

The Student Special

Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

Winter 2010

A Trip to Cuba

By Ron Wise

In December 2009 I went to Cuba. I was part of a group that delivered supplies. We took medical supplies to a Catholic convent, where the nuns help people who are sick. We took school supplies to a rural school.

We spent much of our time in Havana. It is the largest city in Cuba. Two and a half million people live there. It is also the capital of Cuba. Havana is an old city. It was founded in 1519. It has many old buildings. Some of them are not in good shape. Others are being fixed up. Havana has newer buildings, too. Many of them contain apartments. Some are hotels.

One day we took a trip to a place in the mountains not too far from Havana. That area used to have a lot of trees. Many of them were cut down. But new trees have been planted there, and the place looks a lot like it used to.

We also visited cities on the south coast of Cuba. These cities are much smaller than Havana, and life in them is much different.

There are fewer cars in Cuba than in many other countries. Some of the cars are American cars from the 1950s. Most of those cars are used as taxis.

Food in Cuba is rationed. People are given ration cards, which they use when they buy food. They can also buy food that is not rationed, but it costs a lot more.

People in Cuba get free health care and free education through the university level. There are universities in the major cities. Cuba trains so many doctors that it sends some of them to other countries to work.

In Cuba the government owns all the stores and companies. So most Cubans work for the government. Street vendors work for themselves. Some farmers own their land. Others work on government farms.

The Cuban people are very friendly. Many of them speak English, which is taught in the schools. They often wanted to know where I was from.

See **Cuba**, page 2

Cuba, from page 1

Cubans love music. The nicer restaurants usually have groups that play music. In one city we visited, music groups play outdoors every night, late into the night. We saw a live dance show at a theater, and a small choir performed just for our group.

I enjoyed my trip to Cuba very much. I hope that it will soon be easier for people from the United States to go there.

Rice

By Linda Del Bene

Rice is one of the most important foods in the world. It grows in many countries. Rice grows best in countries with hot weather and a lot of water. Rice grows best where the land is smooth and flooded with water.

Farmers have grown rice in Asia for more than 10,000 years. It is the most important crop in Asia today. Thailand and Vietnam grow a lot of rice to sell to other countries.

The United States also grows a lot of rice today. Americans eat about 25 pounds of rice each year.

Rice is a healthy food. It has important vitamins and minerals. It has very little fat.

Have you had your rice today?

The Student Special

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Editor: Ron Wise

You are invited to write pieces for *The Student Special*. Send them to the Editor, Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, VA 22042.

We Need Your Help

The Student Special is for the students of the Literacy Council. It would like to have more stories written by students. The stories do not have to be long. They can be about things that really happened or about things you make up. Your name will not be printed if you don't want it to be.

So try writing something for *The Student Special*. Send it to the Editor, in care of the Literacy Council office. Happy writing!

What Do You Want?

By Ron Wise

Skill Book 2 and *City Living*, page 24

New words: **want, horse, we**

"I want to get you a pet," Tom says to his brother Ned.

"What do you want for a pet?"

"I want a puppy," Ned says.

"I cannot get you a puppy," says Tom.

"Mother will get sick from a puppy."

"Then I want a cat," Ned says.

"Mother gets sick from cats," says Tom.

"Then I want a horse," Ned says.

"I cannot get you a horse," says Tom.

"A horse is very big.

It must have a barn to live in.

We do not have a barn."

"Then I want a duck," Ned says.

"I cannot get you a duck," says Tom.

"Father says we cannot have birds for pets.

A duck is a bird."

"Then I want a snake," Ned says.

"I cannot get you a snake," says Tom.

"Sister says she will kill any snake we have for a pet."

"I cannot have a puppy, a cat, a horse, a duck, or a snake," says Ned.

"Can I have a fish?"

Tom stops and thinks.

"Yes, you can have a fish," he says.

"I will get you a fish for a pet."

Answer the questions:

1. Ned cannot have a _____, a _____, a _____, a _____, or a _____ for a pet.
2. Ned can have a _____ for a pet.

Apples, Olives, Fish, and Eggs

By Linda Del Bene

Skill Book 1, Lesson 12

Dan has a box.

Dan has three apples.

He puts the apples in his box.

Jill has a cup.

Jill has ten olives.

She puts the olives in her cup.

Fran has a pan.

Fran has a fish.

She puts the fish in her pan.

Ted gives a dish to Sam.

Sam has two eggs.

He puts the eggs in the dish.

Dan has apples, and Jill has olives.

Fran has fish.

Ted and Sam have eggs.

Find the words and circle them. They go across and down. They are from the story.

R L E B O X B V

P A N C L O N U

Q P E D I S H R

I P G L V H O F

P L R T E V M I

U E G G S C T S

A S N R R U P H

B L A P K P S I

apples

box

cup

dish

eggs

fish

olives

pan