

# The IEP TIMES

Bringing the World to Eastern Mennonite University

March 24, 2005

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**March 22: Potluck with Conversation Partners**

**March 22: Community Service at Spotswood Elementary School**

**March 23: Community Service: EMU Family Fun Night for Waterman Elementary School**

**March 25: Good Friday – No classes**

**March 31: Community Service at Wilbur Pence Middle School**

**April 2: Field Trip to Washington DC**

**April 9: Community Service: Annual Blacks Run/ Downtown Clean Up Day**

**May 9 IEP Summer Session begins**

## *Harrisonburg City*

I have lived in Harrisonburg with my family for a little while. Harrisonburg is a beautiful, small city surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains. I love our mountains in the fall when trees turn red, yellow and orange. It is an unforgettable panorama. Besides the beautiful nature, Harrisonburg is a good place to raise a family. People in our city are very friendly and thoughtful. Our children have good teachers and good schools. I love our city. My husband often likes to say, "Harrisonburg is the best place in the world."

Anna Marchuk, Ukraine  
Advanced Level

Harrisonburg is a small city. It is in Virginia, in the eastern US. There are many people who live in this city because this city has good nature. There are a lot of mountains around it. There are many students who come to study in this city because James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University are here. Most of students come from other cities and other states. Some students come from other countries. There are a lot of restaurants in this city; for example, there are Thai restaurants,

Chinese restaurants, Indian restaurants, Mexican restaurants and a Japanese restaurant. There are many stores in this city, such as Walmart, JC Penney, and Belk. Though this city is a small city, there is everything in it.

Chawalit Iamkitphaisan, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

I come from Thailand. I have been in Harrisonburg for 2 months. I am going to study in IEP for one semester. After that I will go to my home country. I would like to introduce the places that people can go shopping in Harrisonburg. This city has 2 branches of Walmart superstore. You can buy everything there, and around the Walmart area there are many shops for shopping, such as Circuit City (an electronics shop, a pet shop, a bookstore, and Roses (a clothing shop). Everything is cheap at Walmart. Harrisonburg has a big mall area called the Valley Mall. It is close to Walmart on Route 33. You can buy everything there. I want to suggest that when you want to go to places that I mentioned you should go by bus. It's comfortable for international students. The regular price is \$1 but if you are an EMU student, you have to pay 50 cents. I suggest you take the bus route 5 because the bus route runs past a lot of shopping places. You have to believe me because I usually take the bus to many places in this city.

Apisak Sangpin, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

## *IEP House*

IEP is a very exciting program for all the people who like to learn or have new experience in languages. However, some of my teachers are very hard especially the teachers in grammar and reading classes. People are very nice. IEP is for students from other countries, such as Japan, China, Mexico, Honduras, Russia, and many more. The atmosphere at EMU and IEP is very comfortable. We all get along. Also, when we are at the IEP house we talk a lot about our cultures and share things. In my life, I never tried so many different types of food as I have

tried in IEP with the international students. Likewise, we share our opinions in the classroom too. When I was in high school I heard students talking about people from other countries, but I never really paid a lot of attention to them because I didn't know what it was like to get along with people who didn't speak English or my language, Spanish. I always talked in Spanish to people, but now that I am in IEP I have learned that if we talk to different people we learn a lot of new ideas and also we think differently. Anyway, IEP house is very challenging and also a good experience that I am having in my life. Thanks to IEP and my teachers my English is improving a lot.

Alicia Cardoso, Mexico  
Advanced Level

Do you want to improve your English language? Or do you have problems with your English? IEP can help you improve your English. IEP is the Intensive English Program. IEP has many good teachers. They are kind and knowledgeable. At IEP there are many international students. Every month we have a potluck. It is like a party to celebrate students who have birthdays in that month. Everyone brings food, soda, cake, etc. And we eat together. It is so happy. I have had good experiences and good memories. Here everybody is best friends. And they find conversation partners to practice their English.

Nont Mahittarithigrai, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

## ***Potluck***

Potluck is a very interesting activity at IEP. All international students and our teachers prepare and bring their food. We set the table and then we pray before we start to eat. It is fun to try different food and it is always delicious! We talk to each other and learn something new. Potluck makes us like one family. We feel closer and friendlier with each other.

Zhanna Bondaruk, Belarus  
Advanced Level

Since I came to the U.S., I have joined the potluck at the IEP several times. Now I find I like to join in the activity more and more. First, we often study English very hard. Everyone comes to IEP to have classes, so we don't have enough time to communicate with each other. But the potluck gives

us an opportunity to chat away at the IEP and relax from the tense study atmosphere. Second, the IEP students come from different countries. Every student brings their food which symbolizes a different culture. We understand different diets and cultures whenever we join in the potluck at the IEP. Furthermore, we bring different dishes. We have to introduce our dishes. We practice our English conversation and develop our speaking skills. So I enjoy attending potlucks even though I have to cook a dish. I can taste different foods and also learn things about different cultures and customs.

Jinzheng Wu, China  
Advanced Level

## ***Spring Break***

In Spring Break I went to Washington, D.C. for few days and I visited the National Museum of the American Indian. The museum consists of four floors and has about 800,000 collections. The collections have a very aesthetic, cultural, historical and spiritual significance. On the ground level there is a Mitsitam Café where people can enjoy meals and snacks based on the indigenous foods and culinary traditions of Native American. On the second floor the visitors can buy lots of wonderful accessories, books and CD's about Indian culture and arts. On the third and fourth level we can see three permanent exhibitions about universe, people and lives of Native American. On the level four there is a Lalawi Theater. The theater shows an interesting film which lasts 13 minutes that tells about Indians nature, history, culture, and arts. I was mainly interested in the nature, history, culture, religion and philosophy of the American Indian. Their daily lives are close to the earth and nature like water, forest, trees, rivers, fish, animals and seasons. The Indian religion, culture, art and philosophy dealt with the nature. Their history, however, was formed by two foreign powers that were the European settlers and Christians missionaries. It seems that the presence and influence of both foreign powers in the Indian's country and life had positive and negative significance. On one side, both European immigrants and churches introduced a new, modern culture and Christianity to the Native American; now many Indians can enjoy the modern civilization like education, health care, communications, etc. On the other hand, the presence of European settlers and Christian missions destroyed the Indian's culture, religion, philosophy, arts and nature. I spent 5 hours

looking at the Indian heritage. I think the American Indian museum is not only significantly artistic but scientific too. People can enjoy looking at the beautiful exhibition of the National Museum of the American Indian while learning something about the culture, history, philosophy, arts and spirituality of the Native American.

Paulus Rahmat, Indonesia  
Advanced Level

I went to Sarasota during Spring Break. I traveled with 12 EMU students. They were really kind and funny. When we arrived in Sarasota, one of my friends tore his jeans. He said that it was a memorial ceremony of visiting Florida. And they tried to take care of me well. The moment that we started one friend asked us to stop. She said, "We are missing Sang-Mi. Do you know where she is?" At that moment I was sitting on the seat in the back of the van. After that they tried to take care of me more. So I traveled very safely. We had many activities. We went to Miami Beach, Sarasota Beach, a national park and a theater. Among these activities visiting Sarasota Beach is my best memory. In Sarasota Beach we barbecued hamburgers. It was really fun! In addition, some friends had a sand fight. Even though they had trouble getting rid of sand from their bodies, the audience who didn't have a sand fight, including me, were very happy.

Sang-Mi Mun, Korea  
Advanced Level

During Spring Break I drove 1,000 miles. Even though I didn't know the roads well, I wanted to go on the trip. I didn't have much time for knowing that the road system was well organized. It was easy to follow the directions. So I could go to places where I haven't been before if I had a map. I surveyed a way to visit on the internet. And I printed out the map. We went to some places near Harrisonburg. Endless Caverns was the first place where we found and visited. It was not far from my home, about 20 minutes by car. That place is private so it is well taken care of. The cavern was discovered in 1879. Also, it is located on the side of the Massanutten Mountain overlooking Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley. Secondly, we went tubing on Massanutten Mountain. I went there before but I wanted to again with my family. Winter sports are fun for our family, especially for my wife and sons who like to ice skate. So we went there after lunch. And then we bought a ticket for all of us. We went up on the

summit and prepared to slide on the steep road. But my second son, 3 years old, changed his mind with fear. I had to stay with him on the summit. However, my wife and first son had a lot of time for sliding. At the end I had to come down with him on foot and it was a long walk. I was impressed by the beautiful view while driving on the highway. I think it will be more beautiful in May or June. Also, most drivers keep the law, and give me the way. In my country I always had to face the traffic congestion on the road. But in this country I haven't seen that yet. Roads are clear and open. By the way, I haven't gotten used to crossing the central lane on the street. Sometimes I can see the car crossing the way without a signal. Of course, safety zones in the central lane also are strange to me. But I think it is useful for drivers. Driving in this city is very interesting to me. I love to drive a car in Harrisonburg.

Sooncheon Park, Korea  
Advanced Level

## ***New Experiences***

I have come to America many times but I came only with Japanese friends, so I never went to an American restaurant and I didn't see American food. Now, I see American food every day. Many things about American food surprise me. First, American serving sizes are huge. The first time I went to an American restaurant, I didn't know how big it would be. I ordered a few things (main meal, salad and dessert) and the food came to me. I couldn't believe how big it was. Of course I couldn't eat everything. I ate only a quarter of it. Second, American food has many kinds of flavors and colors. For example, I thought coffee had only a regular flavor before but they have many kinds of flavors! In Japan, it is difficult to find flavored coffee because it is not popular. The most surprising thing is that a lot of American foods are fat free and sugar free. I hope many "fat free" things will sell in Japan because I want to eat, but I don't want to gain weight. I think Japanese people also think like me because many people worry about their weight. American people worry too much about their health and weight, but many American people are overweight. I wonder about this.

Ai Sato, Japan  
Intermediate Level

This is my first time in America. I have to adjust myself for eating, sleeping, transportation and study. The first week I only understood a few things and ate only a few things. It was hard to go somewhere

by myself because I didn't have a car and I didn't know how to take the bus. My first snow was too cold for me, but I liked it. I never saw snow before. I felt like a child in elementary school. I didn't have a car or phone and my host family had to drive me to school. My host mother cooked too much dinner for me and I had to finish it. It's good for me, however, to learn something new and find new friends. I don't like American culture, though. Most people live by themselves. They don't care for everyone. I think maybe it is the freedom Americans have. I studied until Spring Break. I went to New York to meet my aunt there. I went by bus. The bus was so dirty and the driver drove too fast. When I arrived in New York, my aunt took me and my friends to Atlantic City. We spent time playing the slot machines. I knew it was not good, but I played. I lost about \$50. My aunt told me some people have a goal to get make money from it, about \$50 - \$60 a day. I also saw a Broadway show there. It was good. We stayed in Atlantic City for 2 days. After that, we came back to N.Y. My aunt is a nurse. She works the night shift. She told me she left one hospital and now works in another hospital. She loves to take care of patients. In the daytime, she took us around to see New York. It has many buildings, people and cars. I don't like big cities. They are just good for a trip, not to live in. Every second was a good experience for me.

Nont Mahittarithigrai, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

I had never been outside my country before. I wanted to see things in other countries that I had never seen. I had a good opportunity to go to the USA because my university in Thailand contacted IEP for me and I decided to study there. At first, I didn't know anything about IEP or the USA. I only found some information on the internet. When I came here, I didn't know anything. How did I do when I arrived here? IEP sent someone who was a volunteer to pick me up at the Washington, DC airport. I lived with an American family. Everybody was friendly to me and to the other international students. I had to adjust my life because many things were different, especially the time difference from my country. The time in the USA is 12 hours later than Thailand. I couldn't sleep at night for 2 weeks. I love the small city because it makes me feel quiet and relaxed. I live in Harrisonburg, Virginia and I like this city because it is like my expectations before I came here. I had a good opportunity to go to New York City. It's a

very big city. I visited many famous symbols of this city, but I didn't like it there because it looks busy. I will study at IEP for one semester and after that I'm going to come back to my country. I love American people. If I have the opportunity to come back to the USA again, I will come right away.

Apisak Sangpin, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

I am a student from Thailand. When I came to America, I didn't know about American customs, American culture, or anything in America. I had to have new experiences. First, I experienced problems with the new foods that are different from the foods in my country. Second, I experienced problems with time because the time difference in America is 12 hours later than in Thailand. I couldn't sleep at night because night time in America is daytime in my country. Third, I experienced problems with the customs and culture in America. For example, in my country, when I go to a restaurant, I don't pay a tip, but in America, I have to pay a tip. Finally, I experienced problems with English. These are big problems for me in America. I have to change my life so I can live in America.

Chawalit Iamkitphaisan, Thailand  
Intermediate Level

## ***Stories About My Childhood***

It is wonderful to remember my childhood. I remember those moments when my parents played with me. I feel happy when I remember playing with my toys. I remember that I cried when my father left for work or when my mother left for the shop. In my childhood, I discovered pain, sadness, happiness and solitude. In my childhood, I had pleasant times. I had a good time playing different games with other children. The hardest time for me was when I started school because I had less time for playing. Sometimes, I didn't care about the classes. Instead, I wanted to play. Also, in my childhood, I learned to plan my time better. In the morning, I went to school. In the afternoon, I did my homework and helped my mother in the house. Soon I went to play with the other children. On the weekends, I went swimming at the river and on Sunday, I went to the soccer field. I also liked to play video games. I still do. But my parents were

always angry when I went to play video games or when I went to play soccer. My mother didn't want me to break an arm or a leg.

Osman Castro, El Salvador  
Intermediate Level

In my childhood, I used to play outside. Computers and computer games weren't familiar when I was a child, so I hardly played in the house. Also, my house was located in the country so there were a lot of interesting things for me. I usually went to a little park with neighbor friends. We climbed an old tree, played hide-and-go-seek, high tag, color tag. In the fall, we picked up acorns and leaves. To me, my most unforgettable memory was exploring the forest. I think if I went there now, it would be a very small grove, but it felt like a big place then. There was a small shrine and an old wall. My friends said "kappas" lived in that wall so I went there. A "kappa" is a fictitious animal. They are shaped like a mouse, but have scales, shells and a hollow place in their heads. Their faces look like that of a tiger. They are amphibious. If they have water in the hollow part of their head, they are more powerful. They like cucumbers. Sometimes, they pull animals into the water and suck their blood. A long time ago, people said that if a child drowned, it was because the kappa pulled it into the water. At the wall, I was a little scared because it was gloomy and felt uncomfortably cold even in the daytime. I took courage and opened the wall lid; then my friend ran away!! I didn't see anything because I ran after my friend. I don't know if the kappa lived there or not, but it is an important memory for me.

Ai Sato, Japan  
Intermediate Level

## ***Favorite Places***

My grandmother's kitchen was always quiet and warm. There was a gray brick furnace in the right corner. In the early morning grandfather made a fire. Grandmother prepared a meal in this place. It made comfort and warmth. There was a small window in front of you when you came to the kitchen which was never closed. There was a white pail with clear drinking water on the small chair near the window. We liked to drink water from the well. There was one small table in the left corner. The meal and drinks were prepared by our grandmother on this table. When we came to our grandparents' house we had breakfast, lunch and dinner all together. We

liked to spend time together. We joked and laughed. There was a wooden dinner table and wooden chairs around the table near the left wall. The small kitchen with a fire in the furnace made a comfortable and warm place for our big family.

Tatiana Sych, Belarus  
Intermediate Level

The living room of my house in Montevideo, Uruguay is a very interesting place. When you walk into the room, you can see a wide variety of colors from the walls and furniture to the floors. The walls are the color of ivory and the carpet is green like the sea. The furniture is the color of honey. The warmth of the room and the comfort of the furniture are very inviting. The large 1800's style windows are beautiful. They bring light into the room, and they also have a wonderful view. The walls are covered with many pictures from countries all over the world and pictures of my family who also come from many different countries. The pictures on the wall tell the story of my family members, who they are and where they come from. So, when you come into my living room, you will feel welcomed and fascinated, and you will want to stay for a while in this interesting place.

Eduardo Calleja, Uruguay  
Intermediate Level

## ***A Farewell note from Tsedan Drolgar***

It was such a great pleasure to meet with you and to study together. I would like to thank every teacher for all their kind help and support. Thanks to my wonderful host family for always standing by me and treating me as a daughter. Thanks to James Yoder for meeting with me twice a week, even though he is very busy. I am so lucky that I met lots of good people here. Everyone in the IEP family is very special and I have a deep respect for each of you. It is time to say good-bye and it is very hard for me to leave so soon. I hope everyone who I met here is doing well. I would like to wish good health and happiness to everyone.

Tsedan Drolgar, Tibet  
Advanced Level

*(Editor's note: Tsedan is continuing her Masters degree studies through Future Generations in Peru at this time)*

## **Alumni News**

**Willi Hugo Perez (IEP 2001-02)** is the dean of the Latin America Anabaptist Seminary (SEMILLA) in Guatemala City, Guatemala. He completed his Master's degree at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in May 2004. Willi was recently on a visit to the US to inform churches about the work of SEMILLA, and he spent two days in Harrisonburg. On February 16 he took time from his busy schedule to meet with IEP students. He claimed that when he began IEP in August 2001, he only knew the word "hi."

**Elena Bercian Perez (IEP 2001-02)** progressed quickly alongside her husband Willi at IEP. Being an extrovert, she used her English skills in social situations, in the community, in volunteer work for the Gift and Thrift store. She is a qualified elementary school teacher and is now thinking to return to a university in Guatemala to become certified as an English teacher.

**Ker Ferdinand (IEP 2002-03)**, originally from Haiti is working in the physical plant at EMU and studying toward an Associate degree at Blue Ridge Community College where he has been successful in his writing courses. He says that he learned writing techniques and built up his confidence at IEP and now he enjoys writing, to which his instructor at Blue Ridge remarked, "And it shows!"

People like Willi, Elena and Ker have expressed their appreciation to us, the teachers, for the help we gave them at IEP. However, it is we, the teachers, who would like to express our appreciation to them for studying hard and for making the Intensive English Program a good place to learn.

## **The Final Word**

Since my office is next to the IEP computer lab, one way that I measure the activity level at IEP is to observe and listen to what goes on in the computer lab! There has been a lot of activity this semester in the lab. Groups of students have worked on Power Points for their presentations in Current Events class. I see lots of people researching on the Internet, writing essays, and sending e-mail. Of course, students also relax by listening to music and playing

games on the computers. I have also heard lots of friendly conversations between students from different countries.

The students in the lab probably wonder what Dr. Medley spends so much time doing in his office all day. So I thought I would tell you. Besides my visible duties in the IEP, I have lots of duties that are not so visible to students. If we are to get new students to come to the Intensive English Program in the future, I have to be in contact with our representatives overseas, and I have to answer e-mails from prospective students.

Very happily, I have been quite busy in March processing applications for new students who will join IEP during our summer programs and in the fall.

Besides my IEP duties, I am also now teaching three classes in the university. I teach Grammars of English and Psycholinguistics for undergraduate students who are preparing to be teachers of English when they graduate. I also teach Language and Culture for teachers who are working on their Masters degree in education.

If you take a peak in my office, besides the uncontrollable piles of paper that you see (!) you will notice that I have been getting ready for *summer* with all of the tomato seedlings I have started. I am looking forward to those big, juicy red tomatoes that I can grow in my garden. Ahhh, before you know it, summer will be here. There are only five more weeks left in our semester. I hope all IEP students will make the most of their time and enjoy all the learning they can for the last part of the semester.

**Mike Medley, IEP Director**

**Please contact IEP at (540) 432-4059, email [iep@emu.edu](mailto:iep@emu.edu) or see our website at [www.emu.edu/iep](http://www.emu.edu/iep) for more information**

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