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ESL NEWSLETTER

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Changes in the ESL Program

By Magda Kozicka

This semester has brought changes to the ESL program; one of them is the opportunity to learn in an online environment. Two classes have an online component. ESL 064, which is Reading I, and ESL 074, Reading II.

The online class is every Friday; this means students don't have to come to school on this day. They are given assignments instead, which have to be done by Monday. The homework that is sent to the teachers through the internet is graded depending on the teachers' criteria. These grades can be checked by students through the internet.

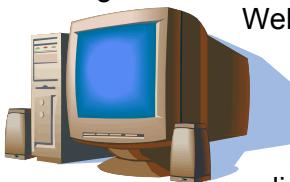
The online class includes segments in which students do their assignments. For Reading II class, there is a discussion board in WebCT. Through the

WebCT, students can read the assignments the teacher gives and then there is a discussion board where

students have to write their opinions about some topic and respond to other classmates. Reading I also has this section for the online class, but it also has Plato where students have to read 3 texts and answer questions relating to the readings. They also have vocabulary tests there.

The online part is treated like a separate class, and students that are taking the online course get one credit more for it. It means they receive 5 credits for the whole class instead of 4 as is usual for ESL classes. The online class also has a separate name. For instance, Reading II is called ESL 074, and the online part has an "A" added to it, so it is ESL 074A.

Although the online part is treated separately, it doesn't mean that students don't



have to take it. On the contrary, they have to do that. For example, when they want to take ESL 064, which is Reading I, they also need to take ESL 064A, too. The classes are co-requisites.

According to Reading II teacher, Lisa Miotto, online classes give two main benefits for ESL students. They give students flexibility with their time and help with getting used to computers. The other online teacher, Chris Anderson, from Reading I, agrees with that. "Students can complete the work when and where it is the most convenient for them," she says. She also adds that the online class helps students interacting with one another.

Besides advantages, teachers also see disadvantages of the online class. "Online teaching can reduce flexibility for teachers," Miotto says. Teachers have to plan carefully in advance, and they have to sacrifice a lot of time to connect topics from the face-to-face class with the online part. She also adds that it is hard for students that don't have internet at home to do online assignments. They have to adjust their time to computer lab hours on campus. Fortunately, the ESL program added availability to use computers at Black Hawk College even on Sundays, which was not possible before, to do online assignments.



Besides problems for teachers and students without access to internet at home, there are also other disadvantages that Chris Anderson sees. First of all, to work in the online class, students need to know their password and ID. For Reading II class, the students have different IDs for each section, so they have to remember three of them, and it seems to be a problem for some of the

students. The other disadvantage that Reading I teacher sees relates to Plato, one section of the online class. Plato is accessible for all BHC students, not only ESL students, and sometimes it is too busy, so students can't do their assignments on time.

Not only teachers but also students see advantages and disadvantages of this change. Many students are very content to have the opportunity they received. "I heard many classes are taught online lately, so this is a good way for us to prepare for future academic classes," Snezana Todorovic, Reading II student said. She continued, "I also like to send messages." Like Snezana, many students like talking with other students through discussion board, too. "We can compare our opinions," Nari Ota, a student in Reading I said. "It helps me with my opinion."

Like I mentioned before, students also see disadvantages of the online part of class. Lillian Lara, Reading II student, says that sometimes instructions given on WebCT are

doing is that contact that assignments from online part of the class take too much time to do. She ends her statement, "I am not sure if I like online class or not." There are also other students that think like Lilly. One of them is Luis Durán, Reading I student. He says that he doesn't have any benefits from online class, "I am learning more from doing homework by hand," he adds.

The online part of ESL classes is a novelty. This semester, the ESL program has only two classes that include online: ESL 064, and ESL 074 which are Reading I and Reading II. The next semester will bring two other online classes. One of them is ESL 071 - Grammar II; the other one is ESL 065 which is Writing I. Every semester there will be added new online classes to the program, so within a year and a half, all ESL classes will have an online co-requisite.



A Story about the Old Bridge

By Snežana Todorović

The Old Bridge.....the pride and the sorrow of my beautiful town of Mostar, in the small republic Bosnia and Herzegovina, south-eastern Europe. Its name is rooted in the word "mostar" which means "a guardian of a bridge."



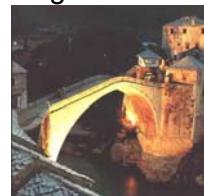
When I was a child, I used to spend all my days playing around my Old Bridge. Whenever I was happy or sad, I was there, dealing with my feelings sitting on its walls. For me, the Old Bridge represents much more than just a bridge. It represents the part of my life, the part when I was carefree and happy.

Listed as a UNESCO world heritage sight, The Old Bridge is considered one of the greatest historical monuments of the



Balkans. Its building was ordered by Sultan Suleiman The Magnificent, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. It was built in the 15th century by the best architect of that time. The stone that was used for the building was a limestone that had exceptional physical and chemical qualities. The stones were so smooth that there was no need for a binding material. The stones were attached one to another by iron clamps, and then filled with lead. It was the first construction of that kind in the world. Legend says that, when its building was over, the architect who was in charge was run out of the town because not even he was sure that the bridge would stand. If the bridge had crashed down, he would have been punished for the failure.

But, a miracle happened, and the beautiful bridge was there. For the next 500 years, it was an object of admiration by people coming from both the east and the west parts of the world. For centuries, it was a link between east and west, south and north, many cultures and peoples. Poets have been coming from all over the world to admire and write rhymes about its beauties. "The Old Bridge, once visited can never be erased in someone's memory" – said a famous poet of that time.



The Old Bridge joined two shores of the town. That single arch was the pride of our people.

For a long time, it was the heart and the soul of our people. We had three different nationalities living together, joined by the same culture and historical past. The Old Bridge meant the same for all of us, regardless of whether we were Muslims, Catholics or Orthodox. It meant the possibility of living together in harmony. It didn't join just two shores; it also joined the people of different nationalities. It was a part of our heritage.

One way the Bridge united the different people was the diving competition that lasted for several hundred years. Once a year, on July 27, men from all over the country came to our town to dive from the Old Bridge, just to show their courage. It took a lot of courage to dive from the Bridge, because it was 30 meters high. The best diver earned a valuable prize, but most of all, he earned the respect of everyone. He was considered a hero. Diving from The Old Bridge was also a part of our heritage.



During the last 20 years ethnic tensions arose between people and one day a group of nationalists decided that we couldn't live together anymore. The Bridge survived centuries, but it couldn't survive the barbarism of the nationalist passions that racked Bosnia. In 1993, Mostar's Catholics attacked their Muslim neighbors and turned their guns on the Bridge. When the arch was destroyed, nothing was the same anymore. I remember that day like it was yesterday...November 9, 1993... When I saw the Bridge falling down into the river, I felt like someone tore a part of me. The part of me where I was happy, carefree and innocent. To illustrate how I felt then, I will say that when I heard that my house was destroyed I was sad, but when I saw my Bridge falling down, I felt like someone beloved to me had died. In the years that came after, I asked a lot of my friends how they felt when they heard about the destruction of our bridge. One of them, my good friend, Elvir Lovic, once a professional soccer player and today a worker in the meat industry in Moline, said, "That

moment will always stay in my mind. I felt like they killed the best part of my life. In the next 12 years, that feeling turned out to be the truth. Now I'm sure that I'll never be as happy as I was back then and back there. Ever since then, there is some strange emptiness in my soul that can't be erased anymore." I know exactly what he was talking about.

Suddenly, I became aware of all the evil that was happening in my surroundings. That was the day when I decided to leave. I left to Serbia, where I lived for 12 years. So, I left, but I never lost hope. They couldn't crush the hope that better days would come.

The war had to come to its end. Trying to recover their memories and heal their souls, my people made

a decision to reconstruct our Bridge. Not to build another, but to bring back the same one, made of the



same stone blocks, pulled out of the river. That way we wanted to send a message to all those destructive minds that their intentions to separate us, people of different nationalities, but the same cultural past, were in vain. It meant to give a new life to our Old Bridge. It took seven years for the reconstruction to be finished.

The project was financed by the World Bank and many other sponsors. Turkey was



one of them. They built it the first time, so they wanted to participate in its reconstruction because of historical reasons. UNESCO took a leading role with responsibility for cultural integrity and architectural authenticity.

Its opening was held on July 23, 2004. Thousands of people came from the farthest places in the world just to see the Bridge, standing again. Representatives of the most important world institutions came to share our victory over destructive powers. Citizens of Mostar, who are spread all around the world, came to our town to see the miracle, hoping that the bridge would bring them back that part of lost identity that crumbled down together with our Bridge.

Rivers of tears were cried when 1,000 children from Mostar came into the Bridge singing a very famous song, "Don't let the war

happen ever again." No matter the hatred from the past, that moment was a moment of regretting and forgiving for all of us. So, our Bridge fulfilled its purpose: It unified us, Muslims, Croats, and Serbs again, like one good father unifies his children after a fight and gave us hope for better tomorrow.



A LOVELY WORLD

By Lynn Kuan

In the end of April last year, I got a call from my ex-husband. He cried when he talked to me

 because his younger brother, Valentino, who lived alone in LA, died two months before. No one knew the bad news because Valentino was an isolated person, and he did not like to talk with others, including his family members. I used to contact him about once a month. Sometimes, when I could not reach him, I would leave a message.

Valentino's accident happened in his back yard. He tried to trim an avocado tree, which had obstructed his view from his living room window. Because he was a photographer, he liked to catch the beautiful view from the living room. His house was on a little hill, so he could see the LA city view, which he had mentioned to me was the reason why he bought the nice house. When he tried to trim the tree, he fell down the hill, and nobody knew.

After a week, a gardener who worked for a neighbor found Valentino's body and called a policeman. Valentino was a lonely person, so the policeman could not get any information about his family. One of Valentino's friends knew about my son, who lives in the U.S., but the friend didn't know where my son lived.

After two months, finally, one of the volunteers in Taiwan Tzu Chi Foundation sent the bad news to my ex-husband.

Tzu Chi is a Buddhist foundation which was established in 1966, and its headquarters is in Taiwan. The leader of Tzu Chi is a Buddhist nun called Cheng Yen. Today this non-profit organization has over four million members and has thousands of volunteers in the world. Also, it owns many service centers in the world, including around 70 centers in the U.S.

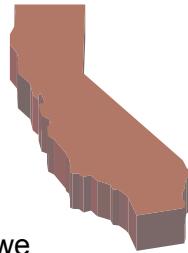
The volunteers provided help in many areas for my family. When my husband, my son and I accompanied my ex-husband to L.A., we had no idea what to do, including how to contact the coroner's office and how to prepare the funeral. Two of the volunteers, Brother Wang and his wife Sister Tsai, were in charge of helping in our event. Because Valentino's body had decayed, we still needed to wait for the autopsy.

The next week, my husband went back to Iowa for his new job in Burlington, and I still stayed in LA with my ex-husband and my son. The volunteers arranged for me to live in the foundation right away; therefore, I did not have to stay in the same hotel as my ex-husband. While we were waiting for the result of coroner's autopsy, we had nothing to do. Brother Wang invited us to join the events of the foundation.

We went to downtown L.A. on Tuesday and Thursday evening together with forty volunteers, and we prepared vegetarian burgers for homeless people. The two places we went, which were two blocks near the homeless shelter, stank. No one complained about the places; instead, we just tried to make around four hundred tasty burgers and separated in two stations for the homeless. According to Brother Wang, the foundation has supported the "Free Food for Homeless Program" in downtown, LA for 2 years and 3 months. "Each time we need around 40 – 100 volunteers in two places," he said. The volunteers are needed to grill, prepare drinks and to make burgers. They come from different locations in LA every Tuesday and Thursday. Most of them spend one hour to reach the sites. They do not mind the stinking environment, even on rainy days. The day I was helping, the volunteers were happy to talk with the people who were waiting for free burgers and hot drinks. I am so proud of the volunteers who are from my country and that they choose to volunteer in this country.



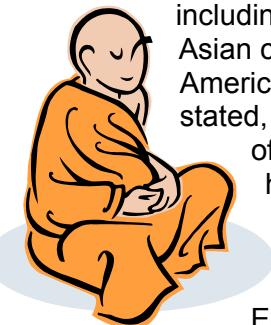
During the third week, I was lucky to volunteer at a free clinic. It was a big and important resource for those who don't have insurance and money to see doctors when they are sick. Brother Wang was grateful to drive me there, and I saw hundreds of volunteers



wearing the same “blue-sky-and-white-clouds” uniforms. They served thousands of people for free at the clinic: dispensing medication, free food and free haircuts, the latter which surprised me because many volunteers are professional hair stylists. In addition, the Foundation prepared 400 hundred “household-cleaning” packages for those unfortunate people.

I was assigned to the kitchen as a dish washer. I felt a little bit frustrated because those people who came over for the free clinic did not like vegetarian food. They wasted a lot of food that was donated by many farms and volunteers; however, it was a wonderful day for me because I had the opportunity to help people who needed help.

According to Brother Wang, the Foundation has done many things in many countries



including China, many other Asian countries, Africa, Latin America....etc. Brother Wang stated, ‘We ‘spread the Seeds of Love in the World’ by helping people as much as we can. We also follow four missions: Charity, Medicine, Education, and Culture. In

these ways, we are doing a network of universal love.’ The Foundation members have also helped in building schools in Mexico and in the Dominican Republic. Tzu Chi members built houses for the Chinese who lost their houses because of the Yellow River flood, and around the world, the Foundation has donated books for schools that needed books for the students and supported low income families, including the children’s education.

I am so proud of the volunteers because those poor people can find what true love is! No wonder, it is a Buddhist foundation whose leader is a nun, who has much love for this world. She has led her volunteers to do many things in the world. Most importantly, they are not concerned about people’s race, religion, age, and gender. They only ask one thing, “Who needs help?” I love the organization so much that I changed my future plan. I had planned to study accounting, in which I have had a great deal of experience, but my interest changed. I wish one day to be a nurse and some day to serve in this Foundation as a permanent volunteer.

In order to understand more about the Tzu Chi Foundation, I interviewed Brother Wang by

phone. I waited two weeks to interview him because he was so busy in the Foundation. He has been a volunteer for around 15 years. “I volunteer,” he said, “because Master Cheng Yen, the leader of Tzu Chi Foundation, has love and compassion and has influenced me to be a volunteer. All my friends know that I used to be a Catholic, but now I am a volunteer in Tzu Chi Foundation. Also, I am a Buddhist and a vegetarian. I was taught by the master to help people who need help. I was taught knowing how to share my love with people. Especially, now that I live abroad, I love to help others.”

I then asked Brother Wang, “In your opinion, what are the differences between Tzu Chi Foundation and other foundations?”

“No, don’t ask me this question because it is too sensitive,” he replied. Then he continued, “But I would tell you that the most important thing is the leader. Master Cheng Yen is the best person I know. She is a nun, but she doesn’t only stay in the temple chanting; she also teaches all the volunteers to share their love with others. The characteristics of the leaders will show in the qualities of a foundation or an organization. She teaches us that a modern Buddhist should know how to share love and compassion. Also, action. Action is most important. We should know how to help people.”



Tzu Chi International Disaster Relief in El Salvador



To Learn from Japanese Houses

By Naomi Iizuka

“Because of a big oven in my kitchen, I can roast the turkey for my family on Thanksgiving Day,” a Japanese wife who is living in an imported house from America said to a reporter on TV. Upon watching this TV program, I could not stop feeling something was awry as the woman is not Christian, and of

course, Thanksgiving Day is not a holiday in Japan. I know the woman yearned for Western style life too much, so she lost the traditional Japanese way of life. It is necessity to adopt useful new styles to our own style for the progress of life; in fact, the Japanese economy developed orientating itself to Western culture. However, I never think that adapting to a new culture means losing our own character or confusing the traditional and the new culture.



What do you think is the real meaning of adjusting, and how can we succeed to conform to other cultures ideally? I found the answer to these questions from my familiar place, which is the Japanese house. The mode of recent Japanese houses can be a model of ideal culture adaptation because it respects both characters: traditional and Western. The Japanese house tells us that before receiving new cultures, we should know the good points of traditional Japanese culture because we are only influenced by other cultures if we do not know ourselves. For this reason, I would like you to know the enchantment of traditional Japanese house before learning the successful adjustment. Sometimes, in the U.S., I read criticism about Japanese houses, but I think Japanese houses are not less comfortable than American houses. I would like you to be more familiar with Japanese houses than the authors of the critical articles, so please throw away your stereotypes about Japanese houses.



The traditional Japanese house is made of wood, which is used for the frame and paper. But, don't imagine the paper like a notebook because the Japanese paper, which is used for doors and windows, is especially strong. Unlike the American house, the hallway

encloses all rooms and separates the rooms from the outside. Just as American people lay carpets on the floors, so Japanese people lay the floor with "tatami" which is made of rush: a type of tall grass that grows in water. One tatami mat measures about 3'x 6', and people described the size of room by its number of tatami. Also, each room is separated by "shoji" or "fusuma," which are reasons that the building materials are paper. Shoji is a sliding lattice door, used for doorways, divisions, and windows of the room. The frames and lattices are made of wood and pasted with white Japanese paper. Because the light can go through white Japanese paper to inside of the room, people enjoy the soft light even when shoji is closed. On the other hand, fusuma is also a sliding door, but it is used only for the division of the room or the door of the closet. A thick paper is glued on top of a Japanese paper lining, and beautiful designs and pictures painted on this paper create a superb room interior. In contrast from shoji, fusuma blocks lights. Masako Yoshizawa, a Japanese student in Black Hawk College, said, "My grandmother's house is a large traditional Japanese house. The house has ten rooms in all, and the largest room has 23 tatami. On fusuma, mountains and other natural scenes were painted."



Then, after the Japanese culture was influenced by Western culture, the style of the house changed. However, Japanese people did not lose respect for their traditional house because they know how comfortable and artistic the Japanese house is. The Japanese people respect both the new culture and their own traditional culture, and they demonstrate this respect in the new house style. For example, in the past, the kitchen was one of the most private rooms in the house, so it was hidden and located in an inner place; however, recently, Japanese people put the kitchen next to the dining or living room. Also, the kitchen is now open, which is similar to American houses, so a mother can talk to her children who are playing in the living room while she is cooking in the kitchen. Because tatami is

softer than flooring, some parents prepare the tatami room for a playing room of their children. In addition, even though the new style house has a shower similar to American styles, the architects did not throw away the old style of taking a bath: washing the body outside of the bathtub before taking a hot bath. Japanese people pick up the useful points of the new culture, so they can combine the new and the traditional style to their houses.

In conclusion, if people try to adapt to new cultures, they should review their traditional cultures before allowing them to be swallowed up by new cultures. If you have a chance to adapt to new cultures, I would like you to think about your own traditional cultures again. If you can succeed adapting the new culture, you can also keep your original culture because to have both makes you unique.



U. S. A. Expectations

By Sabath Velasquez

The U.S.A. is a world of opportunities for many people around the world. A person can buy a big house, buy a luxury car, and make a lot money in a very short time and one can even improve one's life very quickly. Many people say that. People come to the U.S.A. with the illusion of having a better life. Our expectations about this country are wrong because we have wrong ideas in our countries; ideas that are portrayed from our own people who came here before and then return briefly to their homeland. They never mention the obstacles that could disappoint us. These people give us an excellent picture about the life in the U.S., but after we arrive here, we see some differences.

When I was in my country, Honduras, I heard some members of my family, friends and some other people say that anyone can improve his/her life in a short time by moving to the U.S. People have more opportunities to get a better job, earn a lot of money, and buy luxury items. When I arrived in Los Angeles, I found these kinds of things were different. To begin, L.A. is a big city, and I didn't have a car. For this reason, I spent almost three months finding a job by bus. My first job was in a textile factory where the conditions were not really great. The temperature in California is very hot and in the summer time, the temperature outside went up to 107 F., but always inside the plant it increased 10 degrees more. I usually worked from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. I could not save money because I earned five dollars and twenty-five cents per hour. With the money I earned, I spent it to help my family to pay bills such as the rent for our apartment. In L.A. the rent of the apartment is so expensive. The monthly payment is more than six hundred dollars. Furthermore, with this salary, it was difficult to buy a house or buy any car. It's very complicated to keep a good balance with a salary like this when there are so many bills to pay. On the other hand, when I was in my country, I studied hard to graduate as an accountant and even did additional training as a computer systems operator. My self-esteem went down when I arrived in the U.S. as I could not speak English well; for this reason, I could not find a job according to my experiences.



When an immigrant arrives in this country, some things make us disappointed and other things make us surprised. One of the big problems that we need to confront is how to communicate with Americans or people who speak English. For example, José, who is from Guatemala, is working at the Tyson Foods Company and has been living in East Moline for three years. He said, "It's difficult to start any conversation with Americans because I can not speak English well." He also remarked that he has bad pronunciation, and all the time he depends on a translator because he does not have time to go to

school. He has a big family who are depending of him. In addition, Lem, who is from Vietnam, is working in the same company, and he has been living in Davenport for more than four years. He said, "When I arrived in the United States, I could not make any conversation with Americans because I could not speak and understand English at all. Right now, I can understand much better than before, but my pronunciation is very limited. I can not improve it because I must work to support my own family. I have a strenuous job where every worker here uses plenty of energy every hour." In another instance, Snezanan Todorovic, an international student from Herzegovina, Bosnia who lives in Moline, had better experience than her expectation about the United States. She said, "In Bosnia, it is very hard to afford good education. If you want to go to college, you have to be an excellent student, or you must have a lot of money for paying your own tutorial, but it was surprising to discover that actually in this country there are good opportunities for education to everyone who wants to study, so I took the chance. Now I think that my dream about being a translator can come true some day."

When we were in our country, we created our own picture about the United States from some movies or people who visited there before. Some things are similar in our countries, but others are so different. Silvia Leibanos from



Mexico who is living in Moline and has been visiting her family for school vacation said, "The picture that I got about this country is different than I expected. People in my country are more together and charitable. It's very usual to trust your neighbor and vice versa because all the neighbors know each other. For example, I never refused to take care the house of the person who lived close to mine if they were afraid that a robber might get to the house. I got the keys to the house and I could get in any time that I needed to check it out. In the U.S., I don't know my neighbor who lives next to me because people here do not have time to make friends. People have different job schedules, and people move on from one city to another very often." Leibanos continued, "Also I expected to see many people walking on the street or taking the bus like I saw in the American movies, but everything was so different. Very few people walk on the street or take the bus."

Another example of different expectations comes from Erika, from El Salvador, who is studying at Black Hawk College to be a microcomputer support specialist. She said, "In my country drivers provoked several accidents everyday because they not respect the speed limit and stop sign. When I arrived to Quad Cities, I expected to see people driving very crazy, especially teenagers, as I see in American movies, but it was surprising when I saw most people are educated, careful drivers."

The impression of the life in United States is not the same as we see when we arrive here. We immigrate to this country with the illusion to improve our life. Some things disappoint us and others help us to improve.



MY NEW WORLD AND ITS SURPRISES

By Esso Tcheouafei

One year after my graduation, I left Togo, my home country for the U.S.A. with an Associate's Degree in Accounting and Business Administration. My goal was to continue my studies as far as possible when I was in America. When I came here, I immediately got information from my friends about the colleges in the Quad Cities, so I decided to go to Black Hawk College.



First, I went with my friend Anastasia to talk to Counselor Cristina Greene. In a welcoming way, she introduced me to Black Hawk College, and she explained to me what I needed to do. When I was at Black Hawk College, I learned that this community college has two areas or types of education. The first division is the community section; this area has subsections such as Adult Education, GED, ESL, and citizenship. The second division is for academic purposes for a career program or the transfer program which prepares students to attend the university.

That day I was surprised to hear that I had to take a test before everything. In Togo we usually don't take tests before entering a class. We just bring our transcript. Then Christina made an appointment with the Outreach Center for my test. I took two tests with Julie Centeno, who is

one the teachers at the Outreach Center; the result of the test showed I would be in Level 5. I still have in my mind how friendly Julie treated me that day. Indeed, at the end of my test, she gave me a ride because I did not have a ride, and it was also too late to take the bus. I asked myself, "What is level 5?" This level is one of the ESL levels; indeed the ESL program has six levels which are: New Arrivals, level 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 5+. The New Arrival level is for those are learning English for the first time. Those students usually learn how to write. The Level 1 is for those who know how to write, but usually do not know about English or know very little bit about English. The levels 2, 3, and 4 are for those who already have learned English. The 5 and 5+ is those who have a pretty good knowledge about English. After the level 5 +, according to Connie Kappas, another ESL instructor, the students have almost all the key grammar to continue on the main campus.

A few days after the beginning of the class, I realized that we would study many things: grammar, reading, speaking, writing and sometimes general culture. Connie Kappas, my level 5 teacher, said: "I concentrate on four

skills for level 5 and 5+ which are reading, grammar, pronunciation and writing, but the stress is on reading and grammar." She also told me about what she expects from her level 5

students: "I want my students to be little bit more confident and more prepared, ready to take the next step in life."

This system with different centers which work with the main campus is new for me, so I tried to know more how this system works. Then I asked her how the different centers work with and are related to the BHC main campus. She said, "The teachers work together with the counselors to prepare students for the main campus where they can achieve their academic classes or all other academic goals.

At level 5 and now on the main campus, I am surprised with the classroom instruction. Indeed my classroom at level 5 was neat and nice with seven tables. The total number of students was 17, in contrast to my class in Togo which is a hall with 600 seats, but the students exceed 1,500 for the same class. At



Connie Kappas, ESL Instructor & Esoo



level 5, the class is more relaxed; students can have coffee and cookies if they want.

I asked Connie about the different nationalities she usually

She said that the

two largest

groups are

Spanish and

West African;

she has also

students from Eastern Europe, India, and

Vietnam. My last question for Connie was:

How do you feel about the ESL Program? She answered, "I'm proud about the Program which is very strong. I'm also proud of all our students."

Since I came to the U.S.A., I have learned something new every day, and I want to let people know what I learned here in America and what happens in Togo. The Black Hawk College newsletter is one opportunity for me and my classmates to share what we know. I encourage all my classmates and all international students to participate also in activities like The International Festival. For American students, I tell them to feel free to approach international students, especially me. I am ready to share my experience.



Difficulties in America

By María Ortiz

In 1995, I came to the United States with my oldest sister from a small city in Michoacán,

Mexico. My parents were already here along with my two other brothers. My parents wanted us to be together, so they sent for us. I was very happy when I found out that I was coming here to the United States, but I did not realize what immigrants have to go through when they come here to the United States.

I found out that for an immigrant, life in America is difficult for several reasons. Some immigrants don't speak English. For example, it was very difficult for me to communicate with my computer teacher. If I had a question, I could not ask my teacher for help since I did not know how to speak English. I would just sit there staring at my computer unable to ask the teacher for help. I struggled through that class. Many times I thought about not attending that



class, but I did not want to give up, so I attended that class until the semester was over. From that point on, I thought about how hard my life was going to be since I could not communicate with my teacher.

Some of my friend's stories will help you understand why life in America can be difficult for an immigrant. I interviewed Nena, my classmate from Bosnia. "It was difficult for me to pronounce the English words," she said. She learned English in her home country, Bosnia, but when she came here to the United States, she was afraid to talk because of her pronunciation. Now that she has taken pronunciation classes, she realizes that people learn by speaking.

Secondly, leaving family behind can be quite difficult for an immigrant. In my case, my immediate family was already here in the U.S., but before I came to the U.S., I stayed with my grandparents for quite sometime. My mother had to leave us with my grandparents because my parents did not have enough money to buy all the visas to immigrate to the U.S. My mother said that it was difficult for her to leave her two daughters behind, but it was the only way to make it here in the U.S. "I felt lonely because I had never left my two daughters," she said. She left hoping to see us soon. Three years passed, and still there were no signs of us being together. For me, leaving my grandparents was heart breaking. I was leaving two great people who had been like my parents for three years. Since I did not know if one day I would see them, I thought about not coming to the U.S., but I had to choose between being with my grandparents or coming here to the United States to reunite with my parents. To know if other people had to leave their family behind, I interviewed some of my classmates.

Nena said that the hardest thing she had to go through was to leave her father in Bosnia. She said that she hopes to see her father again, but she knows it would be difficult since its hard to obtain a visa, so she does not know when or even if one day she will see him. "I hope to see him again someday, that would be my greatest joy", she said.

Lynn, a Taiwanese student says that she came here to the United States four and a half years ago to be with her husband. She



said it was difficult to leave mother and father behind, but she had to follow her husband, so she came here to the United States with the dream of returning one day to her home country, Taiwan, to see her family again.

Thirdly, finding a job can be quite challenging for an immigrant. For example, when I was 20 years old, I wanted to work in a bank, but since I did not speak any English, I had to find a job which did not require any English. I found a job at a warehouse. There I had to print labels for packages that would have to be shipped out. No English was required in this job, so I was able to perform my job without speaking English. Lynn also struggled to find a job. She said that when she came here to the United States, she wanted to find a job in an office, but since she did not



know much English, she had to find a job somewhere else. "I found a job at a restaurant," she said where she only had to use basic language skills.

In conclusion, many people come here to the United States for many reasons, not knowing how difficult life can be for an immigrant. I hope that my classmates will someday look back on their experiences they had when they came to the United States, and see that they are not the only ones that have to go through all these difficulties.



My Precious Memory of Marycrest International University

By Masako Yoshizawa

Marycrest International University (MIU) was located in Davenport, Iowa. A long time ago, MIU was only a women's university, and there were a few majors such as nursing and education. The nursing course was very famous and popular at MIU, so many senior nurses in the Quad Cities graduated from MIU. Then, MIU became coed in 1969. In 1990, a Japanese university, Teikyo, bought out MIU, and some Japanese students came to study there, but after twelve years, unfortunately MIU closed in



May 2002. I was one of the students studying at MIU. During winter vacation, we went back to Japan. One day, my friend who stayed in the MIU called me and informed about MIU's situation. Of course I was really shocked because I loved MIU.



Mr. Suzuki, who was my former MIU advisor, stated that despite the accreditation difficulties, there was one main reason why MIU closed. The reason was due to financial problems. Teikyo University tried to keep MIU for twelve years, but the board of directors gave up because money ran out for the administration of MIU. According to Suzuki, "Part of the reason was because of the decreasing students enrollment." Again, Teikyo University could not keep MIU anymore because of financial difficulties, so they needed to depend on income from MIU students. Unfortunately, the number of MIU students dwindled away.

I interviewed Naomi Iizuka and Hiroko Ikeda who were MIU students. As for Naomi, when she had gone back to Japan on her winter vacation, she got email from her Japanese friend who had stayed in MIU, and at



that time, she knew that MIU would be closed. She thought it was her friend's joke, but it was true. On one hand, she was shocked and

worried about the parting with her friends; on the other hand, she felt relief at the news because she had a reason for leaving the useless environment of studying at a school that knew it was struggling. Now, she is glad that she entered ESL program in BHC and has taken instructive English classes. As for Hiroko, she had stayed in a dorm at MIU during winter vacation, and the president informed her about the closing. She was really surprised and taken aback, and she said, "I did not know what I should do after the closing." She had lot of interesting experiences at MIU because her American friends were very active people, and they were interested in international students, so they always invited her to go parties or bars. She learned a lot about American culture and a lot of English. She is also now studying here at BHC.

Now part of the former university is a home for seniors. I interviewed to Mrs. Sister Judith

who is director at the Marycrest Senior Center. The Marycrest Senior Center contains a brick building on the 20-acre former college campus. This campus is filled with mature hardwoods and ornamental trees. Also, there is a beautiful overlook of the Mississippi River. The typical apartment floor plans are studio, one bedroom, and two bedrooms. A combination of sidewalks and elevators convey residents and guests to upper living levels with panoramic views. The apartments are carpeted and the kitchen and the bath are tiled; also the apartments include a washer, a dryer, a range with front controls, a refrigerator, dishwasher, garbage disposal and new kitchen cabinets. Residents must put the password in the entrance, and there are grab bars in the hallways, central air conditioning, gas heat, and digital TV jacks. Extended basic cable service is discounted to residents. It is good for residents, and they can live very comfortably.

The Peterson Mansion Community Center, which is the one of the former MIU buildings, offers a full-service kitchen and dining area and social rooms with marble fireplaces. A computer learning center and beauty salon are accessible by elevator. All residents can use the campus grounds. Also, residents can park their cars at the parking area, and they can use City-Bus. There is City-Bus stops on 12th street, adjacent to the campus. Shopping is a short drive or bus ride away on West Locust Street.



Like my friend, Hiroko, I had many wonderful experiences at MIU, and I also appreciate my American friends who were students at MIU. I hope the residents there now feel comfortable with Marycrest senior center, and they can make a lot of wonderful memories there as I did when I was at Marycrest.



Exciting Mexican Festivals

By Laura Nuñez

Everyone loves to have fun, especially if they attend a festival. There are many different festivals that everyone celebrates all around the world. There are many other holidays that

we celebrate in Mexico, but they vary depending on the region or town in Mexico. We have religious festivals, the Day of the Dead and Souls, the Day of Our Race, The Day of the Child, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Labor Day, Constitution Day and other patriotic days, like Navy Day. We also celebrate special dates for the heroes in our nation that made a difference a long time ago. We also have other festivals on our beaches: music and dance festivals, fairs and the Autumn Equinox. Some states have festivals just to celebrate their state. In Mexico, there are more holidays to celebrate than here in the U.S. There's a saying that everyone knows, "You sleep during the day and use the night to party." Another one says, "Mexicans love to party any time of the year."

Following are some of the festivals that I enjoy during the entire year. These traditions we celebrate in the U.S. as well, so we don't lose these traditions. January 6th is the day when the three Wiseman come; they are just



like Santa Claus and that is Christmas day for Mexicans. We also gather around with family and friends to cut the King's Loaf, which contains three plastic dolls.

The King's Loaf is a round, doughnut-like cake decorated with fresh fruit and colors around it. Whoever gets the slice of the loaf with the dolls must host a party for everyone on February 2nd, Candlemass Day. This day is celebrated with dance, traditional food, and music to mark the passing of winter. We can celebrate at home with family members and close friends. In my hometown, we have a church with a big garden, and we have a big festival for everyone to go and celebrate together.

This next festival, Ash Wednesday, is one of the biggest festivals that is celebrated in late February and early March and is like Mardi gras. This festival is celebrated 46 days before Easter Sunday and is marked with parades, dancing, processions, food, fireworks, music and a 'good time.' This festival is especially big in Veracruz, La Paz, Mazatlán and Cozumel. One of the busiest times all over Mexico is during Holy Week from Ash Wednesday through the week after Easter Sunday. Everywhere you go, there will be processions, festivals, parties, fireworks and more! Most Mexicans take this day off work, and students

don't go to school, so you would expect to see more businesses.

Next is one of Mexico's most important events, which is El Día de la Independencia (Independence Day). This is celebrated all over Mexico on September 16th. From this event parties begin. At 11 pm, the President of the Republic shouts the Cry (El Grito) of "Viva Mexico" from the balcony of the National Palace. This event is televised and broadcast on radio to every corner of the nation. The Zócalo, a large town square, in Mexico City is one of the busiest places, and there's a lot of excitement. Next is the Cervantino Festival, which is throughout the first half of October in my home town, Guanajuato. The city has performances of artists from all over the world who gather in Guanajuato, one of Mexico's most attractive colonial cities, to celebrate. For this celebration, we used to go to my grandmother's house in front of which was a DJ and live music. That was a lot of fun. There were also people selling traditional fresh foods.

The 1st and 2nd of November, El Día de los

Muertos and All Saint's Day and All Souls (Day of the Dead) is another event. This honors all saints and people who died in



adulthood. In Mexico, they make the sugar candy skulls, skeletons and Pan de Muertos (bread of the Dead). Relatives of those whose friends and family members have died gather at cemeteries throughout Mexico, bringing bread, fruit and their decorated sugar skulls, along with their favorite food and music. I have good memories about this holiday because in school we used to do decorations and would have an alert with the pictures of our loved ones and decorated with colorful colors. I used to know how to make sugar skulls and other types of candies.

El Día de la Virgen Guadalupe: This holiday is one of our most important religious holidays of all the year. This day is marked by Mass and celebrations in honor of



Guadalupe, and Mexico's Patron Saint. One of the memories that I have is that I was dressed as a Mexican Indian at the company that my dad used to work for. They had a big mass for everyone, and everybody used to dress like this as well. I still dress like this here for the 12th of December at the church that I go to.

There is Las Posadas de Navidad- Nine days leading up to Christmas Day. Posadas are parties that take place throughout the nine days before Christmas Day. They re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for an inn. Local communities arrange for one of the local houses to be the inn that accepts them while local children travel from door-to-door in traditional costume, holding candles and singing traditional carols, requesting a place to stay. This tradition we celebrate here with our closest friends and family members. We also have traditional food, such as posole, tamales,



atole, and other traditional food. Then there is Christmas in Mexico. It starts around the 12th and continues right through until

early in their New Year on January 6th-Kings Day. Parties, celebrations and processions are evident everywhere you go. Mexicans love to party, and Christmas is a big event there. Most tourists spend Christmas here. Last but not least New Year's Ever, December 31st, Mexico City, Zócalo Square, becomes as lively just like the Independence Day.

These events are fun to attend, and I still remember the events that I used to attend when I was younger. Here in my community, we try to keep these traditions and teach others about these traditions.

Different Countries, Different School Look

By Song Moon

"Wow! A school girl who wears a uniform! She seems sexy to me," Peter Lee, one of my American friends, said. He graduated from Decorah High School in Iowa in 2002. So, he feels the Asian school look is mysterious. I suppose he is not the only American who thinks Asian uniforms are awesome.

However, many Korean students envy the American high school dress code because Korean high schools have too many rules for the student dress code including hair style, make up, and accessories.

For girls, high school students in Korea must cut their hair 1 inch below the ear, and they can not color their hair. Boys must cut hair to 0.5 inch length, and of course, no hair coloring. Furthermore, there are just two types of uniforms largely depending on a season, and schools even select the shoes which students should wear. Any accessories and make up are not permitted.

While, on the other hand, American high school dress codes



are not really strict. Bomie Kim, who has experienced going to a Korean high school, Myungji in Seoul, Korea, and an American high school, Miracosta in California, told me, "When I went to Miracosta, I thought American high schools didn't have any rules. Actually, there were some rules, but they didn't affect what I wanted to wear." I know she can't be representative at all, but this case shows how free American schools look in comparison to Korean schools.

The dress code at Riverdale High School in Illinois states, "Students will have the freedom of grooming and of dress if they are clothed from top of shoulders to mid-thigh and are wearing some sort of footwear, and as long as their appearance does not disrupt the educational process or present a health or safety hazard to the educational community." There is much more variety and liberty than in the Korean code, which has strict rules for the high school dress code.

"The principal did not really care what I was eager to put on. If students wanted to wear half shirts, tube tops or tank tops, we could do that, but clothing which exposed undergarments was prohibited," Molly Savage, who graduated from Annawan High School in 2001, said. She continued, "Also, I prefer American ways of dressing because I can express myself, and I like putting on different clothes."

However, Bomie Kim and Peter Lee have different ideas. When they went to high school,

every morning they suffered about what they would put on because they were teenagers who care about their look. Plus, they think uniforms are kind of neat clothes. So they prefer to be dressed in uniforms, but they think Korean ways of dressing in school are too severe.



Undoubtedly, both the American school look and the Korean school look have merits and demerits; Korean ways can give

advantages in terms of equality and unity, but they can't provide liberty of expression and variety of choice to teenagers; reversely, American ways can let students enjoy freedom and diversity even though they can't offer evenness and also collectiveness.

The different approaches to the dress code reflect the social values of each country. According to the values believed more essential by each society, students from both countries will experience different student life. Neither way is better; each is only different.



How War is Related to Resources

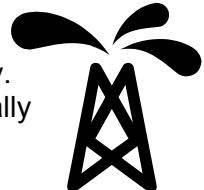
By Koffivi Avegnon

On March 19, 2003, United States invaded Iraq, a country far from the U. S. This operation is called "Iraqi Freedom." The US government states the purpose of the war is simply to free the Iraq people from Saddam Hussein's oppression. American soldiers are dying every day in this foreign country. If Saddam Hussein was aggressive to his



neighbors, why is United States more involved than other countries in that region? Is Hussein the only dictator who oppresses people? Beside the goals to free the Iraqis, I believe there are other purposes of the engagement of American soldiers in Iraq.

First of all, the prevailing idea is that American soldiers are still in Iraq, even after Hussein is captured, to maintain peace. My opinion, however, is that the luxurious resources called "black gold" is behind the decision to remain and stabilize the country. This precious resource, especially



around the Asian continent in Arabic countries, is attracting the most powerful country in the world. I asked my friend and classmate Essokilan Tcheouafei, a student from Togo in the ESL program, "What do you think is the reason that keeps American soldiers in Iraq after the U.S. Army arrested Saddam Hussein?" He said, "Politicians say that they are fighting in Iraq against terrorism, but many Americans think that one of the most important reasons is the oil located there."

Why are we spending money in Iraq while teachers are being laid off, and there is a lack of funding for education? What about health care and jobs for Americans? Are we fighting just for peace in Iraq? Beside the idea to maintain peace, the U.S. government says it is in Iraq to fight terrorism, yet if the U.S. is so concerned about terrorists, I don't understand why they have mainly focused on Iraq.

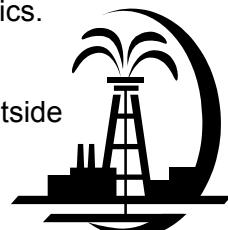
Iraq is not the only country where terrorists live. What about North Korea? What about in America itself? After September 11, we learned that there were terrorists based in the east and central countries of Africa. We have not invaded other countries. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has had people killed in his country using terrorist tactics.

Like Hussein, Mugabe is a dictator. Why doesn't the US government fight him? No outside country was involved in the fighting there except the British government, which still has ties to its former colony. If Zimbabwe had gold or oil in its land, would the US have ignored the murders and land takeovers? Once Hussein was captured, why were the troops not sent back home? To many people around the world, it appears the US government wants to set up new police force, re-educate the population to the "US style of government" in order to help the U.S. control the oil fields. Iraq certainly is not the only country that is inhabited by terrorists. If the US government controls or has a major influence on the new Iraqis government, then it will be easier to control the oil fields.

My neighbor, Marco Polo, a 50 year old, American with Italian ancestry, stated, "I

cannot believe the U.S. kills and injures children and destroys infrastructures if they don't have any 'outside' interest."

Maintaining peace, destroying Hussein, and fighting



terrorists are points that were and are raised to convince us to go and be at war. But are they profound enough to let our friends, sons, daughters, fathers, and mothers die out there every single day? Americans must wake up and express their opinion. Every one needs to be aware of the situation and underlying causes.



Dear Katty

By Katty Ankou

My name is Katty Ankou, and I'm a student in the ESL program at Black Hawk College. I came from the West part of Africa, Togo. Students in English 091 and the ESL program wrote me letters about their problems; my job is to give advice. I decided to write this column because my friends always come to me if they have problems and would like to hear someone's opinion.

Dear Katty:

I have a problem with my boyfriend and I need your advice. I left my mom's when I was 16 years old. At that time, I was staying with my sister. A few months before I turned 18, in September, I moved in with my boyfriend. Now I'm legally grown, and I can do more things now like living in my own apartment, getting a well-paying job and so on. The problem is that I want to move out and get my own place. I want a chance to be on my own; I want to know how it feels to actually be grown, to have a place where I can do what I want where I want it without anybody checking on me. Yes, my boyfriend checks behind me. He checks the phone, my purse, my book bag and even my clothes. What I need to do is to tell him that I want to move out. But every time we have this conversation, he thinks I don't want to be with him, or I'm trying to do something sneaky. How I can tell him I want to move out and get my own place without hurting his feeling or making him think that I don't want to be with him anymore.

Thanks,
Curious Kitten



Dear Curious Kitten:

I'm glad that you wrote to me about your problem. You should have stayed with your mother until you found a job and got to know your boyfriend better before you moved in with him. As for your boyfriend, maybe he checks behind you because he suspects that something is wrong; maybe your behavior toward him has changed, and since the only thing in your mind is to find a way to tell him that you want to move out without hurting his feelings, you haven't noticed yourself acting strangely. What you both should do is to talk about the situation and your feelings and start all over. However, if he checks behind you because he doesn't trust you, then your relation with him is not worth it.

Dear Katty:

I have a problem with people who make fun of others with disabilities. The reason why is I have a disability, and people make fun of me for no reason. I am blind in my left eye. I can hardly use my left hand, and my left leg is shorter than my right leg. I think that I am smart and can do things that other people can't do. Just because of the way I look, talk, and walk, people automatically assume that I am retarded or in special education. I try to ignore them because I know what is true about me. All of that anger builds up inside of me and I sometimes get mad easily. What can I do to stop this anger?

Sincerely,
Angry girl



Dear Angry girl:

I feel you shouldn't pay any attention to people making fun of you. They are the ones who should be talked to. They may like making you feeling angry. What I can say is try not to notice them, no matter what they are doing because you have something that they do not have -- a brain.

Dear Katty:

I really like my cat, but I have a cat allergy. Unfortunately, I have to limit the time I play with my sweet cat because I sneeze and my eyes itch.

How can I play with my cat all the time I want?

Truly,
Naomi



Dear Naomi:

I'm allergic to cats and dogs myself, and I didn't know how to treat it until I watched a commercial on the TV about allergy medicines. You should talk to a doctor and get a prescription. It is your cat, and you don't want to make him or her to feel abandoned.

Dear Katty:

I started school a month ago and it has already become a heavy load. I am a full-time student, and I work full time the days I don't have school. My time is spread very thin over a wide variety of tasks. I feel my schoolwork suffers because I don't have the time to give 100%. Instead, I spend most of my time trying to rush through things just to get them completed. Please help me find a way to manage my time to get the best quality in the shortest amount of time.

Sincerely,
Out of time



Dear Out of time:

To tell you the truth, I'm in the same situation. Only I'm a part-time student and work over fifty hours a week; it is not easy. The best I can say is we need to hold on and do our best right now. I use my free time to complete any homework I have left. I do not get out much because I can use that time to finish my assignments. If you have children who don't let you pay attention to your schoolwork, send them to your mother's house or have their father take them for couple of hours, so you can have some free time and finish your work.

Dear Katty:

I have a huge problem. I heard that this school has really bad air ventilation. I did not believe it at first, but everyone in all of my classes is sick, including me. There is pretty big rumor going around about the poor air quality, and I just wanted to know if that is true.

Thanks,
Stuffy nose



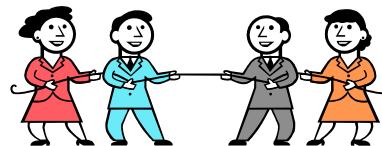
Dear Stuffy nose:

I sent an e-mail to Mr. Somers, Director of Facilities Management, about the bad air ventilation. He said that the rumors are untrue. The staff conducts periodic air quality surveys throughout the college.

Dear Katty:

Recently, I have found myself in a troubled situation. I have a best friend that I have known for years, Amanda. We have grown extremely close, and I see her as a sister. She is a little on the rebellious side. Within the past six months, I have made another friend, Heather. Heather is a very safe person, very by the book and very judgmental. Because Amanda is so insubordinate, Heather finds it hard to get along with Amanda. Also because Heather is so judgmental, she finds it hard to be in the same room with Amanda. I think their reasons for this conflict are very petty and basically unnecessary. I really like both of these girls, but it is so hard to have two friends that cannot get along. Am I being selfish or should I just get over it and realize that these two have clashing personalities and can never be friends?

Signed,
Troubles with friends



Dear Troubles with friends:

They can be friends. They don't have to have the same personalities to be friends. You can't say that you and Amanda or that you and Heather are friends because you have the same character as they do. Maybe they don't get along too well because they think you like one person better than the other, and they don't want to lose you as a friend. Give them an ultimatum. If they both want to your friends, they are going to have to put up with each other. If one of them can't get along with other, she is going to have to walk away because you can't break your friendship with your best friend if the other best friend can't get along.

Dear Katty:

I am concerned about the recent loss of jobs due to Eagle's and the Case plant closing. Other places are about to close; we have a big problem in the Quad Cities area. My question would be: how hard do you think it will be to find a job in the QCA and where would be a good place to start?

Thanks,
Mark Twain



Dear Mark Twain:

Maybe you should get a job as a writer!

Seriously, I looked for jobs in the Quad Cities for a year, and I did not find any. I went outside of the QCA, and in three weeks I found one at Muscatine. The only problem is one should have a car or a nice friend who works at or near the same. Team Staffing and Sedona, which are QCA companies, can help people find jobs that are near you. You should go see them or check out BHC's Job Placement Office.

Dear Katty,

I would like to know why Black Hawk College charges students so much for the parking lots. It seems like the college gives more parking passes than there are spaces,

and I also think that we should pay the ten dollars for a year and not for a semester. Other schools charge five dollars a year.

Signed:
Overcharged



Dear Overcharged,

I sent an e-mail to Mr. Bob Somers, and according to him, "BHC charges ten dollars per semester for parking in lots 1, 2 or 3 of the Moline campus. The fee is the smallest of all the colleges in the Quad City area. We charge a fee because these are the most heavily used lots and require the most repair and maintenance. The college is not allowed to budget for parking, only for building and salaries. Colleges in Illinois are left on their own for parking programs. A ten dollar parking fee only sounds like a great deal of money until one breaks it down. A semester is sixteen weeks long. That is .63 cents a week, or .13 cents a day. (That is .12 cent less than parking at the meters for an hour.). The ten dollars are used to repair, plow, light, and rebuilt the parking lots and roadways on the College. The fee is not new, just the collection method. The fee used to be taken from the students' auxiliary fee, and now it is only paid by people who drive."

I think he made his point, and .63 cents per week is not that much if you think about it. My advice to you is to start saving the .63 cents per week for the next semester.



Introducing...

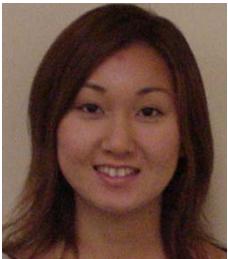
Laura Nuñez is a 19-year-old student from Mexico. She has been living in the U.S. for almost ten years. She likes to cook and get involved in the community. In the future, she plans to become a bilingual kindergarten teacher.



María Ortiz is a parent-to-be and expects her first baby in January. Her goal is to graduate from Western Illinois University and become a teacher. She is from Mexico and has lived in the U.S. for nine years.



Masako Yoshizawa is a 22-year-old student from Japan. She came to the U.S. four years ago. In her free time, she likes to hang out with her friends. In the future, she wants to get a Master's degree in English and work in the U.S.



Magdalena Kozicka likes to hang out with her friends and attend parties. Some day, she would like to become an accountant. She is 20 years old. She is from Poland, and she has been living in the U.S. for almost one year.



The Writers

Essokilana Tcheouafei comes from Togo.



He's been living here for more than one year. His hobbies are playing soccer and listening to music. He wants to continue studying business because he already earned an Associates Degree in Business in Togo.

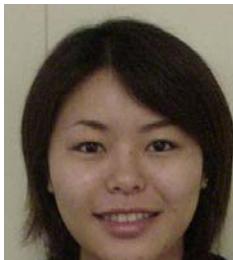
Koffi Avegnon is a 29-year-old student from Togo. He came to the U.S. in August 2002. Beside the fact that he works hard and goes to school at the same time, he always finds enough time to hang out with his friends. He plans to complete his academic courses and get a four year degree.



Snezana Todorovic is from Bosnia. She has been living in U.S. for six months. Her hobbies are reading and listening to music. She likes to spend her free time with her daughter and friends. In the future, she plans to become a professional translator for English and Bosnian.



Naomi Iizuka likes to watch movies and talk to friends. Her goal is to finish a university degree in the U.S., and her major will be biology. She is from Japan and has lived in the U.S. for four years.



Song Moon is from Korea, and has stayed in the U.S. for nine months. She likes to play piano and travel. She is returning to Korea after she finishes the ESL program. She will complete her university in Korea, majoring in business & administration.



Lynn Kuan is from Taiwan and has lived in the U.S. about five years. She likes cooking and traveling and will study nursing in the future.



Sabath Velasquez is from Honduras and has lived in the U.S. for five years. He likes playing games and listening to music. He will study computer science after he finishes the ESL program.

Katty Ankow comes from Togo. She has lived in the U.S. two and a half years with her family. She likes to read and listen to music. Some day she would like to have her bachelor's degree and eventually become a doctor.



Karen Hindhede is an English/ESL instructor. She likes to read, write, bike, and travel. Some day, she would like to learn Spanish.



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-- Karen Hindhede