the United States on the importance of receiving an international education. In 1977, former president Jimmy Carter wrote: "Only by knowing and understanding each other's experiences can we find common ground on which we can examine and resolve our differences.... As the world becomes more and more interdependent, such mutual understanding becomes increasingly vital."

Students willing to study outside their home countries give us hope. Thank you for choosing the LCC and the University of Houston. Thank

you for helping us work toward mutual understanding. We have spent a beautiful fall together at this university. There is much to recommend on our campus and in our city at this time of year. Do your homework and study for your tests, but don't forget to take the time to look around and realize that you are in an extraordinary place at an extraordinary time.

This fall, we have been delighted to have 486 students from 44 countries in our Intensive English Program. 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 2011, and I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in January for the spring term of 2012 in the Language and Culture Center.

Joy Tesh



# DON'T FORGET

**Jan.**

**Tuesday 17:** Registration and tuition/fee payment  
**Wednesday 18:** Testing  
**Thursday 19:** Student activities  
**Friday 20:** General meeting for all students, orientation, assignment to level/class, meet teachers  
**Monday 23:** Classes begin

**Mar.**

**Monday 12 to Friday 16:** SPRING HOLIDAYS

**Apr.**

**Thursday 19:** Final Exams  
**Friday 20:** Final exams & End of Classes  
**Monday 23:** Final Michigan & Writing sample  
**Wednesday 25:** Final student activity  
**Thursday 26:** Student-Teacher conferences (morning)  
 Graduation ceremony (afternoon)



## Highlights of the Fall Semester 2011



## LCC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**T**he 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 11, 2011, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to Abdoulaye Diarra, the Davidson scholarship to Aura Mariana Malpica Rangel, and the two merit scholarships to Rodrigo Silva Maeda, and Maria Carolina Mejia Hernandez.

**Abdoulaye Diarra** was awarded the Valdes scholarship. Mr. Diarra is from Mali and is studying in level three. This is his second term at the LCC. After he completes his study of English, he plans to pursue a degree in medicine. Mr. Diarra studied medicine in his country before coming to the LCC. He enjoys playing soccer, video games, and taking trips.

**Aura Mariana Malpica Rangel** was awarded the Davidson scholarship. Ms. Rangel is from Venezuela. She is studying in level three and this is her second term at the LCC. After completing the intensive English program, she plans to pursue a Master's Degree in Business Administration (M.B.A.) at the University of Houston. In regard to receiving the scholarship, Ms. Rangel remarked, "I felt super proud of myself because my hard work was recognized. I am immensely grateful to the LCC for this opportunity and for making me feel at home."

**Rodrigo Silva Maeda** was a recipient of a merit scholarship. Mr. Maeda is from Brazil and is currently studying in level six. He plans to study for his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Motor Neuroscience after graduation from the LCC. Mr. Maeda remarked that it was very nice to receive the scholarship. He added, "I feel grateful for having been a part of this institution and graduating from the LCC is a satisfaction for me."

**Maria Carolina Mejia Hernandez** was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. Ms. Hernandez is from Colombia and is currently studying in level three. After completing the intensive English program, she will apply for the M.A. program in geology at the University of Houston. In regard to receiving the scholarship, Ms. Hernandez remarked, "I'm happy with this scholarship because it helps me to complete my dream and goal, which is to work with oil companies about environmental issues both in my country and elsewhere in the world."

We congratulate **Abdoulaye Diarra, Aura Mariana Malpica Rangel, Rodrigo Silva Maeda, and Maria Carolina Mejia Hernandez** 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 the next LCC scholarship recipients will be at the Fall Graduation ceremony.



Sandy Hartmann, Associate Director





## **A Place in My Country**

**Luther Oliveira, 2C**

The place in my country Angola that I want to describe is a place many people like. It is Luanda Island. The native people in my city go there. Most people go to Luanda Island on weekends because it is a tropical place, and it has many choices, for example, beaches, restaurants, house parties, night clubs, and hotels. Luanda Island is a good place to go for holidays.

## **Korea**

**Yougki Cho, 1D**

I am from Korea. Korea is in Asia. My country is called South Korea. Korea is divided into two nations, South and North. Korea is the only divided country in the world. Korea's

American restaurants. I like Riyadh more than any place in the world. I want to be there now and sit together with my family and friends and watch a game of football until midnight.

## **My Deir al Balah**

**Mokhlis Altawashi, 2D**

I was born and raised in Deir al Balah in Palestine in the central part of the Gaza Strip. This city is famous for its beaches and date palm trees. There is a cemetery dating back to the late Bronze Age. It is filled with pottery, tombs, and bronze pots, and it has a mosaic floor. There is also a monastery built by St. Helena in 372 A.D. People in my city work in the shops and markets and also in the fishing industry. The produce available at this time in Deir al Balah

# **A PAGEANT OF CULTURES**

national food is kimchi. Kimchi is good for our bodies, and can prevent obesity. Also, it is spicy, but has a delicious taste, so many foreigners also like kimchi. Taekwon-do is one of the sports of Korea. The most important principle in Taekwon-do is good motion. Many people from different countries learn Taekwon-do. I'm so proud of my nation.

includes barley, wheat, grapes, olives, raspberries, lemons, figs, sweet melons, pomegranates and dates. All in all, it is a beautiful city, and I miss it very much

## **My Routine in My Country**

**Abdullah Alidrisi, 1D**

Everyone in my country goes to mosques every day. In the morning after we finish praying, we go to breakfast and go to work, school, or college. In the afternoon, we go to pray and then finish work or school and go back home to dinner. At night, I go to pray and then perhaps go shopping, eat in a restaurant or play soccer. After I finish, I go back home and sleep so I can wake up early in the morning. This is my routine in my country. I love to be back in my country. I miss my family.

## **Riyadh**

**Khalid Almutairi, 1B**

Riyadh is my favorite place for many reasons. First, my family is there, and I was born there. Second, my closest friends live in Riyadh. In Riyadh, there are many places for fun and shopping like parks and malls. We have many big streets. Riyadh has many different restaurants like Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, and

## Ramadan

**Aissata Niare, 1B**

My favorite holiday is Ramadan. I like this day because it is obligatory for all Muslims to fast. It is only once every year. On this day, people eat sheep and beef with rice. On this day, people ask for forgiveness from their parents, friends, and neighbors. On this day, they wear special new clothes for the party. In the evening, they either go to the movies or stay home and get some rest. People always spend the day with their families. I like Ramadan a lot because it is the blessed month.

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*On this day, they wear special new clothes for the party. In the evening, they either go to the movies or stay home and get some rest.*

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## Eid Day

**Turki Alassaf, 1A**

My country has two Eids every year. People are very happy during Eid because they see their family and friends. My Eid in 2011 was very bad because I didn't see my mother and my father. I just called them in the morning. Then I asked them, "How is your health?" They were very happy because they heard the sound of my voice. In the evening, my friends, who were also living in Houston, called me

and together we went to a coffee shop dressed in our best traditional clothes. I saw many people from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Turkey at the coffee shop. We sat together. It was my first Eid in Houston. I missed Eid in Saudi Arabia.

## Eid

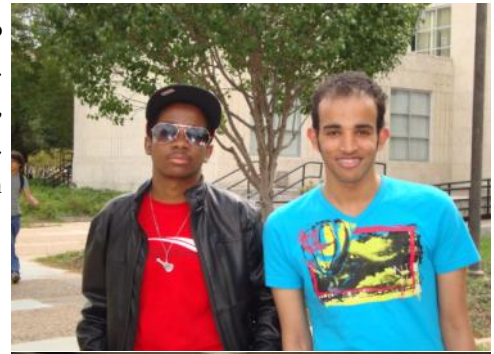
**Meshary Alrashodi, 1A**

Last Eid, my family and I went to my grandmother's house. My grandfather, my uncle, my cousin, and my niece came to my grandmother's house for breakfast in the morning. Then we sat and talked about everything. After that, we had lunch and relaxed. My friends and I played games in the garden. In the evening, we watched a movie. We like Eid because we always have a lot of fun on this day.

## Eid

**Abdulrahman Alshaya, 1B**

Eid is a special day for Arab people because they can meet each other, visit their families, and have fun together. People usually get up very early in the morning and cook lamb for lunch for family members and visitors. Women wear beautiful dresses while men wear white thobes. In the afternoon, they all sit down round the dining table for lunch. Old people will sit down first, followed by women and young people.



# ***Astride Two Cultures***

*Another effect of living in a foreign country is adjusting to a new living situation, like having a roommate. It is a challenge when you receive the news that you are not going to live alone but with a stranger. It has been the most difficult problem for me; I do not have privacy now, and I feel uncomfortable.*

## **A New Life**

### **Priscila Herrera Pellon, 4F**

Living in a foreign country involves having to learn another language and meeting new people. At the beginning, it is difficult because you miss your friends and your family. You continue, though, because you know that it is a beneficial experience. In fact, when the time to return to your native country comes, you will say, "I don't want to leave." Some of the effects of living in a foreign country are becoming independent, adjusting to new living situations, and adapting to new customs.

One of the most significant effects of studying abroad is gaining independence. This is the best thing that has ever happened to me because I had been too dependent on my parents. I am extremely shy, and it took me a long time to enjoy the freedom here. I know my parents gave me everything I have here, but it is my responsibility to do what I need, such as taking care of the laundry, the bills, the grocery shopping, and everything else my parents had done for me when I was living with them.

Another effect of living in a foreign country is adjusting to a new living situation, like having a roommate. It is a challenge when you receive the news that you are not going to live alone but

with a stranger. It has been the most difficult problem for me; I do not have privacy now, and I feel uncomfortable.

A third effect of living in a foreign country is adjusting to the new customs. At first, this is difficult, but as time passes, you start feeling comfortable. When you eventually adapt, it doesn't matter if you are living with a stranger, need to do the laundry, or go to the supermarket. You slowly develop a routine, and you feel better about everything.

Living in another country is a positive experience, even if you feel uncomfortable at first. Later, you will feel better, as if you were living in your native country instead of in a foreign country. You are going to become independent and have more self-esteem once you are here. All the new work you need to do will become part of your everyday life.

## **I'm at Home in Houston**

### **Ali Ekici, 3D**

I had many positive and also surprising experiences when I came to Houston. First, I arrived at the airport where my cousin was waiting to pick me up. After that, we went to the car park to take the car and go home. When I saw the cars in the huge parking lot, I almost fainted

because they were so big! However, I pulled myself together because I knew it would not be the first or last surprise for me here. Until today I don't understand why people need these cars because, unlike Germany, the speed on highways in Houston is very limited. The key word on German highways is "speeding". Next, I learned that Americans love fast food. Even though it is unhealthy, there are many fast food restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King, Whataburger and Wendy's. There are many options like burger with beef, burger with chicken (grilled, crispy, spicy) and bacon or without bacon or burger with cheese or ketchup. The third experience was about the friendly people everywhere in the U.S. Although I am a foreigner in this country, nobody makes me feel like this because the people are so friendly and they are always ready to help me with anything. I feel like I am at home here in Houston.

## **I Would Choose Houston**

### **Mariam Konate, 3D**

Since I arrived in Houston, I have learned about other cultures, new education systems and the strange weather. Indeed, here, especially at the LCC, there are a lot of people



coming from different countries. Therefore, there are also different cultures and all of them are very special. For instance, in Taiwan's culture, giving a yellow flower to someone in love means breaking up, and in Chinese culture, you must not stand very close when you talk, especially men and women. The other

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***“In Taiwan's culture, giving a yellow flower to someone in love means breaking up, and in Chinese culture, you must not stand very close when you talk, especially men and women.”***

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discovery about culture is Thanksgiving. On this special day, the Americans cook turkey and invite their friends to come and enjoy it with them. The education system is also new for me. In fact, after high school, you enter university for four years to get a bachelor's degree, two years for a master's degree and around three years for a doctorate. This is different from my country where one year before a bachelor's degree, you get a

license degree, two years after your bachelor's degree, you get a DEA degree and then after three years, a doctorate degree. Also, the way of teaching in the U.S. is different, too. The students are less stressed, and teachers are friendlier. The last discovery is the strange weather. Here, it rains often even though it is sunny, and frequently there are different kinds of weather every few days. For example, the day before yesterday was hot like in the summer, and yesterday and today it has been very cold. In brief, I am very happy to have chosen to come here, and if I must choose again, surely, I would again choose Houston.

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### **Changes from China**

**William (Junhang) Chen, 4E**

This is my first time to come to America, and the differences between China and the United States have given me a lot of problems. First, there is the problem of communication. Anyone visiting a new country finds language to be a real big problem. I faced unprecedented pressure with that challenge. When I first talked to

native English speakers, their fast speech confused me. I didn't know what they were saying, so I apologized again and again and asked them to repeat what they had said. Nevertheless, I was never afraid of my horrible pronunciation. I began to practice speaking and to recite the new vocabulary incessantly. I even added body language like hand gestures when I communicated with Americans. Step by step, I could understand their meaning, which is a relief because I don't want to miss any chance to have a conversation. The environment is another difference I have gotten used to. I was shocked because the United States is cleaner than I had expected. For example, after my airplane had landed in San Francisco, I was surprised to see some youngsters lying on the carpet in the airport. In China, I would never lie on the floor because it is too dirty. People always spit everywhere, and they throw trash all over the place. However, I saw Americans collecting trash, and they even separated materials, such as paper, glass, and plastic into the different garbage cans for recycling. This is unlike in China, where

recyclable resources are often wasted. Food is another difference. Even now, I still don't like American fast foods such as hamburgers, sandwiches, and chips. These foods are too high in calories, and I think that's why many Americans have trouble with obesity. I don't want to eat those foods all the time. In China, my staple food is rice, and vegetables are my favorite food. Cultural differences always bring exciting effects, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to live here and compare America and China. The language, environment, and food are the major differences between my life in America and China.

## Houston and Riyadh

### Aziz Abdulrahman Alfahaid, 4F

Have you ever thought about the differences in your life between two places? Or have you ever thought about what would happen if you lived in a new society? Would you fit in that new place? I have had many different experiences in my life, but my experience of living in a new city is most interesting for me. My life in Houston is totally different from my life in Riyadh because of my responsibilities, my schedule, and my activities.

Since I came to Houston, I have become more responsible. Right now in Houston, I have a scholarship that pays for my education and daily necessities. This is good but and I have to budget this money very carefully. Every month I make a plan for how

and where I am going to spend it. At first, I experienced some difficulty because in Riyadh, I had never thought about the money my parents gave me; whenever I needed more, I just asked them for it. In addition to the budget, living alone is a different experience in my life. In Riyadh I was living with my three brothers, two sisters, and my parents in a large house. We had breakfast, lunch, and dinner together every day. If one of us had a problem, we dealt with it together. Now in Houston, because I am living alone, my problem is just my problem, and there is no one for me to share my problems with. I have become totally independent by doing everything myself, such as buying a car and renting an apartment. For example, when I decided to buy a car, I had to search for it by myself. In contrast, when I was in Riyadh, my father chose the car and bought it for me. Also, I was living in a great house without having to take care of the bills or the food. Now, I am the one who is responsible for the rent, bills, and food.

My schedule has also changed since I came to Houston. For instance, when I was in Riyadh, I usually woke up just one hour before the class. During this hour, I took a quick shower, had breakfast, and drove to school. I was always taking a shower as soon as I woke up to make me alert. I also ate a quick breakfast because I had to save time to drive to my school, which was far from my home. Now in Houston, I

always wake up at least four hours before class. During the time before the class, I take a shower as soon as I wake up; then I eat a heavy breakfast. The rest of the time is for finishing my assignments. I have been studying every day since I came to Houston, which is not the same as what I did in Riyadh, where I only studied for tests and quizzes.

My activities in my free time in Houston are also different from in Riyadh. For example, spending time with international friends is a new experience for me. I like it because I have fun and enjoy practicing English all the time. Also, I like learning about new cultures and how my friends' lives were in their countries. All my international friends in Houston are friendly and funny. We spend our free time visiting museums and art galleries. Besides these activities, I also like to go to football and basketball games. In contrast, my friends in Riyadh and I went camping in the desert during the winter for five to six days, and then we would return to the city for a while before camping again. We did several other different activities like swimming and playing volleyball. Even though my life in Houston is different from in Riyadh, I am comfortable with both lives. Therefore, I think I am able to fit in and live in many different cities. In the future, I will go to live in different cities such as London, Vancouver, and Shanghai.

*Now in Houston, because I am living alone, my problem is just my problem, and there is no one for me to share my problems with. I have become totally independent by doing everything myself, such as buying a car and renting an apartment.*





## Three Changes

Abdulla Alshammari, 5F

When I was a young kid, I thought that my life would always be the same: I would go to school, finish school, attend a university, and live with my family. Last year, my school finished, and I tried to find a good university. But I couldn't because my grades were low. Therefore, my father told me that I had to go to the U.S. to learn English and after that to attend a university there. When I arrived in the U.S., my life started to change.

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*Some customs that we have in our country look very strange to the Americans, such as men kissing men on their cheeks as a greeting. But the Americans also have customs that puzzle us, such as boys and girls studying in the same school. In my country, all schools are separate schools.*

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The first change that came to my life in the U.S. was living alone. It was very difficult for me to live alone without my family during the first days. I used to live with my family, and I didn't think that one day I would have to live all by

myself. I had always depended on my family for everything. I had never cooked a meal or cleaned the house when living with my family. Now, everything changed. I had to start to cook, to clean my apartment, and to depend on myself for everything.

The second change was related to culture. It was not very easy for me to adapt to the new culture. Some customs that we have in our country look very strange to the Americans, such as men kissing men on their cheeks as a greeting. But the Americans also have customs that puzzle us, such as boys and girls studying in the same school. In my country, all schools are separate schools. However, these customs are not too difficult for me to live with. It's just a new culture for me.

The third change that I experienced is the different nationalities from different parts of the world. When I first came to the U.S., I thought that I would see just Americans everywhere, and I never thought I would see many different nationalities, cultures, and languages all in one same place! However, I started to get to know new cultures and make new friends from all over the world.

The three changes above are not all of the changes I have had in my life, but they have been the most important changes that I have ever had. All the changes that I have had in my life were difficult for me in the first days, but with the passage of time, I got used to all of them.

# This Is Not the America That I Knew

Kyun Hoon Boo, 5F

*"I thought that everybody in the U.S. made a good living so they could afford a good lifestyle as shown in the movies. By this, I mean I thought that everybody owned a big house, had a nice car, and got a good job.*

*Nevertheless, since I came here, I have noticed that it's not the truth. People are struggling with bills, and many of them can't just afford the "movie lifestyle."*

*As a Korean, I also grew up with all those Hollywood movies, so naturally I had some fantasies about the U.S.*

Back in the 1940's, a lot of Hollywood motion pictures began to be shown in Korean theaters. It totally changed the Korean people's lives. People began to dress like the people in the motion pictures or try to have meals in Western ways, such as using forks and knives. The reason Koreans started to do the same things that were shown in the Hollywood films is because it was so much different from their traditional Korean culture. Everything in the motion pictures looked so fantastic, especially back in the days when most of the films were shot in Los Angeles.

As a Korean, I also grew up with all those Hollywood movies, so naturally I had some fantasies about the U.S. For example, I thought this place would be full of beautiful Caucasian women and we would party all the time, just like what I saw in the movies. But, instead, I have met more Asian women than I did in Asia and I have gone to fewer parties than I did in Asia. Even the service system is not as good as I thought, and the people in the service industry are not as friendly. I've been in the U.S. for almost three months. Now, I have gotten used to all those things, but of course, I've also given up all my fantasies about the American society.



## The Truth About America

Lloyd Stevy Ntoutoume Eko, 5E

Coming to the U.S has always been a dream for every young person in my country Gabon. Of course, I am not an exception. Before getting here, I only lived to achieve this dream, to achieve “the American dream.” However, now that I am here, my thoughts and my attitudes toward this country are different from what they were in the past.

First, my thoughts about the American lifestyle is not the same. When I was in my country, I thought that everybody in the U.S. made a good living so they could afford a good lifestyle as shown in the movies. I mean by this that I thought that everybody owned a big house, had a nice car, and got a good job. Nevertheless, since I came here, I have noticed that it’s not the truth. People are struggling with bills, and many of them can’t just afford the movie lifestyle. Secondly, my belief about the relationships between people in his country has changed. In the past, I thought that people were friendly and kind. However, when I got here, I was very surprised to see that people are not very close. Most of the time, they think about themselves first. And, the most surprising thing is that usually the neighbors don’t even talk with each other.

Also, when I was in my country, I thought that everything was perfect in the United States. Roads and streets were clean and electricity never shut down. Nevertheless, the reality is different. There are many bad roads and dirty streets. The worst fact is that electricity sometimes shuts down, and it really reminds me of the bad situation in my country.

## I Don’t Feel Very Happy With Houston!

Safa Almohsen, 5B

I am a student from Saudi Arabia and ever since I came to Houston, I have had a lot of trouble with transportation. In Saudi Arabia, women are not allowed to drive. This means that when women decide to go somewhere, they have to ask one of their male relatives to give them a ride. When I was in my country, transportation was not too big a problem because there was always someone from my family to help me. But Houston is a foreign city where I have no male relatives to turn to for help with transportation. I need to learn to drive a car so that I can be free to go anywhere I want, but as I’m a Saudi woman, I am not allowed to learn to drive a car. My problem with transportation is made worse by the fact that Houston is too big and every place is too far away from other places. Ever since I came to Houston, I have had to take a taxi whenever I want to go somewhere and this has cost me a lot of money!

*My problem with transportation is made worse by the fact that Houston is too big and every place is too far away from other places. Ever since I came to Houston, I have had to take a taxi whenever I want to go somewhere and this has cost me a lot of money!*



# Scary Moments

## The Hog Was Still Alive!

**Phuong Lai, 5B**

Ever since I came to the U.S, I have been impressed by many things such as the modern road system, lots of skyscrapers, nice weather, etc. However, because I really love animals, what has impressed me the most is probably the fact that I could see various kinds of wild animals out there on the streets: birds, raccoons, hogs ... Back in my country, I could only see them in the zoo. The fact that there are so many wild animals roaming freely in the streets in the U.S. is really interesting, but sometimes this can also be dangerous. I remember one day I was driving home from school. I was doing 60 miles a hour when suddenly I bumped into a hog. Thinking that the hog was dead, I decided to get out of the car to check if my car was O.K. Unfortunately, the hog was still alive and was very angry, too. When seeing me, the hog charged at me. I was so scared that I hopped onto the roof of the car and decided to stay there waiting for the hog to go away. But the hog refused to go away! It was not going

to give up and I had to stay on top of the car for half an hour! At last, tired of waiting, I phoned my uncle asking for help. When my uncle came, he shone his car's headlights towards the hog and was able to frighten the hog away. Though I was able to return home safe and sound, I believed that the incident had taught me a lesson, which is never to get out of the car whenever we bump into wild animals on the road!

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*When seeing me, the hog charged at me. I was so scared that I hopped onto the roof of the car and decided to stay there waiting for the hog to go away. But the hog refused to go away!*

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## Everything Was Strange to Me!

**Hien Truong, 5A**

I never forgot the last Christmas when I came back to Houston after the winter break on a late flight. Although I had carefully prepared for my flight such as packing my luggage and having my friend drive me to the airport early, I still got to the airport late. The cause of this was that on that day, the traffic was really bad. My friend, who drove me to the airport, thought that he could avoid the traffic by taking an alternate route, but he was wrong because the traffic there was not any better. At check-in, I was told that the plane had left and that I had to wait for the next flight. I panicked when I heard this. I immediately phoned my sister and explained the situation to her,

but she could not do anything to help me other than to tell me that I had to wait for the next flight. If I had not missed the plane, I would have arrived at the Houston airport at 8 pm, but on that day, I arrived at 2 am, which was 6 hours later than scheduled! Worst still, when I got out of the plane, I did not know how to get out of the airport to where my sister was waiting for me. Then I decided to follow a group of passengers, hoping that they were getting out of the airport and that by following them, I would be able to get out of it, too. But I was wrong, because they suddenly took a right turn and went downstairs to a very quiet and deserted place where there was a train waiting for them! They got on the train, but I did dare to follow them because I did not know where the train would take me. So, I decided to walk back upstairs, dragging along my heavy luggage with me. After walking this way and that way for half an hour and with a lot of talking on the phone with my sister, I was able to get out of the airport at the gate where my sister was waiting for me. Later, when I told her about the mysterious train, she laughed and said that if I had followed them into the train, I would not have wasted so much time and energy trying to find ways to get out of the airport!

# Scary Moments



# Thanksgiving: The Season of Eating & Shopping

## A Family Reunion

**Abdullah Zainalabedin, 3D**

Last week was the first time that I celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday. It was full of very interesting events although I did not go to any interesting places or travel to any new states. Even though it was just four days, it felt like the longest holiday I have ever had.

The first interesting thing that happened to me was when my brother came all the way from Ohio to visit me in my apartment. How surprising! He did not tell anybody he was coming and he brought all his stuff with him such as his bags, clothes, and all his books. At first, I thought he would live with us; however, he showed me his bags which had many gifts for us. "You are kidding!" was what I said when I saw all those gifts, and that was a wonderful surprise.

The next day, we went to my uncle's house. Here another interesting thing happened. We ate something that I had never eaten before: turkey! Yes, that was my first time to eat turkey and it was super delicious. I can't really describe the taste. It is like a mix of two kinds of meat, chicken and

beef. Also, we ate it for one week because it was a really big turkey.

The most interesting thing happened on the day after Thanksgiving. It was Black Friday and all stores offered their customers special low prices. I bought many useful things like a TV, a camera, a new phone, clothes, etc. On Black Friday, I spent approximately \$1400 and that really made me crazy. That is what my teacher talked about. She said, "On Black Friday, they are just going to take your money." That is really true!

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*That is what my teacher talked about. She said, "On Black Friday, they are just going to take your money." That is really true!*

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## Even the Police Are Nice on Thanksgiving Day

**Sheng Ji, 3C**

This was my first Thanksgiving vacation since I came to the U.S. My friends and I had been discussing how to spend it even a few weeks before it came. Since everything seemed to be on sale these days, we didn't want to miss this good chance. Finally, we decided to go shopping at one of the outlets that were not too far from where we were living.

On the first day of my Thanksgiving vacation, we drove to San Marco because we heard there was a huge outlet with hundreds of shops. We started out at 10 a.m. and we expected to arrive about noon. But we were so excited that we were speeding without knowing it. That was a big mistake because we were soon stopped by a policeman.

Luckily, because it was Thanksgiving and because we were international students, the policemen just gave us a warning and told us to slow down. We arrived at the outlet a little later than we had planned. It was so crowded that we couldn't find a space to park. We had to drive around for almost 20 minutes before we found a spot. Then we began our big shopping journey. We spent a lot of money even though everything was cheaper than usual. I bought five pants, six T-shirts, two coats, three pairs of shoes and some socks for myself, and two scarves for my mom as gifts. We left the outlet at 8 p.m. We all felt tired but very content. It was such a wonderful shopping experience and I hope I can go back there one more time in my next Thanksgiving vacation.

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*We were soon stopped by a policeman. Luckily, because it was Thanksgiving Day and because we were international students, the policemen just gave us a warning and told us to slow down.*

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## Arabic Thanksgiving

Ali Alqahtani, 3D

My Thanksgiving Day was really interesting even though I am an international student in the United States. First of all, my friends and I met early that day in our apartment. Then, we ate the most delicious turkey on Thanksgiving Day. My friend, Ahmed, had never cooked turkey, so he cooked it with Arabic spices, and it was really fantastic, as Ahmed's American friend said. He said that he loved Arabic Thanksgiving Day! Also, he said that Arabic turkey was better than his American turkey, so he was really happy with us.

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*My friend, Ahmed, had never cooked turkey, so he cooked it with Arabic spices, and it was really fantastic, as Ahmed's American friend said.*

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After that, we went to an exciting party. The party was so crowded that night, and we met other American guys who are students at the University of Houston. It was one of the happiest days I ever had in the United States.

## Korean Thanksgiving

Hana Jeon, 3D

In Korea, we have Thanksgiving Day, too, but it is not an important holiday, so people spend the time just as they do on normal days. A few days ago, however, I experienced for the first time an American Thanksgiving holiday. It was so sweet and I will never forget it. My Korean friend invited me to a

Thanksgiving party in her house. It was not really far from my house. It just took 30 minutes to get there and eleven of my Korean friends were there. I ate a lot of delicious food at my friend's party, such as Japanese food called *onigiri*, BBQ ribs, fresh salad with my favorite dressing, and a traditional Korean food called *kimchi*. I ate many things that I had never tried before. Even when I was full, I continued to eat until all the food was gone! However, the most important thing for me was the sales on Black Friday the next day. I went to an outlet and to the Galleria with my best friend. There were great deals, so I bought many things, such as shoes, earrings, jeans, and a jacket. Actually I'm a shopaholic, so it was a really wonderful day for me. If I hadn't come to America, I wouldn't have had the experience. I had thought that there was nothing special about the Thanksgiving holiday in America, but I was wrong. It was much much more exciting than I had expected.

## Crazy Black Friday!

Faisal Alotaibi, 3C

On Black Friday I did many things. First of all, I went shopping at an outlet shop. I bought a lot of clothes and shoes on sale. It was the first time that I saw what people do on Black Friday, and my friend and I spent more than five hours shopping. The next day I went to the Galleria and bought headphones and an iPad, which was on sale. It was very crowded in the store because of the discounts. I spent \$800 that day! After that, I went with my friends to an Arabic restaurant and ate a lot of delicious food such as lamb, rice, chicken and salad. Finally, that day ended quickly, and it was one of the most wonderful days in my life.

## A Crazy Experience

Hussam Almusabbihi, 3D

I had my first wonderful Black Friday in the United States. First, my friends and I decided to go shopping on Black Friday because shopping is cheaper on this day. We went to an outlet mall. We decided to go early because everybody said it would be crazy and crowded, and it was! I bought some clothing for the winter. They were cheaper than on other days. It was a crazy experience because everybody was shopping and there were long lines outside the stores.

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*After shopping I couldn't find my car in the parking lot because there were so many cars there and it was dark.*

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On Saturday I met my friends in their house and we cooked some Arabic food, rice and chicken, together. After that, we had a small party. At night we decided to go out to have fun. First, we went to an Arabic night club to eat and smoke hookah. After that, we went to an American night club and we danced like crazy. In sum, Thanksgiving weekend was an unbelievable and unforgettable experience in my life.

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*According to the National Retail Federation., Thanksgiving spending this year reached a record \$52.4 billion and a record 226 million consumers shopped in stores and online between Thursday and Sunday.*

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# Thanksgiving Away from Houston

## Thanksgiving on Wheels

**Talha Kabasakal, 3D**

I had a fantastic road trip across America during the Thanksgiving holiday. It was very long but awesome. I went with a group that drove from Houston to Arizona on Tuesday evening. We did not stay too long there and drove immediately to Los Angeles. We visited Hollywood, Santa Monica, and Beverly Hills. When I was in Los Angeles, I realized that it was the most beautiful city in the U.S that I had ever seen. Our second stop was the Grand Canyon in Arizona. We walked on the skywalk which was a glass platform over the canyon. I was scared and excited because I was walking at over 4,000 feet in the air. After that, we traveled around the Grand Canyon and took a lot of photos. The canyons were amazing because they were so deep and high. Our last stop was Las Vegas. It was a city where nights are brighter than days because of countless lights everywhere. A lot of hotels, towers, and casinos make it more beautiful. I went to the top of the highest tower in Las Vegas and took some photos there. After that we toured the city at night. Then we were very tired and we had to drive thousands of miles back to

Houston. I could not sleep in the car because it was not comfortable, and it was difficult to ride for over twenty-four hours. Finally, we came back and I went to bed immediately. I had seen three states and a lot of cities during this trip. It made me happy and gave me a wonderful experience.

## Thanksgiving on Wings

**Ahmed Alshammasi, 3C**

I had an amazing Thanksgiving holiday. First of all, my cousin and I flew to Michigan to spend the holiday with my uncle there. When we arrived at the Detroit airport, we took a taxi to Lansing because my uncle was living there. When we arrived at his wonderful house, he welcomed us and showed us our rooms. After that we went out with my uncle to see the city. While we were walking around Lansing, I felt like this was the first time I visited America because everything was so different from Houston. After a long day around Lansing, my uncle suggested that we go to Chicago on Black Friday. On our way to Chicago, my uncle called the Hilton Chicago to make a reservation. We arrived in Chicago at 8 p.m. and we had dinner at The Cheesecake Factory. Then we went to sleep because we knew the next morning was a big day.

We woke up at 7 a.m. next morning, had breakfast, and then went to Willis Tower, the tallest building in North America. After that, we went to an outlet mall and my uncle gave me money to buy clothes and some other things that I liked. Finally, we went back to Michigan and spent the night there because our flight was on the following morning. I will always remember my first Thanksgiving Holiday.

## Thanksgiving at Sea

**Chia-Hsin Kuo, 3C**

It was the first Thanksgiving holiday of my life. My cousin, whom I had not seen for twenty years, came to Houston with her boyfriend from New York. We went to a restaurant called Tokyo One. We ate king crabs, ice cream and sushi. Then, we went shopping at Macy's. Then we decided to go on a boat ride at Clear Lake. Unluckily, the engine was broken, so we went to see a beautiful light show at Moody Gardens. We walked about in the Gardens and saw millions of colored lights in many shapes such as castles, monkeys, and flowers. On Friday, my uncle and aunt prepared a turkey, sweet potato, and corn. Now we still have a lot of food in our fridge!





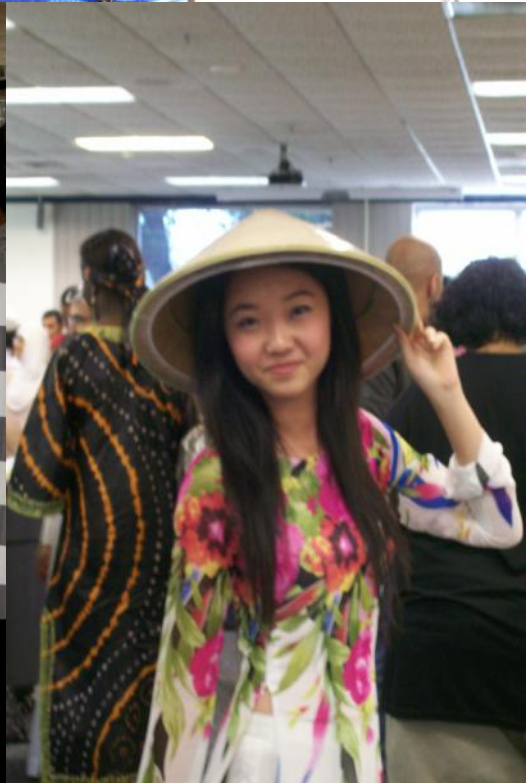


**FRIENDS FROM ALL FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD**



# CULTURE FESTIVAL FALL 09





**HALLOWEEN "JACK O' LANTERNS"**



**SPORTS TOURNAMENT DAY**



**A TURKEY FOR THANKSGIVING**



**EXPERIENCING THE RENAISSANCE**



**RIVERWALK IN SAN ANTONIO**



## Volunteering at KUHF

### A Day at KUHF

**Kathy Najafi**

KUHF is an independent news source for people living in and around Houston. The station broadcasts international, national, regional and local news and special programs from NPR, BBC and American Public Media.

Additionally, it informs its readers of the weather and traffic. Like all public radios, it is dependent upon its listeners in the community to donate money and help support the station.

On October 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 6C and 6D became the first group of LCC students to ever participate in KUHF's fundraising event! Though our students were not really sure what they had gotten themselves into, they soon found themselves talking over the phone and gathering important information from listeners who had called in to donate money. While at the studio, our hard-working level 6 students were well fed with fresh fruit, chips, popcorn, cold drinks and dinner!!!

"It was my first experience to volunteer collecting pledges from donors. Now, I am thinking about volunteering again for non-profit

organizations and charity to satisfy my conscience," said Husain Al-Haboubi, one of the LCC students taking part in the fundraising event.

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*"It was my first experience to volunteer collecting pledges from donors. Now, I am thinking about volunteering again for non-profit organizations and charity to satisfy my conscience."*

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### A Day at the MFAH

**Hussain Alhashim, 1A**

It was a fun day. I went with my class to the MFAH (Museum of Fine Arts in Houston) in the afternoon. It was a good museum. I saw a lot paintings. There was a teacher. She talked about a painting. The teacher gave me some paper and told me to write about any painting I liked. I walked about in the museum to look for an interesting painting. I found it at last but I did not write too much about it. Instead, I chose to go round to look at things. At 5 pm, we left the museum. What a great day!

## Visiting the MFAH

### I Like the MFAH

**Faleh Aldossary, 1A**

My classmates and I went to the MFAH. This fine arts museum was beautiful. It was big, quiet, and interesting. The museum had Egyptian art. The art was interesting. We saw many great paintings. We were happy. The museum is near the zoo. I liked the MFAH. The museum trip was very fun and interesting.

### My Free Time

**Abdulrahman Almowaraie, 1A**

In my free time, I like to do many things with my friends at the LCC. I like to go to the gym with them. I like to go to the movies. I like to cook dinner and invite my friends to come and enjoy it with me. I also like to listen to music, to relax, and to watch TV. I like to go to the zoo with my friends, too. And of course I like to go shopping. I like to go with my class to restaurants and try different foods. I like play games on the computer with my friends. And most of all, I like to go on field trips with my friends. I like to take part in all activities that the LCC and the teachers organize. I'm happy when I have my LCC friends with me.

# Adapting to New Surroundings

*My parents will be proud of me when they see that their son can now stand on his own two feet without help from them anymore.*

## I Can Now Stand on My Own Feet

**Apivit Saibandith, 5F**

When I lived in Thailand, my life was so simple, but after I came to the United States, my life completely changed, especially in regard to transportation, food, and responsibility.

First, when I lived in Thailand, I always used a bus or motorcycle to go everywhere because my hometown is very small. I could go to any place in a short period of time. However, when I came to Houston, I couldn't do that anymore because this city is too big for me to go somewhere without a car. The size of Houston is a lot bigger than my hometown. Therefore, it took me a long time to adjust to my life in Houston. However, the good thing about transportation in the United States is that the price of a car is much lower than in my country, so I can buy a good quality car at a lower price here.

Second, the food in Thailand is completely different from the food in the United States. In Thailand, we eat rice as a main course at every meal, but in the United States, many people eat lot of junk food such as Macdonald's, Whataburger, and Burger King. This made me feel sick the first time I came to Houston because my body wasn't used to it. It was difficult for me to digest a lot of meat and bread. However, it was a good thing for me to try new foods because I think that to live is to experience, so that we will have something to talk about when we get old.

Finally, the biggest difference for me when I moved from Thailand to Houston is about my responsibility. I used to have my mother do things for me, but not anymore. I need to clean my room, wash dishes, fix my cars, and do laundry by myself. All those things have made me grow up a lot. For me, this is the best experience I have ever had. My parents will be proud of me when they see that their son can now stand on his own two feet without help from them anymore.

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## I'm More Mature Than Before

**Azzah Alghamdi, 5F**

When I was in my country, I didn't do anything to help my family besides maybe cleaning the house. They did everything for me such as cooking, cleaning, paying the bills, and shopping. I also had a driver to drive me everywhere I wanted, so I didn't need to learn to drive. Also, in my country, we used to have a maid to help us with the housework. Now I have to do everything by myself. This is the first difference.

The second difference is about the schools. All the schools in Saudi Arabia are separate---girls with girls and boys with boys. Also, in our schools in Saudi Arabia, we were not allowed to choose which subjects to take. Actually, there was no choice at all and we have to take all the subjects. By contrast, U.S. schools are mixed, and all of them can choose the subjects they want to study. They aren't forced to take subjects they don't want. That system is good because it helps students improve what they are good at, which is better than making them take a lot of subjects they don't like and make them confused in the future.

Before coming to the U.S., I was a shy person and scared of being alone, but now I have the courage to live in a city of strange people, with no one I know who can help me, far away from home, all by myself. Now there is no family to depend on. I am now the one who is cooking, and my cooking is very good. If I hadn't come to the U.S., I would never have believed that I can cook. Also, I go shopping with my friends now. It's a fun thing I didn't know before. Shopping is a good way to have fun or to relax. In short, I have experienced how to handle my life all by myself in an unfamiliar environment and that has made me more mature.

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*I am getting to know new cultures and different opinions as well as how to deal with people depending on their way of thinking.*

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## My Attitudes About the U.S. Have Changed

Tung Thanh Lu, 5E

I used to think that it would be hard for me to change my attitudes. However, I have been studying in the U.S. for six months, and I have recognized that people can easily change their attitudes when they live in other cultures or countries. The longer you stay in a new country, the more your attitudes will change.

The first and also the major change in my mind is my thinking about Americans. Before I came here, I had thought that the U.S. was a dangerous country in which many bad people lived. They all had their own guns and were ready to rob me. Even if they didn't have guns, they were taller and stronger than I was, so they could beat me easily. However, now that I'm living here, I have realized that the Americans are very nice and polite. They often smile and ask some polite questions that make me feel I have known them for a long time although I do not know anything about them. Therefore, my negative thinking on this point has disappeared.

The second change in my attitude after coming here is about transportation. In my country, most people use their own means of transportation, but they do not follow the traffic rules seriously. For example, in my country, people try to ride faster when they see the red light, and they laugh at someone who stops at the red light. Consequently, when in my country, I often violated traffic rules because I did not want others to laugh at me. In contrast, the law in the U.S is very strict. If you do not follow it, you will get a big problem, especially for me, who is an international student. I can be kicked out of this country if I cause a serious accident by violating the rules. Therefore, I have changed my attitude when driving. Now I always follow traffic rules very seriously.



## **I'm Happy in Houston**

**Xueying Amber Hu, 5B**

I am a student from Chongqing, China. I was born in this city and raised by its food and water. Therefore, I love Chinese food very much. When I first came to the United States, I missed my hometown food. For days, I felt very miserable because I was busy with my studies at the University of Houston and did not have time to cook my favorite Chinese food. However, I was not miserable for too long because I soon discovered that there are so many good Asian restaurants here. Now, finding Chinese food in Houston is no more a problem for me because there are Chinese restaurants almost everywhere in this American city. I especially enjoy the hot and spicy water-boiled pork with vegetables, the twice-cooked sliced pork, and the tomato egg soup in these restaurants. Even more wonderful than that is the fact that whenever I feel tired with Chinese food and want to try some exotic foods, I can easily find them in the various Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese restaurants, all of which are just round the corner! I feel happy that I have chosen to live and study in Houston!

The second thing about Houston that makes me feel happy is that my hometown Chongqing and Houston have very similar weather. To tell you the truth, my skin is very sensitive to dry weather, and if the dry weather persists, my skin will itch and I will have to scratch it and make long red markings in my skin. Luckily, like in Chongqing, the weather in Houston is humid and this humidity is good for my skin. What is more, the summer weather lasts as long in Houston as in my city and this allows me to wear beautiful skirts and dresses for a long time before the winter arrives.

The last thing about Houston that makes me feel happy is that I have so many new friends here. They care a lot for me, and always stand by my side to support me whenever I need help. You know that Houston is a very big city and if you don't have a car, it's like you don't have legs and you can't go anywhere. I am learning to drive but do not have a car yet and it's not easy for me to go shopping. Luckily, I have my friends, so that whenever I need to buy some daily food and necessities, they will drive me to the store. Also, when I feel sad, they are always there to talk to me and to play with me. When it's my birthday or my friends', we always gather somewhere and talk and eat and play games. Thanks to my new friends, ever since I came to Houston, I've never felt bored even for one day.

## **We've Learned Not Just English!**

**Irede Lima, 5B**

I never thought that the LCC was an interesting and amazing place. I just knew that it is the best place to learn English because it has the best teachers and the best program of English. In fact, this was the only reason that I chose it. However, after spending three months at the LCC, I have now discovered that not only is the LCC the best place to learn English, but also it is a very interesting and amazing place.

The LCC is interesting and amazing because of its students. At the LCC, there are students from many different countries such as Malta, Japan, Saudi Arabia, etc. Some students are from countries I had never heard of before I came to the LCC such as Honduras, which is located in the heart of Central America. The fact that the students are from different countries and speak different languages has a two-fold effect on us. On the one hand, it sometimes gives us headaches. This is particularly true in our first few weeks here. As we are from different countries and different cultures, we did not know how to deal with each other because the ways we act and think were so different. For this reason, in our first few weeks, we had to be very careful when we talked with each other because we knew that what seems normal to one may be disrespectful to others. On the other hand, the fact that the students are from different countries and speak different languages gives us a lot of fun. First, because we are from different countries with different cultures, we can hear on our way to class, during break time, and sometimes even during class, many different languages such as French, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, etc. What is fun here is that we are all friends and yet we sometimes cannot understand what our friends are saying! And if we all talk at the same time in our different languages, you can imagine how much fun that can be!

To sum up, I can say that my experience with the LCC has been extremely interesting and amazing. We first came here with the only purpose of studying English grammar, writing, listening, and speaking, but we ended up learning much more than that: We have learned that coming into contact with people from different countries, cultures, and languages can cause us a lot of headaches; but we have also learned that it can be a lot of fun, too.





# I Apologize to You, Dat

**Is there anyone who has never made any mistakes in life? Nobody is perfect enough to be a good person every time and everywhere.**

---

**Nhu (Jojo) Hoang, 4A**



**I**s there anyone who has never made any mistakes in life? Nobody is perfect enough to be a good person every time and everywhere.

Five years ago I was a naughty girl. My mom wanted me to be a good student but everything was not that simple. I had many friends. I usually forgot to do homework, and I always made fun of my teachers. My friend and I were a popular group in our school. Students and teachers knew us because of some scandals we had caused. My mom was really upset when she saw me hang out every day with these friends. She tried to stop me and control me, but she understood that at my age, students were naughty. I remember she always told me, “You don’t need to get high grades. I just want you to be my lovely daughter, listen to me and go back to your normal life like before”. I didn’t care about what she said, and I turned my back on her.

One day at the end of the semester, one of my friends, Dat – he was also my ex-boyfriend’s best friend – had a conflict with some boys in another group at school. Our group was very angry and wanted to give the boys in the other group a lesson. At that time, my ex-boyfriend was a member of our group.

*“But everything was too late....Dat is in heaven now. I know he can hear what I want to say, and he will be proud of me when he sees that I am changing to be a new girl. My life will go on, but I will never forget him. I know that everything is too late now and that there is really no need for it, but I still want to say, “I apologize to you, Dat”.*”

He came from a rich family and so he didn’t care about anything in his life. He asked the whole group to prepare for the fighting day because he wanted to protect his friend Dat.

My teacher felt that something was happening to her students, but she didn’t know what the problem was. She tried to ask me. She wanted me to share with her, but I decided to keep it secret until the day we finished our final exams. My group fought with the other group. All of them were very violent, and we were surrounded by a mob. Suddenly, my ex-boyfriend ran away to escape from the riot. One guy had seen that, and he sped forward to catch my ex-boyfriend. As the guy had a knife in his hand, Dat, fearing for my ex-boyfriend’s life, rushed after him to stop him. When realizing that someone was about to attack him from behind, the guy turned round and his knife went into Dat’s chest. The fight immediately came to an end and everybody ran away, leaving Dat behind on the road bleeding.

After that day, my mom didn’t say anything about my problem. She just came into my room and looked around in silence. She saw me crying

alone. She could feel what I felt. She hugged me in her arms gently. I was ashamed when I looked into her eyes. Then she drove me to school so that I could say good bye to my friends and my teachers. We also went to Dat's house to visit his family. Although I didn't do anything wrong, I still felt guilty when I kept our group's plan a secret. It was so painful when I saw

my ex-boyfriend and Dat's mom at the police station. But everything was too late.

What I learned from this experience was never to lose yourself because of any friends. Always listen to your mom because she is the only person who will be beside you when you are in trouble. Also, think carefully about what you want to do, and think about the people around you.

Be responsible for what you do. Dat is in heaven now. I know he can hear what I want to say, and he will be proud of me when he sees that I am changing to be a new girl. My life will go on, but I will never forget him. I know that everything is too late now and that there is really no need for it, but I still want to say, "I apologize to you, Dat".

#### FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW

Fifty Years from now, Serena (Meng) Zhang, 4E: "When I am old, I will tell my grandchildren I had nice teachers and classmates from all over the world. I will tell them that my memories of the LCC are full of laughter. After I started studying in the LCC, my English improved greatly. Even after only one semester, I was not afraid of speaking English to native speakers."

Fifty Years from now, Rachel (Yi) Xin, 4F: "When I am old, I will tell my grandchildren all the things that happened this semester. If I still remember, I will tell them that during my first three months in Houston, I made many friends even though we came from different countries. We tried our best to learn English together so that we could understand each other better. I'll tell them that my English improved because I took classes at the LCC."

Fifty years from now, Karman (Jingshu) Lu, 4E: When I become an old woman, I will still remember this fall in the United States because it was my first time to live in a foreign country and begin my independent life without assistance from my friends and family. I have had some problems during these three months. For instance, I cried many times because I was homesick, and my mobile phone was stolen. Nevertheless, my overcoming all of the difficulties made my mother and me feel that I have grown up. In addition, I had a lot of chances to talk with many people coming from different countries, and my opinions about the world were changed. Also, before this fall I had never wanted to live in America because I could not bring my mother, who has poor English skills, to live with me here. However, now I think I will bring her to the LCC!

# The Color of Time

# The Smell of Time

# The Sound of Time

## Street Scene in Early Morning

Ming Kuang (Kimi), 5A

Last Sunday, I got up at 6 o'clock, which was earlier than usual. When I looked outside the window, I saw that the street in front of my house was very beautiful at this time of the day. On the following days, I also got up as early to find out if the street was still as beautiful. It always is.

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*Half of the street is in the shadow of the houses. The other half is bathed in the sunshine*

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First of all, the sun is rising at 6 o'clock. Half of the street is in the shadow of the houses. The other half is bathed in the sunshine, which is warm and which is lighting up the world. At this early time the street is silent and the only sound that can be heard is the birds' singing. There are several squirrels climbing up and down the trees. The grass in the morning seems greener than in the

afternoon.

Second, there are many students going to classes at 6 o'clock. Some of them are eating their breakfast while on their way to school. Some are listening to music or the news from their Walkmans. And some are chatting happily with their friends on the phone on the way to school. Some boys and girls are coming back from the morning exercise, with bottles of water in their hands and towels around their necks. They are all very energetic.

I always like to look at the street in front of my house early in the morning because the freshness of the morning air, the lively animals, and the young energetic people always fill me with enthusiasm for the day ahead of me.



## Street Scene at Night

Karl Lennox Houlevigüe, 5B

Pau is a small town in southern France. All my life, I have lived in this small town and in a small house that is the closest to the biggest street of the town, l'Avenue Edouard VII. This street is part of me. I know it perfectly and have always been fascinated by it: A long avenue, with big trees on each side, and high white buildings, and the smell of the bakery, and the fresh air coming from the Pyrenees. When I was a little boy, I used to walk along the street and watch the seasons change its colors and moods. Thus, the street is cloaked in green, blue, and grey in the spring, yellow in the summer, red in the fall, and white in the winter. Its mood changes with the seasons, too. In the summer, the street is alive, active, and noisy with a lot of people and vehicles; in the winter, it becomes calm and quiet, especially when the snow starts falling and people keep themselves indoors and children do not have to go to school.

I am now a grown-up and as such I have go to work and gone are the

idle days when I could whistle my life away while watching the street change its colors with the seasons. Gone, too, are many other things. But one thing remains unchanged, and it is the fascination that the street holds for me. In the evening, when I am home from work, I still like to watch the street. However, I like to watch it most at around midnight. At this time of the night, the noisy street transforms itself into a tranquil place. In this perfect tranquility, many things stand out. The colors of the night street become more vivid. I can see the yellow light streaming out from my neighbors' houses, the red glaring headlights of the passing cars or the glowing blue and purple signs on the roof of the local restaurant. Even the cold air blowing through the small town from the Pyrenees smells fresher in the deep night. And of course, there is also that shrill singing of the crickets and cicadas in the summer months and the slow lazy hooting of the mountain owls that comes from and goes back into the dark depths of the winter nights.



#### FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW

Fifty years from now, Sophie (Anh Van) Tu, 4E: When I have children, I will tell them about the first time I went to the United States. The thing that I will remember most is the class 4E. Although it was my first class, I felt comfortable, and it was easy for me to make friends with other classmates. Moreover, I will never forget the time I lived away from my parents. When I lived alone, I had to be responsible for myself. Even though I was still like a child, I learned how to take care of myself and even of other people.

# A Fascinating Swamp Tour in Louisiana

**Abdullah Demet, 4A**

I was having a rough time after I finished my relationship with my fiancée. I was suffering and I wasn't happy. I needed something to change my mood and to calm my mind. Erica, my brother's wife, recommended that we go on a swamp tour in Louisiana. There is one of the largest rivers of the world in Louisiana. It is the Mississippi river. As Erica said, it would be a great experience to be in the largest swamp of North America.

My brother found the website of the Swamp Center of Louisiana. We called them and made a reservation for six people for the swamp tour. Then, we called Erica's father to tell him about our surprise for them. When he heard our offer, he was very happy and told my brother he had wanted to take a tour like that for a long time. Last Saturday morning we rented

a minivan for seven people. Erica, Eren and I began to travel to Louisiana. However, we stopped in Conroe because we had to pick up Erica's parents, John and Jody, and also Erica's brother, Alex, over there. When we arrived at the meeting point, Erica's family was waiting for us in their car in the parking lot of HEB supermarket. They got in the car, and together we went to Louisiana for the swamp tour.



When the car was approaching the arrival point on the highway, I was captivated by the view and the large size of the swamp. At that time, I decided I did not want to forget that view, and I took a photo of it. When we arrived at the swamp tour center, we went into the building. It was a kind of museum with various things and photos related to the swamp exhibited in the building.

I had an opportunity to read and learn something about the swamp, especially about the formation of the swamp in the last ten thousand years. While we were walking in the building, a man came to us. He introduced himself to us and told us he was our guide, and he was going to take us to the swamp 15 minutes later. Additionally, he recommended that we go to toilet before the tour because the tour was going to take three hours. Fifteen minutes later, we went to meet the tour guide outside the building. He was waiting for us with his cheerful smiles.

We got into a metal boat that had a one-hundred-and-ten horse-power marine engine. He worked the engine, and the swamp tour finally began. He was steering the

boat fast through the natural channels of the swamp. After we went out from the canals, the guide who was also the captain of the boat stopped the boat in the middle of the river. Suddenly another boat came out of a channel of the swamp and approached the side of our boat. The two guides talked to each other. After that, one of them began to make a speech about the formation of the swamp and the creatures living in the swamp.

The tour took three hours. During the tour, I saw alligators, some different kinds of birds, and other forms of wild life in the swamp. The time passed so fast. I hadn't felt so good for a long time. It was one of the most fascinating experiences in my life. I am thankful to Erica and my brother.

I perceived once more that life is beautiful and keeps going despite everything. We might be in inexpressible suffering, failure or bankruptcy. It doesn't matter what condition we are in. We have got to cling to life tenaciously and never give up trying to be happy. As long as we try to do better, we will be amply rewarded.

#### FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW

Fifty years from now, Tiffany (Chih-hsuan) Chao, 4E: I will tell my grandchildren that their grandmother learned a variety of things this semester. Not only have I learned English skills, but I have also learned about the different cultures of my classmates. We have different customs, foods, and experiences. I improved my grammar, listening, speaking, and writing in just two months. In addition, my classmates are awesome, and I hope we can be classmates next semester.

Fifty years from now, Deng (Yun) Deng, 4E: When I am 73 years old, I will tell my little grandchildren about my wonderful time in the United States. Because I wanted a degree, I went to America to study. When I got to my English class, my teachers were friendly, and I made a lot of friends. When I had problems, they always helped me. Although I was alone in a foreign country, I felt warmth from my teachers and new friends.

# The Little Sticky Note

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Jassim Mustafa Jaf, 5A

I have carefully kept the little sticky note that Lois gave me in the same place where I keep my most important documents. To me, it is no more just a little sticky note, but has come to symbolize the encouragement that I have received and will receive.



When I was in my country, I was very careful not to make mistakes in my conversations with others because I knew very clearly the consequences of these kinds of mistakes. In most cases, I was laughed at. In some cases, I was even unkindly held up to public ridicule. The experience had been so unpleasant that when I arrived in the U.S., I tried hard not to make any such mistakes in my verbal communication with the Americans because if even my friends showed me no mercy, I had no reason to believe that these strangers would be less merciless. However, Allah always has a way to comfort us even in the most unlikely situations.

On my first day at the University of Houston, my friend Aram and I walked into the LCC office and there we met an employee whose name I later found out was Lois. When I started to explain to her that I hoped the LCC would help me improve my conversation skills, I made that kind of mistake that I dreaded most, for, instead of saying “conversation”, I had a slip of the tongue and said instead “conservation”! I panicked when I realized the mistake and for a second or two, I involuntarily relived the unpleasant and bitter experience I had been through many times before back in my country. I even said to myself, “Now! Now! She is going to pounce on my slip of the tongue and laugh at me in front of all the people in this office!”

But nothing like that happened. Instead, Lois just tilted her head a little forward and to one side, all the time looking at me with her gentle eyes to show me that she was attentively listening to me. When I tried to apologize for the mistake, she told me very gently and politely so as not to hurt my feelings that she understood perfectly what I meant to say. Then, she took out a sticky note and wrote down the two words “conversation” and “conservation” and spent the next several minutes to clearly explain to me the meanings of each. That she did not make fun of me surprised me, but what surprised me even more was that while all this was happening, she didn’t even once turn to look at the other two or three young ladies who were also employees in the office, as if I had never made any mistake at all! Before Aram and I left, she gave me the sticky note, wished the two of us a good day, and assured us that we would enjoy our study at the LCC.

Three months have passed since that day at the LCC office, and in these three months, I have carefully kept the little sticky note that Lois gave me in the same place where I keep my most important documents. To me, it is no more just a little sticky note, but has come to symbolize the encouragement that I have received and will receive in my effort to become a fluent English speaker.



## DAVE'S PAGE

### LCC Fall 2011 Sports Tournament Winners

The LCC Class Photo was 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 - Shuailin Liu, 2nd - Christian Nobila Kouada, 3rd - Rodrigo Silva Maeda. BILLIARDS: 1st - Yang Hu, 2nd - Ilyasse Leassafri. TABLE TENNIS: 1st - Mohammad Aljadaly, 2nd - Mokhlis Alatawashi.



## 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.

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***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 the SEVIS Compliance Coordinator Sam Long. We want to help and make sure you are successful in your studies at the LCC.***

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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 Sam or Dave 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.

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 the SEVIS Compliance Coordinator, Sam Long.

Other visa categories such as J-1, B1 or B-2, A-1, L-2, etc., have their own rules for students in these categories.

## 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.

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### 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, Brad Powell, 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

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*The Editor of Voices Thong Dang wishes to thank everyone who contributed articles and photographs to this issue.*

The University of Houston is  
an EO/AA institution



## Student Activities in the Fall Semester 2011

Our first trip was to downtown Houston, going up in a high-rise building for the view, then exploring and eating in the Houston underground tunnel system. New students and returning students from summer got to know each other, too.

A few weeks after that 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 – Shuailin Liu, 2nd – Christian Nobila Kouada, 3d – Rodrigo Silva Maeda. **Billiards:** 1st – Yang Hu, 2nd – Ilyasse Leassafri. **Table Tennis:** 1st – Mohammad Aljadaly, 2nd – Mokhlis Alatawashi.

On Saturday, November 5th, 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. There are many shops and places to eat. Different musical groups and other performers such as jugglers and dancers entertained us. 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. Because it was a rainy day, we had the Festival inside. 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 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 14th, 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.

