



THE SILC TIMES



Newsletter of the School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC)

Festival of Lights

Dunes of vapors from crackers rise,
Engulf, as odorous airs resound
Effusing joys to all about
Pearls of gleams in these autumn nights
Adorn our lives else trite
With sparklers that motley skies
As soaring spirits of powder wander
Let us thank the heavenly might,
In this festive season of lights.



Editor's Corner

Shiv Bhatia

2010 has been yet another year where we saw a jump in our enrollment. A record, where we have touched almost 200 enrollees (including adults). As a SILC parent, if you feel you can make the difference by volunteering, we could definitely use your help. Nothing is too less or too much as a volunteer. If you want to help, please come see any one on the SILC board. We still have a few open positions as you will read in the President's message.

The start of the SILC academic year usually signals an end to the warm evenings but I didn't realize that summer had come to an end until last Sunday. I was raking leaves attired in shorts and a tee when my 5 year old told me go back inside and dress more 'sensibly'. While it was a typical case of pot calling the kettle black, I guess I was not willing to let go of the nice weather we have been experiencing. I am sure all of you must have enjoyed this extra lease of 'summer' life. Well, as the warm temperatures come to an end, it is time to embrace Fall – a time for the season of holidays both here and in India.

This time of year in India is filled with lots of excitement when children wait for the Festival of Lights. This year Diwali was celebrated on November 5th, therefore a portion of this newsletter is dedicated to the festival. Did you know how it is celebrated in other countries? Want to test your gray cells on a quiz centered around Diwali? We also celebrated Halloween recently. Ever thought how it could have been celebrated in ancient India? Did you miss enjoying the India Fest in August? Did you know that the recent Common Wealth games were held in Delhi and what the history is behind these games?

All of this and more has been contributed by our wonderful student reporters. I want to thank them and other contributors for providing articles. We had an overwhelming response and unfortunately, we were unable to print all articles....which will go in the next news letter. At the same time, I ask parents, volunteers, teachers and more students to keep on submitting articles for future publications. Read on...

SILC Board Members (2010-11)

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SILC is a 501c 3 Non-Profit Organization

“Celebrating and Preserving the Heritage of India in the Heart of America”

E-mail us: info@silcmn.com

Visit: www.silcmn.com and www.silc0910.blogspot.com

SILC : Important Upcoming Dates

November 27	No SILC Thanksgiving Break
December 18	SILC Mela
December 25	No SILC Winter Break
January 01	No SILC Winter Break



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From the President's Desk

Dear SILC Students, Parents, Teachers and Volunteers:

I hope all of you have got familiar with the Saturday routine at SILC. The routine, at a higher level, is – language classes followed by social studies/literature classes followed by the electives. However, what goes on in each class room is not a routine at all. Every SILC Saturday and every classroom brings out different joy, excitement and enjoyment to each of us.

On behalf of SILC Board, I would like to provide you quick summary of the current academic year 2010-11 so far:

1. SILC relies on the dedication of its teachers and volunteers. Many teachers and volunteers have returned to SILC this year as well – taking forward the spirit of SILC. Many new teachers have signed up – Prad Das, Sona Das, Krupali Shah, Anjali Gopal, Varsha Bhatia, Jeyanthi Govinthan, Jothsna Harris, Geetha Sharan, Divya Karan, Nidhi Khandelwal, Suganya Chandrasekaran, Aishwarya Menon, Mary Kate. We are also glad to have Lata Menon and Divya Karan who have taught at SILC earlier. Thank you to all volunteers and teachers. You are setting an example that being part of SILC is a rewarding experience and can be addictive.
2. We now have another year with record number of registrations (touching 200). Half of the students and families are first timers at SILC this year – reflecting the growing interest in SILC and the important role SILC is playing in the community. This will also be the first year where we closed the registrations for the year – in favor of quality over quantity. This decision was pretty hard to take as SILC has always been flexible in accepting the students any time of the year. Considering the current enrollments, we hope that this change will lead to better planning and quality service to SILC community. I envision that we will have stricter enforcements on the registration deadlines next year.
3. We have started Bengali language this year. Thanks for Prad Das and Sona Das for enabling SILC to offer this language too. We have also started Gujarati language

this year. Thanks for Krupali Shah for signing up to teach it.

4. SILC had its first field trip to "Sundari Aur Nag (aka Beauty and Beast)" by Katha Dance Theatre at O'Shaughnessy (St Catherine University) on Halloween day 10/31/10. The two-part program of North Indian dance and live music - show cased kathak yatra (the journey of Kathak dance) and also Sudari Aur Nag, an Indian rendition of Beauty and Beast. "Wonderful", "Amazing", "Beautiful" are some of the experiences I have felt and heard from other SILCers.
5. With the increase in number of students, ensuring that we are not causing any disruption to the classrooms we rented at Como High School has become a challenge. We have received several complaints from the school teachers about – garbage/spills left on the tables and floors, leaving the black boards unwiped, disrupting the furniture arrangement in the classrooms. We do not want to jeopardize our relationship with the school due to this reason. I ask each of you be extra cautious and be vigilant on how we take care of the rented space.
6. SILC Board, with the help of dedicated roster of volunteers and teachers, is working hard to make SILC better. If any of you have any ideas or thoughts on how we can improve the functioning of SILC, please drop us a note. We need you. We are also in need of additional volunteers – Official Photographer, Official Videographer, SILC Holi Celebrations Coordinator, SILC Outreach Director, Registrations Coordinator, Assistant Treasurer. Please contact us if you are interested.
7. Finally, keep checking these SILC sites for weekly announcements and class materials.:
<http://www.silcmn.com> and <http://silc1011.blogspot.com>

Yours sincerely

Siva R Jasthi



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From the Desk of the Assistant

Literature Teacher

(Sarah Hansen)

The SILC Literature Class, led by Divya Raman, has been hard at work reading and discussing Amar Chitra Katha short stories in comic book form. These stories fascinate me! Students know them well and many feel they are significant texts. Some students can recite entire tales! And usually, when someone is reciting one of these stories, the room gets very quiet and kids pay close attention. As a graduate student interested in culturally relevant curriculum and literacy practices—and as a former classroom teacher—I find this is a very remarkable phenomenon! I peppered students with questions about the ACK stories and they were very patient in answering them (They really take good care of their resident graduate student!). I thought you might be interested in hearing what they had to say about these very important stories.

Q: Have your parents or relatives told you stories about reading the ACK tales in India? Think back to what they've said. How do people read these stories in India? Do kids collect them? Do they trade the comics (like baseball cards)? Does everybody "know" these stories? Who knows them best (Grandparents? Little kids? Teenagers?)? How do you explain their popularity? Or if your parents or relatives haven't told you stories about reading ACK tales, why do you think that is?

- Parents have told us about the ACK stories and they've read the books to us.
- Kids do not trade the stories like baseball cards.
- Both old and young people know the ACK stories. Teens, parents, & grandparents know the stories best.

Q: How do people read ACK stories here in the US? Do you have copies of these stories in your house? Who reads them? When do you read them? Are they always in comic form? Who knows these stories best in your house (Parents, Teenagers?)? If they are not always in comic form, what form do you think is the most interesting? Do you think these stories are popular among Indians in the US? If so, how do you explain this popularity?

- People bring the stories back from India and read them in all forms, but mostly comics.
- Some of us have a lot or a few at home; others get the stories from SILC
- Mainly kids and parents read the stories.

- We read the stories for SILC, or if our parents read to us.
- These stories come in other forms besides comics.
- Parents and grandparents know the stories best.

Q: The following sentences are printed in the ACK books, "When they look back at their formative years, many Indians nostalgically recall the vital part Amar Chitra Katha picture books have played in their lives. It was ACK—Amar Chitra Katha—that first gave them a glimpse of their glorious heritage." What do these stories communicate to you about your heritage? What interpretations of the texts are you making? Do you think kids in India interpret them in the same way? What would you imagine to be the differences?

- Every story has universal text. They all have Indian-related pictures.
- These stories are seen in other cultures as well (but in different versions) and show values that have been passed down.
- Kids in India probably interpret these stories differently than we do because kids in India have different cultural experiences.

Q: How well do the ACK stories apply to your life today? If you think they do describe the dilemmas you face today, how do you explain their timelessness? Describe moments when you disagreed with the moral of an ACK story.

- The stories are timeless.
- They describe lessons that are still important in today's life.
- We've mostly agreed with the morals in the stories.

Q: If you were teaching English at a public school in the US, would you include these stories in the curriculum? Why would your students be interested in reading them? Why might they not be interested in reading them? What age group would you have read these comics?

- Yes, we would teach the stories in US public schools because the stories and morals are good.
- Students would be interested in the stories because they are different, fun, and creative.
- Students might not be interested in the stories if they don't understand the culture or Indian heritage.
- We recommend students in grades 3-6 read these stories in classes like "World Literature."

(Sarah Hansen is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. This is her second year at SILC.)



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My First Ride in a Cycle Rickshaw

(Aradhana Menon)



We were visiting my grandparents in Delhi, India during the summer holidays of 2009. It was my sister's birthday so my grandparents were giving a party. My grandfather and I had to go to the bakery to get her birthday cake. It was very hot so my grandpa decided we should ride a cycle rickshaw to the bakery instead of walking. It was my first ride in a cycle rickshaw. The cycle rickshaw is a carriage attached to the cycle. Two adults or two adults and a child can ride the rickshaw at the same time.

As soon as I sat in the rickshaw I jumped up because the seat was very hot from standing in the sun. My grandpa gave me his handkerchief and I sat on it. The driver put up the hood because of the sun. When the cycle rickshaw was in motion I felt that I was sliding down and I would fall. So, I held on tight to the side bar. My grandpa also held me tightly.

When we were going through the traffic, with cars and buses zooming past us, I got a little scared. We reached the bakery safely and got the cake. On our return home, I held on to the bars more tightly because my grandpa had the cake in his hands so he could not hold me. At one point we went over a stone and we bounced on our seats. I watched the cake as I thought it would fly out of Grandpa's hands and hit someone on the road. It was not as I thought it would happen. I was disappointed. We arrived home safely with the cake.



(Aradhana is a 4th grader at the William Byrne Elementary School in Eagan. She is the greatest fan of her elder sister, Aishwarya and simply adores dogs.)

Vijayadasmi

(Tarunika Anand)



Vijayadasmi is the day that you celebrate the victory of the good over evil after Navaratri. Vijayadasmi is celebrated on the tenth day asking for the blessing of the Goddess Saraswati. Vijayadasmi is the auspicious day of the beginning of art and learning since it is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge.

I learn Bharatanatyam, a classical Indian dance, and every year my dance teacher has a Vijayadasmi get-together. All of her students (including me) practice one to three dances throughout the year which we present on Vijayadasmi. We do this on Vijayadasmi to show our progress and how we've worked hard throughout the year. This year I danced two dances. I danced a piece called Govardhana Ghiridhara and a piece called Alarulu Kuriyaga. Govardhana Ghiridhara is the story about young Krishna lifting the Govardhana Mountains for the village people and cows to hide under so they wouldn't die from the terrible rain created by Indra. Alarulu Kuriyaga is the about Alarmelmanga and her marriage to Perumaal. Vijayadasmi is a great holiday to start something new and to show arts.

(Tarunika studies in 8th grade at Math and Science Academy, Woodbury. She likes to draw, sing, dance, play piano and listen to music)



Festival of India (India Fest) Aug 2010

(Suparna Malia)

How would you spend a pleasant summer day? Would you spend it outdoors celebrating your culture? That's exactly how I spent August 15th, 2010. India Fest is a huge Indian festival that celebrates all aspects of our culture. There is dancing, singing, various other talented performances, booths, and of course, INDIAN FOOD! Organized by the IAM (India Association of Minnesota) and taking place on the St. Paul Capitol Grounds, this festival is one annual event you won't forget!



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I arrived at India Fest at about 10 am to set up the SILC booth with my dad. My dad took on the responsibility of advertising SILC by handing out flyers, showing the history of SILC, and talking about the various curricula there were while I took on the responsibility of a slightly more 'artsy' way of advertising. I volunteered to paint the Indian flag on the finger nails for anyone interested. This sure did help popularize SILC! I soon saw my friends start to come in, and before I knew it, it was time to get ready for our SILC youth dance performance to the song 'Aaja Nachle'. I handed the job of nail painting over to my mom and a few other volunteers while my friends and I got ready to dance. Time seemed to go on endlessly before the SILC group was announced to perform. We watched the Maharashtrian folk dance by the SILC ladies and the upbeat Punjabi song by the children. It was finally our turn to go on stage! It was a good thing the stage floor wasn't burning like last year's immense heat.

After our lively dance was done, I got some time to eat the Curry Up food. My friends and I sat on a hill, watched the performances, and ate. There were Bharatnatyam dances, Bollywood dances, and so many more! After that, it was time to get ready for our second dance, which was choreographed by Neelam aunty, to the bhangra style. Since there weren't any changing rooms, we had to change in the State Capitol! All the boys and girls in the bhangra got on stage. Our dance was very energetic and definitely a lot of fun!

When I was done performing, I returned to the nail station. But my mom urged me to go have fun, look around the booths, and get a snack. After all, we won't be seeing most of this until next year! So I browsed the booths, which had a lot of different associations and advertisements. It was really cool seeing how many events and organizations there were, and how many people found something new they would like to try out!

Afterwards, it was getting late and people were beginning to leave. After all the dances, songs, advertising and eating, India Fest 2010 was finally coming to an end. The crowd's excitement was dying down as was its energy. As people left, the booths were getting taken down, and the food trucks were packing up. The day was pretty long and tiring, but the joy of getting closer to our culture each year still remained. As we went home, I was sad to leave, but excited for next year! I can't wait for India Fest 2011!

(Suparna is an 8th grader at St Croix Prep Academy in Stillwater. She loves playing piano and viola; and spoiling her little sister)

Diwali Around the World

(Mahima Gupta)



Diwali is the Festival of Lights. It is the biggest festival of India, many people spend weeks preparing for Diwali. Diwali is celebrated differently all over India, but the way it is celebrated stays the same no matter where you are from. Here is a small description of how Indians celebrate Diwali in different countries.

Indians are the second largest ethnic minority in Britain. So many Indian-British people miss India, especially during festival time. So they celebrate most major India Festivals including Diwali. They try to make their Diwali celebrations as close to India's as possible. They celebrate Diwali by visiting their local temple and worshipping Goddess Lakshmi. They also exchange sweets, blow conch shells, and by lighting diyas and lamps around their houses. They also celebrate with their Indian friends and family.

Guyana, which was formally known as British Guyana celebrates Diwali too! Guyana is located in Northeast Coast of South America. Over 33% of the people there are Indians. The way Diwali is celebrated there is very similar to the way it is celebrated in India. Friends and family exchange visits, make sweets like pera, bharfi, and kheer. Indian-Guyanese believe that wearing new clothes is the symbol of healthy souls in healthy bodies.

The name Indonesia actually means Indian Islands in Greek. Only 2% of Indonesians are of Indian origin. There is an Island called Bali which is mainly inhabited by Indians. So, Diwali is a really big festival for them! Indonesians celebrate Diwali very much like Indians do.

Malaysia is a very diverse country! Though only 8% of Malaysians are Indians that doesn't stop them from having a big Diwali festival! Malaysians call Diwali, Hari Diwali. Diwali is celebrated during the 7th month of the solar calendar. Many of the South-Indian traditions are used in Malaysia like the festival preceding with an oil bath. The Diwali Celebration includes a visit to the temple and lighting small clay lamps filled with coconut oil and a wick (otherwise known as a diya).

Mauritius is an island in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. Over 63% the people of Mauritius are Indians. So, all the festivals, including Diwali are celebrated in



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Mauritius. They celebrate Diwali by lighting rows of diyas and by lighting firecrackers which are supposed to ward off evil spirits. The people of Mauritius also believe that Diwali was celebrated much before Lord Rama came back from exile.

Nepal is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country nestled in the Himalaya mountains, right above India. Diwali in Nepal is called Tihar. Diwali is celebrated for five days. The first day is celebrated in honor of the cows. They feed rice to the cows and believe that Lakshmi comes in form of a cow. The second day, Vahana of Bhairava is celebrated for dogs. Nepal's prepare special food and feed it to the dogs. The third day is celebrated by lighting candles around the house. Firecrackers and fireworks are used too. The fourth day is celebrated for god Yama, the god of Death. He is celebrated for long life. The fifth final day is Bhhaya Dooj dedicated for the brothers who are wished long life and prosperity by their sisters.

Trinidad and Tobago is in the Caribbean Sea, 7 miles away from Venezuela. 43% of the 1.3 million of the people from Trinidad and Tobago are Ethnic-Indians. Diwali is celebrated as a National Holiday. All Indians of Trinidad and Tobago which include the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians celebrate Diwali! Diwali is celebrated to show good over evil.

(Mahima studies in 7th grade at Crosswinds Arts and Science School in Woodbury. She enjoys being with her family, friends and having fun!)



Halloween - Indian Style (Meera Viruru)

You all know about Halloween, right? You dress up as your favorite story character or basically whatever you want.

Ever wonder if Halloween was prevalent in ancient India, how it would be celebrated. Well, this year a bunch of us got together and decided to see if we could dress up as our favorite character from the Indian mythological stories. Here are some cool ideas that were thrown out... you might want to try them next year!

You could be Jatayou from the Ramayana by taking a party hat and covering it with construction paper to make a beak. At our Indian Halloween party we had a Rama who had a bun on his head with those wooden beads around it looking like Rama in exile. We also had a Krishna with peacock feather on his head and a small wooden flute. We had a Sita when she lived in the palace wearing nice clothes and jewelry. We also had a mother earth who was Sita's real mother. Then of course there was the candy and we wondered what the kids in ancient India would have received as treats....maybe laddus or gulab jamuns!

All in all it was a very unique experience and I am glad we tried celebrating Halloween with an Indian touch.

(Meera is 12 years old and studies in 7th grade at Math and Science Academy in Woodbury. She loves figure skating, dance, and writing fiction.)



Common Wealth Games

(Angad Jaspal)

The Common Wealth Games 2010 were held in Delhi. To be honest this is the first time I even heard about the games and also the first time I watched this event. I was astonished of how great these games were. My favorite thing to watch was the amazing ping pong players. These games were blowing me away. I never wanted to change the channel. If you couldn't get a chance to watch it this time it will be a while until the next games are in 2014. Like me, if you had never heard of these games, here is some information.

The concept of a united Commonwealth sporting event had been talked about amongst Commonwealth nations since the rebirth of the Olympic Games. A sporting competition bringing together the members of the British Empire was first proposed by Reverend Astley Cooper in 1891, when he wrote an article in The Times newspaper suggesting a "Pan-Britannic-Pan-Anglican Contest and Festival every four years as a means of increasing the goodwill and good understanding of the British Empire".

The Commonwealth Games is a sporting event staged between the elite athletes of countries from the



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Commonwealth. It is held every four years, and is conducted over many sports, in a format much like the Olympic Games.

The Commonwealth Games attract the top athletes of member nations of the Commonwealth, thus making it a world-class competition, second only to the Olympic Games in many people's opinion.

The Commonwealth Games are unique in the world of sport as it is based on a historical linkage of Commonwealth countries, not based on geographic features such as the Asian, Pan Am and African Games, or based on climatic conditions such as the Winter Olympics. The Games are also unique as it shares a common language, unlike the Olympic Games, as all athletes and officials can speak with each other in English, creating an atmosphere that has led to the Commonwealth Games being long known as the 'Friendly Games'

(Angad is 11 yrs old, studies in 6th grade at Math & Science Academy in Woodbury. He likes playing basket-ball and watching sports on TV)

SILC : Know Your Teachers / Volunteers

Given below are the names of our teachers / Asst teachers who are the bed rock of our school. You can learn more about their bios on our website. The SILC community gratefully acknowledges that all of them take out precious time from their personal lives to volunteer and we profusely thank them for doing what they do.

1. Bengali – Pradip Das / Sona Das
2. Gujarati – Krupali Shah
3. Hindi Adults – Seema Nambudiripad
4. Hindi Preschool – Nidhi Khandelwal
5. Hindi 1A (5-6yrs) – Shiv Bhatia
6. Hindi 1B (7+ yrs) – Divya Karan
7. Hindi 2 – Ria Arora / Sunita Mannamkunnath
8. Hindi 3 – Reshmy Narayanan
9. Hindi 4 – Gayathri Moorthy / Shreedevi Mahavadi
10. Kannada – Mangala Achar
11. Malayalam 1 – Gupthan Namboodiripad
12. Malayalam 2 – Vishnu Namboodiripad
13. Nepali – Padam Sharma
14. Pre-school – Jothsna Harris / Geetha Sharan
15. Tamil – Suganya Chandarsekharan
16. Telugu – Siva Jasthi
17. Social Studies 1A (Kindergarten) – Varsha Bhatia
18. Social Studies 1B (Grade 1) – Sonja Agarwal
19. Social Studies 1C (7+ yrs) – Sapna Das-Bradoo
20. Social Studies 2 – Shalley Gupta
21. Social Studies 3 – Maulika Kohli / Anjali Gopal
22. Art – Divya Raman / Sarah Hansen
23. Cooking – Lakshmi Warriier
24. Dance Adults – Lata Menon / Neelam Malhotra
25. Dance (5-7 yrs) – Amrit Devgun / Jeyanthi Govinthan
26. Dance (8-10 yrs) – Aishwarya Menon / Mary Kate & Kali Kanwar
27. Dance Youth – Neelam Malhotra / Erin Oberdofer, Sofi Ali
28. Literature – Divya Raman / Sarah Hansen
29. Cricket – Praveen Puligondla
30. Tabla – Anil Kumar / Subash Mehta
31. Yoga – Punjabhai Patel / Krupali Shah



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Diwali Quiz : From The Editor's Desk (Part I)

Un-scramble the following words related to Diwali and win:

1. OAYDAHY _____
 2. AVNRAA _____
 3. IRFKREWSO _____
 4. WIILAD _____
 5. VTHTSIOELSLAFFIG* _____
 6. KHJLOAMSAPIO** _____
 7. LKANA _____
 8. ESSETW _____
 9. MAALSAKHN _____
 10. MAAR _____
 11. NOGAIRL _____
 12. LCSNEDA _____
- * 3 words ;
** 2 words



(Part II)

Try to find the words that you un-scrambled and are hidden in the word-maze below (*Words are hidden top to bottom, bottom to top, left to right and right to left.*)

H	E	I	L	I	W	Z	L	O	Y	J	A	O	Z	S	O
B	L	A	K	S	H	M	I	P	O	O	J	A	G	S	N
M	M	D	A	M	J	V	S	V	G	Z	W	X	W	W	N
V	W	X	U	B	F	P	X	S	V	T	R	G	W	E	T
X	M	Y	U	I	X	S	P	O	W	J	T	K	U	E	U
F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L	O	F	L	I	G	H	T	S
A	A	E	I	L	A	W	I	D	W	C	X	L	K	S	R
B	C	L	B	O	G	F	Y	V	I	U	Z	Y	H	D	F
Z	T	D	A	Y	T	V	H	Q	C	K	L	V	X	P	M
S	W	N	N	F	W	N	A	N	A	M	H	S	K	A	L
O	L	A	A	U	E	C	B	B	G	O	X	B	C	P	S
D	A	C	V	T	A	Y	O	D	H	Y	A	H	M	O	S
V	I	F	A	C	M	Y	B	R	M	T	P	J	V	J	H
R	N	G	R	R	A	N	G	O	L	I	L	A	N	K	A
Y	L	J	J	Z	R	G	E	W	W	F	I	N	B	Z	I
D	R	I	S	K	R	O	W	E	R	I	F	X	O	C	A

RULES

- Email responses for Part I only to: info@silcmn.com
- Only 1 entry per FAMILY. Parents can help.
- If there are multiple All-Correct entries, winner will be selected by lottery.
- The lottery winner gets a Barnes & Noble Gift Card worth \$10.
- Winner must be a current student or volunteer at SILC.
- Last date for submissions is Saturday, November 27, 2010.