



# Multi-Cultural Brief

Adult English as a Second Language Program  
Adult Learning Center  
Charlottesville City Schools

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## Charlottesville Festival of Cultures 2009

*"Go to Lee Park for a dose of culture."*

- Beth Duffy, WCAV TV anchor



*"Each of us is unique & special. Today, let's share, learn understand, appreciate, & celebrate."*

- Gertrude Ivory, Associate Superintendent, CCS

*"It's a great thing to do. It brings people in the community together."*

- Roger Gonzalez, Charlottesville resident



## See the World in Lee Park: Charlottesville Festival of Cultures 2009

By Susan Erno (Director, Adult Learning Center)

Once again, the Festival of Cultures, a project of the Adult Learning Center, transformed Lee Park into a world marketplace on a beautiful spring day. There are so many reasons to love this Festival:

Everyone is welcome. There are no longer any minorities. Regardless of how you look, you will see others like you in the park. Men in long white tunics or skirts, women in saris, bold African prints, kimonos, burquas, wooden sandals, painted hands and feet - all are here.

An appreciation of our differences and similarities grows. We look different; we wear different clothes; we speak different languages; we have different beliefs. But, we are also the same. We love our families; we want the world to be better; we are happy to be here today. The more we know about each other, the less we will fear each other. We can smile and spend time together on a pleasant afternoon with no yelling, no violence, no war.

*"I love this. It reminds us of the richness of our community. Charlottesville is home to so many people from so many parts of the world. It is a lively place."*

- Dave Norris, Mayor of Charlottesville.

And we celebrate all day long. From the opening African drum roll to the closing Morris dance, the park is transformed. Balloons, tents, food, children, bright quilts, wheelchairs and strollers, storytelling, laughter and dancing, hands moving, feet tapping - smells and sights and sounds in abundance.

*We learn more about Charlottesville, faraway lands, helpful agencies, culture, music, crafts, stories. "We want to show our culture and tell about our culture,"* said Ghulam Mohammed-Hakim, an ALC ESL

Student from Afghanistan. Buffalo Soldiers of Central Virginia share the history of

*"I come every year. I like seeing all the different cultures."*

- Elizabeth Austin, city resident.

African-American soldiers in the Civil War. "These soldiers made up first rate regiments of the highest caliber and had the lowest desertion rate in the Army." Children learn about mandalas, henna, Ojo de Dios, and origami.

At 4 pm the Festival ends. People reluctantly leave. Tents are lowered; tables and chairs are folded and stacked. The fullness of the day lingers. We have made connections; strangers have become friends. We leave with hearts filled with music and gratitude. "Today is the best day of your life," sang the Breath of Life Gospel Singers. It is indeed.

For more information about the Festival of Cultures, go to:

[www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures](http://www.avenue.org/festivalofcultures)

To watch a video of photos from the Festival, visit:

<http://www.adultslearn.org>.

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## From the Editor:

As the school year draws to an end, we celebrate a great sense of expansiveness of perspective in ourselves as part of the ALC community and as part of the greater Charlottesville community as a whole. The annual Festival of Cultures is one way in which we celebrate each year. We also celebrate through the voices of our students who experience first-hand what it is like to live internationally every day in small ways as well as large.

The world is becoming increasingly global and at the same time increasingly aware of locality, of roots, and of the importance of particular histories. These often contradictory feelings are the international experience. There is an indescribable joy, a sense of warmth and hope that we all feel as we recognize in ourselves and each other our common humanity. This sense of unity includes acknowledging that we are all part of the same global history and experience together the exploding expansion of modern technology. There is scarcely a part of the world that colonialism, western expansion, and modern technology have not touched (*Thai Baht*). Furthermore, no matter where we are from, we can all appreciate the challenges of being human beings who must rely on the fabulous good fortune of luck in this mega-technological world (*My Father Had a Strange Experience*) as well as the responsibilities of using technology in this world more mindfully and less wastefully (*The Other Side of Technology*).

But to be fully international does not mean to simply rest in the warmth of community, acceptance, and mutual concern and respect. Our individual histories do not just fade and go away. They are part of the fabric of interconnectedness that makes up each particular moment in the present. Just as it is important for Charlottesville, as it undergoes broad changes, welcoming newcomers from around the world, not to forget its own history, so also many if not most cultures around the world are experiencing profound changes that can have major unintended impacts on the ways people lead their lives, challenging their abilities to maintain continuity between generations (*Birds and Korean Daddies*).

Internationals tend to be restless, if not in actually moving from place to place, at least in perspective. Because they live between cultural worlds, as increasingly we all do, there is no final resting spot, no soft landing. Wherever one is, there is the shadow of a remembered other world, be it homesickness for family, friends, and one's cultural past (*Homesick; Time That Passed*); discontent when one finally does return home because home is not how one remembers it and one has already established ties and a way of life in the new world; or because what is new is not always as exciting as one imagined it to be (*Big City, Small Town*).

Furthermore, we hear about world events in the news that trigger flashes of memories from our childhoods, memories that were both small and inconsequential and at the same time are the threads that marked our survival. The history of technology as well as the political histories of our global community have many times been violent or have held a constant threat of utter catastrophe. How extraordinary and heroic that people could be willing to become "human bombs", not to threaten and destroy but to defend humanity, to ensure cultural survival, so vulnerable and small but more powerful than tanks, nuclear warheads or huge, ideologically polarized, politically powerful rivaling countries in quest of dominance (*Anyway, Who Would Be the Strongest Army in the World?*)!

So what is the place of cultural uniqueness in this increasingly global world in which we live? What a treasure it is to learn about kimonos, burquas, mandalas, and also the power of a single

word, “Wooree”, that allows us to see the world and our relationship to it with new eyes and to appreciate how important that single word is with all its cultural and historical implications for the people who use it (*My Wife, Our Wife - the Geography of Language*)!

To what extent do we leave our old cultures behind and completely adopt the new? Our cultural traditions can be part of the richness we bring to the new global world, but if we adhere to them too strictly, we may never find a comfortable place in which to live (*What I Am Looking for in a New Apartment*), and without learning about the ways of other people, we have no way to bridge the gap for new friendships and new ideas (*To Follow the New Customs or Not*).

Finally, as our children teach us, there is a way to play with all of this: when it is convenient, we can be older or we can be younger, whatever suits the situation best (*I Am Younger Now in the U.S.!*). But again, there are universal rules that can bring about the best in all of us: be honest, be generous, and, above all, be kind (*Honesty Makes the Best Relationships*).

Have a great summer!

Respectfully,  
Leslie A. Furlong, Editor

Leslie A. Furlong, Editor  
Sabra Timmins, Layout and Design

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### 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!

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## To Follow the New Customs or Not

By Ruizi Liu (China)

Living in another country could be an unforgettable experience of a lifetime. For most people, it sounds quite intimidating to live in a country where the language and customs are totally different from their motherland. You might come across a bunch of problems when you are abroad, like the different habits of eating, speaking, and writing, etc. However, it also can be a very enriching experience if you immerse yourself very well into the customs of where you live.

It is quite natural for a person who first comes to a foreign country to stay with people from their homeland because they feel more comfortable to speak in their native language and eat their home-style foods together. We are afraid of communicating with the local people because it is said to be quite difficult to immerse into their culture as a foreigner, so most of us just give up without even trying. I was like that until I met Jenny, a girl who is also from China. She is so different from most Chinese people here although her English was not good at all originally. She couldn't even get the chance to go to the advanced level ESL class as other Chinese girls who came to the U.S. together with their families. However, after her hard work on improving English, now she can not only speak English as fluently as the native speakers, but also she got a promotion in her work and received an offer from UVA medical school!

After learning about Jenny's experience, have you ever considered that changing a style of living can be very interesting, too? Here in the foreign country you can practice your second language as much as possible. At the same time, you may find something to eat that you really love, though most food is different from

what you used to eat in your country. Take me for example. I fell in love with baking once learned about it. How could I have imagined that when I was in China where people never use baking to cook? The process of learning to get used to a new country and customs is just like a journey: the more you travel, the more interesting things you'll find.



*I fell in love with baking once I learned about it.*

I have already lived in the U.S. for almost one year, and I prefer to follow the customs when I'm staying here. During the days I learned the culture, I made lots of American friends, and it turns out that knowing the local culture can be a bridge of friendship between two people. When we are together, we have many topics to talk about, and time flies when I hang out with friends, which will be a good way for getting rid of homesickness.

Furthermore, knowing more about the culture and customs can reduce the chance of misunderstanding each other. Some good habits can be considered very rude in another country. For example, to enter the home of somebody from Japan without taking off your shoes could be very annoying to the family host. If you behave according to the habits of your own culture without caring about the local customs, you may cause people's embarrassment or misunderstanding.

*(continued on page 6)*

# Homesick

By Sheila Fenske (Brazil)

Homesick is a word used to explain what people feel when they are away from home or country and miss it.

I have been thinking what I could write for this class, and I just decided today. I talked to a woman from another country who feels close to Germany. Although she has been living here for 13 years, she started to cry when she talked to me about her country.

It is interesting how each person feels differently about being away from home. There are so many new experiences when we move to another country, but sometimes those new experiences aren't important enough for people to feel at home. What can make us feel at home? Specific situations? Things? Food? Friends? I'm not sure about that. I think all these things can influence how we feel: living with others whom we like; food that does not taste strange to us; having good friends.

On the other hand, I think our past experiences are very important. For example, I was living away from my parents' home for about 3 years before I moved to the United States. In addition, my family moved a lot during my life. That makes the moving easier. It wasn't hard to move here although English is sometimes difficult. Another thing that can facilitate the move to a different city or country is the person's personality, how each one of us acts or thinks.

Or both: personality and past experiences.

Anyway, the most important thing is what we do to avoid being homesick. I always remember the advice that an *au pair* counselor gave: "Don't be alone; make friends and look for different activities." To summarize, try to be happy where you are and don't think about "how much better" things were in your home country.

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*(To Follow the New Customs or Not  
continued from page 5)*

In conclusion, living in another country can be a fantastic opportunity to broaden your horizon. With the development of the world, globalization has become an inevitable trend. Therefore, to know more about the customs in a foreign country can be a very rewarding experience through which you can not only be more open-minded and tolerant of other cultures, but also you learn more and improve yourself to become a well-rounded person. So, why not make an effort to follow the customs?

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## The Time That Passed

By Asuka Duryea (Japan)

This past February I went to visit my family and friends whom I had not seen in two and a half years. I couldn't be any more excited when I bought my plane ticket. When I saw my folks again, not much really seemed to have had changed at first, except for another wrinkle on my mom's face. However, while I enjoyed seeing my family, I came to realize that I had missed so much of what had happened in their lives for the past years.

So there I was, studying everyone's faces in the room, trying to capture the atmosphere I didn't recognize. There was a new face among the usual faces - my cousin's new baby. I never had a chance to feel my cousin's poufy belly before she gave a birth to her child and became a mother. Seeing that my cousin, whom I have known since I was little, and her husband, had started a family surely emphasized the fact that things had changed in the world I knew.

Then, there was a face that I didn't see as well. That is my grandma, who passed away shortly after I moved to the States. I couldn't make it to her funeral. Everybody was now referring to her as "was" in a tone that showed that's who she is to them now. Since I didn't actually get to see Grandma leaving us, addressing her as "was" still doesn't really register in my mind sometimes.

When I agreed to move to the States with my husband, I did so thinking that I could always fly back home for a visit. I now realize that, as long as you're not physically there, you can't really be a part of their lives.

However, experiencing this major disadvantage of living far from my home country has made me realize how much my family means to me. Maybe I would not feel the way I do now if I didn't have the distance in between. I have decided to stay in better contact with them since my return to the States. I can't wait to visit them again.

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### What I Am Looking for in a New Apartment

by Karam Kim (South Korea)

A nice, cozy, bright apartment might be every newly married couple's dream. Unfortunately, I chose my very first apartment through an on-line system without seeing the real thing. I spent two months with my rooms and now decided to move. Here, I will tell my views of what I considered in looking for a new apartment as a recovery from my first decision.

In the beginning, I was dominated by the Korean philosophy of 'Poong-Su' (literally

*(continued on page 9)*

### My Wife, Our Wife - The Geography of Language

By Jason Sung (South Korea)

Every day we talk and write with language. It is mainly through language that we humans communicate with each other, make others know our thought, and share each other's feelings and emotions. As one of the essential parts of culture, every language reflects its culture's character. Language is not only a communication tool but also the very home of thought. Thus we can draw out the cultural connotations from language.

*(continued on page 11)*

## Anyway, Who Would Be the Strongest Army in the World?

By Eunkyong Cho Heo (South Korea)

*“Bring it on. You are the worst ...muhng-chuhng-ee (idiot, stubborn and stupid) I've ever seen in my life!”*

*“Don't say what I wanted to say, ...chun-chee-ya (stupid moron, fool, &?#@). Go ahead.”*

Just before, they were talking about airplanes, satellites, UFOs, those kinds of things. And now they were about to settle today's issue of who would be the strongest army in the world between the Soviet Union and the U.S. by their fist fight in Korea in the 1970s on their way home from elementary school.

*“The strongest army in the world is the Soviet Union because their science is more advanced than that of the U.S. They were the first ones in the world to send up a satellite.”*

*“I've never heard of such a thing. My uncle, who came back from the Vietnam War, said the U.S. weapons are incredible so no one would defeat them.”*

I don't know how many of us there had been on or seen a plane close up. How many of us had even seen an American by then? Any different colored person would have been regarded as an American back then just as all Asians are usually regarded as Chinese by westerners now. Hallways in the school were full of dreadful posters and slogans against communists and communism. I had no idea what would be the connection between the satellite and being the strongest army in the world.

Anyway, who would be the strongest army in the world?

As many other places in the world, in Korea in the 1970s the place where my family moved to

was small. There was no pharmacy, no butcher shop, no bank, no Chinese restaurant, no hair salon, not even a proper grocery shop that could carry the bean sprouts and tofu for our humble daily meals. There was a very small store next to the school where we would get our pencils and notebooks. On special occasions, we could get gaudy snacks there. We treasured the small store. About the time I graduated from elementary school, there was a Chinese restaurant, a bank, a hair salon, a dry cleaner's, a bicycle repair center, and so on.

*(continued on page 10)*



## Birds and Korean Daddies

Julie Han (South Korea)

Wild geese, eagles, penguins! When you see the above words, what do they remind you of? Some of you may classify them into birds of passage, birds of prey, and into their habitats. Others may just envy them for being able to navigate freely with gorgeous looks.

It's very delightful for me to wake up every morning listening to birds singing. I sometimes wonder how many different kinds of birds are singing there. As a Korean who lived in Seoul for a long time, it's a wonderful experience to listen to such various birds' singing every day.

*(continued on page 13)*

*(What I Am Looking for in a New Apartment continued from page 7)*

‘wind and water’: *Poong-Su* is similar to the Chinese system of *Feng Shui*, although there are some major philosophical differences) as a guide to help me find a good apartment. However, I hardly ever found one since housing follows American customs. Therefore, I dropped one condition, a south-facing living room, which I had been most concerned about. Instead, I sought sunny windows as much as I could. Not only did I want to keep my rooms bright with sunlight, but I also wanted to save the number of lamps. I worked very hard. Once I found a possible apartment, I ran out several times a day to learn how much sunlight was exposed on the rooms.

I also needed to avoid big trees or a slope in front of my windows and to have an open view. It is what my mom and grandmother would consider. If the location is physically blocked, they believe that ‘luck’ belonging to home owners cannot flow through their home. This is not the only reason they believe this. It is also important to most people because a nice view helps people to have a good rest and meditation at home. Research says people who live in open view locations can easily release stress and have an open-minded attitude to their surroundings.

The first two things I talked about above might be on your list. But I don’t think ventilation would be big issue to everyone from different nations. Korean people use various kinds of spices and ingredients. And, some spices can be taken as an unpleasant odor to other people. I think it’s good to remove these smells as soon as possible, especially in the case of an international location. Having a good floor plan for air flow is also good to prevent humidity during rainy days. For these reasons my new apartment had to have no spaces air-blocked by walls or corridors. I believe it would work to keep the air fresh all the time.

I have questioned myself about my first settlement for a while. I have emphasized

these three points mentioned since they bothered me with the first apartment most. I spent an exciting time looking for new housing. Now I am ready to move to my new place and have confidence to make my own place with nice, cozy, bright feelings as I dreamed last time.

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## Big City, Small Town

By Maria Flores (Spain)

I went to NY last weekend. It’s a big, amazing, and noisy city. When you are walking on the street, you can see a lot of people. People from everywhere: whites, blacks, Asians, well-mannered, rough, cute, ... A lot of cars: luxury ones, old ones, cabs, ... There are very different kind of shops: most of them have four floors, and others are little, old, luxurious, ... The best brands in the world: Tiffanys, Nike, ... NY is covered with lights and LED’s at night. You can be as you want, dress as you want because nobody looks at you. I think that you can be the way that you really are. It’s a melting pot. You have all the opportunities in the world to do what you want.

In those moments you realize how different life in a big city is from the life in a small town. When you are walking on the street you can see ... nobody! Where are the people? I don’t know. Maybe they are in their houses, or in their cars. I walk alone, except downtown, where you can find someone drinking something or buying a newspaper. Of course there are shops in C’ ville but no Tiffanys. There isn’t any noise, only the birds, the trolley bus, ... Everybody knows everybody, and if you tint your hair red or you dress in something showy, people turn to look at you. And there aren’t too many opportunities in a small town.

Though really the good of the world is that you have both places: big cities for stimulating yourself and small towns for taking a quiet life. What do you prefer?

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(Anyway, *Who Would Be the Strongest Army in the World?* continued from page 8)

So there must have been lots of things going on. I remembered the song titled, *The Raven Master Sergeant Kim Returned from Vietnam*, which I overheard as I passed by those construction sites. However, the things that I most remember now are the events that took place along the road rather than its size.

It usually took about thirty minutes to get home from school by foot after class. Of course, going to school would take less than that. Those thirty minutes were enough to do many things: pick one person who should carry several backpacks by scissors-rock-kerchief in order lighten other bodies to do something else such as play on the railroad tracks, listen to someone's yesterday saga who so proudly wore an armor-like plaster cast: whether he was conscious or unconscious while being treated, among other issues. It was enough time to enjoy doing nothing but just walking alone along the road where *cosmos bipinnatus* had been planted.

We were taught to greet first whenever we encountered elders by saying, "... *an-nyung-ha-se-yo* (How are you?)" with a bow. In response to our perfunctory bobbing, they would ask if we studied hard and reminded us that we should study harder. But an old man, who looked like he was 200 years old from losing his teeth and hearing, responded somewhat differently. In a wobbly voice he shouted, "*I have. Have you also eaten well?*" He had to have been through the time when imperialism got his country, then again witnessed his people and his impoverished land torn apart by ideologies ... and he made it. He survived. In his generation, "*Have you eaten*" and "*Have you and all your family been well over the night?*" had been sincere greetings.

Who would be the strongest army in the world anyway? Just before the fist fight broke out, a halting, yet convinced voice claimed, "*I think the strongest army in the world is ours. My teacher said the Korean army was not scared of anything, even tanks. During the 6.25 (the Korean War) they became themselves as a human bomb.*" Since we were young and too naïve about life to figure out what the human bomb meant, we were all fully satisfied by our accomplishment of figuring out that we were protected by the strongest army in the world.

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## Thai Baht

By Jern Kittiwatanakul (Thailand)

Each country has its own languages and ways of life, so, as I can see, many people face various problems while traveling abroad. Definitely, the first barrier is a different language. It would become easier if people in that country could speak English as their second language. But in some countries which do not speak English, it might be more difficult for foreigners to travel around. If you are not fluent in English and plan to visit Thailand, you may have trouble understanding Thai English. Furthermore, only people in urban areas can speak English. I hope this article will help you.

(continued on page 11)

(My Wife, Our Wife - The Geography of Language  
continued from page 7)

Wooree, “we” or “our” in English, is one of the most commonly used words in Korean. Originating from the word *Wool*, a fence or a fenced realm, it implies a sense of shared-ness within a group including oneself. Within Korean society it is almost impossible to go without using it. *Wooree-zib*(our house), *Wooree-dongnae*(our village), *Wooree-nara* (our country)..... I like this word as it gives a sense of being together. But when it is used in a way such as *Wooree-Eumma*(our mommy), *Wooree-Hyung*(our brother), *Wooree-agi*(our baby), *Wooree-manura*(our wife), *Wooree-sillang*(our husband), etc., we can find something strange. Instead of “my brother” or “my mother”, “our brother” or “our mother”? What on earth is this: our husband or our wife? Can we share each other’s family or spouse? How do we dare to use such an immoral expression?! Surely we should not actually do this.

Then, what is this? Why do we Koreans use such expressions so often? One of the main reasons for this, I think, is in its connotation of contextual homogeneity. According to Richard E. Nisbett, an internationally renowned cultural psychologist of Michigan University who wrote *The Geography of Thought, Asians and Westerners think differently*. Through several experiments, he pointed out that there are fundamental differences in the ways East Asians and Americans perceive their environment and surroundings. He describes, in broad terms, Americans see themselves as individuals. Korean people usually give a high importance to context. In Korean, conversations are mainly based on it. So also does Korean language strongly enforce contextual thoughts. Recognition of relative age and personal relationship with the person you are speaking in bloodline, or kinship, and/ or geographical contexts is the most important key for successful communication. In this context we can understand the common usage of the word *Wooree*. As it has both spatial and spiritual homogeneity, it becomes one of the

basic terms in context-based Korean society.

So from now on if I say to you *Wooree-manura*, please understand it as *my wife*. It is only a cultural expression. It is just the same as when you say *my wife*. Thinking is not universally the same in time and around the globe. The same goes for language. To read of other ways of seeing, thinking and processing, the world will be more illuminating and challenging. In that sense, why don’t we start to call this class *Wooree class*?

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(Thai Baht continued from page 10)

In Thailand, money currency is *Baht (Thb)*. At present, one U.S. dollar equals 36 Thai *Bahts*. For bills, there are 20 *Thb*, 50 *Thb*, 100 *Thb*, 500 *Thb*, and 1000 *Thb*. For coins, there are 1 *Thb*, 5 *Thb*, and 10 *Thb*. Besides this, there are also 25 *satang*-coin and 50 *satang*-coin (1 *Baht* equals 100 *satangs*), but we rarely use them in everyday life.

In Thailand, whatever you buy, everything always shows its net price which already includes tax. In my view, shopping in Thailand is more convenient than in America because there is no need to calculate the net price while purchasing. Moreover, in restaurants the price shown on a menu always includes tax (about 7%) and service charge (about 10%) as well. But it is fine if you want to give an additional tip.

In addition, for other services such as getting a taxi, having your hair cut, etc., there are also differences from America or Europe because these services have no service charge or tip.

For the Health Services Center or hospitals, the payment of service always includes doctor’s fees, medical fees, and the cost of medicine. There is no prescription charge.

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## The Other Side of Technology

By Jason Sung (South Korea)

There is no question that technology has made a strong and significant contribution to human civilization. Truly technology has gone far toward solving the many problems humankind has encountered. Modern science has made it possible to develop technologies tremendously which have been essential to cope with various human needs. The development of an affordable hybrid car will do much to reduce problems caused by environmental pollution.

*(continued on page 14)*

## I Am Younger Now in the U.S.!

By Julie Han (South Korea)

As I get one year older every year, it's sometimes difficult to be aware of my age. When I see my children growing up, then I realize that I'm getting older and older. Oops! This is what my grandmother and then my mother often said to me. I must be getting older just as they did. How sad it is! But, I am happy here in the U.S. because I'm two years younger now than I would be in Korea. Do you know why?

When we count age in Korea, we use two different ways. One is the actual age on the basis of the birth date, the same as in the U.S. For many formal documents, we are requested to write down the date of birth and the actual age. And also for the candles on a birthday cake, we prepare the exact number of candles according to the actual age. However, another way to count age is commonly used in Korea. We don't use the unit of a month or half year even for mentioning age of babies and kids. As soon as a baby is born, the baby is one year old because we regard the baby as a complete person taking into consideration the period of being pregnant. And then all Koreans get one year older on every New Year's Day, January 1<sup>st</sup>, not on their birthdays. Then, this funny thing happens. If a baby is born at night on December 31<sup>st</sup>, the baby becomes two years old on the very next day even within several hours of the birth. Isn't that funny?

These two different ways of counting age are sometimes used for other purposes by my little boy. When he doesn't want to do something by himself, he says to me, "Mom, it's too difficult for me to do that. I'm only a five-year-old kid. Please help me!" On the contrary, if he wants to do something even though I don't allow it, he says to me, "Mom, I'm seven years old, as you know. I can decide what I want." What convenient excuses they are!

It's just a number mentioning age, and being two years younger will be reduced to only one year difference after my birthday. But, I really feel that I got younger and that I gained time of extra years when I came to the U.S. Maybe I could do something that I hadn't been able to do during the past few years. Isn't it nice that all of you are younger by as much as one or two years than you would be in Korea?

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However, regardless of how I feel about birds, there are some negative expressions about birds in Korea. It is said that terms have many different meanings depending on the cultural and historical context in which they are used. But the words “wild geese, eagles, penguins” have more of a sad meaning rather than a negative one in Korea these days.

In Korea, many students have to compete with each other even from elementary school in order to go to well-known high schools and eventually to enter a few prestigious universities. Exams are not everything in school life but they occupy a lot of importance. This causes too much pressure and stress on the students and forces them to attend private academic institutions after school in order to excel in major subjects such as math and English. They have to give some parts of their childhoods and accept such an exhausting life as it is believed to promise their successful and prosperous future.

Many parents are sick of the Korean education system and want their children to study in a better educational environment with the benefit of English education. That’s why so many students from elementary, middle, and high schools go to study abroad since the Korean government allowed studying abroad at an early age in 2000. As they go to study abroad at an early age, their mothers often go with them to take care of them. Then, the fathers are left alone all by themselves sending money to their families in foreign countries. These fathers are called “wild goose daddies” in Korea as they resemble wild geese in the aspect of their constant love and devotion to their families.

The original term was “wild goose daddy”. Since then, new words, “eagle daddy” and “penguin daddy”, are being used to indicate the fathers categorized according to their different situations. “Eagle daddy” means a daddy who can fly to his family any time he wants without any financial worries because he has enough means to do what he wants, the same as eagles in the world of birds. “Penguin daddy” means a daddy who can’t fly to his family and has to stay lonely in Korea in a cold and difficult situation because he doesn’t have enough money. He resembles penguins that can’t fly even if they have wings like other birds and who must stay on an iceberg in Antarctica.

According to the Korean Ministry of Education, the number of students who went to study abroad at an early age in 2006 was up to 29,511, 15 times more than 1,839 in 1999. And according to the research done in 2007 by Korean education researcher and professor, D. Lee, the estimated number of wild goose daddies will be up to 10,000, and 15% of them are sending more money to their families than their incomes allow. This specific phenomenon in Korea is causing serious social problems as well as family break-ups.

I feel sorry for the birds above mentioned as they could be angry and upset for being used in this weird situation. And I also feel sorry for those separated families and eagerly hope there is an improvement in the Korean education system in the very near future. Being family members together, whether they have enough money or not, whether they are in a difficult situation or not, isn’t it the most meaningful thing for a family?

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## My Father Had a Strange Experience

By Kyungna Park (South Korea)

My father receives an annuity payment every month, and it is paid into my father's Bank A account.

One day, he started to send some money from Bank A to Bank B, which was more beneficial. At first, my father went to Bank A directly several times and sent money from Bank A to Bank B using the banking device.

After that, he wrote the numbers of his account at Bank B in his notebook, and he used telephone banking. At the end of the process, information of confirmation for the date, the amount of money, and the name was heard. The sound from the telephone was not clear. Anyway, the owner's name on the account of Bank B was similar to my father's.

After several times of telephone banking, he saw his account at Bank B, but the money was not paid into his Bank B account. When he wrote the numbers of his Bank B account, he mis-wrote several numbers. If someone who was the owner of the account that my father sent money into by mistake didn't want to pay it back or said, "*It's not my business,*" it would be trouble for my father.

My father went to his friend, the manager of a branch office of Bank B to say, "*Help me!*" The friend asked his secretary to find out whose account this was. After a while, she reported back to him, "*The owner of that account is your wife.*" That was what it was. The owner of the account was the wife of my father's friend, the manager of the branch of Bank B. It was such a mysterious coincidence and so fortunate. Of course, my father could be paid back without any trouble.

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(*The Other Side of Technology continued from page 12*)

The influence of technology today is huge in its effect on every individual's life. We cannot live a single day without technology. People tend to believe what they have heard or seen from TV. It is quite true that we live in a technology-dominant society. Every week I communicate with my friends in Korea through the Internet. Just by attaching a web cam to your computer, you can talk with your friend while seeing each other's face. Sometimes I ask one of my friends in Korea to check and repair my computer through remote control technology. In these ways, technology opens a new world to us that was impossible in former days.

However, technology not only has positive aspects but also negative ones. Dark sides of technology are hardly recognized nor commonly accepted. But sometimes technology acts to make our eyes blind; it keeps us from becoming aware of danger. It usually weakens people's senses of the outside world. While it brings us a safe and convenient life, technology often leaves us unaware of our surrounding environment. Air conditioning and heating systems have taken away our immunity to harsh climate. Lack of awareness is apt to act as a cause of ignorance of responsibility. For example, every morning we flush the toilet water with no hesitation. We are often unaware of the effect of that action: the journey of the water we flushed and its effect on the environment. You flush, and you forget. The damage to our surrounding environment will follow thereafter.

Over-dependence on technology today may do harm to our future life. While we try to put technology to good use, we should consistently be aware of its effects. So, how about forgoing modern technology for a day or two?

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# Honesty Makes Good Relationship

By Ruizi Liu (China)

In my opinion, many factors can be taken into account for building a good relationship between two people. For example, caring, understanding, loyalty, trust, honesty and so on. Among these factors, honesty, which in other words is called telling the truth, is the most important consideration in most relationships.



First of all, honesty, which means never lying to each other, is the essential element for building a healthy relationship between human beings. Let's take marriage for example. As we all know, marriage should be built on the basis of trust in each other, and always telling the truth is the best expression of love. Not only telling the truth can help your partner understand more what you are concerned about, but it also helps a lot in improving mutual communication between the couple. Always be frank and open with your lover, your relationship will definitely be more and more intimate. On the contrary, if cheating happens between couples, their marriage will be totally destroyed.

In addition, talking about friendship, honesty is the most important factor to maintain this relation. For me, I would choose the honest person to be my friend, for the feeling of being cheated is so bad, and no one wants to be treated like that. Compared with caring, understanding, loyalty, trust, the opposite of honesty is the worst one for me to bear. Therefore, always telling the truth is the necessary factor for me to consider when making friends as well as maintaining our friendship.

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## 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

## CALENDAR DATES

ASSESSMENTS      *New students must take an assessment prior to first class.*

6/30/09   Tuesday   10:00 am - 12:00 pm

7/1/09    Wednesday   6:00 - 8:00 pm

7/2/09    Thursday   10:00 am - 12:00 pm

SUMMER CLASSES

July 6 - July 31

GED TEST

July 14 & July 15

### **ADULT LEARNING CENTER**

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