

August, 2004

Living Beyond Culture Bumps



Issue 1
Design by Sarah Ghariani

"Creating A New Vision For America"

WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

Living Beyond Culture Bumps is a newsletter for educators in America who are walking into classrooms that are a far cry from those of their own childhood. It is based on the promise that the differences we encounter (cultural differences, generation differences, ethnic differences, gender differences) really do enrich our lives. Each month, *Living Beyond Culture Bumps* follows a fictional character, Jane Talbet, as she faces innumerable **culture bumps** (those big and small differences in cultural expectations) with her students and their parents. Journey with her as she discovers new and varied ways of leveraging her culture bumps into a close-knit community and making sure that her students - both American-born and other-born, are not left

behind.

Each issue introduces a different student who brings a unique perspective to the continuing saga. In addition to their story, each issue has a Q and A with readers' questions answered by guest experts, a cultural puzzle, FYI and a Snapshot of an individual who is living beyond culture bumps. This preview issue's Snapshot is of your editor and future issues will feature the children of mixed cultural marriages (Through the Eyes of the Children of Love), Mennonites in West Texas (A Town and its people), and A Woman of Grace and Grins (A Success Story). So join us this month as we begin to create this new vision for America.

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To ensure future *free* issues of "Living Beyond Culture Bumps" send your name and e-mail address to Carol Archer at cma@culturebump.com
Please title it " Sign Me Up !"

MUMTAZ SULEMAN : NOT LEFT BEHIND

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a student from another country in your school?

Let's meet the first of several students (as well as American students) who study with Mrs. Talbert. His name is Mumtaz Suleman, and he comes from Mosul, Iraq.

Taz took a bite of his eggplant sandwich. The olive oil had soaked through the white bread, and he held on with both hands to keep it together. With the taste of olive oil came the memories of "back home" - Mosul and mama. The yearly family gathering at



Mumtaz Suleman : Not Left Behind (cont from page 1)

the cemetery in old Mosul where his grandpa lay under the ground. Mama laid the brightly colored tapestries on the rocky ground and then covered the tapestries with food, dolmas (cabbages and onions stuffed with lamb and rice) skewers of barbecued ground lamb and liver and yogurt mixed with water, mint and ice. So cool on the hot summer days. Mosul...Mama...

*"Mumtaz, Mumtaz..."**

Taz looked up into the clear blue eyes of his teacher, Mrs. Talbert, as she knelt beside him.

"Mumtaz - Come with me to the office."

She gently pulled on his shoulder. Mumtaz looked at his sandwich.

"Bring your sandwich along. You can finish it later."

She began to wrap his sandwich in the crumpled wax paper. Taz stood up.

"Tazzi Wazzi fuzzy hair. Tazzi Wazzi didn't care."

Taz glanced at his two classmates now doubled over with laughter. He couldn't understand what they were saying, but he knew that they were playing with his name. And a pang of homesickness hit his stomach. He thought again of Mosul and mama as he put his hand in Mrs. Talbert's.

"Jason, Ramon - you boys hush. Erica, I like the way you are eating, quietly and politely."

Teacher and student entered the hallway and walked in silence to the office. As they

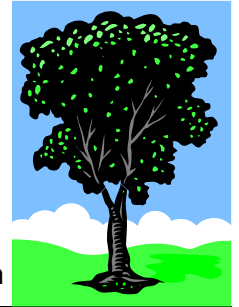
went into the office, happiness spread through Taz and spilled out in a smile as Farida held out her arms to him. Farida had always been his favorite sister and when she'd left for America, he'd stayed on the flat roof of the house for days with a pain deep in his heart. Although he eventually came down from the roof, the pain stayed in his heart until

last year when his father asked him if he would like to go to America to be with Farida. When he nodded yes, he hadn't thought about leaving Mama and Nazir and his cousins. But now he and Farida lived in this big American city. He heard Farida talking about them being refugees. Taz wasn't sure what refugee was. Now, kneeling beside him, his sister spoke in Kurdish, *"Get your books and things - we're going on a trip."* Fear filled Taz' face and Farida said, *"Don't worry. You'll like this trip."*

She stood up and turned to Mrs. Talbert, *"So he should do chapter three in math and the worksheets in language arts?"*

Yes, that will see him through fine until Monday. Goodbye Mumtaz. Have a nice time."

Jane Talbert stood for a moment watching the slender boy walk away with his sister. *"His English is not coming along at all..and I'm not sure what to do. Refugees, immigrants, aliens.."* She sighed and shook her head.



*Mumtaz means "excellent" in Arabic

(To be continued next month)

For Your Information

Jane Talbert and Taz are not alone in not understanding legal definitions of refugee, immigrant, asylee or alien. The average person on the street does not understand the myriad of types of foreign-born people living in the United States today. So *for your information*, let's look at some of the types of refugee status as well as immigrant status.

**Jane Talbert and Taz
aren't alone in not
understanding.**

FYI (cont)

Refugee: An individual who has been forced to leave home and flee to a second country because of death threats resulting from political or religious beliefs or ethnicity. Becomes a ward of the United Nations and is accepted by a third country for settlement. The U.S. Congress decides on the number of refugees accepted into the United States each year.

Asylee - When an individual comes directly to the USA and seeks asylum in the USA. Examples include Cubans. Farida, coming after the First Gulf War, is this type of refugee.

Parolee - A refugee who is allowed to enter the USA under various special circumstances. Taz, who has joined his sister several years later, is this type of refugee.

Immigrant - An individual who has applied for permission to come to live in the USA. Usually must wait for several years in his/her own country before coming to USA.

To download free cross cultural information about Iraqi Kurds in the United States, go to www.culturebump.com



Our World

Welcome To Your Newsletter (cont from page 1)

Today's teachers face the daunting challenge of not only teaching math, language and social studies, but of preparing the children to assume the mantle of citizens of the United States and of an ever shrinking world. And America's students are enormously varied - students like Taz (born in Iraq), Manual (born in El Salvador), Patricia (born in Mexico), Egnobo (born in Nigeria), Kim (born in Korea) as well as Erica and Roosevelt (born in the USA.). In fact, according to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education, 3.2 million public school students were identified as limited English proficient (LEP) in 1998, a number that has nearly doubled in less than a decade. This newsletter and its staff believe that this represents a tremendous opportunity for the United States. It is dedicated to providing the information and support for educators in America so that they may realize the potential in America's children.

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Q&A With Dr. Maria Bhattacharjee

Q: Why shouldn't we fear Spanish overtaking English in America?

A: DR. MARIA BHATTACHARJEE, PROFESSOR, URBAN EDUCATION, UH/ DOWNTOWN

As a native Spanish speaker (originally from Venezuela) and as an American citizen, I believe that not only should we **not** fear Spanish overtaking English, we should encourage more and more students to learn Spanish as well as other languages. In today's global market, our multi-lingual citizens give the USA a definite advantage (*Send us your ideas on this month's question as well as a question for next month to cma@culturebump.com*!)

A Snap Shot



Carol M. Archer, Ed. D.
Cross Cultural Communication

Your editor is Carol Archer-consultant, trainer, researcher, writer and educator — the author of Living with Strangers in the U.S.A: Communicating Beyond Culture, a book that grew out of her extensive research into inter-personal, intercultural communication.

The originator of culture bump theory and methodology, Carol has a Doctorate in Education with a research focus on culture and urban studies. Carol worked in Algeria and has consulted with clients such as AT&T, Princeton University, Pecten/Shell Oil, Exxon and the World Trade Association with participants from around the world. She speaks Spanish and has studied Arabic and French. In addition to teaching at the University of Houston's Language & Culture Center for the past 29 years, she teaches ESL strategies and second language acquisition theory at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. She formerly developed cultural orientation for refugees for the State of Texas.

Carol's other publications include "Culture Bump and Beyond" in Culture Bound: An Anthology, published by Cambridge University Press, The Toolkit for Culture and Communication published by the University of Houston and "Managing a Multicultural Classroom" in Learning Across Cultures, published by NAFSA. Dr. Archer served as cross-cultural consultant for the PBS series, "Images of America.

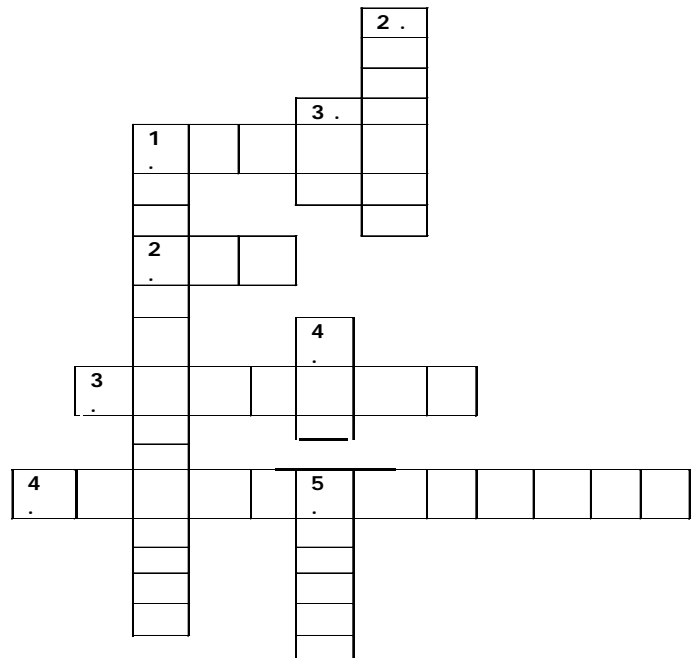
The Game Corner

Each month, there will be a "cultural" game that requires specialized cultural knowledge about the culture in the story for that month. This month, there is a cross word puzzle requiring knowledge about the Iraqi Kurds. If you do not know the information, there are three ways of getting it:

- A. Wait until next months' newsletter with the answers
- B. Visit www.culturebump.com and read the information about Iraqi Kurds or
- C. ASK AN IRAQI KURD the following questions

DOWN (1) Name of a Kurdish political party founder (2) the form of riches for Kurdish women (3) name of a Kurdish political party (4) name of another Kurdish political party (5) the word for excellent in Arabic

ACROSS (1) Name of a major city in the north of Iraq where many Kurds live (2) Kurds drink a lot of this in small glasses with lots of sugar (3) name of a famous Kurdish historical hero (4) Kurdish men are famous for being very skillful at this activity.



Be the first to send the correct answer to cma@culturebump.com and win a free Culture Bump T-shirt.