

# Suburban Life

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## English only spoken here

Students of many nations share their cultures with one another

By Lorraine McClellan  
staff writer

**I**T WAS A party of spontaneous song and dance for the students in the English Language Institute.

The background tapes spun out unfamiliar music played on unfamiliar instruments. A quartet in exotic Middle Eastern costume began a folk dance and encouraged others to learn the simple but lively steps. About a half-dozen of the guests formed an ensemble to sing a patriotic song from their native land. A few sang solos. Another half-dozen or so formed themselves into position to have their picture taken. Then others posed for their picture in their native costume. There was a lot of clapping, either in applause or in time with different ethnic rhythms and beats that changed quickly.

All the while guests were picking and choosing from the buffet table laden with foods representing a countless number of nations in the world, brought by the students who

*'I think we've had students here that speak every known language in the world, even some African dialects that we didn't know existed.'*

— Ilene Abramson  
Instructor

English Language Institute

come from as many of those nations.

The party chatter was all in English because only English is allowed to be spoken in the institute.

When the end-of-the-party group picture was taken, instead of saying "cheese" for the photographer, one of the guests suggested, and the others followed in unison, saying "Peace be to the world."

It might easily have been mistaken for a gala holiday party, but it wasn't. It was the written-into-the-curriculum finale for the every seven-week session of learning English in the institute on Orchard Ridge

College, Oakland Community College.

"WE ENCOURAGE mixing and sharing," said Kaye Zapinski, one of the institute's six instructors. "One of the first composition assignments is always to write about one of their own holidays. It's the basis for their own composition skills and that background is used for sharing some of their customs with the other students."

"And we encourage hospitality. It's the best way I know of to promote world peace," said Helen Habib, administrative assistant of the institute, the only one of its kind in Michigan housed in a junior college that runs with day and evening classes in seven-week sessions year around.

The institute is heavy with Latin American students in the winter who come to study English during their school vacation. It is always heavy with Lebanese students, many running away from their war-torn country, and many coming to this particular area because they have relatives here.

Many of the Japanese learning to speak English come as an entire family, here on a business visa. But whether a business visa, a student visa or a tourist visa, instructor Ilene Abramson said, "I think we've had students here that speak every known language in the world, even some African dialects that we didn't know existed."

All of the instructors speak several languages. Habib speaks French, Spanish, Arabic, Italian and Astour, an Arabic dialect, but those languages are rarely, if ever, used in the classroom.

"The ideal mix for us would be for every student in the class to speak a different language. One of our teachers' biggest problems is breaking up groups that form among the students who speak the same (foreign) language," Abramson said.

"Our students speak, read and write English only from the first minute they get in our door — as opposed to teaching with a translator — or as opposed to teaching in a bilingual class."

THE ENGLISH Language Institute was formed about five years ago "because too many foreign-speaking students were enrolling in



Raphael Malkoun, Koyumi Doghava and All the end of their seven week session of studying English. Malkoun and Barak are both from Lebanon. Doghava is from Japan.

college and not making it," Habib said. "They may have taken English in their own land but too many were enrolling not knowing what they were doing."

"There are students who read English well, but can't write it. Some need a lot of concentration on grammar. Some need vocabulary expansion. We address the needs of whoever we have in the class," Abramson said.

"The class," said instructor Malka Subrin, "is conducted in a very informal atmosphere, a lot less formal than the philosophy."

The philosophy is strict adherence to teaching listening, speaking, reading, composition and grammar, all required by the U.S. Immigration Department.

Some students accomplish what

they want within the intensive seven-week session and are "graduated" into college. Some return for another seven-week session. Some are visiting here only for seven weeks, and will return in the next year for another session.

"But they all leave with new friends. Some of the very best friendships are made here," Abramson said.



Claud Michael and Nable Siblini clap to a different beat during the party of sharing their native dress, music, dance and foods with fellow students.

## Registration under way for center's winter term

What musical instrument can be played with no previous experience, teaches music reading skills, can be the first step to playing other instruments and costs only about \$10?

"The recorder," claims world-class musician and instructor Nikolai Lemberg, who will lead "Recorder and Flute Instruction" in Farmington Community Center's winter term.

Born in Moscow where he received his master of music degree from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music, Lemberg has been giving music instruction to American students since he came to this country in 1983. He established the classical music program at the Lycee International of Southfield and is currently the director of the musical program for Southfield's Cultural Arts Division.

In "Recorder and Flute Instruction," Lemberg will introduce students to the recorder and to music study. Classes will be offered for students from kindergarten to senior adults and for various skill levels, including flute instruction. Beginning Jan. 24, Lemberg's class will be offered Tuesdays or Thursdays. The in-

structor's fee is \$40 for children and seniors and \$45 for adults for eight sessions. Contact Lemberg at 661-3443 for class times.

"RECORDER and Flute Instruction" is just one of the new courses offered for the community center's winter session. There are several other first-run courses for both youth and adults.

"Mural Production," taught by Carol Diehl, offers students the chance to produce a mural size painting in cooperation with the other students in class. There is still room for eight ambitious artists ages 13-17. Classes begin at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, and the fee is \$42 per person for six sessions.

"Easy Cartooning and Illustration" is taught by Linda Snavely for third through sixth graders. Students will learn how to create cartoon characters from simple shapes and figures. The class begins at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7; the fee is \$10.

"Creative Drama with Nancy Gurwin" will introduce youth ages 10-17 to theater techniques and performance. The actress and singer presents these workshops begin-

at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23. The fee is \$60 for five sessions.

"Silk Screen," taught by Carol Hansen, is where students will create their own silk screens for T-shirts or cards. Classes will begin at 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23, with a fee of \$24 for three sessions. "Silk Screen" is open to those over 12 years.

"DRAWING FACES," taught by Hilmar Howard, will instruct students in head and face figure illustrations using charcoal and conte crayon. Classes begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25. The fee is \$24 for four sessions.

"Touch Diving" is taught by Kathy Muscillo, who presents students with the latest dancing styles for today's danceable music. Class begins at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, and is \$30 per couple for six sessions.

Registration for all classes is on an ongoing basis until the first session of each class. Contact the community center at 477-8404 for reservations or other information.

The center is a non-profit independent organization at 24705 Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile Road.

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