



Charlottesville City Schools  
 Adult English as a Second Language Program  
 Adult Learning Center  
[www.charlottesville-esl.org](http://www.charlottesville-esl.org)

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## My “American Family”

By Wanxia Wang (China)

When I first came to America, I was afraid and shy. I couldn’t even correctly speak a whole sentence. So I went to ALC (the Adult Learning Center). I had heard that I could meet some friends there.

Soon I found it was like a big family. Here I can meet friends who come from all over the world. Here there is no discrimination, no matter what color people are. In the Newspaper Class, I can say what I want with freedom in this family.

As new members, we talk about exciting experiences, accidents, and culture shock. We have a nice teacher. She

is like a mum, a sister, and a friend. Although she has a Ph.D. degree background, she never acts like a supervisor. She is always so warm and is all ears as she listens to us speak terrible English and then corrects it. She always encourages us not to give up anything: learning English, living bravely, facing reality, making friends with other people, and taking care of ourselves.

Like her kids, we tell her our stories, some silly, some funny, some unfair experiences which make us angry. Like a mum, she comforts us and directs us.

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## From the Editor

Another school year at ALC has gotten off to a great start with new and returning students bringing full enrollment to our classes, abuzz with activity. In preparation for the **Health Fair** coming in December, displays of student work exploring the many components of having a healthy life line the hallway. Our bulletin boards are filled with up-to-date notices and flyers of opportunities, encouraging students to participate more fully in the Charlottesville community. Books in the Book Cart Lending Library are being added or exchanged on a regular basis. In short, ALC is alive and well!

With regard to the ESL Newspaper Class, in our first month and a half of classes, students have discussed and written about a variety of topics, but throughout there has been a recurring theme of dealing with culture shock and homesickness. Homesickness can be triggered or manifest in many ways. It can be felt in the process of finding safe haven and a family here at ALC (**My American Family**) or in the ways language and cultural differences make us feel frustrated with our own "stupidity" (**Yes or No?**). It can come upon us as we sit outside a café that in some small ways looks like it could be Europe (**Natural Bridge: High as Niagara, Old as the Dawn**), or as we watch sheep at the Fall Fiber Festival, reminding us of ways we used to live (**Different Pastures: Raising Sheep and Goats in the U.S. and Tibet**). It can come upon us in our

dreams or as we recall memories of childhood (**Good Memories from My Childhood** and **Stories That Make Me Laugh**), or through the indirect expression of stress as we try to cope with finding a dentist in an emergency on a weekend (**Why Don't We Have Life without Stress?**). Sometimes we even feel it in the sharp contrasts between the freedoms we experience here in the U.S. and the challenges happening elsewhere in the world (**Freedom That Makes a Heart Bloom**).

We also talked and wrote about the excitement and sense of adventure involved in new beginnings. We discussed both the beauty of and deep sense of suffering that legends from long traditions can hold (**Beautiful West Lake**) and the challenge and romance of coming to live in a new country as a newlywed (**Will You Marry Me?**). For many, driving a car is a new experience; **Check Your Lights!** offers good advice to all drivers, not just the "green horns" among us.

We have added a new segment, called **Student Highlights!** in which students from the Newspaper Class interview other students at ALC as part of an ongoing process of learning more about each other. In this issue, two students interview Juan Carlos, a student from El Salvador who is a member of the ESL Advanced Conversation class. Throughout the year, the Newspaper Class will interview other students, both ESL and GED, at the school.

Finally, we want to pay a special tribute to the new GED graduates of 2004 (**GED Graduates 2004**). Through attending their graduation we continue to remember that, no matter what the challenges are, no matter how old we are, no matter how we got to where we are or why, it is the process of going after what we truly want that makes our lives meaningful and our achievements an inspiration to others.

Leslie A. Furlong, Editor

### Mission Statement

The *Multi-Cultural Brief* is an ESL newsletter created by students who want to improve their English and is produced as part of a newspaper class offered through the Charlottesville Adult Education program. Its purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to

- share their experiences of being from another country,
- offer multi-cultural perspectives on life in Charlottesville,
- help inform people who are new to Charlottesville of issues and opportunities around town,
- build a bridge of communication between the ESL population and Americans living in the Charlottesville community.

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## Who Are You?

By Chia-Hui Wang (Taiwan)

Laughing really could cure your sickness. Don't forget to laugh loudly three times every day.

Last Sunday, we went to church and heard an interesting story told by our priest:

***“Don't forget to laugh loudly three times every day.”***

*There was an old lady who went to church and wanted to be seated in the front row. As she requested guidance to the front, the usher*

*suggested to her to sit in the back instead. She asked the reason why and was told, “because the priest's speech will be very boring.”*

*Then the old lady asked again, “Do you know who I am?”*

*He said, “Who are you?”*

*She answered, “I am the priest's Mom!”*

*Then the usher asked quickly, “Do you know who I am?”*

*She said, “No, I don't know who you are.” Then he said, “Good. Thank God.”*

Are you laughing?

## Yes or No?

By Young Hee Kim (South Korea)

“So, you've never driven in Korea, have you?” Jody said. “Yes,” I said strongly. “You've driven? But you said you don't know how to drive.” She looked at me, confused. Suddenly, I felt something was wrong. “I mean I've never driven,” I said to myself. Our conversation stopped. It seemed as if she didn't understand what I was saying. I had made a mistake again. But there was no time to explain. She began to talk about another issue. I became angry with myself.

Whenever I experience situations similar to this, I feel I am so stupid that I can't even say “Yes/No” answers correctly. Everybody knows what “Yes/No” means. You would think, “What is wrong with her?” Nothing is wrong with me. It's from Korean grammar and culture. Please let me explain why I, on occasion,

become “stupid.”

If someone asks, “Didn't you study hard?” in Korean, I can reply, “No” (meaning “I did study hard”) or “Yes” (meaning “I didn't study hard; I had something to do”). Here is another example. A teacher can ask, “You didn't attend last class, right?” I can answer, “No” (meaning “I did attend”)

or “Yes” (meaning “I didn't attend”). The meaning of the “Yes/No” answer for negative questions in Korean is opposite from English. That's why I make people misunderstand. Absolutely, that's not my fault!

You may wonder why Korean grammar is like that. Actually, I don't know. Let me think about that. Well, I guess, when I answer, I place myself in

other people's position, not mine. The previous example, “Yes” (meaning “I did not attend”) in Korean implies that the teacher is right and I agree with the teacher, so I say an affirmative answer, “Yes.” But I am not sure of the reason why.

***“I feel I am so stupid that I can't even say a ‘Yes/No’ answer correctly.”***

I have to be careful when I say “Yes/No” answers for negative questions. But you know that changing a language's custom is not easy. It comes out

spontaneously when you say simple words, such as “Thank you,” “Hi,” and “Yes” or “No,” even in a foreign language. It doesn't need any hesitation. Sometimes I forget to switch “Yes” and “No” with each other and I just say it wrong. How embarrassing it is!

If you talk to someone like me, please remember my writing and don't blame him/her.

# Natural Bridge: High as the Niagara, Old as the Dawn

By Eva Horvath (Hungary)

Less than one and a half hours away is this more than 100-million-year-old and 215-foot high natural miracle. This formation is a “natural bridge,” which was shaped by a creek for a long time. The Bridge is strong enough that it holds a highway on its top. There is a trail, where one can pass under the Bridge and see its walls and its arch fully.

If you want to see **Natural Bridge**, you should prepare for a day-long visit because, besides the Bridge, there are plenty of other attractions to see.

If you are interested in toys, or you are with children, you can see the Toy Museum under the Welcome Center. There are a lot of old (made in 1740) and quite modern toys, too. Unfortunately, it is forbidden to touch the toys, which is hard to expect from kids, especially from younger ones.

The Bridge can be accessed by foot or by shuttle. Of course, the walking trail is more lovely since the trail runs along Cascade Creek, and, if you are observant, you can notice birdfeeders, birdhouses, and beautiful birds, too.

At the entrance of the passage under the Bridge is the Summer House Café, where it is worth going to rest a bit on the way

back. For me, it was a lovely experience to stay here for a while. Because of the place’s style, it could have been in Europe. So I felt myself at home a bit. Not to mention the nice fish, which you can feed while drinking coffee or snacking on the patio. From the Café runs the Nature Trail as far as Lace Falls.

Under the Bridge runs Cedar Creek, which eroded it over millions of years. Before

the coming of the white men, the Monacan Indians who lived there called it “The Bridge of God.” It is higher than Niagara Falls, so it is no wonder that if one leans against the wall of the Bridge, she feels as if she is in Brobdingnag (the land of giants from *Gulliver’s Travels*). There is a legend that George Washington carved his initials (which are still visible) in the walls of the Bridge. It is funny, but it is an historical fact that Thomas Jefferson bought this enormous formation and surrounding area for less than \$3 from King George III of England.

Not far from the Bridge you will be invited to step back in time and see what life was like in a typical Monacan village 300

years ago. And yes, there are some real Native Americans in the village! I met with the chief of the Monacans, and he was one of the kindest and keenest people whom I ever met. The chief showed us the whole village, the appliances, tools, weapons, pots, the cots, the clothes, the garden, their symbols, and more. He baked some cornbread for us, of

course on hot rock, and he told a lot of interesting things about his own tribe and his roots going far back into the past.

*“Before the coming of the white men, the Monacan Indians called it ‘The Bridge of God.’”*

Did you know that the practice of scalping was originally not an Indian practice? A long time ago, the white hunters and soldiers got 3 pieces of gold for an Indian man’s head, 2 for a woman’s head, and one for a child’s head? They got their gold only when they showed the heads. Besides the fact that this was terribly inhuman treatment, it was very dangerous, too, because of the infections. There were a lot of epidemics and diseases in that time, so the captains had to change the way of massacring Indians. After that, it was enough to show the scalps.

The next station is the Saltpeter Cave, where earlier people

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# Just Do It!

By Li-Chu Kuo (Taiwan)

I think I need to write something right now.

I am so glad to join the Writing Newspaper Class. One day in August, I saw this class online, and I thought, writing for a newspaper? So professional, and so difficult for me. I never kept it in my mind.

Three weeks ago, my friend, Hong, mentioned this class. She said, "Maybe you can try it." And then I came to the Adult Learning Center with her. I met a great teacher and several new friends. I am so thankful to Hong. The class is not really difficult, but writing is not easy for

me. As I know, practice and practice, try and try are the best ways to improve my English.

This is my first step in writing. It's short and maybe I will have lots of mistakes (I always remember one of the class rules is, "Don't be afraid of making mistakes; everyone does them"). But I am still writing it down — my reflections on joining this class.

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## Natural Bridge

(Continued from page 4)

mined nitrates to make gunpowder during the Civil War. It was very interesting, because at first sight you think it is very narrow, but if you go into the cave, you can see how spacious it is.

Along the trail you will see the source of the Lost River, and the last station of the trail is Lace Falls, which is a small cascade along the 50-foot drop. Along Cedar Creek Natural Trail you can see lots of special trees, bushes, flowers, and you can also see blue heron, wild turkey and other birds.

There are caverns near the Bridge, too. These are the deepest caverns on the East Coast. You can't go there alone, only with a guide, who will tell you some interesting stories about the caverns. The temperature is a constant 54 degrees, which is very cold, so you should wear warm clothes.

There are some big halls and beautiful dripstones inside, and there is a special bat and insect population down under the deep. If you have enough time, you can also visit the Wax Museum where you can see lots of human replicas. It's really good fun for everyone.

Before you leave, it is worthwhile to go back to the Bridge in the evening time because during the summer in the evening, there is a light and voice show, the Drama of Creation.

If you are interested, this website can help you to plan your visit. Also, you can check the price of the tickets or have a look at some pictures about the attractions: [www.naturalbridgeva.com](http://www.naturalbridgeva.com).

## *Want to Contribute to the Multi-Cultural Brief?*

Do you have a story, an opinion, a skill you want to tell people about, a recipe, a good idea, a complaint, or a response to what you learned here?

Share it with others!

All submissions are considered. You don't have to be part of the Newspaper Class to contribute!

There are still openings in the Newspaper Class! Classes meet on **Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 12 noon, Wednesday evenings from 6:00-8:00 p.m., and on Fridays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** Come as many times a week as you like.

If interested, call (434)-245-2817, or e-mail: [Susan.Erno@ccs.k12.va.us](mailto:Susan.Erno@ccs.k12.va.us).

To receive the *Multi-Cultural Brief*, visit 1000 Preston Avenue, Suite D.

# Different Pastures: Raising Sheep and Goats in the U.S. and Tibet

By Samdup Bhuti Pittard (Tibet)

This year, the **Fall Fiber Festival** was held in Montpelier Station, not far from Charlottesville.

I went there, and it was very interesting to me because I grew up in a small town where we had many different kinds of animals, such as sheep, goats, yaks, cows, and horses. When I was in my hometown, I spent most of my life with sheep and goats.

*“I thought to myself that in America, no matter how much land animals have to roam on, they are still in a cage, not completely free.”*

Therefore, I enjoyed going to this Fall Fiber Festival a great deal. It made me think about the differences between how Americans and Tibetans take care of sheep. It made me think of my beautiful and cozy hometown once again and how we managed the animals as the seasons changed.

As far as I remember, in my hometown, we keep our ewes and nanny goats close to town in the summer because they cannot walk fast like rams or billy goats. Also, we have to be watchful with our animals because vultures look forward to eating their babies. So, during the summer, we have to keep them in the house while the rams and billy goats can go anywhere they

want to. We keep our rams and billy goats on the mountain, far away from town. Normally, shepherds and animals have houses in the mountains, and the houses are made out of stones.

We put the sheep and goats together and let them choose who they want to be with, without forcing them to breed.

In America, they try to force the best possible animals to breed. Americans think it is important for them, because if you breed animals well, then the animals will have good traits generation to generation. Some of the traits that breeders look for are good wool, resistance to disease, eating less, and making less work overall for their caregivers.

Spring and summer are sheep and goat sheering seasons because it helps them cool down and humans need the wool. In my hometown, we put the sheep and goats in a corral. Then we pick them one by one to shear them. When we shear their wool, we have to tie their legs together carefully. We use special kinds of knives to shear

their wool.

However, in Virginia, they don't tie the sheep's legs together. They put it's head between their legs and hold tight and use an electric machine to shear the sheep's wool. I was amazed about this machine, which is small but works fast and neatly.

When summer comes, we take our sheep and goats to the mountains and hills. We have an enormous amount of land, which belongs to everyone.

In my hometown, we don't keep sheep and goats in one place or inside fences. We take them everywhere. We feel it is good for animals to be free to go wherever they wish, yet if we take them very far away, then the problem is that there are some other village's shepherds who take their sheep and goats near there. The sheep and goats mix with each other, so we have a difficult time separating them. However, we never argue about the land, which belongs to everyone since we have a lot of land to take sheep and goats to.

However, animal owners at the Fall Fiber Festival said that they also have huge plots of land, but they keep their sheep and goats inside fences even though every day they move their animals from pasture to pasture. I

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## Different Pastures: Raising Sheep and Goats in the U.S. and Tibet

(Continued from page 6)  
thought to myself that in America, no matter how much land animals have to roam on, they are still in a cage, not completely free.

In summer and fall in my hometown, sheep and goats have plenty of food to eat, and we take them very far away from the farmers working in the fields. We don't want the sheep and goats to eat the farmers' crops, so we have to search for places which have plenty of grass. Usually, sheep and goats eat any kind of grass, but sometimes they prefer special kinds of grass and bushes which grow in the high mountains and small hills. Their food comes from natural grown grass and bushes.

However, animal owners at the Fall Fiber Festival said they put their sheep and goats in fences and move them every day from pasture to pasture because they said sometimes, if you keep sheep and goats in one place, they will get worms from their dung. That's why they grow special kinds of grass for them and feed them special food. I did notice that American sheep and goats are bigger than sheep and goats in my hometown. I think it's mainly from the chemicals that they spray in their food.

When winter comes, we do carding work because my hometown is covered by snow

and we have no field jobs to do. We separate the wool by hand first; then, we card it to make it smooth and easy to spin the wool. When we spin the wool, we use a drop spindle. After we spin the wool, we make clothes, tents and household items, etc. We do all this work by hand, so it takes quite a bit of work and time.

However, at the Fall Fiber Festival, they separate the wool by hand a little bit, but mostly they use cards to make it smooth. They also have machines which do not take any electricity to make it smooth. They also use spinning wheels which do not take any electricity, but people have to sit there and use their feet to push the pedals to spin the wool. Also, you have to fit the wool while you pedal your feet. It does the work very fast and neatly. I was pretty amazed by all these machines because they make a big difference compared to how slowly work is done when using your hands.

My hometown's animals are very important to us because we depend on them as well as our

own fields. For example, we use their milk to make butter tea, Tibetan beer, cheese, and trade goods. Also, we use their meat to eat or trade for rice or other things. Moreover, we use their wool to make clothes, household items, and shoes, or to trade for other food or goods.

In contrast, at the Fall Fiber Festival, one lady said that she is doing it as a hobby. She and her husband are not dependent on their animals. The animals keep the land clear. The main goal is to sell their land after it goes up in price.

***"I was pretty amazed by all these machines because they make a big difference compared to how slowly work is done when using your hands."***

In brief, I like some ways in which Americans take care of their animals because it is less work when you breed animals and use machines to shear, card, and spin the wool. That way you have more time to do other work.

However, I do like some Tibetan ways that the people of my hometown use because they do not force-breed animals and animals can choose their own. Also, we do not keep them in fenced pastures, so they can go wherever they want to and they have more freedom.

# Check Your Lights!

By Wanxia Wang (China)

When I got my driver's license, I was very careful and happy to drive my new car. Not for long. I now know what it means to be a "green horn."

A "green horn" is somebody who has just learned a new skill.

Even when I'm driving the speed limit, there are still some young drivers who honk their horns at me. I know they like to drive five to ten miles beyond the speed limit. They can see who is a new driver. Some people laugh at the new ones who are too nervous when they are driving. Some people have patience and are polite.

I have some other experiences of driving a car as a "green horn."

One day after class at ALC, I found my car couldn't start. I tried several times but failed. Suddenly, I remembered I didn't turn off the lights when I locked the door of the car. It was beginning to get dark, and I had an appointment in half an hour. I was so anxious. What should I do? Suddenly, I thought about my teacher, Holly. She was holding Dialogue Café in the classroom. Maybe she had some ideas. So I ran to Holly's class to ask for help. She introduced me to her students: "This is Wanxia. Her car doesn't start. Can anybody help her?" A student stood up to help me. Then he followed me out.

Outside, a student from another English class at the school came to give me a hand when he saw us open the hood. None of us knew each other's name. The two students worked together without a word. After a few minutes, they used jumper cables to jump start my car. My car engine started. I was so thankful to them for helping me at the critical time.

***"I was so lucky. But I don't want to be a 'green horn' any more. I'll take care of the car more carefully."***

Two weeks later, I discovered that one of the guys is my classmate's husband! The other guy is my new classmate!

Another time was when I was sitting in my class. Jim, another teacher, came in and asked, "Did anybody who owns a Dodge not turn off the lights?" Oops, it was me! Nice people everywhere!

A week ago, I got another lesson about turning car lights off. It made me scared. When it was dark, I thought about my car on the top of a parking garage. I remembered my teacher told us to watch out because there has been a sexual predator in Charlottesville recently. I felt scared when I was walking alone in the big garage. Meanwhile, I remembered a horrible movie .... When I got to the top of the

garage, I saw that a car's headlights were on. Who was there at this time of night? I felt my hair stand on end as I approached the car. Oh! My God! It's *my* dear car! The lights are on!

I was so sad I had forgotten again, but I was so happy that the lights still worked because I had installed an excellent new battery just last week! I quickly jumped into the car and locked the door. I decided this kind of thing can never happen again.

I was so lucky. But I don't want to be a "green horn" any more. I'll take care of the car more carefully. Who knows what could happen if the battery goes dead again because I forget to turn off the lights in some strange place.

If it really happens to you, please don't worry. Calm down. Find some people who can help you. If you are a AAA member, you can call AAA. They can come to your location in around one hour. You also can install a device inside the car that will remind you to turn off the lights. The best way is to check the lights before you leave the car. If your car battery runs down easily, you should go to the auto store and check the quality of the battery. Some stores can give you a free check. Changing it in time can save you time and money, and even your life.

# Why Don't We Have Life without Stress?

By Soohyun Kim (South Korea)

Last Friday, I woke up in the middle of the night due to a terrible toothache. This time, the intensity of pain was equated to that of a toothache I suffered from last year. A year ago, out of the blue, I had a severe toothache one Saturday, so I had to wait another two days to see a dentist.

Anyway, the nightmare came back this time again.

I couldn't stop thinking of last year's horrible experience. Last year, the pain was tremendous, and I couldn't but cry throughout the night. This time, I thought to myself, "What if the pain gets stronger day by day? Then will I have to go to the E.R. to have the tooth treated, or will I have to take tons of painkillers until I can see a doctor?" I was so upset that I couldn't come up with a good idea.

I rushed to go on the Internet, looking for an available dentist in the Charlottesville area who was available on weekends. I knew that a chance to see a dentist on weekends was very rare.

When I called 1-800-DENTIST, most of the dental clinics were closed; I learned, however, that when it came to an emergency situation, I could leave a message on the doctor's pager. I desperately began to leave messages, but my efforts were

all in vain. No one had returned my call by the next day. I was in anger and despair and felt like I was a drowning man reaching for a straw.

*"Many people say every illness comes from emotional stress."*

Then I got an idea: I could look in the Telephone Directory for the Korean community in Washington, D.C., where quite a lot of Korean businesses and companies are well-established. I found a dental clinic run by a Korean dentist. Although the time I called him was on Saturday, I instantly called him and, to my surprise, he answered the phone. While I was talking to him on the phone, all of a sudden, a phrase struck me: where there is a will, there is a way!

I begged him so that I was able to see him on that day. In fact, no dental clinic is open on weekends. But the doctor, who sounded so generous and merciful, let me see him on that day.

My husband and I rushed to Fairfax, VA, where the clinic is located. Soon

the doctor examined my troubled tooth, X-Rayed it and told me, "I cannot find any decay or cavity in your tooth. It doesn't seem to have any problems. I think you need to rest a while. It appears to be a pain caused by too much stress."

I couldn't believe what I heard from him. Then how come it was so painful? My humongous concerns, like expensive dental fees in case of having a root canal treatment, disappeared at once!

Still, I feel some pain on my back tooth. But, strangely, it's getting better now. Once again, I realize that we can well arrange our lives by having enough sleep and eating well. Then stress doesn't overwhelm us.

Many people say every illness comes from emotional stress. I learned this simple advice from my experience this time. Let's get rid of stress!

## Massage @ Home

**J.W. Gordon**

**823-6152**

**Swaleview@worldnet.att.net**

Swedish and Deep Tissue Massage in your home or in mine. Call for details.



# Beautiful West Lake

By Hong Zhu (China)

“Paradise is in the sky, Hangzhou is on the ground.” This sentence expresses the beauty of Hangzhou. Hangzhou is my hometown. It was the capital of China about 800 years ago in the Song Dynasty. The city is well known for its beautiful West Lake, which looks like a glittering pearl set in eastern China. It is located in the valley of foggy mountains.

In summer, the lake is filled with gorgeous lotus blossoms, except in the middle of the lake where there are three deep pools. In the middle of each pool there is a classical pagoda. When people travel in small wooden boats on the lake in the moonlight, we can see the moon reflected on the water in the center of the three pagodas. In the spring the lakeside is filled with bright-colored peach flowers. The landscape is as nice as if it were the

paradise of the human world.

West Lake has not only beautiful scenery but also many ancient legends. One of these famous tales is about a sad love story, the legend of a white snake. This snake was an incarnation of a beautiful fairy.

*“West Lake ... looks like a glittering pearl set in eastern China. It is set in the valley of foggy mountains.”*

Usually she was an ascetic hiding in a cavern in the mountain.

This story happened on a small broken bridge on West Lake. One day, the white snake turned into a pretty girl strolling on the bridge enjoying the peach blossoms. She met a handsome and poor young intellectual, named Shane. She fell in love with him at first sight. She decided to abandon her immortal life without any worries and married Shane. They lived together

very cheerfully.

But soon after that, the emperor, named Yuhang (the emperor who ruled the Heavens) heard the news. He was very angry with her because he had made the rule that human beings couldn't marry immortals. So he sent soldiers to capture her and put her deep under the pagoda called Leifen Pagoda. She was separated from her husband forever. You may imagine the sad face of the fairy and hear her gently crying.

People living in Hangzhou like to tell these kinds of stories. Maybe you don't know the fact that young people couldn't marry for love without their parents' permission in ancient China. Therefore, they made these stories to sympathize with those lovers and also to convey the desire for liberal marriage.

## Will You Marry Me?

By Alley Kim (South Korea)

One spring morning, about five months ago, my heart fluttered in anticipation. I thought that every day wasn't always the same.

In the evening of that day, I went to downtown Seoul to meet my boyfriend. In such a dream-like place, I ate dinner with him.

At that place, the moon was very shiny and sweet. I thought that maybe there would come some happening with good feeling. I was looking through the cafeteria

windows and listening to the beautiful music.

Suddenly, the waiter gave a big bunch of roses to me. I was amazed by that and saw my boyfriend's face. He looked shy. And he gave me an engagement ring.

He gently said, “Today I received admission to the University of Virginia. Thank you for your help. Will you go to the United States with me?” And he

added, “Will you marry me?” Then he put the ring on my finger. I was very confused and excited. I felt that today's date was very special to my life. I was confused.

“Is this real or a dream?” So I asked him to pinch me to make sure that this was not a dream.

I softly said, “Of course. I had been waiting for your proposal.”

At that time, it seemed like I was standing in the scene of a movie.

*“At that time, it seemed like I was standing in the scene of a movie.”*

Because of this, I came to the United States with my husband after I accepted his wedding proposal.

# Good Memory from My Childhood

By Ronen Kraus (Israel)

Everybody has good memories from his past. One good memory I have is from my childhood, when I was 9 years old. I grew up in a city in Israel, called Beer-Sheva. This city is located in southern Israel in a desert area, and the weather there is very hot and dry most of the year. I had two good friends with whom I spent most of my free time.

At that time, kids were spending a lot of their free time outdoors. It was the “dark ages” before the computer era. We used to play a variety of games, like soccer, marbles, basketball, flags, five cubes, and many others. Kids were allowed to do things that parents would not even dream of allowing them to do today. One of those things we did is the good memory I’d like to share with you.

In the middle of our neighborhood

we had a small playground with few pieces of equipment and no grass or fence. One day we decided to make a campfire in the playground. So, everybody brought two potatoes and an onion. We collected some wood to burn in the fire. It was a small fire which burned for about two hours.

We put the potatoes and the onions in the fire and waited until they were ready to eat.

Meanwhile, we played on a small carousel nearby. We told each other stories, jokes, or just kept silent looking at the flames. It was like time was not running forward.

After a while, we looked for the potatoes and the onions by spreading the burning coal. It was hard to

distinguish between the ingredients and the coals. Then we ate the potatoes and the onions, passing them around, and I still remember their wonderful taste. You had to see our faces after we ate them. They were all black, including our clothes. Afterwards, we put out the fire and went home.

We enjoyed it so much that it became a habit. We did it almost every other day for months.

What I treasure today and also miss is the unconditional friendship between us, the sense of sharing and the feeling that we were alone in all the world and the feeling that the clock had stopped its running.

Although we did not do anything special, it was original for us.

*“What I treasure today and also miss is the unconditional friendship between us...”*

## My “American Family”

*Continued from page 1*

The school is like a harbor. We rest here, we prepare to fly from here, ALC. The students come from all kinds of fields: they are medical doctors, nurses, teachers, Ph.D. students, cleaners, etc. If your English is not good, you can go to Jim’s class. Teaching in vivid ways, he is not only good at playing guitar, but he also has a clear standard American voice which makes an impression on you.

Heidi, the Dialogue Café teacher, and volunteer Mike can help

students practice English after class. When you feel hungry, there is a kitchen in the middle of the building. It has vending machines, a microwave, a

*The school is a harbor. We rest here, we prepare to fly from here, ALC.*

refrigerator, and a coffee maker, etc. Students can talk and read in the kitchen area. Studying in school after class is welcome. In the hall there is a “Book Cart.” Students can help themselves to books for free, and you can also donate your favorite book to the Book Cart if you want. Program Director

Susan Erno said, “Make your study here like your home!” Sometimes she brings organic vegetables to share with us. Sometimes Holly brings beautiful flowers and squash which grew from her garden. In this school every teacher is nice. They are glad to help you: Leslie, Jim, Heidi, Debbie, Chip, Carol, Kathy, and Betty, too. They hope, through studying English, you will understand American culture and fill yourself out.

At ALC I feel like I am with my family.

# Stories That Make Me Laugh

By Samdup Bhuti Pittard (Tibet)

One day, I was sleeping in my bunk bed with small kids that I cared for in school in India. It was our duty to take care of small kids, wash their clothes and give them baths. Our beds had two levels. They were made of metal and wood slats inside. The top of the bed had a mattress, which was filled with yellow grass. It was pretty rough but comfortable.

That night was very cold, snowing and windy. I could feel the cold wind and hear the sound of breezes from my window, which was made out of colored green wood. When I looked through the window, it reminded me of my Motherland, Tibet. The Motherland, where I was born and which gave me the most happiness in my life. The Motherland, which was surrounded by beautiful mountains covered with snow and where you always heard the voices of religious musical instruments. It was so joyful.

That night, I was feeling lonely and sad, but at the same time, it made me remember my family whom I left many years ago because the Red Chinese government occupied my Motherland. I was thinking about my family, friends and my country for a while. Then I fell asleep. In my dream I was in my village in Tibet with my younger brother, Tenzin Naldup. When I was in Tibet, I usually took care of our goats. I had to take the goats to the high mountains or hills. Sometimes, my younger brother came with me to look after the goats. I was very happy to be with him. He and I got along very well. We went very far away from home and close to the big and high mountains and hills. We looked around the mountain and felt the cool breeze and listened to the sweet sound of the birds' song. It

was so beautiful and quiet that I felt like falling asleep and relaxing and feeling the beauty of nature. I told my younger brother that we would rest for a while, and we took a short nap. For a while, we forgot about our goats. Especially, one of the goats had a baby in her stomach. Her baby was very ready to be born. When we woke up, she was crying. We went quickly and checked on her. Her baby was born and lost.

We were so worried and searched for the baby goat. Suddenly, I realized that an eagle could have taken the

baby. For some reason, I looked up in the sky, and I saw an eagle. We both chased after the eagle. We did not see there was a big hole, so we both fell down and got hurt. I was so worried and called for my brother.

This is a true story but that night I remembered it in my dream. When I woke from the dream, I was on the ground at my school in India. My friend, Dolma, asked me what happened. I told her about the dream, and she asked me if the dream was true or false. I said to her it was true; it happened when I was 7 years old and I missed my family. She said that she understood missing one's family because she left her family in Tibet, too. She said, "Stop daydreaming." I got up from the ground, and my knees were turned into gray bruises. Other than that, I was all right.

On another night, I again had a dream about a memory with my younger brother. We were on the mountain looking after our goats.

We left our goats and walked a little away from them. It was so beautiful and you could see green grass everywhere. We wanted to play a game, but we didn't know what to play. Somehow my younger brother got an idea, and he asked me if we could play "pee competition." I said all right, we could do that. We peed as far as we could through the high hill and deep hole. The hole was very deep and wide. We both laughed and laughed and hugged each other.

*"I think a dream is just a dream. Whether it is good or bad, don't try to believe in it too much."*

Suddenly, I heard a noise saying, "Get up, girls." When I woke up, I was in my bed and realized I had been dreaming again. I touched my sheets and the

sheets were wet with a big yellow spot of yellow pee. I felt pretty ashamed and got cleaned up. My home mother did not scold me because I was old enough to understand what I did. She did punish me a few times when I made mistakes when I first came to her home; they also were dream mistakes. Sometimes dreams are good to have, but other times they are too complicated and weird. The dream is just a thought that we are thinking about something or remembering about someone. Sometimes, we have good dreams that make us happy, but other times the dream will make us depressed.

I think a dream is just a dream. Whether it is good or bad, don't try to believe too much in it. In my case, in my dream I was in Tibet and very happy to be with my younger brother, but in the end it put me in a little trouble. However, I always remember my family and friends. They come to my dreams a lot.

# Freedom Makes a Heart Bloom

By W. S. (Tibet)

When I was living in Tibet, someone told me that the U.S. is a free country. People can talk about everything, even about politics.

In my country, we can't talk about politics. Even if you are from another country, you shouldn't talk about the problem between Tibet and China. So at that time, I was afraid to talk about politics even in simple conversation.

I am happy I came to the U.S. and had the opportunity to know about the U.S. and many different things. I have lived here for two years, and I have seen that many things are not so bad, even though I miss Tibet. The main reason is that people can talk about anything, even about politics, and people are very nice. They don't care what country you are from or who you are. If you have any problem, then they will like to help you very much; they don't expect anything from you in the future. I think this is why the American culture is different.

It wasn't what I imagined the U.S. was going to be like. I imagined that every place would have big buildings and not have many small houses or historical buildings.

But it wasn't true. The U.S. has many small houses and old buildings. It is very beautiful,

and I think they should keep those houses and historic buildings for their culture and remember past times. Also in the U.S. the places are beautiful and clean, and it is convenient to go shopping, go to school, and do other things.

In Tibet, we also have many small houses and historic buildings, but when the Chinese came to my country, they tore down a lot of houses and very old buildings, especially the monasteries, and even now they never stop doing it.

Anyway, the person who told me the U.S. was a free country was telling the truth. Everyone can talk about everything, even politics, and after that you will not have any trouble.

Also, even if someone knows more things than you, you don't have to be shy because you think you don't know much. They never belittle you, and they will give you the opportunity to know things from other people. I think that is another way American culture is different from other countries.

When I came to the U.S., I was

afraid to talk about politics and even to speak English, but with many people's help and time, I am more comfortable to talk to someone and never feel scared or lonely. So I am happy I had the opportunity to come to the U.S. and have many opportunities to know things.

One very important thing is I am able to achieve real freedom of my heart and mind. This is the best feeling I ever had in my life.

***“One very important thing is I am able to achieve real freedom of my heart and mind. This is the best feeling I ever had in my life.”***

Yes, of course, I am sure there are many things I still need to know about the U.S., and I may learn things that are not ideal, but the good way of the U.S. is that it is a free country, so I believe people can change everything.

Also, I know some of the American people sometimes talk too much about their lives.

My hope is that they will have the opportunity to go out and see other countries and the lives other people have. I think it will be a very good experience for them, so they will realize that this is a wonderful place to live.

# Student Highlights!

The Multi-Cultural Brief is beginning a new series dedicated to highlighting the rich diversity and talents of students taking classes at the Adult Learning Center. We call this series "Student Highlights," wherein students from the ESL Newspaper Class conduct interviews with fellow students. What follows is the result of an interview of Juan Carlos, a student in the ESL Advanced Conversation class conducted by two students in the Newspaper Class, Soohyun Kim and Chia-Hui Huang.

## Juan Carlos

By Soohyun Kim (South Korea) and Chia-Hui Wang (Taiwan)

Juan Carlos, an ESL student in the ESL Advanced Conversation class at ALC, comes from El Salvador and has been living here for about seven months. He has two brothers. He is a handsome man, and he is also unmarried.

His main purpose for coming to the U.S. is first, to work, and, second, to learn English. Right now, besides taking English classes at ALC, he is working at Christian's Pizza, one of the best pizza places in this town. He plays various roles there: taking orders, making pizza, and doing some chores as well. Since he seems to enjoy his work and studying English, he has no

plan to go back to his country for the time being.

Before he came to this small but historic town in the U.S., he majored in journalism; at the same time, he was a

*"Before he came to [Charlottesville], he majored in journalism; at the same time, he was a cashier working for a supermarket in El Salvador."*

cashier working for a supermarket in El Salvador.

His first impression of Charlottesville was that it is very cold compared to his country. While Virginia has four distinct seasons, El Salvador has, according to him, only two seasons, summer and spring. He said, "My hometown and Charlottesville are very different in terms of weather, people, and, of course, language." On the other hand, he thought that people are friendly here.

He came to Virginia in February, staying at his

aunt's house where his aunt and a little cousin are living. After staying there for two months, he started to live by himself. Sometimes he misses his mom, grandmother, and two brothers who are still in El Salvador.

Since he said that he is sometimes lonely, we asked him whether he is thinking of marrying someone soon. But he was quite determined to say, "Now that I am focusing on work and studying English at the same time, I have no thought of getting married yet."

Charlottesville is a really good area for him to find a job and make money. Although El Salvador is his home country, finding a job there is very frustrating. Part of the reason is that personal connections are the most important factor in finding a job. That is why Juan Carlos prefers working in the U.S. where hard-

### November 2004

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>7</b>	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>14</b>	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>21</b>	22	23	24	<b>25</b>	26	27
<b>28</b>	29	30				

### December 2004

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
<b>5</b>	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>12</b>	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>19</b>	20	21	22	23	24	25
<b>26</b>	27	28	29	30	31	

- Nov. 18: Harvest Potluck at ALC.
- Nov. 24-26: Thanksgiving Break. No classes.
- Dec. 9: Health Fair at ALC.
- Dec. 17: Classes end.
- Salsa Sunday: Charlottesville Salsa Club (www.cvillesalsaclub.com) sponsors a weekly opportunity to learn and practice Salsa and other dances in a smoke-free nightclub atmosphere. Special: Advanced Salsa Workshops by Edwin

Roa 6:45-7:45, \$10. Then Edwin will give a beginner’s salsa lesson at 8. Edwin gives a very energetic group session that gives you a cardiovascular workout too! His lesson is included with the regular admission fee. DJ’s music begins after the lessons and is 85% salsa mixed with other Latin styles. Complimentary water and sodas. The Outback Lodge, 917 Preston Ave. 8-12:00 p.m. \$5.00 (members \$3.00). 979-7211.

## Student Highlights!

*(Continued from page 14)*

working people bear fruitful results in the end.

On top of this, he also believes in the power of education in the U.S. He said, “By giving more opportunities to people, people in El Salvador can have more jobs and my home country can be more prosperous.” He is a diligent and honest young man. In the future, when he goes back to his country, he hopes to become an English teacher there.

He is very pleased with living in Charlottesville where people are well educated and

polite. But, there are a few things he hopes for the city of Charlottesville. One is that the city build more schools for foreigners, and another is that the city develop a more convenient transportation system so that foreigners like Juan Carlos are able to have easy

access to go anywhere at any time within the area.

Finally, when we asked him for his hobby, he said that he likes playing guitar; in fact, as a professional guitarist, he can play all kinds of genres with the guitar. He also can play soccer. Unfortunately, he does not have enough time to play a soccer game in the U.S. because he is so busy with doing his work and studying

*“But, there are a few things he hopes for the city of Charlottesville. One is that the city build more schools for foreigners, and another is that the city develop a more convenient transportation system...”*

# GED Graduation 2004

By Leslie A. Furlong

On October 21st, the Regional GED Graduation Celebration was held at Albemarle High School where 39 students were honored and received their GED degrees. It was an event that reminded everyone — students, teachers, administrators, family and friends — why the work of Adult Education is so inspiring and so important to all our lives.

The event opened with vocals by the Albemarle High School Jazz Ensemble, followed by the Processional where the new GED graduates entered the hall.

**Joseph J. Johnson**, Director of CATEC, welcomed everyone and introduced themes that were to recur throughout the evening. He spoke about how each student and supportive family member and friend present was a testament to “overcoming obstacles and challenges to achieve something wonderfully special.” All these people together have “inspired all of us and created the incredible love that exists in this room.”

There were four featured GED

graduates who spoke. **Thelma Byers** of Greene County spoke of the importance of taking that first step, so crucial to achieving any goal, let alone one as challenging as getting a

*“Shoot for the moon.  
If you miss the moon,  
you are still up there  
among the stars!”*

**Thelma Byers**

GED. Besides relying on spiritual support, she also thanked her fellow classmates, her family, and her teachers for their support and encouragement. Lest anyone underestimate the degree of hard work and determination it takes to complete the GED, she told of one person who took the test 17 times! She herself did not pass the first time and had to confront her own doubts. “Maybe I’m too old,” she thought. Clearly, by her eloquence as she stood facing the audience, she was a testament to the fact that “you are never too old to learn.” As she told her own children, “Shoot for the moon. If you miss the moon, you are still up there among the stars!”

**Sherri L. Davis**, also from Greene County, spoke

beautifully about what this achievement means to her and about how powerful it was for her to be able to graduate the same year as her own son.

**Bonnie L. Herring** of Albemarle County again articulated how reaching for educational goals is not just an aspiration of the young. For her, it has been a long hard road. Becoming a graduate is something she has wanted to achieve for 25 years. She described how, like so many, she entered adulthood early with many responsibilities she had to fulfill. As a result, she said, even though throughout her life she has always loved to read, she somehow felt that “part of me could not get beyond age 15.” Later, “I saw my children graduate, and it tore me up. I have grandchildren now, and I have what I longed for for so many years, a diploma.” She went on to say that not only was this night “a celebration of our courage, strength and will to succeed,” it was also a celebration of the importance of giving back to the community and the importance of the educational process as an ongoing part of one’s life. As a volunteer ESL teacher in the Albemarle

(Continued on page 17)

## GED Graduation 2004

(Continued from page 16)

Adult Degree Program under Rebecca Snider, she finds that “helping others to learn is one of the most satisfying things I do.”

**Timmy L. Turner** of Charlottesville spoke with brevity, humor and irrepressible enthusiasm. To a cheering audience he said, “I was real lazy, and I decided to do something about it!” While he made us laugh, his words spoke to the importance for all of us to recognize that “laziness” can be as much an obstacle to the life we want as other challenges.

The keynote speaker was **Charles Martin**, Executive Director of Urban Vision. His warm enthusiasm, admiration, and respect for the graduates and their families and friends was evident throughout. He emphasized that, even as earning a GED is a significant achievement, it is also not an end, but a beginning. He said, “Regardless of how you were born, you can set your mind on what you want to accomplish and go after it. The first step is education.” His hope for the graduates and for all in attendance is that

achieving this goal has shown them that they now have the ability to “set about figuring out what [they] need to know in order to do what [they] have never done before.” Real wealth, he said, is not about financial gain or meeting the goals others may have for you, but “achieving what *you* set out to achieve.” He stressed the importance of letting go of attitudes that say, “*They* are gonna do what *they’re* gonna

*“I’m a ninth grade high school dropout. But being in my senior years, I still have a thirst for learning on any level.”*

**Rosa Barber, Voices 2003**

do,” thereby giving “them” unnecessary power over your life. Instead, he urged, “Always be you. Don’t worry about *them*. Believe in yourself and know that you can. Then you will be just fine.”

**Susan Erno**, CCS Adult Education Coordinator, presented the Outstanding Student Award in honor of **Rosa Barber**, “a mother, grandmother, community activist, public housing advocate, a writer and a lifelong learner. At the Adult

Learning Center, we knew her in the latter role — a lifelong learner. For 2 years, Rosa was a regular in the Tuesday-Thursday afternoon GED class. She was looking forward to taking her test and being here today. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Rosa died suddenly last month. In recognition of her determination and spirit, on behalf of Charlottesville City Schools, I present this

Outstanding Student Award in Rosa’s honor to **Maria Heath**, her daughter.”

After the presentation of diplomas, graduates,

teachers, family and friends, amid boisterous cheers, bouquets of roses, and flashing light bulbs, gathered for refreshments provided by Greene County Culinary and Arts I and II.

Representative Mitch Van Yahres in absentia spoke for all of us when he said, “I am in awe of each and every one of you for what you have accomplished. Now go out and do good things!”

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