

The IEP TIMES

Bringing the World to Eastern Mennonite University

February 13, 2006

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

February 13: Potluck with Conversation Partners

February 15 & 17: Guest Speakers

February 27: IEP Forum on Sexual Harassment

**February 26: Foreign Film Series: *Central Station*
(Brazil)**

March 6-10: Spring Break

March 14 & 18: Washington DC Field Trip

Love Stories

Valentine's Day is coming. Although I am apart from my family and best friends in Korea, I am sure Valentine's Day will be such an exciting and lovely day for everybody, I think. I do not know how this day was made and what the tradition is in the U.S because I have never thought about that before.

In Korea, Valentine's Day is a big anniversary or occasion. Women give chocolate to men. Then, one month later, men give candy to women on White Day on March 14th.

We also have "a Black Day" in Korea. This day is for the person who does not have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. On Black Day, singles who spent Valentine's Day alone and lonely meet together and then go to eat black noodles. The black noodle is a Chinese noodle. I do not know why they eat the Chinese noodle, but it is so funny, isn't it?

These days, the meaning of Valentine's Day is changing in Korea. People want to buy expensive chocolate and presents to show their love. It tends to be materialistic. I do not think it is good way to show how much we love each other. This day is just to express our mind, to show care because, in our busy lives, we can sometimes ignore and be unconcerned about the important people who are always next to us.

I hope everyone spends a great time with family and friends this coming Valentine's Day. I wish I were able to always be with people who I really love and by whom I am loved.

Yeonjung, Korea
Advanced Level

In 1998 I came to the U.S to live with my parents who had been living in the US since 1993. While I was living in Mexico, I met Carlos at school. He was very intelligent. He was not cute, but he had something that attracted me: his honesty, loyalty. I used to play basketball at school. Carlos was always there with me.

After my graduation I was to come to live in Harrisonburg, VA. Carlos and I talked about it. He was really sad. He told me he would wait for me to go back to Mexico. A year later Carlos told me he couldn't find a good job so I wanted him to come here. In 1999 he came as an illegal.

During his trip, he walked seven days in the desert of Arizona without food, without water for the last 2 days. He and his friend Rigoberto saw a village far away and went there looking for food. Before they got there Rigo stepped on a rattlesnake's head. Rigo jumped so high to escape from the snake. That night Carlos was walking to Phoenix and behind a bush a small cow scared him really bad. The cow was not moving and Carlos almost stamped the cow's face. Finally, when Carlos arrived in Phoenix, AZ, he called me and he said everything was ok, nothing to be worried about.

When he came to my parents' house in Virginia, he was tired, thin and hungry. Carlos got sunburned all over his face, ears and shoulders. Also there were blisters between his toes. It was the saddest thing that I had ever seen. I cried so much that night. I told him that I was really sorry about it. Then he hugged me and said he loved me so much and had missed me. Then he fell asleep.

Susana, Mexico
Intermediate Level

I'm going to tell the story of how my parents got married. At that time Korea was a colony of Japan. One of the sad things then was that Japan was taking Korean girls to Japan to be used as sex slaves. Since my mother was only seventeen years old, she didn't want to get married; but to avoid being taken to Japan, she had to get married. Therefore, her father and another father arranged for their children's marriage.

Actually, before their wedding day, my mother and father didn't see each other. On that day a palanquin (a carriage box) took my mother the long way to her groom's house.

As a matter of fact, she didn't know how to get back to her parents' home. She was very upset and cried almost every day. The younger brother of her husband was then ten years old. He remembers that she cried so much that she hugged trees to help her to stop crying.

Without love or romance in the beginning, my parents have been living together for sixty years. They have a comfortable lifestyle and have eight children, twelve grandchildren, and one great grandson. Nowadays it is unusual for an extended family to live in the same house, but four generations are living together in my parents' house.

I see through my parents' lives that love means emotional commitment, and I believe love needs care for it to grow. Not many people believe love can exist forever, but for them it has.

Kay, Korea
Advanced Level

My aunt's name is Rita. She is one of my maternal aunts. Her husband's name is Karna. They had an arranged marriage. Before then, she lived in the house of one of her sisters. Uncle Karna's home was also in the same village, but he was not there because he worked in another city for the Nepal army.

The husband of the sister in whose home Aunt Rita lived and Uncle Karna's brother were friends. They thought about the marriage of Karna and Rita. They talked to each other first and decided to call Karna home to see Aunt Rita.

He came home, and they met each other and talked about their likes, dislikes, education, work, family situation, and life. Then they liked each other and decided to get married.

Two months later they were married. Then after three days of marriage he went to his work because he had a short leave. That's why they didn't celebrate their honeymoon. She lived with his parents. They couldn't live together; but since they loved each other so much, they sent letters to each other and sometimes talked on the phone. After six months he came home, and they celebrated their honeymoon.

Now they have two daughters. They are so cute and lovely. They miss their daddy because also nowadays he can't live with them because of his job. But they love each other. My aunt is taking care of their daughters. Sometimes she takes them to visit their father. They want to live together, but they are obliged to live in different places.

Jashoda, Nepal
Intermediate Level

Fourteen years ago I met my husband at my university in Korea. At that time he had finished serving in the army and had returned to school. I was a junior student, and he was a senior. I was a chorus member, and I joined a group of Christians at the university. He was the leader of this group. When I met this man the first time, I had a friendly feeling toward him; and apparently he felt the same about me. I went to this group once a week to study the Bible and pray to God. Sometimes the group members, including him and me, ate dinner together, talked a lot about matters of common interest, and went on hikes. We enjoyed watching soccer games and movies. We attended church and also did some teaching there. He was a good leader, sang and played the guitar well, and looked nice.

One day he confessed his love to me. We were in love with each other. While we dated for the next three years, he impressed me favorably.

I always pray to God to guide me. When I pray, I know God hears me. I listen to God's voice and obey Him.

I accepted his proposal of marriage. Finally I got married to him, and now we have two lovely sons. My heart has always fluttered about him. When I look back to when we met and think about how happy we are now, I have a thankful heart to God. I believe our marriage was through the grace of God. I know God loves me and God is with me.

Jenny, Korea
Intermediate Level

My grandfather, Young-Soon Choi, was in the army for ten years. Before he went to the army, he met my grandmother. They were so young and felt that they loved each other, but my grandfather had to go to fight in World War II.

While the war was happening, he was taken prisoner by Japan. However, he was so brave that he succeeded in escaping from Japan. All the time he was thinking about her.

After the war they met again and got married. However, my grandfather had to leave because once more Korea needed him. At that time he was an officer who was part of the Jae-Ju-Do Plan. My grandmother prayed for him every day. Eventually he came back home again, and then he gave a gift to her. It was a four-leaf clover.

Choi, Korea
Intermediate Level

Looking at the passing scenery from the window, I was smiling secretly. On this afternoon of November 23, 2003, I was on this train together with my friends. We were going to Sapporo, the largest city on my island. I looked back at my best friend, Saito. He looked really fidgety. I chuckled and turned to watch the scenery again. The buildings reflected in the windows were getting bigger as the train sped toward the heart of the city. Even though the view was full of light because it was still afternoon, everything I saw was still brighter because I had a secret plan for my friend.

Saito and I had gotten to know each other two months ago. When we met the first time, both of us had thought we never wanted to speak to each other again. Though we don't yet know how it happened, we became best friends anyway. Afterwards, we made more and more friends, and we enjoyed their company--Chiho, Yuzi, Yuko, Saori, Motoki and others.

One day I visited his apartment and talked with him while he was cooking something for both of us. Some days earlier I had heard from Yuko about Chiho's confession of her feelings about Saito. She had confided that she really loved Saito seriously, honestly and genuinely. Even though I didn't know her very well then, I thought I needed to ask Saito something. Also, I thought this would be a good opportunity to be close to him. Maybe then I realized that I wanted to get along with him better.

Therefore, I asked straight out, "So do you have any favorite girls?"

"Hey, hey, hey! What's up suddenly?" he replied, sounding a bit flustered.

"I just have some doubts on my chest. Because we have been going to the same university for half of a year, I thought maybe I could ask."

"No, I don't," he said as he returned to his cooking.

"Really?"

"How about you, Yokoyama?" (We usually use last names when we speak to each other.)

"Ah...you know? I usually love most of the girls I meet," I said, admiring my way of replying, and we laughed and continued the way we males talk. Eventually he told me whom he loved—who was, yes, Chiho.

Immediately, Yuko and I met to discuss a secret mission to arrange for Saito tell his love to Chiho. It was such a difficult problem because it would affect their relationship afterward. Thus we had to prepare a dramatic, memorable, impressive and moving situation. We thought and thought and thought. Actually, it was only 5 or 10 minutes until we decided

to take them to Sapporo! I titled our expedition "A Big Mission to Tell of Love in front of the TV Tower in Sapporo."

One week later, we were on the train, and I was smiling. Everyone was there except Yuzi and Motoki, who had part time jobs. Saito, next to me, was very tense and fidgety. Perhaps Chiho was also tense. Of course our plan was known by all of us except Chiho, and all of us except Chiho and Saito knew that spring would come to their lives. (This expression in Japan means they would hang out with each other in the future.)

After we arrived in Sapporo, we went shopping, enjoyed karaoke, and looked around this city. It was like usual dating plan. Finally, after it was dark, we went to the main, street where there is a big tower. This street is huge, and in its grassy center there are a lot of trees, benches, birds, and stuff for children like swings, seesaws and chutes; and usually many people go there all the time. Especially in the winter time, it has some beautiful lights. Actually, my plan was that Saito would tell Chiho about his love for her in this place among the lights and in front of the tower.

The time had come. Yuko, Saori and I put ourselves at some distance from Saito and Chiho, and waited for him to talk to her. We waited and waited and waited--maybe for ten minutes. Was that long enough for him to tell her?

I went closer and asked stealthily, "Hey, Saito. Did you tell her?"

"No! I was just trying to tell her when you came, so I couldn't!!"

"Oh, I'm sorry."

He was angry, but I was smiling. Then the rest of us went to Mr. Doughnut, which is a famous doughnut store in Japan, to get some food; but since the store didn't allow people to take out its food, we went to Lawson, which is one of popular convenience stores and got some meat and hot green tea.

When we went back to Saito and Chiho, it had been done.

"What did you say?"

"What?"

"I mean what did you say to Chiho?"

"I will have never tell anybody."

"Not to just me?"

"Nope."

"Hey, come on!"

Actually, he has never told me. That's O.K. I think it is kind of a dramatic secret. It is enough for me that the plan succeeded. They are still hanging out happily. Maybe they will get married.

November 23, 2003 is Saito and Chiho's anniversary day. However, it is not only theirs but also

mine and Saito's friendship anniversary day, when I got an everlasting friend. On that day, our bonds drew tighter. I have been remembering that day since then while Saito and Chiho go on having a special date in Sapporo on every November 23.

Kazunori, Japan
Advanced Level

My mother always told me, "Women have to marry." So, I have been thinking: *Do I have to marry? It is hard to find a good husband.* When I was young, (I think I am still young) I wanted to meet a husband like my father because he was the only man I knew. During these years, as I am growing, my thoughts were less clear, more confused. *Why do I have to marry? If I live alone, isn't that good?* I have met many people, some are single, others are couples. Looking at this, I have decided I have to marry. The couples have problems, such as fighting or breaking up, and the singles have problems. Each has their problems but when I saw a single person, I felt very sad. I thought, *the single looks lonely.* After work the single goes home to an empty house, nobody is there. They eat alone. Of course they have friends, but friends will have a family and won't have enough time to spend with the single person. There upon, (Mom,) I will marry someone, in the future.

Hyo-Jin, Korea
Advanced Level

Love of Different Kind

Looking at a tree...

Looking at a tree brings me peace. Touching the bark, so rough and so natural, I move closer, raising my head. The green branches I see hanging down, so gentle and compassionate, again, so peaceful, make me feel so secure. I pick a leaf, so soft; It smells like freshness and life.

I listen. I hear the birds singing between the branches. They sound so happy. There are two squirrels on the other side, fussing over a nut. I listen more carefully. I hear the ants marching up the tree. I hear a worm chewing on a leaf, so quiet but so shrill and clear. I can feel Him. I can hear Him. I even can see Him. He is so Wonderful and Beautiful and Amazing.

Laela, Iran
Advanced Level

Our Families

Love letter to my baby boy Josiah

I was so surprised when I found out that I was expecting you that I cried for almost twenty minutes, not because I was sad or anything but because I was so happy. I HAVE LOVED YOU FROM THAT MOMENT; I never thought I could fall in love this deep. Thirty weeks of excitement and happiness: the last days where full of expectation and unbearable because I was desperate to meet you. When the nurse brought you to me for the very first time, my heart rate was so fast that I thought my heart would come out of my chest. I loved you from that moment. When I wake up every morning my first thoughts are, I love you! When you smile at me, nothing else matters. When I observe you sleeping like a litter angel, I know you are the perfect gift from heaven. When I look into and your big brown eyes, I know I was born to have you, to love you and to protect you. When you put your arms around my face and play with it, I feel whole and wish nothing else but you. I promise you that I will try my best to give you what you need, what you deserve, and to always be here for you. My little angel, I love you more than anything else!

With lots of love, your biggest admirer, Mommy

Azucena, Guatemala
Advanced Level

There are four people in my family. We live in Japan. My parents have a farm. They grow tomatoes, onions, beans etc. I help them sometimes. My brother is 22. He loves painting, watching movies and taking care of cats. He lives in Tokyo now. He works as a movie assistant director for a film company.

We are a close family. We eat meals together everyday and talk to each other. When I was a child we traveled around Japan many times. It is a precious memory.

We had a cat. She was pregnant and had four kittens. After the birth she got sick and past away. We decided to raise the kittens. Everyday we fed them and gave them a bath. I learned about the importance of life and its difficulties.

When I was a new born baby I had a serious disease. My parents worried about the later effects. But I don't have any disability or disorder. They tell me this is the Grace of God. They say that I should thank God. They worry about me very much but they conceal it from me. They want to help me and support me. After I return to Japan I am going to tell my parents about my experience at IEP and America.

Seiko, Japan
Low Intermediate Level

Coping in New Situations

My life changed forever after my first pregnancy. I had many changes in my body. My life changed when my baby was born. I had to feed him and take care of him. I had to learn to change his clothes and diapers.

When I had my second baby I had more experience. When he cried I knew what was wrong with him and I knew what he wanted. Now they have grown and my life is changing again.

Usually I sleep well at night and I don't have to change diapers anymore. Now I have more time for myself. That's the reason why I am going to school to learn English. My children also teach me English when they can. I am glad that I took care of them. They are healthy and smart. I thank God for my two sons' life.

Alma, Guatemala
Low Intermediate Level

I have no material treasures, such as an old watch, an amulet from my childhood or a card of love. I just have the memories of my family in my mind. I remember the old times when, during vacations, I lived in my Grandma's house outside of the city. Whenever it rained, I drank coffee boiled in a ceramic jar which gave a very delicious flavor. While outside the rain gave an incomparable smell to the ground, I used to stand in front of the kitchen window, watching the rain make the littlest rivers on my Grandma's patio. The drops hung on the roof's boards while my Grandma was cooking and telling me what we could do after the rain.

Still, my favorite memory is of my Mom. Every time I see a piece of chocolate, no matter where, I have this memory of my mother cooking a chocolate cake on my birthday when I was ten years old. It is like a picture in my mind where I see my chocolate cake and my family waiting for me to cut the cake. My mom is on the other side of the table beside my father, telling me, "Go ahead! Cut it!" My brothers are singing a song for me. A simple piece of chocolate or the rain wakes the memories of my family and the places I always miss.

Raul, Mexico
Advanced Level

I remember my first day at school very well. I was very happy and anxious too. My father took me to the entrance of the school. Before he left he said, "Everything is going to be all right. Don't worry and don't make any tricks." I didn't answer because I was not happy anymore. I was very anxious. I walked very slowly and looked carefully around me. I saw the children playing and laughing at the big courtyard which was in the center of the school. I also saw a group of adults talking about something. After that I saw a young overweight woman coming towards me. She had black and curly hair. She was wearing a nice pink dress. Suddenly, she was in front of me. Then she asked me if I was Jorge. After that she took me to my classroom and introduced me to my classmates. The classroom was so silent everybody was so quiet. She told me that she will be my teacher for that year. She said that I needed to find a chair and sit. I obeyed and went directly to the corner to find a table and chair. I had to listen to everything she said. After six hours the class finished. I went to my house very happy. I liked my first day at school.

Jorge, Mexico
Low Intermediate Level

The first time I came to IEP I didn't understand much English. I felt strange but with an illusion to learn this language. I started in Basic level. It was very interesting when I saw people of other countries and listened different languages. I don't deny that I felt bored and desperate but I was happy too. I still remember my first day of class. Now that I have the opportunity to continue studying I will take advantage to the maximum. I think if I learn English I will be a helpful person in this country. I know that it is not easy to learn this language but with effort and dedication it is possible. It will be hard at times but I ask God to help me in those moments. I am very thankful for the opportunity that IEP gives me.

Osman, Guatemala
Low Intermediate Level

Living in a world with some many different cultures can sometimes be difficult but the experience can be positive. The Unites States is a country with many cultures: from Asia, Europe, Africa and America, etc. For everyone it is a *shock* to live with all this mix. Learning new things, customs, expressions, experiences, etc., creates a good source of diversity.

The first time I came to this country was a good experience because I learned many things about this country. It wasn't easy for me in the beginning because of the language. It was very hard to try to communicate with somebody who doesn't understand my native language. This was a big *shock* for me, communication. I was using signs and a couple words that I learned in High School. When you break the ice and you trust in yourself everything is easier.

One example of all this culture shock, something that happened to me was customs around invitations. In my country when I invite a friend for dinner or lunch I always pay, as the person who gave the invitation. But here in USA, it's different. When somebody invites you to a dinner, everybody pays for his or her own food. I remember when my friend invited me to lunch in a restaurant. I didn't take money that day because I assumed he was going to pay (my custom). After we ate, the waitress gave as the ticket and my friend told me how much I was needed to pay. I was in *Shock* because I didn't have any money. I told my friend my situation and explained to him about my custom. He paid all the bill and then he explained to me about how it is in USA. I was ashamed about this incident but I learned something new.

We need to live these experiences but sometimes you never forget them.

Noel, Guatemala
Advanced Level

I left El Salvador in January 1990. I arrived to Washington DC in February. I had a hard time looking for a job. When I found a job I never thought that I would work in a restaurant. I had no experience in this job. I first started washing dishes, pans and cleaning the floor. It was a low paying job and I had to pay rent. I worked harder and harder to learn more jobs in the restaurant. Later I learned to cook. One day my boss told me that I needed to work in the kitchen because Steven was moving to California the following month. I was happy and willing to learn something new because I wanted a higher paying job. Now that I live in Harrisonburg I work in Cargill at Dayton. I am happy. My job is very important for me. Everyday I learn new things.

Edis, El Salvador
Low Intermediate Level

The Final Word

What a great start we have gotten off to this semester! I see and hear all around the IEP a spirit of friendship, cooperation, and diligent study. We are blessed with a wonderful group of students this semester.

I am especially grateful to our highly skilled and dedicated teachers, Sandy, Barbara, Anali, Christi, Nancy, and Maria Esther for all the gifts of teaching and personal care they are giving to the students. They are working hard to equip students with English skills that will be useful to them in further studies.

We are also thankful for our partner class this semester SOC 252, Families in Social Context, and the class instructor Deanna Durham. I am so happy that IEP students are able to study a wide range of family issues in partnership with other EMU students.

The writings in this issue of the *IEP Times* are excellent. I think they give readers lots of good insights on issues related to families: love, courtship, marriage, birth, child-rearing, and maturing to handle new and different situations in life. I think that these writings foreshadow more good things to come in the remaining weeks of the semester. I believe that students are going to make great leaps in progress if they continue to work in such a good way.

- ▲ Improve your English skills!
- ▲ Enhance your education!
- ▲ Press forward in your career!

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

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