

ESL Newsletter

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ESL NEWSLETTER

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In the Name of Technology!!!

By: Jean-Pierre Kankoe Folligah

Since the creation of the world, people's lives have changed due to scientific progress.



A few years ago, it took one to three months for a letter sent in Togo to reach America. Today, with the rapid development of communication infrastructures such as the Internet, this

transaction takes a few minutes to be completed. This fabulous progress is now extended to every sector of activity, such as schools, offices, and businesses. Thus, Black Hawk College takes the opportunity offered by the Internet to move ahead by adding online courses to its programs in order to help its students. The ESL Program Coordinator at BHC, Anne Bollati, was concerned about the students' success and their future, so she introduced an online component to the ESL Program for one reason. She said, "I added an online component to the program to prepare students to take online classes."

The ESL Program is an academic program which is designed to help international students who do not speak English fluently, and who want to improve their English ability and be part of American society. Since its creation in 1991, the program has offered many courses to its students, but these courses haven't had online components. Still, they are intensive, interesting and helpful. In addition, they assist the students in developing their grammatical, reading, speaking and writing skills. To attain this goal, students have the opportunity to choose between Intermediate Grammar, Reading, Writing, Listening/Speaking I, and Communication

Skills. After completing these courses successfully, the students can register for Advanced Reading, Writing, Grammar, or Oral Skills. At the end, the student who has completed all these courses graduates.

This "old" version of the ESL Program has been thriving. As a result, there were over 800 foreign students who graduated. They took great pride in doing it, and today what they feel is not regret, but a sentiment of a job well done and of gratitude.

The introduction of an online component to the ESL Program in 2005 constitutes a complement to the face-to-face classes and then brings a new change to the courses. Now with this program, students have to attend classes for four days from Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, they have the opportunity to come to the ESL Lab or to stay at home to do their online assignments.



This change is designed to help students not only to succeed at school, but also to deal with life realities. Anne Bollati said, "This change helps students to take different classes in their future. Everything in this country is computerized, so students need to be able to work with computers." Some students have similar vision as Anne about the program. For Kokou Djondo, a Togolese student in Writing II, "This change is good; it helps me to be familiarized with computers. Also that can help me take another class."



The new change offers a great variety of programs such as discussion board, Internet research and quizzes. It applies to all courses except Listening/Speaking I and II. Since its introduction, "People like it," said Ms. Bollati. She continued, "The students are complaining

about not typing quickly, so we offer them a three-day workshop practice with keyboarding and typing." All this effort is made to make it easier for students to work online without any problems. Unfortunately, some students still are having problem working online. This is the case of Yi Ping Wu who declared that, "Sometimes I can't log into WebCt. That really makes me mad. Other times I can just open one window but not more than one, but we need to read some comments from classmates. Most of the times we can just read one comment."

Anne Bollati is conscious about these problems encountered by students. She has done what she can to assist them. As she said, "The school has the lab opened on Sundays because students work on Saturdays and need Sunday to work on homework." With this schedule, students who have problems can come to BHC to work at the lab during the weekend. In spite of this effort, some students still are reluctant. This is noticeable through their reaction. Yi Ping Wu stated, "I am taking three classes this semester. Although doing homework is really helpful, unfortunately, I don't have time to finish all of it especially during weekends. Online assignments make me mad and upset because I cannot finish all of them. However, I really like the online assignments because they are more interesting than class courses."



As we know, every change in any domain of our life cannot be done without any difficulties. The ESL Program Coordinator in making this change to online classes has encountered some problems. "It was difficult to make a transition between the two systems. What to teach in online classes and face-to-



face classes was a problem. I have also had to learn how to be an online teacher," said Anne Bollati. Students also, due to the introduction of the online component, have

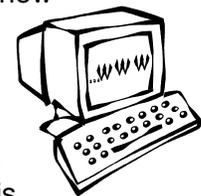
had their learning habits changed. Yi Ping Wu is pleading for a decrease in the amount of online assignments because she needs more time to review her homework and textbooks.

Now one year and half after the introduction of the online component to the ESL Program, its coordinator is feeling good

about this change because she sees that students express more and more themselves through the discussion board. In addition, she noticed that grammar activities can be boring, but with online class they are now easy to do. Despite the positive changes, as an experienced teacher, she declared that "computers cannot replace teachers."

Apart from the introduction of online component to the program, there are some other new changes to the program. The first one is the Junior High School and High School ESL Student Workshop. This workshop, which is the result of intense collaboration between the ESL Program Coordinator, Anne Bollati, and the ESL Special Program Coordinator Imelda Crinklaw, is designed to give the opportunity to parents and especially students to learn more about the ESL Program and to begin thinking about college as Anne Bollati said.

The second one is the Black Hawk College ESL Connection website that can be used as an important resource in classroom and as a link to communicate with ESL teachers. If you type www.bhcesl.blogspot.com in your browser, you will enter the magic and interesting world of Imelda Crinklaw who is in charge of this website. This ESL Connection web site can help students to know more about ESL and even



learn and practice their pronunciation at home or wherever they are. The best part of the website is the link to the BHC ESL Alumni Map. "This link is designed to collect information on each ESL student that has graduated since the start of this program in 1991," said Imelda. When clicking on this link, you will go through a wonderful world where you can find beautiful pictures and information about those who have successfully completed their ESL program. Alumni who want to post their pictures and information on this website need to contact Imelda Crinklaw who can help them to do so.

After the introduction of the online component to the program, the ESL Program Coordinator is thinking now about the program changing in the future in order to fit the needs of ESL students. For example, Ms. Bollati said that maybe in a while, one ESL course will be completely online. That will give the

opportunity to students to stay at home to learn and do their homework.

The ESL Program which is designed to help foreign students to speak English fluently has changed since its creation due to the internet progress. These changes have positively affected students learning habits. Thus, there still is a lot to do to make these courses more helpful, but BHC, and especially the ESL Program Coordinator, are happy to take one step ahead today on their way of positive program changes.



Are You Interested in Nursing?

By: Rosi Monzon

Why are there so many students who want to study nursing these days? If you want to study nursing, the Quad Cities has four institutions that offer an Associate Degree in Nursing, and they are Black Hawk College, Trinity Hospital, Scott Community College, and St. Ambrose University. Students have several schools to get a degree in nursing, and there are many advertisements in the newspapers everyday where hospitals and clinics are offering a lot of nursing jobs. According to Nan Reddy, Educational Advisor at Black Hawk, every semester there are 200 students who try to get into the nursing program, but only 40 students get into the program every semester.

Why do only 40 students get into the nursing program? One reason is that the state of Illinois requires that the faculty must have a Masters degree in nursing in order to teach nurses, and Black Hawk College doesn't have people to teach more than 40 students. Another limitation is having trouble finding clinical spots because there are so many schools in the Quad Cities and every school has to share the hospitals. When students go to the hospital to have practice, they are divided in small groups of eight; otherwise, having a big group would be inconvenient for the hospital and the students, too.

Cristina Greene, a counselor at Black Hawk College, says, "There are some steps to follow before being admitted in the nursing

program. First, someone needs to call to the department and express interest in entering the program, complete an Application for Admission form, send a transcript of high school or GED scores, and successfully finish all the prerequisites: SOC 101, PSYCH 101, BIOL 101, and developmental courses determined by ASSET/COMPASS testing." To be one of the 40 students chosen for the nursing program, a student must have at least 2.7 grade point average or above, but people have to keep in mind that one competes with 200 students, and the faculty take the students who have the highest grade point average and that means that the student who really wants to get into the program must have only As and Bs.

The amount of time to finish an RN program depends on each individual person. For example, there are some students who are just part time and others are full time; there are other students who don't need to take all the prerequisites because they did well on the campus placement tests, and others like the English as a Second Languages students who must finish the whole ESL program in order to start the requirements of RN program.

There are many problems students face while attending school. Some students have a job; others students might have financial difficulties while others are single parents. Stephanie Valdes, a nursing faculty member, says, "The program is designed to be finished with all the courses in four semesters, but it is rare the student who finishes the RN program in four semesters because nursing is very time consuming and every nursing class is 10 credit hours which means a lot of studying. Most students take first all the generic classes and then they take all the major nursing classes."

Even though most of the students have to struggle with their studies and their personal responsibilities, they know that when they finish college, they will have a job because of the shortage of nurses throughout the United States.

Stephanie Valdes, says, "The job opportunities are great; there are many places where nurses can work; they



can work in hospitals, clinics, doctors office, schools, private companies.” Some students decide to take a short course of nursing and that is the LPN program (License Practical Nurse) which is different than the RN program (Registered Nurse). In education there is a big difference between the students who want to get into the RN program and the students who want to get into the LPN program. The RN students take a higher level of courses to get into the program. For example, the LPN just needs to have taken Math 080 (if needed), COM 100 or ENG 101, and PN 110 (Basic Anatomy and Physiology) or BIOL 145 as their prerequisites while the RN takes more prerequisites.



Sally Flesch, Coordinator for the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), says, “The practical nurse is going to be someone who does

bedside care, who works with the assessments of the patients, who consults with the registered nurse to decide what the approach care is going to be. A practical nurse is also someone who gives the medication in the unit; the practical nurse is very involved with care of the patient. The RN supervises the practical nurse and makes the decisions.” The LPNs also find jobs because there is a need for LPNs, too.

If you are one of these students who want to study nursing because it is your desire or because the job opportunities are really plentiful, don't quit your desire to study nursing just because it seems difficult to get into the program or because it takes long time. I have always kept in mind the words of Karen Baber, from the nursing faculty, when I told her that I want to become an RN some day: “Never give up on your larger goal; I was 43 when I earned my bachelor's degree, and I did it.”



Missing Family

By: Kokou Djondo

I am a legal immigrant from Togo, West Africa. I immigrated to the United States in 2003, through a diversity lottery (DV) which is a program designated so that people will legally immigrate to the U.S. This program helps many people to get their resident card within two or three months. In 2003, I left my country, my wife, three daughters, one son, parents, sisters, brothers and relatives for my first time. I have been married since 1988 and our first daughter was born in 1991. The last one is called Marie Josiane and is seven years old at the present time.



In 2002, when I won the lottery visa, I decided to come with my family because all our names were sent to the consulate of America in Togo, but at the last moment, my uncle who gave me housing advised me that it would be better if I went to America and then my children came later with their mother. As result, I decided to leave without my family, but I was not happy because I had not had this experience before and I imagined how difficult it would be separated from my whole family.

I think that my imagination became a reality because since 2003 when I came to the U.S., I have faced the greatest difficulties I have ever had in my life. I think that it is a great difficulty to be separated from my lovely family. I don't have the freedom that many immigrants have who live with their children and spouse. Every day I think about my wife and kids who call me and say “Father, how do you feel? Do you think about us? When will we see you? When will you get a visa for us? When do you think you will come back to see us?” Sometime when I call my wife, my smallest daughter asks me, “Father, I hear your voice; I would like to see you, but where are you?”

I also ask myself many questions every day. Can I get visa one day for my family? What does the Immigration and Naturalization service think about my case? Even though I find some answers I wake up every day with more problems than the



previous day. In search of probable answers I have met other people who have a similar situation. I also have interviewed other immigrants attending BHC and at my workplace about what are the biggest problems they face with being separated from their family, and we have found we have similar problems.

Ayao Vonor, who is my classmate from Togo, said, "Since I came to the U.S., I have suffered from the absence of my family. I have had difficulties living alone. Sometimes I call home three times a day. It is a lot of money I spend every month. If I had my citizenship, I think my family could get their visa because every time I want to know the issues of my application, the first question the government asks me is, "Do you have your citizenship?"

Agbeko Koffi, another student at BHC, in Reading I class, said that he has been in



America for four years. He is very lonely. "I have never lived separated from my family," he said. "I shared my home with my wife and my children. In America, since 2003, I have done

everything by myself. I cook, wash my clothes, shop, and iron." Koffi does this activity in addition to working and going to school full time. He continued to explain that in his home country's culture, most of household chores like cooking, washing dishes or shopping were done by his spouse and children. As husband, he had to bring home the financial aid the family needs to buy everything. Chores are not a man's affair in his home country. He has had to learn to live alone along with all of the other difficulties. "I have had serious problems of stress and homesick," Koffi stated. "I think about my wife who has to find place for my young daughter who goes to secondary school this year. I think about my children's education and health every day."

I met Laura Bloomfield, an employee at the U.S. House of Representative 17th District Illinois, who said that although Immigration

understands the frustration of separation between families while the petitioner is currently waiting for his or her application to be processed, the petitioner must go through the channels of processing



which includes various steps and background checks. Each case is different so a person should not compare his/her case to another. Immigration also can't take one case and place it ahead of another. This would be unfair to other cases. There are many petitions pending so it takes awhile for the cases to be processed.



As I continued to interview more people, I learned that each of the interviewees had a feeling of emotion and frustration. Ruben Mojica is a student at BHC. He is from Mexico and has been separated from his family. He said, "This is one of the worst experiences of my life." He continues and explains that it is very hard to live this experience "because if I have a problem, the only way to find the solution is to call my mother and tell her my difficulties. I call my mother every week."

I think that all the people who are separated from their family have troubles in their every day life in America. I would like that Immigration and Naturalization service to understand our feelings and sympathize with us more. I also think that one of the best ways to help legal immigrants who are separated from their family is to make the procedures and process easier. Every day when I open my mail box, my wish is to find a positive answer to my petition because the arrival of my family is the one solution which can make me very happy.



"MADE IN TAIWAN" vs. "MADE IN CHINA"

By: Yi-Ping Wu

I am Chinese and also Taiwanese. Many people have asked me an interesting question, "Is Taiwan in China?" The answer I give is Taiwan is located next to China, and there are many differences between Taiwan and China.

Taiwan is an island in East Asia; it is located west of mainland China in the Pacific Ocean. It is close to 245 miles long and 89 miles wide. In 1912, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, who was a revolutionary leader, led a group of people from mainland China to Taiwan. He declared a republic in the same



year. His Three Principles of the People, Nationalism, Democracy and Livelihood, helped Taiwan to become a sovereign nation. In contrast to China, Taiwan is capitalistic and practices more freedom. We are Chinese people in Taiwan, and we feel we have been independent for 95 years even though China does not officially recognize the R.O.C. The official name of Taiwan is The Republic of China (R.O.C.). Some people called it "Formosa" because this Portuguese word means graceful, and people think of the island in water as graceful.



According to principles, Taiwan and China differ in that our government makes its own policy. The government's policy about the economy is a

success; it helped Taiwan to become an associate of the "East Asian Tigers," a phrase which means a growing economic entity. The Asian Tigers are considered to be Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. In addition, we also have the freedom of voting for presidents and getting an education. In 1996, we voted for the first president after new legislation was introduced to make our country more democratic; this created a big influence in Chinese history because in China, leaders are not voted for by people. One of my



Japanese friends at Scott Community College, Shinnosuke Ban said, "I went to Taiwan to visit my cousin for four days before the election of the president in March 2000. I was

surprised that the Taiwanese were so excited about the political parties. The Taiwanese government was very aggressive and assertive." It is well known that vast crowds always turn out to support their political parties before every election in Taiwan.

Moreover, the right of a nine-year-basic-education helps our children to have equal opportunity of getting education. It is also not too hard to enter into a college in Taiwan; almost every student can have a higher education. As an American student who has researched Taiwan for a few months, Jenifer Lynn Countryman said, "Taiwan seems like it

has more freedom in education, stronger businesses and a healthier economy than China. The Taiwanese government also allows people to make personal decisions like how many children you can have."

I know that most people in the world are confused with the differences between Taiwan and China. One of my classmates, Vagif Patsiyev from Russia said, "I think that there are no differences between Taiwan and China. Taiwan is one of the big cities of China and governs itself." However, we have continued to vote for our presidents every four year, so the policies are totally different in Taiwan and China.



We are also proud of Taiwanese

products such as high-tech equipment and consumer products. Taiwan has become the world's number one supplier of such consumer products as LCD monitors, PC cameras and DVD discs. Two thirds of the world's notebooks come from Taiwan. In fact, the Taiwanese company, "Giant," is the largest bike manufacturer in the world. Consumer Reports rates Giant bikes as the best. In addition, some Taiwanese people are famous throughout the world. For example, Chien-Ming Wang is a famous Yankees pitcher. He became a hero in Taiwan after he helped his team to victory 19 times.

Besides own government since 1912, the languages are different for some reasons. In Taiwan, the official language is Chinese Mandarin, but the native languages are Taiwanese and Hakka.

福 龍
愛 囍

As another classmate, Geeta Subedi from Nepal said, "I went to Taiwan for basketball competition in

2005, the last year of high school, and I remembered how to say "How are you?" and "Thank you" in Chinese Mandarin, but I don't know how to say that in Taiwanese or Hakka." Although she could not understand Taiwanese or Hakka, she thought that the Chinese traditional character was very interesting. The Chinese traditional character is similar to the Chinese simplified character, but the Chinese Traditional character has more detail in writing. The Chinese traditional character has been

used for more than five thousand years, but there are a few places in the world which use the Chinese traditional character. Unlike China, Taiwan is one place. We are proud of using the Chinese traditional character because it is one of the world's cultural inheritances. Not only do I think that the Chinese traditional character is very beautiful, but also Americans like this kind of the Chinese character; it is not too hard to find some Americans who use the Chinese traditional character as a tattoo. Many Chinese restaurants in the U.S. use a lot of the Chinese traditional characters in signage and menus.

Whereas the lifestyle in China is getting better and better, the lifestyle in Taiwan has been better for a long time. Most Taiwanese are enthusiastic about treating people well, especially foreign visitors. In fact, it is not too hard to see how great enthusiasm we have. One of the famous spots is "outdoor night market," where we relax. There are many outdoor night markets around the corners of the streets from nightfall to

Taipei 101



midnight every day. As Geeta Subedi described, "Before I arrived at an outdoor night market in Taipei, I could see a bright place with a noisy crowd. When I got into there, everything was so exiting that I could not forget it. Every boss who had a loud voice shouted out to people and waved hands in order to call people to look at the products or games." Also, Shinnosuke Ban said, "I loved eating delicious and cheap food in the outdoor night markets because it is a crowded and warm atmosphere. The noodle soup was my favorite food in outdoor night markets." In other words, we are really friendly, enthusiastic people who like to socialize.



Xiaolongbao(Soup dumpling)

Taiwan, a small island on the Pacific Ocean, is my lovely country. The Chinese in Taiwan are Taiwanese who made good government policies, the language and the lifestyle different from mainland China. Ever since I was little, I have be school until I graduated from college in 2005. I also voted for our presidents in 2000 and 2004. I have taught my host-family how to pronounce "beautiful

women" and "handsome men" in Chinese Mandarin, and I have written a few Chinese symbols for my classmates. Because of the Chinese culture, many people are interested in me, so I am glad to share my life in Taiwan with them. I recommend Americans to visit Taiwan and see all that is "Made in Taiwan."



LIFE IMMIGRANTS

By: Vagif Patsiyev

I was three and a half years old when the government of Uzbekistan released the prisoners in Fergana, a small city in



Uzbekistan where lots of Turkish people, my nationality, were living, in order to do the government's "dirty work." The government put crosses on the doors of people's houses, so the prisoners knew which houses to attack. The prisoners ran into the houses and killed families; they killed children, women and men. The government created a war; they had political problems, so they scapegoated the Turkish people. Lots of the Turks were scared that the same violence would happen in their city, and most of us moved to Russia. From that time, my family started moving around the world.

Like most immigrants, we were seeking a better life, so we moved to Russia because we had always grown vegetables, and Russia was the best place for us to find work. When we moved to Russia, we didn't have anything because we left everything in Uzbekistan. We had one four bedroom-house for three families because we didn't have money. My grandparents, my uncle's family and my family lived in one house. When I talked with my father, he told me that years later when he went back to Uzbekistan for a visit, he saw our house, which he and his family built, but somebody else was living there by that time. This was hard for him to talk about and hard for me to listen.



We moved to Russia in 1989, but the Union of Soviet Social Republic broke apart in 1991, so our documents were no longer valid, and the government didn't give us a new type

of passport, which is what they should have done for every person with a USSR passport. "Because," they said, "you came here because of a war in Uzbekistan, and we didn't call you, the government should decide what to do



with people of your nationality." The government, however, took fifteen years to decide our status.

Because we didn't have passports, my parents couldn't work in a regular job, and that made our life much harder. My parents gathered grass and gave it to the government, so a pharmacy could make medicine. Only gathering the grass helped us to survive.

One of my parents' friends sold clothes by that time, and she recommended that my parents do the same job, but my parents didn't have enough money to get started. Then, they borrowed some money and went to Moscow with their friend where she taught them where and what they could buy. Finally, we started to earn some more money.

Later, we bought one small house, which had one room, and my immediate family moved into that house. Because my parents still couldn't find a good job, they had to work a lot. By that time I already had two brothers, Nizam and Rafael; Rafael was one year old and Nizam was two years old. My parents went to work and left my brothers at home while I went to second grade. When I came home after school, I would cook something to eat, mostly tea, but sometimes I cooked a potato to make my parents proud of me when they returned home. My mother said, "Once I came home and saw that you and Nizam were sleeping, but Rafael called our neighbor and asked for something to eat and that was so hard for me to hear."

After I finished secondary school, I went to a university; I didn't write my nationality because I knew that I wouldn't be accepted into the school. Everywhere I went, I didn't tell my nationality. Then, the government said, "Enough! You have lived in our country too long. Now, go back to Georgia, the country where your oldest ancestors came from, or go to Turkey." We didn't have much of a chance to apply for refugee status in many different countries, but the USA responded first for our

plea. Because we heard that life in the USA is better than most places, we decided to move.

We sold everything that we had, but there were lots of things we couldn't sell like some of the hardware, sofas, and tables. We moved to the USA. Many people couldn't even sell their houses. Most of the people had to leave relatives in Russia. My grandmother died in Russia after we left it. My uncle and cousins still stay in Russia. All the time, when people move from one country to the other, they lose their relatives, friends and everything that they have already achieved.



However, there is a common saying, "If something happens, it happens for the best," and I believe that is true. Most people who moved from Uzbekistan to Russia had a better life than people who

stayed in Uzbekistan, and those problems that were in Russia helped us to move to the USA, where we can work and study, and hopefully create an even better life.



USA, A PARADISE ON EARTH USA, A PARADISE ON EARTH

By: Mensah Abaya

Human beings are always in search of a better life. Many people find that it is very hard to pull up roots in their homeland and move to a different country, yet many of us do precisely this because the image we all have from other countries through the media, and the internet excite our desire to immigrate. Around the whole world, the United States is considered "El Dorado," an earthly paradise. The USA is a country of democracy, a country of freedom. America is a



country of rich people, a country of famous people, and a country of the movie stars. It is a country where everything is going well, a country of "easy money," a place where milk

and honey flow. Our desire is to move there and become rich. Our hope is to satisfy our money thirst and to achieve success as soon as possible. Yet our goals are so high and our perception so inaccurate that we sink into despair when we arrive in the States. Many of us have stereotypes about the US that are deceptive.

When I was in Togo, my country, I thought that in the USA, I could find a good job, making good money and go back to my country in a few years. Before I left my hometown, I told my family and friends, "I am going to the United States. Don't worry about anything. From now on, I believe it is the end of your financial problems, the end of your suffering. I will send you money every other week, or if it is possible, help you to join me." Two months after I set foot here, I found a job, but it was not the well-paying job I had pictured. From job to job, from city to city, I am still seeking that well-paying job, but I haven't found it yet. I have been in this country for almost four years, and even now, I am not out the woods yet. The money I earn serves only to feed my wife and my child here and pay the bills. If, so far I am unable to make ends meet, how can I lend assistance to others?



Ben Barrigah is another former student of BHC who had the same preconceived opinion about the USA regarding the financial domain. He tells the story of his unfortunate experience. "I am from Togo, and I was working in a ministry of social services as an accountant. I had a good salary. I had my own house and I was married, so I had three kids. My life was comfortable, but I was worried about one thing. My job was civil service, and my country went through political problems at that time. I knew that if the country sank into political problems, the economy also sank into problems. In order to prevent possible economical crisis, I decided to move to the USA. For me the US is "Canaan," the land God promised to the Jewish people. In that land, there isn't poverty or suffering. I talked to my wife who agreed with me. I promised her that in a few months she could join me with the kids. As a result of our



agreement, I moved to the US. Against all expectations, I have been here for almost three years, and my family is still in Africa. Going back to my country will be not easy because I already lost my job. Also, I have not amassed a lot of money so that once in my country I can start my own business. Now I am facing a big dilemma."



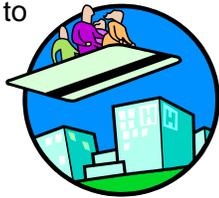
Confronting another different situation, El Hadj, an ESL student from Senegal told me what he thought about the US. He said, "I have heard that once in USA, there are many companies that are looking for people to hire. I will not waste my time at home anymore. I can do many jobs if I want. I will be hired so all my expenses will be in charge of my employer. I will be housed, fed, and dressed free." He continued, "But when I arrived, I spent almost two months at home before I found a full-time job and the working conditions were not so easy as I thought. Even though you are sick, your employer will force you to come to work. I can not believe that. In my country, the employer at least respects his employee's state of health."

Prior to their experiences in the USA, many people including myself thought that most Americans had good financial conditions. Hui Yu, an international student from China, declared, "I learned through the media that the richest people in the world are found in the USA. As for me, everybody in the US is rich." Geeta Subedi, from Nepal, went further, saying, "I believe that all Americans are well off. I thought that they all live in nice houses, in great buildings just like I saw in the movies." I also thought that in the US life is easy; there is no poverty, everybody lives comfortably. However, I was surprised, to see homeless, street people. I can not believe seeing people on the side the road begging for money. I can not believe seeing many houses that look like houses in my country.



The USA is a country about which everybody in the whole world has his own idea. Driss, from Morocco, told me that he has spent many years in Europe. "In England, for example, I have never received bills from a

hospital. The only thing I had to do was to pay the medicines.” Human beings are always insatiable and are always in search of something better. He thought that in USA maybe, social life would be better. “Perhaps I will also get the medicines free. In addition, I can find a better job; who knows?” He moved to New Jersey. One week later Driss got sick. “I was hospitalized for three days. I left the hospital without paying one cent. I was happy because I had made a good decision. I didn’t realize that a big surprise was waiting for me. One month later, I received a bill of \$22,000 and five cents. I said OK, I don’t have money yet, but when I will start working I will be able to pay that bill in a few months. Now, I am sure that I can work my whole life here in US, and I will never be able to pay that bill.”



As for Vagif Patsiyev from Russia, he heard all Americans are fat. He told me that he has read this inscription on the internet, “Even the air in the US makes people fat.” If he takes the meaning of this sentence in the first connotation, everybody is fat. But when he takes the second connotation, this sentence means life is easy in the US: an easy job, easy money; people are helpful and friendly. “However, life is not easy at all as I thought. People are busy all the time and don’t have time to spend with you.”

Although many people have experienced many things dissimilar to their expectations, not all perceptions are negative or detrimental. The USA is a welcoming country. The USA has welcomed more immigrants than any other country. Our problems are that we have a strong trust in the economic power of the USA, and we think that we will realize our dreams as soon as possible. We have forgotten that those people who were ahead of us have built this country through hard work and determination. Before we achieve better lives in terms of financial prosperity and enhance our personal freedom, we have to work hard to bring our contributions. It was hard for any immigrant at the beginning, but little by little we don’t regret coming to this country. The US, is a country of opportunities. Koku Kluga, an ESL student, let me know when he was in his country Togo, he applied to some universities here in the US, yet, they are so expensive that he couldn’t

afford the cost. “Luckily I moved to US with the status of permanent resident. I started ESL classes at BHC without paying anything. I started college with financial aid. Now I am preparing to go to Illinois University with a scholarship. Wow! The USA is the only country in the whole world we can have such opportunities.”

Koffi Sessenou is another international student at BHC. He told me that his coming to the US helped him find his dream. “I didn’t have any problem finding a job. I became more responsible to fulfill my duties as father. I have access to study; I have many opportunities to do some research.”



Rosi Monzon from Mexico didn’t complain at all about her coming to US. She said, “I feel more comfortable than in my home town. I have the opportunity to reach my goal to be a nurse and work in the America medical field.” And Geeta added, “I cannot believe to see teachers and students close like a mother and her son.” Her statement made me realize I had a similar conception about that matter, because I can call my teacher any time at home and ask questions.



There are many reasons why people choose to immigrate to the USA. One thing we have to know is that the reality inside the US is not the same as the reality outside the US. The US is a dream country with equal opportunities



Jefferson

for all. To achieve our goals, we must work hard with perseverance and determination. We must know that in this country, time is money and there is no time to waste. We will agree with Thomas Jefferson, “I find that the harder I work the more luck I seem to have.” Despite all our disappointments, nobody can regret coming to the US. Many people feel comfortable; many others reach their goals. Finally, one thing we might all recognize and agree on is that although all the myths and stereotypes surrounding it, the United States is a land of hope. God Bless America.

The Burial of Agbezudo

By: Yao Kotoku

In Togo, especially in the Ewe culture, having a good burial is very important. The importance of your funeral reflects your position and the community's consideration. The non-participation of the community in



one's funeral is the most severe insult toward a person, and it's a dishonor for the deceased's offspring. My interest in the funerals in Ewe culture results from two essential points.

First, the nature of the funerals is determined by the nature of the death and condition of the dead body. An accidental death or a dead body with injuries corresponds to a simple funeral. The second element is the age of the deceased. The older the person is, the bigger and happier the funerals are. My Uncle Agbezudo used to say to his descendants, "My funeral must show the prestige of my life."

My Uncle Agbezudo was the elder and the chief of the family. As usual, he woke up early that morning of his death but instead of sitting in his front room, he called his brother, Koku, and told him that he had a malaise. Despite of the efforts of the nurse called to the rescue, he died. Immediately, Koku called his other brothers and sisters and they decided how things would go on. Under the big tree in the middle of the compound, they disposed benches and chairs to receive "ndi," greetings from relatives, friends and sympathizers.

In Ewe culture, after a person dies, the family and other community members plan the funerals during two meetings: "Tovibobo" and "Duwobobo."

Koku, who became the chief of the family, informed us that the "Tovibobo," which is the meeting of the closest relatives, would take place at the end of the week.



The news of Uncle Agbezudo's death spread quickly around the area. Some hours later, "voila," the first visitation opened the ballet of comings and goings. Koku, encircled

by some of his brothers and sisters, asked the visitors to sit on the benches in front of him. After the salutations of rituals, he asked the visitors for the motive of their visit. "We heard about the death; we come to greet you, show our compassion, and ask about the program," said the leader of the delegation. Koku replied, "As you heard, my brother decided to join our parents." He went on by saying that he would keep them posted about the program after the "Tovibobo."

During the *Tovibobo*, all the extended family was present. They discussed about how things would go on. After many propositions, they finally adopted the budget of the funeral. It would be valid and executable after the approval of the "duwobobo," which they decided to convene for Tuesday.



"Duwobobo," is the meeting of the community. Face to face, are the representatives of the community composed by its notables, some ordinary citizens, and the family of the deceased. After talking about the circumstances of the death and the personality of deceased, Koku presented the program and the budget. The program was approved right away, but the budget was changed by voiding some expenditures. Agbezudo would be buried the next Sunday. With the approval of the community, the creation of commissions and the distribution of tasks started. There are the commissions of the coffin, the wake and burial, the announcement, and the food.

The day for the wake-keeping, called "nudogbe," was Saturday. On that day, several folk groups engaged by the sons-in-law of my deceased Uncle performed, competing for the attention of the mourners under the big erected hanger. In Ewe culture, if your father-in-law or mother-in-law dies, you have to engage a folk group to play for the honor of the deceased. The group "Agesheka," with its mad rhythm, seemed to gain the upper hand. The men and the women showed themselves in a dance which consisted of a rhythmical movements. Suddenly, late in night, all lights were extinguished and everything remained quiet: the body was brought back from the mortuary.

It was put in the covered coffin. It was taken to the place it would be waked.

Sunday was the day of burial. Early in the morning, many women of our community cleaned the place designated for the ceremonies, the big hanger. They placed chairs and benches. In the big courtyard, many animals were slaughtered. The most important one was the bull that reflected the prestige of Agbezudo's life. Its meat was shared and sent to every notable. The rest was used to prepare food for the guests. The dead body was displayed under the big tree. What an artistic job! The display showed Agbezudo, fisherman in his time, sitting as usual at a net, repairing it.



Around 9:00, the male members of the family in predominately white uniforms were seated in the order by age. Koku was dressed with his most beautiful "Kente," colorful cloth. Opposite them, were the members of the community. They were separated by an aisle. At the right side of the male members of the family, the women, members of the family, sat down on mats put on the floor. Their dresses were made with the cloth chosen for the occasion. To the left side, there was a place for the folk groups. Unlike the somber atmosphere at funerals here in the United States, the funerals in Togo are colorful and celebrative occasions. It is usual to have many folk groups performing simultaneously. The funeral of Uncle Agbezuge was very colorful and happy because he was over eighty years old. Everybody got dolled up to show his or her beauty. Like in the United States, funerals in Togo are a celebration in honor of the deceased.

The last place was occupied by the deceased sons-in-law and their companions. People arrived by groups. Every group, that arrived, passed by the aisle and was greeted "Mia woezo" which means, "Welcome." Then the group exchanged with the main three groups present (family, community and women) the traditional formal salutation, which is lengthy and consists of inquiring about the health of family and friends. The arrived group ended the greetings by "Miawoe do wom," which means, "You are doing well." The arrival of the deceased sons-in-law and their

companions was very rhythmical. The arrival of the fourth son-in-law was remarkable. Wearing a very elegant "kente" with "sikasoga," gold jewelry, he walked as a king in front of a company of more than a hundred persons singing and shouting prestige.

"Donukudzi," the leader of the notables asked Koku to start the ceremonies. A party of the members of the family, to which were added representatives of every present group, went to the courtyard to undertake "Sikode," the libation. It consists in invoking the ancestors, in handing over the deceased to them and asking their approval and their protection for the success of the ceremonies. A man, in front with a calabash full of water in the hand, after having called the name of ancestors one after another, poured water; at this instant, blows of salvos blared, and the "Atopani," the eloquent tom-tom began by naming the prestigious names of Agbezudo.



Then with funeral songs, they came back under the hanger and went directly to the place reserved for the folk group. They sat in a circle waiting for the moment to start "Agbadza," the funeral rhythm.

Then came another important part of the Ewe funerals: the monetary donation. It's mandatory for everybody of the community to make a monetary donation to pay the funeral expenses. In the center of the aisle, two men were sitting down on a mat. Besides them, another man stood up. After the greetings, each member of the community gave his or her contribution and identity to the man standing. This man announced the donor and contribution loudly through the speakers, and the women on the mats thanked the donator by saying together: "Akpe, Akpelo." When the donator added an alcoholic drink, mostly the traditional "sodabi," to the monetary donation, the thanks was lengthy. Periodically, the notables were informed about the evolution of the collection.

Around 2:00, they started "Agbadza" the funeral dance-drumming. At the same time, the small daughters and small sons of "Agbezudo,"



wearing traditional clothes and jewelry of value, passed through the crowd and mimed some stages of the life of their grand father. For each passage, new dress.

At 4:00, the place where the body was displayed was closed. Koku and some family members entered to put the body in the coffin. A few minutes later, he came out in front of the coffin carried by six small sons of *Agbezudo*. The coffin was a big fish with golden scales. The choice of the coffin participated in the presentation of the life of my Uncle, the famous fisherman. "Here is Agbezudo who rests in the belly of what he always captured, the fish,"



said the speakers. They took it to the center of the *Agbadza's* circle. The intensity of the rhythm doubled. They turned it around seven times and took it out. Everybody stood up saying good-bye to

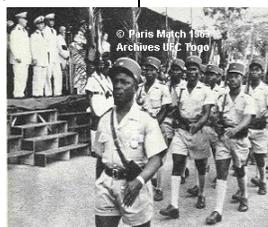
Agbezudo. And the coffin carriers set off for the cemetery where my uncle found rest with the ancestors.



The 13th of January

By: *Dzignbondi (Marceline) Sebou*

At the beginning, it was a political murder. After he killed one president and sent the other to the asylum, Sylvan Olympio became president of the Republic. Starting that 13th of January 1967, he began running Togo, and celebrating that date like an Independence Day. To support my idea, one BHC student who is from Togo and wished to remain anonymous, said of that: "The 13th of January commemorates the date that the Father of Independence was assassinated." Most often people who don't realize the difference. Kankoe Folliganh, another student from Togo, explained that April 17 is actually Independence Day because that was when the country gained independence from French rule. Folliganh said, "That (the parades and parties) makes people think that January 13th is



Independence Day."

First, it is a huge holiday, for its preparation takes months of training for people all around the city and in the inner towns of the country. "It took more than three months for the training," said Ayao Kotoku, another Togolese student. You can't just imagine how gigantic a 13th of January is in my country. Vonor used to think that the celebration was interesting, and that people were motivated, but he doesn't think the same thing about it now. Similar to Vonor, Kokou Djondo, a Togolese student and classmate said: "I was young at that time, so I found it interesting. But after, thinking deeply, I remark that it was costing money for our country."

Then, all the country news at that time was about the celebration. For three weeks to one month, people could watch only the celebration on the national channel; there were no movies, no other entertainment. At that time there were no private channels. It was only less than a decade ago that we had some private channels and then you could see what you wanted and not that retransmission of the 13th over and over. The celebration itself is held near the sea, a place that is a road. According to Christian Abbaya, a Togolese student, "This celebration usually takes place on one of the main roads of the capital, so it makes the traffic very difficult at that time."

The government puts seats and covers all around where people are going to sit. The President's seat is apart from the others. He stays with his family and some of his children. Then around him sit the invited presidents and people from other countries, the members of the government and the body guards. All the members of the government are and have to be present at the celebration.



A number of employees, from fifty to seventy, in all ministries have to be trained in order to walk for the fest. Students walk too. Like Vonor said, "I walked during my school years because it was an obligation as it was when I started working." Most ministries have a T-shirt with their logo and a picture of the president on it. In all, we have thirty-four ministries in our country. Then some private offices have to walk, too. Those who sell in

the Big Market, a big place which contains the mall or a shopping center, also walk. Retired people walk, too. In short, every segment of the population goes to the parade.



The huge walk is made by the military forces like some of my classmates from Togo said: "The most interesting was the parade of soldiers, majorettes and ordinary citizens." We have more soldiers than workers. Their walk takes almost two hours. Soldiers walk with all their weapons and most of their tanks. The next interesting work display is the one performed by girls called "majorettes," a kind of cheerleader. It was really nice looking how they dance, walk and use their bodies to perform acrobats.

Finally, the next two days after the celebration are holidays for all the country: no school and no work. Most of the time, the president invites some presidents from the other countries to assist in the celebration. It isn't only held in the capital, but also in one of the towns in the country. There in the other town, a military chief supervises the entire event. Therefore, it is obvious that the amount of money spent is huge. "They should use that and money for other purposes," Folligan said.

From the results of my interview, it is obvious that the majority of Togolese, even if some people like the colorful aspect of the celebration, don't like the financial waste of money. Everyone has a reason for his disagreement with the festival. Most people find the parades and the colors interesting, but do not agree with that celebration. The celebration itself is more used to show the control of the president on the country and to celebrate a false independence day.



Are Festivals for Animals or Humans?

By: Geeta Subedi

The fire crackers and lights in the sky makes me feel like going back to my home country. I cannot forget the candles and bright houses around me. How could I

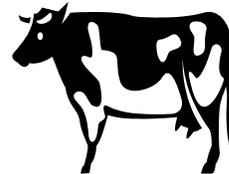


forget the bright and colorful costumes of my family? It is exciting when I remember my festival, Tihar, in Nepal. It is celebrated for five days in which each day carries a special significance. Tihar, known as the Festival of Lights and Animals, is a time of candlelight, tinsel decorations and festive colored sweets.

On the different days, there are offerings and small celebrations for crows, dogs, cows, oxen and siblings. The first day is completely for the crows. I remember my grandmother cooking a special food for



crows and placing the food plate outside the house to call the crows. We worship the crow as the messenger. In the ancient time, Gods and Goddesses used to transfer one message from here to there through crows. The second day is celebrated for the dog as a protector of the home. Early in the morning, Tika, a paint of dried plants, is put on dog's forehead. Flower garlands are also put on the dogs, and the dogs are given special meats and fresh food. The dogs are not only known as a protector in my country but all over the world. As we know, police officers, too, use the dogs to find things or people. On the following day, we celebrate the cow. On this day in the morning, we give cows good food and put flower garlands around their necks. People crawl three times between the cows legs and if the animal allows it, the



person is considered lucky for the year. If the animal is not co-operative, it is considered bad luck for the year.

The Festival continues into night as we celebrate Lakshmi Puja (Goddess of Wealth). Garlands are hung, and lamps are lighted to invite "Lakshmi" into the home. While the



eldest family members are busy worshipping Lakshmi, the youngsters enjoy the festivals by singing and dancing. These dances are often used to collect donations for social work. On

the fourth day, we celebrate the ox with its special meanings to us. We believe he can bring us success, power and strength. Oxen

are domesticated by many people at home, so they are allowed to visit and worship during the day. We give them a special fruit drink when they come to visit the oxen. In the evening, it is Mha Puja (Self New Year). According to the Nepal Era, it is the Day of the Self, when people give themselves blessings to remain healthy and happy for the rest of the year.

Bhai Tika (Siblings Day) is the day when sisters make offerings to their brothers. The rituals of breaking a walnut, putting on garlands of "makhamali," a kind of spring yellow flower and encircling brothers in the rings of mustard oil protects them from Yama, Lord of the Netherworld. This is the final day of the festivals but also one of the most precious. We start the day by putting the "Tika" for siblings and exchanging gifts. We also play cards and gamble during this day. It shows strong ties between siblings.



In search of the past and the present festivals, I went with my grandmother, Guma, to talk about their celebrating style a long time ago and how is it now. She said, "It was better in the past. People used to get prepared for many days to celebrate, but now I see no people interested in celebrating." I interrupted and said it is time that has changed and so have the people. She replied that it is the only festivals which talk about the culture and tradition of the past, and Tihar is one of them. She also stated that we can get love towards animals if we give one day to them. It is also reasonable for us to pray for our health and our siblings. It is the reason



Festival Tihar should remain longer.

If you were born in a country like mine, festivals and their cultural significance count a lot. There are more than fifty festivals celebrated in Nepal, but Tihar happens to be the second biggest and most enjoyable festival of my country. Every festival celebrates the culture of a people. So, it is better to celebrate and continue the



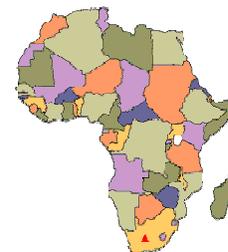
festivals of my culture. My Nepalese festivals are so important for me, and I love to celebrate each and everyday.



What Africa is Telling You About

By: Koko Nicoue

Africa is a large, beautiful continent, a good-looking place. It is the birthplace of humanity, a continent of wonders, and also a continent of mystery and misery. As we all know, it has been a site of slavery and colonial expansion. Africa is a mother of civilizations, a place where we can find a range of cultures and languages. The history of this continent lets many people have a dualist conception about it. Usually through conversations, I find out that many people have wrong ideas about this continent.



There are many different places in Africa more beautiful than many people think. In Africa, we have art, poetry, sculptures, a lot of natural resources, a lot of diversity and a lot of cultures. Africa also possesses many buildings, monuments, museums, rivers, and many skyscrapers. It is true that there are many animals in Africa, and it is also true what adventurers sometime show on TV: people with lions, panthers, elephants, giraffes in woodland or savannas, but one thing people forget is that not all part of Africa is about animals.

One student surveyed stated, "I know nothing about Africa." First of all, Africa is a continent, not a country as many people think. The continent is rich in natural resources, oil, phosphates, gold, and diamonds. It is true that some countries are poor; others are modern and sophisticated too. There are many regions and forty countries. People often think that it is a large open place filled with animals. For example one student wrote he thought Africa was "a large expanse of beauty, a hot land with lions and others awesome animals we do not have." In some parts of Africa like Togo, Ghana and Cote Ivory, coastal West Africa, there are few animals but lots of diamonds,

ivory and good business areas, exciting activities, and large cottons plantations. Life is like here, except it's colder in the United States.



There are varieties of weather in Africa because each country has its own type of weather. In Lome, the capital of Togo, a West African country, the temperature feels like Chicago in the summertime, but without the wind. While in Zimbabwe, a country in southern Africa, the temperature is like southern California.

One problem with the image of Africa is adventurers who show up on Discovery Channel with different sorts of animals like giraffes, elephants, monkeys. And they also show some people who live in villages. That's just "show" part of Africa; that's what the producers think is best to show or needs to be shown, the stereotypical stuff. All of these examples make me ask myself, what about the rest part of Africa?

For example, Lomé, is a city of 21,925 square miles, with an average population density of 253 people per square mile. In Lomé, where I am from, we have many different schools and many private and public colleges. We have churches; we also have grocery stores and small clothing stores similar to what one would find in shops in the



downtown Quad Cities. Most of the time we have a big open market where many people come everyday to do their shopping and buy everything they need.

When I went to school in my country, we usually wore uniforms. For example, girls wore skirts and shirts while boys wore pants and shirts. We had many different physical activities, such as soccer, track and field, basketball and others sports. But the main sport is soccer.

Sometimes I walked to school, but other times my dad drove me. We had cement, cinder block home with two-bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room. Outside we had a coconut tree. Outside opened up to a "common area" which we shared with all our neighbors. Besides talking

with the neighbors, I liked going to the movies or playing tennis at the private club nearby. We also attended church where I sang in the choir. I was too young to go to clubs, but there are many where people can dance, eat snacks, and drink. On Saturdays and Sundays, my friends and I would like going to the beach, which was about three miles from my home. Even though there are many similarities between every day life here and in Togo, I miss how busy the streets were at night. Here, everyone stays home, and we don't see anybody, but in Togo it's safe for young children and vendors to always be out on the streets, even in the evenings. It makes for an active, vibrant feeling.

I went to high school here in East Moline.



At that time, most of my classmates asked me questions that I never thought they would. I was shocked by their questions. Some of the questions that they

asked me were: Have you ever seen lions and all those other animals? Have you played with animals? Do you have apartments in Africa? Do you have cars? Did you go to school in Africa? etc... What were they thinking? When I told somebody or someone asked me where I was from, and then I answered from Africa, I was pretty sure that they would think something else about me.



Most

Americans, don't travel overseas; that's why they don't know much about Africa or other countries. I wish and hope someday Americans will travel one day to visit Africa to see what Africa really is and what is really outside of America.



!!!Living in America!!!

By: Koku Kluga

I love experiencing freedom in the USA, but I have to work hard. Immigration according to Roget's II the New Thesaurus is "departure from one's native land to settle in another." That change of land comes with a lot of



transitions. How immigrants face that life of transition is very interesting to describe. Most people immigrate to this country waiting to have a better life. Raphael Leonard, from Liberia said, "I came to United States in July 1993,

but I didn't expect when I was in my country that I needed to work so hard before making money." He didn't know that in the USA, he would have to work ten hours a day, six days a week. This was a great surprise.

I moved legally to this land in May 2002, like other people, in order to be free and support all my family in Togo, West Africa. Was life easy here? When I first came, I had a very bad time. Language was my first difficulty. At the airport, when I asked at a telephone store for a phone card, nobody understood my English. I could not understand anything that Americans said. They couldn't understand me when I spoke to them. I needed an interpreter for everything everywhere.



The weather is another difficulty for me. I never saw any cold season in my country. I couldn't go out in the United States, especially in the Quad Cities without warm clothes, or stay out for more than half an hour even with warm clothes. Although snow is nice to see when it covered the entire city, it was difficult for me to do anything. Even though I had read and heard about snow and cold weather, the

physical reality is different than an intellectual concept.

I could not use the college degrees I had from the college Solidarite of Lome and a two year university in the



capital of Togo to find a good job here. I majored in mechanics and worked at Immaco, a large well-known company which sold machines. Here I could only work in factories. So, to accomplish my goals, I decided to go to school in the morning and work a second shift full-time job. This schedule helped me to learn American English and make money to survive. Life transitions were not very easy here like I

thought. I had to work very hard. I also had to learn the American language before understanding anything.

Rosi Monzon from Mexico, now a student at Black Hawk College in Writing II class said, "I came to the United States in December 2001 because my husband lived here. I lived in Viola, IL, a small town, far away from the Quad Cities. I had



language and transportation problems, so I moved to Moline to take courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at BHC." She continued, "The first thing that I did was to go Outreach Center in East Moline, to start English." She finished, "I now have more opportunities here than in my home country of Mexico."



One of my classmates Kankoe Folligah from Togo, West Africa, said, "I came to the US in 2003 to study and to have a better life. I had language difficulties when

I first arrived. It is not easy to live here, but it is better than in my country because there are many opportunities for work and study."

For example, I could not find a job even though I looked for three years in Togo, but I found a job here in two weeks. Also, there is only one university in Togo, but in the US, there are many universities and a lot of opportunities for students to study easily.

It is true; life transitions are not easy in this land; however, I appreciate how Americans like to work. I learned to understand and speak English. I also learned to thank people who have helped me. I also learned that I can educate myself by going to college. With a college degree, I can become an engineer and earn more money to live and help my family. My family consists of my two parents, three brothers and three sisters. They all join me in feeling good about coming to the USA, which is a land of opportunities. I encourage every immigrant in Quad Cities to take courses in the ESL program at the Black Hawk College. This will help with living in America and dealing with some of the transitions.

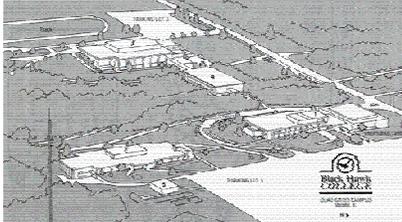




CAMPUS BEAUTIFUL

By: Ayao Vonor

People around the world like to take care of everything they have. Governments, parents, and managers also do the same. In fact, at Black Hawk College a team composed by of John Kidwell, Director of Facilities, Mike

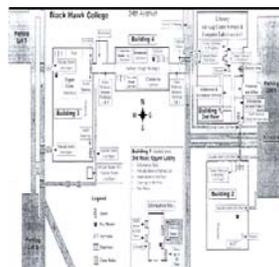


Phillips, who works on the Quad Cities Campus and Jacob Ray, who works at East Campus have carried

out projects to improve the campus. These three people have worked hard to keep the Campus healthy. They create a safe and comfortable environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors.

Black Hawk College was built in 1966, but the appearance looks like it was built this year. For example, when you enter the Campus everything is clean from outside to inside. A student from Togo, Koko Nicoue, said, "The first day I entered this College, I was surprised because I found everything nice while I had learned that the College was build in 1966." Many students from Togo had the same impression when they came to the College.

The Campus is attractive and well - organized for students into sections like the computer lab, library, classrooms, the tunnels between Buildings 1, 2, 3 and the parking lots. The campus is easy to navigate and helps students to have a good stay when they come on the Campus. Also, teachers and the staff are helpful and try to make everybody happy. Codjie Komla, an employee at Tyson Food and student at Black Hawk College said, "I like to study in this College because teachers and the staff are welcoming and helpful." Another student from Liberia, John Ampa, said, "Everyday when I enter on the Campus, I feel safe because I know that everything continues to be repaired and the neatness is at 100%.



That helps me to have a good study. As we say, 'A safe spirit must evolve in a safe body.'"

In August 2006, the College undertook the painting of the tunnels, building repairs and parking lot repairs. Where does the College find the money? How do the enterprises get the projects? What are the results? In response to these three questions, John Kidwell said, "I usually prepare the projects with Mike Phillips and Jacob Ray. First, we have meetings in my office here; second, we think about all the projects the College has and then we choose those which are most important; then, we look for the way to find money."



Concerning where they find money to carry out these projects, he said," We ask money from the State and also from the College. After getting money from the State or College, we appeal to the community businesses by making an announcement in the newspapers, on the radio and on television. The community businesses which are interested come to the College and fill out an application. Then the committee which is in charge of those projects studies all the applications and awards the contracts of those projects to the qualified companies. Then, the projects are entrusted to them to be carried out.

The College's staff and the community business managers have meetings before starting the projects. Though the meetings the staff lets the community businesses know how they want the projects to be carried out. About how they use the money allocated for the projects, Kidwell said, "We don't give them all the money at first. We deduct 10% from of the money. That money will be returned to the contractors when the projects are done correctly."



For example, at the beginning of this fall, the tunnel of Building's I to III was painted. Also, to keep the campus safe, the lights were repaired as well as some windows of both buildings. For example, in the library and tunnel, lights are changed regularly while the tunnel was painted. The regularly steps at the

south of Building I were also repaired. Then the parking lots located at south and north are were also repaired.

The projects around the Campus give to the students, teachers and the staff pleasure when they enter into the College. They help the College to keep its attractive appearance. Everybody feels good when they are in the College. Then, students like to study in this College and will continue to study in this College.



I am very happy about all the projects which were done this semester around the Campus and those which were done before. I hope that similar projects continue in the future. I would like to give my contribution to help these projects. Actually, I am planning to invite my friends and family from Africa to visit Black Hawk College, which is an honor to Moline and in particular to the Quad Cities.



Sports Passion Vs Sport Cost

By: Ruben Mojica

Sports are very popular in colleges all around the country. Sports represent the spirit of the college, the colors and the students. At Black Hawk College, there are many sports: basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball and golf. Some people ask themselves why there aren't more sports? According to Troy Noble, the former men's basketball coach, the money is the main reason for not having more sports. "Bringing other sports to Black Hawk College would cost a lot of money, and the college does not have the money," he said.

The sports that we already have in the college represent our spirit very well; however, not everyone likes these sports. Thus, in order to interest more people in sporting events, the college should think about adding more sports.



If the money is the main problem to adding new sports, what about other sports that may not need much money, for example

soccer? Soccer is a sport that most people believe doesn't need much money; in fact, I was one of those people, but by talking to Garry Huber, the Athletic Director, I found out that soccer does cost more than what most people think. "Most teams nowadays have a year- round season, and if we want a soccer team, we need to find a place where the athletes can practice in the winter, and we don't have any place, and it would cost a lot of money to make one," Mr. Huber said. Tennis is another sport that people think that could be added; likewise, Mr. Huber also talked about it, and he explained to me that even though Black Hawk College already has tennis courts, it will cost a lot of money to update them.

Despite the cost, additional sports like wrestling and soccer would be a good investment. The college would have more students if the Athletic Department added wrestling and soccer because many athletes don't have a place to go after they finish high school. If Black Hawk College had these sports, it would bring those athletes to Black Hawk College. I have seen a least six good soccer players that could play in any college because they have great skills, but unfortunately they would not attend a college that doesn't have soccer. They think about moving to a college that has soccer. If Black Hawk College had soccer, I think that these students would probably stay and persuade others to come to this college to finish a career in this college; this in the end would help the college because it would have more students and keep the ones that they all ready have. Most of the students that are involved in sports tend to do better in school because students in college have to have a GPA of 2.0 and take 12 hours of classes which causes the students to work harder in school.



Investment in more sports like soccer and wrestling would attract young athletes. Area high school students that have these two programs, UT, Moline and Rocky, would find BHC a much more attractive option.





OUR WRITERS

Geeta Subedi



I come all the way from the mountainous country of Nepal. I am 19 years old. I love to play all the time. I have a dream to become a nurse in future. I like friendly and helpful friends. I really enjoyed the ESL classes at Black Hawk College. I am fond of having children and old people around me.

Kokou Djondo

I was born in Togo, West Africa. I came in the U.S. in 2003. After my high diploma in Arts and Humanities, I completed my Master's degree in Law from the University of Lome-Togo. I was a justice Attache serving as a Chief Court Clerk at the Lome First Instance and First Class Tribunal for thirteen years. My hobbies are reading law books and watching TV channels 18 or 69. I plan to study American law after I complete my ESL classes.



Vagif Patsiyev



I moved to the USA in May of 2005. I am 20 years old. I like computers. I have been taking ESL classes since I came to the USA. I want to study computer programming at BHC.

Jean-Pierre Kankoe Folligah

I am from Togo. I have been living in the U.S. for three years. In my free time, I like watching TV, working on the Internet, and reading history books. My goal is to get a degree in management.



Mensah Abaya



People often call me Christian. I am from Togo and have been here in U.S. for three years. I'm married and have one child. I graduated in Sociology of Development at University of Lome (Togo). My goal is to continue in this domain and work later in a humanitarian organization. I like to read the Bible in my free time and talk to people about Jesus Christ.

Yi-Ping Wu (Ping)

I am from Taoyuan, Taiwan. I love taking photographs and then putting them into my blog. I also like eating delectable food, especially Taiwanese cuisine. I am glad to share my life with people and help them solve problems. It is wonderful when I spend time with my family and friends. My goal is to travel around the world. Finally, I want thank my mother for supporting me in learning English in the U.S. this year; I will go back to Taiwan in January, 2007.



Rosi Monzon



I am from the beautiful country of Mexico. I have the privileges of being married for almost five years to a wonderful husband and of having a precious son called Nathaniel. My hobbies are to listen and sing Christian songs in Spanish and English. Also, I love to spend time with my little one playing ball, reading books, and teaching him educational things. My goal is to become an RN and for this reason I wrote the article about the nursing program. I'm so glad to live in the United States; I believe that this great nation is a blessing from God.

Ayao Vonor

I am from Togo. I am married and have three children. My wife is Sylvie and my children are: Immaculee, Deo, and Nicaise. I moved from my country to the U.S. in November 2002.



Yao Kotoku



I was born in Lome, the capital city of Togo. In February 2005, I moved to United States where I pursue my ambitions and dreams. One of them is to obtain a Masters Degree in Accounting and Financing. Family, excellence, friendship, life and games are my passions.

Koku Kluga



I was born in Togo. I went to school for fourteen years in my country before I came to the USA in 2002. I live here with my family. I have a three and half year old son and and six month old son. I am working full-time at Tyson (IBP), and I am taking English class at Black Hawk Collage. It is interesting to learn American English.

Ruben Mojica



I was born in Mexico. I came here when I was 14 years old. I graduated from high school in Rock Island. I play football and wrestle.

Koko Nicoue



I'm a student from Togo. I've been in the U.S. for two years, nine months. I came here with all of my family. I have two brothers and two sisters; I'm the middle one. I like to be active, practice different sports, especially tennis and track & field. In my spare time, I like to watch TV, play tennis, study and cook with my mom. I also like to sing, to dance, and to swim. My goal is to have my Bachelor Degree in Nursing and later a Master's Degree. My proudest accomplishment was when I took care of patients in a nursing home, as a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) student in high school.

Dzgbondi Kougbani-Sebou



My first name is Dzighbondi, but I am known as Marceline. I came from Togo two years ago, and I live with my son Daniel and my husband. I started Law in my country and didn't finish before coming here, so I will probably study business law starting next semester. I believe there is no age or time to say that people are done with their studies.



The ESL Newsletter is put together by students in Writing II (ESL 076). We are grateful for the assistance of Sheryl Gragg and Anne Bollati and for all of you who have consented to interviews or given us suggestions for topics. If you have an idea you'll like the next Writing II class to consider for the spring newsletter, please e-mail me at Hindhedek@bhc.edu.
--Karen Hindhede, Instructor