

Charlottesville City Schools
 Adult English as a Second Language Program
 Adult Learning Center
www.charlottesville-esl.org

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.

Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?

One of the definitions of “melting pot” found in Heinle’s Newbury House Dictionary of American English is “... place where immigrants mix into the main culture.”

In Classroom A of the Adult Learning Center on Preston Avenue, we like to think of an immigrant mixture as more of a “Salad Bowl.” We all come together to make a wonderful dish—yet, each one keeps his own color, taste and identity.

On Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., there is a “mixing” going on in Classroom A. Students from many countries come together to learn English as a Second Language for the first time. In the process, they learn about each other and become not only classmates, but good friends, as well. Let me tell you about the people in the “bowl”:

Essi is from Togo in West Africa. She was a merchant in her country. Essi and her husband Joseph (a French teacher), came here in 2003 along with their youngest daughter. There are four older children still in West Africa. Coming here under the sponsorship of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Essi and her family have immersed themselves in the community through work

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From the Editor

Happy spring to one and all!

In this issue we continue to feature articles written by the members of the ESL Newspaper Class. Because, however, not everyone who is a part of the Adult Education program is able to be a part of that class, we decided to expand our reportage by inviting each class to contribute articles about who they are and what interests them, and/or what information they would like to share about their daily lives in Charlottesville. In this way we hope the reader will better appreciate the wide range of levels of English proficiency, the diversity of life experiences and abilities, and the multidimensionality of concerns faced by adult learners in our community. In this issue, three classes are represented. One is

the daytime ESL 100 Low Beginning class led by Kathy Garrou, where each student is introduced. Another is Leora Brown's evening ESL 101 High Beginning class, where several students wrote letters to the Transportation Committee at the Virginia House of Delegates regarding the issue of providing interpreters for those taking the Virginia Driving Test. Members of Debbie Tuler's ESL 104 Advanced Conversation class each wrote their own articles around the theme "What to do when you are unemployed in Charlottesville," reflecting the fact that many in our population do not have a visa status that would allow them to work even though their level of English proficiency is high and often they have advanced training from their home cultures. Their writing demonstrates a wide range of interests and enthusiastic curiosity about making the most of life here in Charlottesville.

One more thing. Please check out our website at www.charlottesville-esl.org. The *Multi-Cultural Brief* is now available on line! Just go to where it says "Click here for the current issue of the *Multicultural Brief*." Also, 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 and submit it to the *Multi-Cultural Brief*! All submissions are considered. You don't have to be part of the Newspaper Class to contribute! To submit material visit us at 1000 Preston Avenue, Suite D, Charlottesville, VA 22903 or call 434-245-2817.

Yours truly, Leslie A. Furlong, Editor

Myungjin Oh, Assistant Editor

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Festival Coming Soon....

Fun for the Whole Family...

Do you like meeting people from around the world and learning about them, their countries, and their cultures? Do you want to share your culture with others? Do you enjoy music and dance? Do you have children who like stories and enjoy doing craft projects? Do you like eating good food? Do you want to learn more about resources that are available to internationals in Charlottesville?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then the Charlottesville **Festival of Cultures** is for you!

The Festival of Cultures celebrates the linguistic and cultural diversity in our community as well as increases awareness, understanding, and appreciation. It provides an opportunity for building a bridge of communication between new Americans and established residents. The Festival creates a friendly and welcoming environment that fosters tolerance and respect for all residents in our community.

The Festival is free. You can bring a picnic or buy food from vendors.

For up-to-date information, watch the Adult Learning Center bulletin board, or visit our website:

<http://avenue.org/festivalofcultures>

Where: Lee Park (on Market Street, between 1st and 2nd streets)

When: Saturday, May 13, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Two Chinese Dances at the Festival of Cultures

By Hong Zhu (China)

The 3rd Festival of Cultures in Charlottesville will be held at Lee Park on May 13, 2006. There will be many splendid performances there include dancing, singing, musical instrument playing, displaying of different countries...etc. Here I'm going to paraphrase two Chinese dances that will be performed during this time. This performance will be three or four Chinese dancers dancing with beautiful Chinese songs.

The first one is a modern song. It is titled Da Lang Tao Sha (It means big wave sifts the sand).

This song tells about a young man longing for his lover. He is sitting on the beach, looking at the gentle waves on the sea in the sea breeze, missing his lover who is far away from him. He whispers to his lover in his heart, "Are you willing to be a companion with me forever? No matter how the world changes, no matter how long the road of life is, I'll always cherish you in my heart."

The second one is a traditional song like Romeo and Juliet. It is titled Liang Zhu. This was a very famous legend in ancient China. Liang was a young man. Zhu was

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Two Chinese Dances at the Festival of Cultures

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a young girl from a wealthy family. They met each other in a small private school. During their studies, they became very close friends. Because a girl was not allowed to go to school in ancient China, Zhu assumed a male identity in the school. When the time

came for Zhu to return home, she invited Liang to visit her residence. When Liang came to her home a year later, he was surprised to see Zhu's true

identity. He was overjoyed to know Zhu was in love with him. However, Zhu's parents were prejudiced against him because of his lower social rank. They made her become engaged to another rich man. In great sadness, Liang fell ill after he returned home and died in great misery. When Zhu heard of this on her wedding day, she fled to his grave. Her tears moved the heavens, the earth beneath her cracked open, and she jumped into the open grave. Miraculously, the pair was transformed into butterflies. They lived together in heaven forever.

These will be only one of many wonderful performances and displays. Please come to see this annual event in downtown Charlottesville.

Voices of Adult Learners

By Myungjin Oh(Korea)

On March 23, 2006, the celebration of Voices of Adult Learners was held at Burnley-Moran Elementary School from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. This event is the part of Virginia Festival of the Book Event and this year was its 10th anniversary.

Susan Erno, a co-chair of the Regional Literacy Coordinating Committee, opened this event with greetings. She told the audience that they have collected over the years over 1,000 stories. It shows us that the event has been successful.

This year, 90 adult learners wrote and shared their stories about 4 subjects: education, family, the world of work, and life changes. There were 17 winners and 12 honorable mentions.

That night, 21 writers read their stories to the audience. Some of the stories showed us the importance of education. Some of them were about the miracles of their lives. International adult learners

read about cultural differences, missing their families, and adjustment to or challenges of the new world.

Some of winners touched us with the real meaning of a family. Some shared stories about their jobs or the routine of their work. We felt that they were proud of their work.

All these stories were very impressive. We learned many things from them. If you want to read these stories, go to the Regional Adult Education website:

www.avenue.org/adulted.



Virginia Cavaliers

By Selina, Cong Qu (China)

Walking on the streets of Charlottesville, you always see an orange symbol like this: a capital letter “V”, and below it, there are two crossed swords (sabers). You can see it anywhere — on hats, T-shirts, flags, or cars.

However, what’s the meaning of this symbol? Where is this symbol from? I believe you are also interested in it as I am. Now let me tell you something about it.

“Walking on the streets of Charlottesville, you always see an orange symbol like this: a capital letter “V”, and below it, there are two crossed swords (sabers). You can see it anywhere — on hats, T-shirts, flags, or cars.”

The symbol is called “Virginia Cavaliers.” It is often used to represent the Virginia football program (as well as other athletic programs). Just like other American universities, sports are very important traditions for the University of Virginia. Each UVA student loves and feels proud of this logo. This logo has now become the most marketable symbol of Virginia athletics.

So where does this logo come from? The logo first appeared in 1994 as part of the Cavaliers' new football helmet design. It was designed by a student of UVA, Matthew Welsh, who received a bachelor's degree in studio art from UVA in 1994.

But why is it called “Virginia Cavaliers”? There is another story. In the beginning of last century, two alumni of UVA wrote a song for the football team of UVA.



“The Cavalier Song”

*Come and sing dear old Virginia's name
And make the Blue Ridge roar
For the world yields honor to her name
Who knew her deads yore
Then make each heart a flowing bowl
And pour our pledges strong
As down the ages still we roll
Virginia's triumph song*

*Once more our might has won the fight
We gain the victor's due
And all men raise their voice to praise
The orange and blue
So, through the years, like Cavaliers
We'll shout Virginia's name
It e'er shall be on land and sea
A sign of might and fame.*

This is a beautiful and encouraging song, which says that the sports traditions are just the same as enduring martial glory. Though it didn't become the traditional song of UVA, it left a resounding name for the university: “*Virginia Cavaliers*”.

Of course, if there were no real Virginia cavaliers existing in the history, this name would not be accepted so widely. The cavaliers were not civilian cavalymen or soldiers. They were royalist supporters in the royal colony of Virginia at various times during the colonial period of the United States.

Now, do you understand the “V-Swords”?

Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?

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the Adult Learning Center.

Elena comes to us from Mexico. She was a surgical nurse before coming to Charlottesville and now does some private duty nursing with older adults. Elena and her family (which includes her husband and three sons) have been here for three years. One of her biggest pleasures (outside of ESL 100) is spending time with her grandchild.

Sakhi Ghulam, a former Minister of Commerce in his country of Afghanistan, came to Charlottesville under the IRC sponsorship in 2001. Sakhi and his wife are very proud of their five children and twenty-four grandchildren. Three sons live in Germany; one daughter is in Afghanistan and the other daughter is in Virginia. Sakhi and his wife are happy here and hope to become U. S. citizens.

Andreia joined our class in January, 2006. She came to Charlottesville with her husband, Luis, who is involved in scientific studies at UVA. Having been married one year, this is her first trip to the U. S. In Brazil, Andreia was a teacher of Art and Decorating.

Zarkpa is from Liberia and came here under the sponsorship of the IRC 19 months ago. Zarkpa was a merchant in Liberia where her husband was employed as a teacher. She is the mother of three young children

who keep her very busy at home.

Carmen, a former Commerce worker in Mexico, became a student at the Adult Learning Center in the fall of 2005. She has a son who lives in Charlottesville and a daughter who is in Mexico. She spends her spare time baby-sitting for friends and reports she is very happy in Charlottesville.

Vera comes to us from Brazil by way of several years in Angola. She has been a Certified Pre-school teacher. Vera and her deceased husband are the parents of four children. She is here in Charlottesville for awhile with her daughter, Evlese. This changeable east coast weather has caused her to have an asthma attack—we are hoping that spring will bring good health for her.

Miwut, from Thailand, is a mother with teen-age children. One of her children recently received his GED in our Graduation ceremony here. She says her children inspire her to want to speak English. She has a strong sense of family and keeps up with her extended family in the U. S. and back home in Thailand.

Safia, who is Turkish, came here from Russia with her five-year-old son who is now in kindergarten. She has an eleven-year-old step-son back in Russia. This lady, with a sparkle in her eye, is very excited now.

She has recently gone to work, which makes her feel more self-confident about her life in the U. S.

Abuidris and Hawa are from Liberia and joined our class in March. They are a nice addition to our group. Hawa has recently gone to work but comes to class on her days off.

Cecelia is also from Liberia. She is the mother of three children. One of her daughters has been very sick but is now improving. Like all mothers, this has consumed a lot of Cecelia's thinking. The other mothers in our group have been consoling to her. Cecelia works at the University of Virginia Hospital.

Maygul joined our class in February. She is Turkish and is from Russia. Because it is hard to get to Preston Avenue by bus (even though she lives in the city), her walk to class takes 30-45 minutes each way. This does not keep her away. She is a model to all of us to do more walking. She is the mother of three grown children and has 3 grandchildren. All of them are here in Charlottesville.

The "mixer of this bowl" is Kathy, who feels honored to be in the presence of such brave, caring, and interesting people. She hopes the time together in ESL 100 will give the class members a sense of friendship and community in the U. S. that will continue long after they have moved up to another class!

Snow in Charlottesville

By Huang Lin (China)

Snow is a common thing to many people, but it is unusual for me. I never saw it snow in my hometown.

Yesterday morning when I got up and drew the window curtain as usual, I found it had snowed. I was surprised by the beautiful prospect out of the window. It had been snowing since the night before.

“When I walked around the corner of my apartment building, I was amazed by some small trees. They couldn’t be trees. They should be works of art.”

What a wonderful world! All the things were adorned by the pure white snow, and they looked completely different from yesterday. All the trees, cars, houses and the ground were covered by the snow. It had been done so completely and so perfectly, and all this had been done silently. You didn’t even know when it began and when it would finish.

I went out of my home and entered a world of snow. The air was fresher and the sky seemed clearer than usual. The snowflakes flew in the air, slowly and lightly. The pure snow could be seen everywhere, and the whole world was soundless. The squirrels, which yesterday had been jumping between the trees in the yard, seemed to have disappeared from the world.

When I walked around the corner of my apartment building, I was amazed by some small trees. They couldn’t be trees. They should be works of art. On their small branches, there were layers of snow. They were piled so high and so incredibly on the small places. It seems that they

were so weak that they would collapse in a breeze. It couldn’t have been done by an artist, but must have been done by nature. So I slowed down and passed by smoothly. I feared they would be hurt by the sound of my footstep. I went back home and got my camera. I didn’t want to miss this beautiful picture and lose all my memories.

I liked to walk on the snow. I not only liked the sound and the feel of stepping on snow, but I also liked my footprints on the snow. The footprints were like the memory of our life, and they recorded that we have been here. They are clear at first, and fade with time, just like the memory of yesterday.

When I looked at the pictures, I understood suddenly why when people thought about Christmas, snow would come to their mind at the same time. Only the pure white world could match the holiness of faith.

Snow calms the mind, purifies and quiets it, like the world of fables. I like snow, and I like the world of fables. If you haven’t seen snow, don’t forget to give yourself a chance to really see it.



Letters to the DMV

Do you think it would be a good idea for the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) to give driving license tests ONLY in English? With no interpreter services? And no availability of tests in other languages so we can get our drivers' licenses while we work hard to learn English at the Adult Learning Center at night? We didn't think it was a good idea in ESL101 p.m., so we wrote letters to the Transportation Committee at the Virginia House of Delegates asking them to not pass House Bill #287. It worked! They met the next week (in early February) and decided not to pass the bill! Phew... Below are the letters we wrote.

Dear Transportation Delegates,
Enclosed please find heartfelt letters from ESL students at the Adult Learning Center in Charlottesville, Virginia who are very concerned with the pending House Bill 287. They need interpreters at the DMV in order to take and pass their driver's license tests while they are working hard to acquire more English skills. Please oppose

HB 287 and support these recent legal immigrants in their struggle to become productive members of our community.
Leora Brown (Teacher – Adult Learning Center)

Dear Delegates of Virginia Transportation,

“We need to drive a car to go to our job, the store, and everything. I need to go to school to learn English.”

I think it is important to have interpreters for driver's license tests. We don't speak English. We need to drive a car to go to our job, the store, and everything. I need to get to school to learn English. I need a car for my business, to do my laundry, and to visit friends and family and, if my children need to go to the hospital, I need a drivers' license.
Sincerely,
Ibradim Kibarov (Russia)
Hlaing Soe Soe (Burma)
Luz Maria Martinez (Mexico)
Yasha Ismailov (Russia)

Dear Delegate Gear, Hugo, Scott, Jones, Bowling, and Welch,
I think that it is a good idea to have interpreters at the DMV. I needed to drive to

go to work, but I didn't speak any English, and I would not have been able to take the driver's license test in English. Interpreters will help people who are new here.
Natalya Kibarova (Russia)

Dear Delegate Welch,
I think that it is a good idea to have interpreters at the DMV. Some people need to go to work very early, fore the buses can take the bus. I would always be late and might lose my job. Many people would not be able to pass the test without an interpreter and this would be a hardship. For example, we would have to walk home from school, and this would take one hour. Also, if I had to walk or take the bus to work, I would be late. If I am late three times, I will lose my job. My friends need interpreters at the DMV, the hospitals, and for social security. Please help my friends. Thank you so much for helping me and my friends.

Sincerely,
Kibar Kibarov (Russia)
Dear Delegates Gear, Hugo, Scott, Jones, and Bowling, I

Coming Back to My Other Home

By Viviana Bernal (Colombia)



It is funny to say this, “coming back to my other home,” but it is the truth.

Why do I say it? Because I am from Colombia, and, of course, that is my home. I went to my country for the Christmas and New Year holidays. It was a good time. I saw all of my family, and we spent two weeks together. But I missed my other home, here in Charlottesville.

My husband and I arrived here for the first time in August of 2005. We have been here for almost six months and are having a really good time here. My husband is studying for an MBA (Master of Business Administration) at Darden and now has a lot of friends and activities.

In my case, I also have many friends, special women that are in the same situation as me. And I have found a lot of things to do: English courses, tutoring sessions, volunteering, and activities with different groups (DPA and International Women’s Group).

Now we have our lives in Charlottesville. It is a good and different experience for us. We have more time together and for ourselves. It is interesting, because in Colombia we didn’t have that time because we had jobs there and we worked a lot.

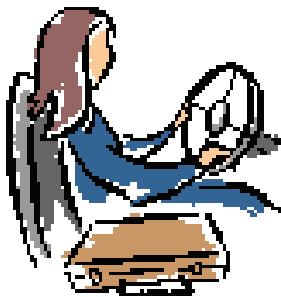
For everything that I mentioned above, we are happy here and we know that we need to enjoy this time. We want to spend more beautiful moments here. We have met wonderful people and we want to meet more people in the future.

Letters to the DMV

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think that it is a good idea to have interpreters at the DMV. Some people need to go to work very early before the buses can take them there. If I don’t have a driver’s license and had to take the bus, I would always be late and might lose my job. Many people would not be able to pass the test without an interpreter, and this would be a hardship. For example, we would have to walk home from school, and this would take one hour. Also, if I had to walk or take the bus to work, I would be late. If I am late three times, I will lose my

job. My friends need interpreters at the DMV, the hospital, and social security. Please help my friends.



Thank you so much for helping me and my friends. Sincerely,
Kyaw Zin Moe (Burma)
Dear Delegates Welch,
Gear, Hugo, Scott, Jones,
and Bowling,

I think that it is a good idea to have interpreters at the DMV. We don’t understand English very much, so we need interpreters. If we waited until we understand English, it would take many years to get a driver’s license. We wouldn’t be able to go to work or school without a license. We need to earn money to live. Even though I am taking an English class now, I would not be able to take the test without an interpreter. Please keep the interpreters. Sincerely,
Saik Worn Oung (Thailand)

My Lifelong Friend

By Myungjin Oh (South Korea)

When I graduated from elementary school, I saw that most students cried because of parting from their friends and teachers. I also did that. But I forgot them very quickly. After I grew up, I thought it was very childish. However, I might still be childish.

Last August I visited Korea for one month. It was my first visit since I moved to the U.S one year ago. I met my family and friends. I had a great time with them in Korea. However, my mind was heavy because I needed to say good-bye again to them like one year ago.

I have a best friend in Korea. Her name is Ji-Ae. We met each other when we were in middle school. Her character is very different from mine. She is so strong, brave, and energetic. She always takes care of me like an elder sister.

When I went back to Korea I had so many stories to tell her and my other friends. We met each other almost every other day, and we traveled to the small island called An-Myun in Korea. We chatted like when we were young, played some card games, and had a picnic. I really wished that time would stop there.

The last night at the island, we had a small party. We talked to each other and laughed as usual. Suddenly, she stopped laughing, held my arm and said to me,
“Do you really have to go back to the U.S? Please don’t go!”
I could not say anything to her. We both knew that I had to go back to the U.S.

The day before I returned to the U.S., she visited my house. She gave me a card. When I took the card, I felt that it was a little bit different from the usual cards which she had given to me. It was small but very thick.

“What is this?”

She didn’t reply and just looked at me.

I opened the envelope. There was a card with folded money. “What is this?!” I asked again with surprise.

“We are old enough to give money to each other instead of presents.” she said composedly.

“I can’t take this!”

“I don’t know what you need and I worried about your heavy luggage. Just take it.”

“After she left, I stood there for a while in a daze. My hand holding the envelope looked so awkward.”

We looked at each other for a moment without any word. I saw tears in her eyes. Probably, she also noticed mine. I couldn’t say good-bye to her. We just hugged each other.

After she left, I stood there for a while in a daze. My hand holding the envelope looked so awkward.

How many times do I have to feel heartbreak to say good-bye to people that I love? I definitely know the second time is easier than the first time. But it is still difficult for me.

This December 18th is her wedding day. Even though I can’t participate in the ceremony, I want to say to her, “My heart is always with you.”
Congratulations!

My Japanese Friend

By Jing Xu (China)



Tomomi Takatori is one of my foreign friends. She is from Japan and came here with her husband. She is quiet and elegant, just like traditional Japanese girls.

“Tomomi is a responsible teacher, considerate and kind-hearted.”

For various reasons, I'm planning to accompany my parents to visit Japan this summer, so I've been learning Japanese from her recently. Tomomi is a responsible teacher, considerate and kind-hearted. Besides that, she has much experience in teaching. She used to be an elementary school teacher in Japan. Last week, she showed me a sheet, full of simple sentences in both Chinese and Japanese languages with English pronunciation written by hand. Her handwriting was beautiful and neat. I was so moved that she spent so much time preparing for the lesson! The class, of course, is interesting and meaningful. It is much better than the class I took when I was in university. Actually I studied Japanese as a second language when I was in school, but I forgot almost all of it.

Once we played a game named "pictionary", which requires one player to draw pictures in order to explain the words, and others to guess. It can help us to memorize vocabulary.

To my surprise, Tomomi is also good at drawing! She told me that it was hard to explain the meanings to the young kids sometimes, so she learned the skill of drawing pictures, for vivid pictures are easy for children to understand. Just think about it; do you know how to draw an ant? Tomomi showed me the exact way, which contains many details. So I can tell that she must be an excellent teacher in Japan.

“Last week, she showed me a sheet, full of simple sentences in both Chinese and Japanese languages with English pronunciation written by hand.”

Moreover, she does well in skiing! Because her major was physical education in university, she was able to tell me how to control my balance, how to reduce the speed, and even the principles of skiing. Wow, what a full-skilled teacher!

Nowadays Tomomi is learning Chinese as well, because her husband is a Chinese speaker. That's a chance for me to do something for her. I am grateful to have such a wonderful, talented friend. She is going to take her driver's exam next month. I hope she can get her license as soon as possible, and enjoy her life more.

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.

Pains of Learning English

By Huang Lin (China)

What is the meaning of English for me? Is it a painful experience or a gift? I don't know.

I was born in China and lived in a village when I was a boy. At that time, my life had nothing to do with English. It was in middle school that I began to study English. My English teacher was a handsome young man who had graduated that year, a really professional guy. At the first class, he told us that "studying should be self-disciplined. I hate students who are forced to do too much homework." We all cheered for our great teacher who knew us so well. But a week later, I found that I could not be as self-disciplined as I expected. I felt that my brain was like a strainer; that is, I continually forgot the old knowledge while I studied something new. Therefore, most of the time, I got a D. Fortunately, I got a high pass at the high school entrance examination after I exerted myself to study English intensively for three months.

After I got to senior high school, the situation didn't improve. I forgot most of the English that I had learned by heart for three months during the summer vacation. My English teacher liked using slides with lists of questions and asking questions by turns. I spent most of my time preparing my answer instead of listening to the teacher, but it did not always work. Sometimes another student's answer was not correct so the teacher would pass the question to the next student. And the most terrible thing took place. The answer you prepared didn't fit your question! You

should prepare the answer of the next question if fortunately there was enough time. Or you should say sorry to the teacher, and it may become a terrible thing to some

"I felt that my brain was like a strainer; that is, I continually forgot the old knowledge while I studied something new."

student after me. I felt very nervous in English class at that time. Another interesting thing took place at the opening class. There were many teachers from other schools that attended my teacher's opening class. My teacher knew I was not good at English, so she asked me a very easy question, which she thought everyone should be able to answer well. "What is your favorite sport?" she asked. And she was so surprised that she could not say a word for several seconds when she heard my answer. Because my answer was "blackboard," although what I wanted to answer was "basketball." From then on, my teacher didn't dare ask me any questions at opening class. Fortunately, I got the highest score during my college entrance examination.

I had an English unit examination, which was not important, during the first year of university. When I finished and looked up, I could easily see the answers of my classmate who was seated in front of me even though I was short sighted. His paper was so exposed

and the letters were so big. I could not help changing some answers I was not sure of to his answers. When the results came out, I got an unbelievably low score, much lower than what I had gotten before. It was the only time I had ever cheated on an examination. I learned a lot from it. There were three important things I would never forget. The first was, never cheat on an examination. The unbelievable low score was a warning for me. From then on I never cheated on an examination, even if sometimes when I finished and looked up again, because I knew it was my true score, regardless of how low or high, and I deserved it. The second important thing I knew was that the student's English was as bad as mine. And the most important thing was that I found there were two different papers in that examination. I got paper "A" and he got paper "B". It was the reason that the proctor did not warn my classmate when his paper was too exposed to me.

During college, the only course which I failed was English. It hindered me from getting a scholarship for two years. But fortunately again, I passed the CET4 (College English Test grade 4) at once, although I had failed at my CET1 and CET3. CET4 is the most important examination at many colleges. You can't get your bachelor degree if you don't pass the examination. After the CET4, I threw away all my English books and celebrated the fact that I wouldn't need to learn English anymore.

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Pains of Learning English

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Two years later, I wanted to attend graduate school, and I had to take the entrance exam unexpectedly. Good luck would not always be. I failed my English examination this time.

After graduation, I worked at an IT (Information Technology) company as a software engineer. Most documents about programming were in English, so I still couldn't escape the suffering of English. I read the documents with an online dictionary. I also dreamed of having a wonderful translator some day.

At one point, I decided to study hard at English, and I hoped I could find some method that would help me learn English more easily. I was attracted by all kinds of learning means and memory theories. I searched the Internet and read

“Good luck would not always be. I failed my English examination this time.”

many people's advice: that is, learn English every day, listen to the radio when you are waiting for the bus, speak English with your family, watch English movies, review the knowledge from time to time, etc. At last, I found that my English didn't improve a bit because I had spent more time searching the methods of learning English than on studying English. Even today, I still can't help reading it and wanting to know what is said about it when I surf the Internet and find someone announcing there is a new

method of learning English, though mostly there is nothing new to me.

Things change unimaginably. I had never thought that, one day, I would live in a country where all the people speak English. I nearly didn't say a word when I took the plane from China to the U.S., and I worried if I would be able to take the right airline when I changed airlines.

Now, I live in Charlottesville, and everything is new to me: new country, new people, new friends, and new language. English also brings many friends to my life, though I only said a few words a day during the first two months here. I attend Bible Study, and I study English at the Adult Learning Center. I have met wonderful instructors and classmates from all over the world.

On the road of my learning English, there are too many people I want to thank. Thanks to my wife; I would not have stayed here and learned English without her. Thanks to my teachers who taught me in middle school and high school. Thanks to Tom, the parson of the United Presbyterian Church, who was so busy but still tutored me every week for several months. Thanks to Holly, who was so kind to me and encouraged me to speak English at Dialogue Café. Thanks to Leslie, who encouraged me to write in English and copied my article for me last time when the copy machine was broken. There would not be this, my first article, without her encouragement. Thanks to Jim, who taught me many things

about living in the U.S. Thanks to Ed, who has invited me to many activities. Thanks to all my classmates, who gave much pleasure to me.

“Things change unimaginably. I had never thought that, one day, I would live in a country where all the people speak English.”

Sometimes it seems that I am unlucky, for I never can escape the suffering of English. Sometimes it seems that I am a really lucky guy because I always have an opportunity to learn English. Since I can't escape learning it, I will face up to it. This time, I will not only learn English but also speak it and use it. I can not be overcome by English but will overcome English with hard learning. Bless me and keep an eye on me. Good luck to my friends, who are also suffering learning English.



Bay Cruise

By Eva Horvath (Hungary)



I love the ocean and the sea. Actually, I love every kind of water. I love the waves, the salty wind, the animals, and the endless range. If I have an opportunity to go on a boat I catch it immediately.

I spent a couple of months in California last year, mainly in the Bay area. It was a very varied environment for me. There are mountains there and bears, eagles and condors, deer and hummingbirds, and of course the Pacific Ocean. That was the first time I saw seals, sea lions, and whales. I couldn't wait to go boating.

When I arrived in San Francisco, my first thing on my "to do" list was walking to the harbor. And it was so nice! I was starting to look for a good cruise offer when a huge boat started. There were a lot of tourists on board. They were loud, and there was a loudspeaker, too. One man was shouting that "this will be a spectacular experience for you. We will show you Alcatraz, the prison of the prisons, and the most wonderful Golden Gate Bridge..." and so on.

People were screaming after every sentence. I was shocked. This wasn't what I wanted. We did try some with my husband to find a fitting bay cruise for us, but a couple of weeks later we gave up trying.

One day we were walking near Fisherman's Wharf and a sailor stopped us. He offered a cruise

for us, for a very affordable price. We asked him about his boat, and he showed it to us. It was a very old wood fishing boat. We liked it a lot. We asked about the time of the departure, and he told us, smiling, now, if we want to do it. Of course we did.

The boat was nice and authentic. There were old fashioned instruments in the small cabin, but what we really loved was the wooden steering wheel. It had a fine woody and oily smell.

He told us stories about his hard fisherman years and how he injured his back and his hand, and about boating, San Francisco, the port, Alcatraz, and also about the port where American soldiers used to board during the Second World War.

At one point the captain asked my husband if he wanted to try steering the boat. Of course he did. It was great to see him doing this, it was fun for the captain, because this way he could rest for a while in the bow, and it was an unforgettable experience for my husband.

Meanwhile we saw pelicans, jellyfishes, sea lions, and seals in the water, and also there were some starfish stuck on the boat. The weather was so nice, I could take a lot of pictures of the bay. It was really fortunate, because most of the time the bay is foggy.

On this trip we saw San Francisco and the surrounding area from a completely different view. We also saw beautiful sails, lots of sea animals and the other side of the fancy piers. We heard interesting stories and experiences from first hand, we had a lot of fun, and no one disturbed us at all. We had enough time to see what we wanted, to observe things and listen to each other. I believe it is worthwhile to look for personal memories anytime even if it takes time.

My Personal Experience with Reporting

By Viviana Bernal (Colombia)

One of my activities in Charlottesville is my newspaper class. January 18th, 2006 was my first class, and it was the same day a reporter, Kate Andrews from the *Daily Progress*, came to our class and talked about her job.

In this moment, I thought, "Oh my God, I can't do this. It is very difficult for me."

Before her visit, Leslie, our teacher, asked, "Who wants to volunteer to write about her speech?" And I said, "Me. I want to try."

Oh my God, I don't know what I was thinking at that moment because it was my first time in this class. I didn't know about the methodology or how the class worked, but I did it.

When Kate Andrews started to talk, I began to feel fear because she spoke fast and I needed to take notes. In this moment, I thought, "Oh my God, I can't do this. It is very difficult for me." But after a few minutes, I started to understand everything, maybe not every single word, but the whole idea.

The funny part was my notes because I took three or four pages, but every other paragraph was in Spanish, my native language. I think it happened because my mind was busy understanding and putting ideas in my notebook. I don't know if that is normal, but it worked for me.

After that, in my house, I needed to organize my notes and put them in logical order to start my reporting. It was a little bit difficult, but I remembered Kate's words. She said that if you want to write a report, first of all you need to think of what the readers want to read, what is the most important thing, and then it is easy to structure your reporting.

That was exactly what I did, and I felt comfortable with my work.

Finally, my reporting was published in the *Multi-Cultural Brief*, the Adult Learning Center newspaper. I'm so happy for that!



My Babysitter

by Huyen Thanh Hoang (Vietnam)

There are many people that I will be thankful for all my life for what they have done. One of them is my babysitter, who lived with me for almost 3 years. She and I now live far from each other, but I still keep thinking and caring about her all the time.

When my baby was 4 months old, I had to go back to my job, and I looked for a babysitter. That was why she came into our lives. I was very anxious because she was only 16 years old. However, my anxiousness disappeared when I saw how she took care of my baby. It was even better than me. My baby followed her very quickly.

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My Babysitter

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The first year of a child's life is a sensitive time. Thanks to her, my baby grew up very well. My babysitter was a really responsible person. I saw that many times she woke up during the night to check whether everything was fine with my baby or not. When my baby got sick, she was so worried that she almost could not sleep. She stayed up all night to take care of my baby. I was very lucky to have her as my babysitter.

Furthermore, we had many things to share together, from our daily work to our feelings. My husband lived in the U.S. during that time. She helped me to overcome that difficult time more easily. I did not think she was my babysitter. She was much closer than that. We considered each other as sisters in one family.

One year passed very quickly. I still remember the first day she came and said that she would live with us for one year. I was sad to think that we would not live together anymore. It was so painful for me. She was an important part of my life. My baby and I really needed her. However, she did not let me be sad for long when she told me, "I cannot live far from you and Too (my baby). I want to stay with you and take care of both of you." We were smiling because of the happiness.

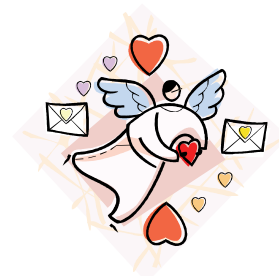
Last year, my husband studied so hard that he wanted me to come to the U.S. with him. There were many reasons that I could not bring my baby. It was so difficult for me to decide whether to stay in Vietnam or go to the U.S. My mind was torn between two ways. "Your husband really needs you. You should go and don't worry about Too. Believe me. I will try my best to bring her up well," she persuaded me many times. Finally, I left my baby in Vietnam with her and my parents-in-law. Without her, I could not be brave and strong enough to do that.

I admired her. She was much younger than me, but there were many things that I could learn from her: how to cook food for my baby, how to feed her, what to do when my baby got sick,.... She had a hard childhood. She left her home-

town for Hanoi to find a job by herself when she was 13 years old. Her parents were very old. They could not work and needed money from her. She sent all her salary to them. She took care of her parents when she was very young. Of course her situation was different than mine. The thing I have learned from her was a responsibility to parents.

"Your husband really needs you. You should go and don't worry about Too. Believe me. I will try my best to bring her up well."

Now, my baby and I are living in the U.S. It was lucky that before I left, I found a job for her. She is a worker at my friend's company. She has such a good job that both of us cannot imagine. We still keep in touch every week. In her letters, she is always afraid that my baby will forget her soon. Don't worry, my babysitter! We will remember you. How can we forget you? You are so meaningful for my family.



Chinese Paper Cutting

By Hong Zhu (China)

Paper cutting is one of China's most popular forms of folk art. Paper, scissors and engraving knives are the common tools to use. Paper cutting is a traditional art form that can be traced back to the 6th century in northern China, so it is a very ancient form of folk art.

Paper cuttings have different uses or purposes. Most can be used as an ornament on gates, windows, walls, columns, lamps, mirrors, and lanterns. They are still widely used today in some important festivals, especially during New Year. In China, it is very important to put paper cuttings at the entrance gates for they bring good luck to the family. Window paper cutting is one of the forms of folk paper art. Window paper cuttings are pasted on windows. In northern China, the windows of the farmers' houses are usually built with wooden shutters. The farmers put paper cuttings on the shutters on some important holidays, such as spring festival. Replacing old paper cuttings from windows with the new one signifies a farewell to the outgoing year and the welcome of the New Year.

During Chinese traditional wedding ceremonies, the parents of the groom have to paste a big red paper cutting of the Chinese character "double happiness" on the wall. To the Chinese, red is a

lucky color. The bride's family also uses these lucky designs to decorate all the china and gifts. These paper cuttings add joy to the celebration.

Also, paper cuttings can be used for religious purposes. Some serve as decoration for sacrificial offerings to the ancestors or the gods.

In addition, this art work is sometimes used as embroidery patterns for clothes. Some women put their favorite paper cuttings on their pillows or the tops of their shoes, which they then use to follow the patterns they embroider.

Paper cuttings are all hand made. They use designs of dragons, birds, people, livestock, flowers, and Chinese characters. You can glue them onto homemade cards or gifts to make them special.

How to make a paper cutting:

- 1, Design or photocopy the pattern on shiny thin paper;
- 2 cut out the shaded parts and around the outside;
3. Hand paint paper cutting with color.

Below are two samples:



Dragon and Boy



Giant Panda

Gender Equality, for Whom?

By Eunkyung Heo (South Korea)

March 8th was International Women's Day. As we know, some special days are instituted to make up for a weak part in the present, like International Women's Day. Women in many countries are in disadvantageous positions still now.

"Now it has improved through having a better understanding by some people, especially women. It raises the issue of "gender equality" between men and women."

And some women have jobs, but only a few of them who are gifted, a chosen few, get good jobs – so-called career women —, and many common women are in places with not good working conditions. Now it has improved through having a better understanding by some peo-

ple, especially women. It raises the issue of "gender equality" between men and women.

Today, "gender equality" is one of the big issues all around the world. There are conflicting opinions on this matter. Some say nowadays, women take places almost the same as men. (Some say women are already placed above men today.) Some say it is far from a reasonable level. It is hard to apply a certain standard bar to this case. Anyway, I can feel improving women's position in many ways both qualitatively and quantitatively. At this time, in some countries, the level of equality for women who are in seriously disadvantageous positions is clearly a problem.

When I was very young, I could hardly see women drivers or teachers, and also men hair-

dressers or dress designers, too. Now, I can see gender is not necessary for doing these jobs anymore. They are just doing their job without noticing their gender. Of course, still now, some kinds of jobs are influenced by gender both traditionally and physically, but the influence becomes fainter by change of technology and cognition. We often see individual character is a more powerful factor than gender character for doing something.

It is different from a certain gender wanting to take the place of another gender. It might be a matter of opportunity and choice. Now, many in the younger generations choose jobs that they want. There is no regard of prejudice because of their gender. It is working for both genders, isn't it?

What to Do When You Are Unemployed in Charlottesville

The ESL 104 (Advanced Conversation) class has discussed a wide range of activities we can all take part in when we are out of work. Some activities are those things you do if you are looking for a job; some activities are those you do if you cannot work or if you work but have some extra time. Read on for many ideas!

[Editor's note: Because there were so many wonderful ideas that the ESL 104 Advanced Conversation class thought of, we thought it would be best to share some of them in this issue, and some in the next issue.]

Charlottesville and Its Nature

By Edurne Busteros (Mexico)

Charlottesville is a beautiful city surrounded by nature and wildlife. This brings some important advantages and opportunities for the people who either visit or live in Charlottesville. People can enjoy walking throughout the city, hiking, swimming in natural places, etc.

During the past months, I have had the chance to see different animals. I have seen deer, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and even dif-

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Charlottesville and Its Nature

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Valley is an option. On the other hand, if you want to go swimming, you can enjoy Chris Greene Lake, Walnut Creek, and Mint Springs Valley Park. These three parks have sand beaches for freshwater swimming during the summer months. You can get more information about these and other places at www.charlottesville.org or call 434-970-3589.

Now that spring is coming, I recommend organizing with friends and having a picnic right in nature. This is a very relaxing way to have a good time with friends while enjoying nature.

Get Outside!

By Katy M. Jones (Quebec, Canada)

What are you doing here? Spontaneity is the motivation for my sporting life. So, I always answer: climbing, hiking, exploring, swimming, yoga, dancing, and snowboarding -- I just don't have the time for anymore diversions.



I very much enjoy the state of Virginia because of the nearby mountains and vast wilderness areas (state and national forests and parks). The area is amazing.

Two years ago, in the summer, I discovered Seneca Rocks in West Virginia. Being only 2 hours away from Charlottesville, it is a beautiful easy drive. You just head out to I-81 from 64 West and go north to Harrisonburg. Then, you're only an hour away on Route 33 West. Seneca has become my husband's and my destination almost every other weekend. As I immersed myself in the Appalachians and its hardy mountain culture and people, rock climbing became not only a physical adventure, but a sociological experience as well. I have met so many amazing people that have become good friends.

I'll never forget the first time I started up the 960 foot climb on Seneca's West Face. There I was, wondering what I had gotten myself into. I was sitting with only 3 feet of level, "safe" rock. Everything else was straight up vertical. Thankfully, we were with one of the best guides at Seneca.

"Do you like hiking? Keep reading and I will show you the way to one of my favorite hikes. Old Rag Mountain (3,268 feet) is one of the highest peaks in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Northern Virginia."

His name is Josh, and he works for Seneca Rocks Mountain Guides. I remember feeling my heart skip a few beats and my breath being a little short. I was hanging in my harness, 300 feet above the rocky base of the mountain, feeling so impressed. It was the most intimidating and serious mountain I have ever climbed in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The mountain is also very accessible for beginners. You should consider this life changing experience. I promise, you will never forget this time in your life. Go for it! Call Seneca Rocks Mountain Guides and ask for Josh, Justin, Jared, or Doug and tell them Katy and Russell sent you! (1-800-451-5108).

Do you like hiking? Keep reading and I will show you the way to one of my favorite hikes. Old Rag Mountain (3,268 feet) is one of the highest peaks in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Northern Virginia. It offers breathtaking views, unique terrain, and good exercise, and is only 45 minutes from Charlottesville. The hike is 7.4 miles and there is a \$5.00 parking fee that goes towards trail maintenance. There is a little box where you put your money and your vehicle information. More information is on the web at: www.nps.gov/shen. "Shen" stands for Shenandoah National Park. According to the guide book, the Shenandoah has endured human use

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Get Outside!

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for over 10,000 years and remains one of the most beautiful and natural areas in the entire National Park system.

You can learn more about activities in Charlottesville on this website : www.charlottesville tourism.org and after clic on activities. Also, www.charlottesvilleonline.com

Family Fun

By Hye Young Lee (South Korea)
and Angela Cho (South Korea)

Do you have any plans for this weekend with your child? Why don't you go to downtown Charlottesville for the Albemarle Family Fun Fair and Expo (Sunday, March 5)? Or if you shop at Fashion Square Mall, your family can see the artworks from Albemarle County students in kindergarten through grade 12, until March 11. Art includes 3-dimensional sculptures, ceramics, basketry, and more. If you want to find more events or daytrip ideas, kid's classes and activities, I recommend

looking at *Albemarle Family* magazine. This magazine, dedicated to being "the Ultimate Resource Making Parenting Easier and Growing Up Fun" for families in Charlottesville-Albemarle, publishes a weekly website, weekly e-newsletter, and quarterly print publications (spring, summer, fall, and winter).

You can find the print publications at over 150 wonderful family shops and fun spots all around Charlottesville-Albemarle and in the surrounding counties!

Online at www.AlbemarleFamily.com or www.albemarlekids.com they publish an extensive calendar of kids events and activities in the area, a comprehensive guide to family services, a free community classifieds and an interactive parent-to-parent section.

We hope this information makes many families who live in Charlottesville and Albemarle happy and fun!!!

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