

Life Would Be Boring Without Diversity
By BRITTANE D. LEWIS
Houston

In our diverse country, lots of people of different views influence our culture. America is represented by people of different races who came here as immigrants to develop our great nation. We also have bold, new women in the workplace who make important decisions that affect the country. Also, we recognize the right of people to determine their sexual orientation without the fear of discrimination. Unlike other countries which possess mono-ethnic cultural traditions, American diversity is a unique characteristic. As a teenager growing up in America's "melting pot," I realize that human diversity is a big factor in my life. Not only does it make each individual unique, it also makes the human race very special.

In my school, for example, there are five basic groups within the student body. There are the "headbangers," the "preps," the "nerds," the "Beverly Hills 90210s," and my group, the "cool clique." Each of these groups has distinctive characteristics by which it identifies and/or distinguishes itself. While the preps listen to soft rock and pop music, the headbangers prefer alternative and heavy metal. The headbangers are also notably rebellious. This is not to say that rebellion is bad. My point is that they choose to challenge tradition. I find this to be adventurous and daring. This message is clearly illustrated in their clothing and style of dress. The preps keep everyone "into" school by emphasizing the importance of education both academically and culturally.

The nerds distinguish themselves from the preps with their scientific viewpoint. They are the human databases at our school. For example, they remind us when the next science club meeting is or help decipher the complexities of computer literacy. Members of the Beverly Hills group set the trends at school for our peers. They have assigned themselves as the taskmasters who inform us of our social status and link us to the "real" world. Finally, there is the clique to which I belong, the cools. We administer the stamp of approval and acceptance to decisions and actions. Justice, diplomacy, equality and social balance are tools we endeavor to master as our contribution to the whole. Within each clique there is also racial and economic diversity. In my opinion, our school would not be complete without all of these groups. In fact, I think it would be boring.

When I am home, the diversity continues. My mother is African American, and my dad is Caucasian. So, of course, my younger sister and I are bi-racial. Our ancestry ranges from African to Irish to Polish to Cherokee Indian. Following family tradition, I was taught just as my mother and grandmother were, that is, to not judge the measure of another by his or her appearance or educational or economical status. Respect and self-respect are greatly emphasized in our family. To top all of this off, we live in a predominately Hispanic community. In fact, Houston's racial, economic, educational and cultural diversity is widely celebrated as a major city in the United States and a major port in the world. Consequently, my entire environment is rich in diversity.

My final arena of diversity is the most dynamic of all, and that is the SGI-USA organization. The SGI-USA is a model of unified human diversity. People from every country in the world, all walks of life and every level of diversity in the civilized world are represented here. As Buddhists, we aspire to create unity through diversity, and we recognize the equality and dignity of all human life. SGI President Ikeda says that "no matter what" each individual can make a contribution to world peace "as they are." Personally, I can say as a teenager practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism that the theory of *esho funi* [oneness of self and environment] illustrates that one should be at peace

with oneself and one's environment — first you must change your life, then your environment will change.

In conclusion, I feel that human diversity makes the individual unique and the human race one of a kind. Indeed, our many differences are the very things which truly enhance our lives.

WT

Title: Life Would Be Boring Without Diversity
Subject: World Tribune 12/12/97 n.3169 p.12 WT971212p12
Author: Brittane D. Lewis
Keywords: Boring Contest Diversity Essay Life Organization Publications Without Would