

# the meridian

THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

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Bronx, New York

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# the meridian

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# Student Allegedly Assaulted in Carman Hall

By Juan B. García

Multiple reports were made to Public Safety about a Lehman student being assaulted on Feb. 8, 2017 by four unidentified attackers, two males and two females, at approximately 4:25 p.m. in the basement level southeast stairwell of Carman Hall.

According to Public Safety, the Lehman student had a verbal altercation with the females. Public Safety didn't disclose to the Meridian the reason the argument started. The altercation began off campus at Kingsbridge Road.

The student then entered the campus through Gate 13 on Jerome Ave.

"While the student was walking onto the campus, it looks like [the two males] were on the phone and following him," said Department of Public Safety Director Fausto Ramirez. "We also captured some of the footage on video of a car pulling out and two females approaching the vehicle," said Ramirez. There's also footage where one can see the student running and the two males and females pursuing him.

According to Public Safety, once inside the basement of Carman Hall, they and the student got into a fight. The student pulled the fire alarm to call for help, and the building was evacuated. The four

attackers fled the area in their car after the incident. The student was severely beaten, with injuries to his head, his hands, and his face, according to Ramirez.

During the fight, multiple calls were made to Public Safety, with some students reporting a fight and others calling 911.

In the meantime, the fire alarm was going off. On top of that, a call from the Old Gym reported that a person got sick and had to be taken to the hospital. "It was the perfect storm," recalled Ramirez.

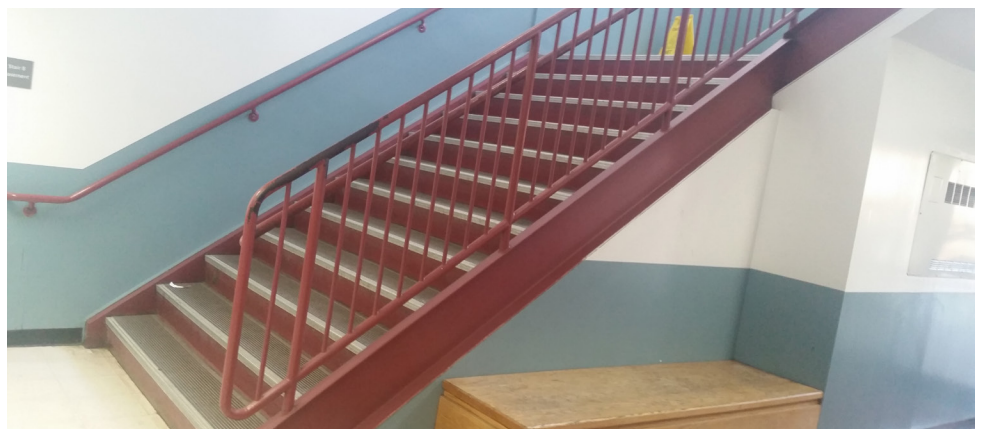
After the attack, the Lehman student was taken by Emergency Medical Services to the hospital where he was treated and released the same day. Once Carman Hall was considered safe, all occupants were allowed to reenter it.

Public Safety searched the campus but did not find the attackers. However,

while investigating, they recovered evidence and footage of the incident which has been turned over to the detectives of the NYPD 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, where Detective Michael Smith was the lead investigator. When reached by the Meridian, Detective Smith declined to make any comments regarding the case. Eyewitnesses provided the license plate number of the car in which the attackers fled. Public Safety found an ID which belonged to one of the females, which was from Monroe College.

"During the altercation and the assault, one of the females dropped her ID card," said Ramirez. Two weeks later, she was arrested. According to him, there have not been more arrests.

Public Safety is asking anyone who may have additional information regarding this incident to contact them.



The southeast stairwell at the basement level of Carman Hall, where the incident allegedly occurred.



# New Animal Planet Series Explores the Bronx Zoo's Inner Workings

By Abrian De Luna



Our very own Bronx Zoo is the focus of Animal Planet's "The Zoo." Source: NYC-arts.org.

"The Zoo," a new documentary series from Animal Planet that debuted in February, uncovers what goes on behind the scenes at the Bronx Zoo. It attempts to enlarge audiences' views of both the zoo---which, it points out, is only ten miles from Times Square, has 6000 animals and 530 employees---and its borough. As Bronx Zoo Director Jim Breheny puts it, in the opening sequence of every episode, gorilla named Ntondo is responding to target training more slowly than usual, indicating something is wrong. It turns out that Ntondo had glaucoma, which increases pressure in the eyes, damaging them and causing vision loss. Ntondo needed laser eye surgery, which Breheny said was something that the staff had never done before. This was the first documented case of a gorilla

"If you ask a child to draw picture of a zoo, chances are they're going to draw an animal behind bars. We gotta take that image and change it."

"The Zoo" does this partly by detailing what the general public does not see happening behind closed doors. For example, in the first episode, a silverback

suffering from glaucoma. Viewers get to see Ntondo being prepped, the operation itself, and how it succeeded in preventing his vision from deteriorating further.

The series also does an endearing job of showcasing the staff's passion for the animals. In the second episode, Melanie Lumba, zookeeper of the children's zoo, introduces her favorite animal, Mert, as "the best goose in the whole world." We see the two walk around the zoo together, with Lumba opening doors and clearing paths for him. She even has full-on conversations with him, and when Mert has to be sent to an animal hospital for a check-up, we see Melanie is genuinely concerned for him as if he was her own child.

The staff often looks heroic as they help animals in need. In the third episode, when a western diamondback rattlesnake needs oral medication to treat an infection,

Bill Orrico, senior reptile and amphibian keeper, moves the snake into a bucket and then puts its head into a tube. He mentions this is the most dangerous part because it puts his hand in danger of being bitten by the rattlesnake, which then has to open its mouth so that a catheter is inserted deep enough into its throat to administer the medication. Naturally, the rattlesnake is agitated, so the danger of being bitten is very real. Orrico admits this is stressful for him and the staff, but he has to make sure the rattlesnake gets its medication.

"The Zoo" also provides viewers a chance to learn about obscure animals such as maleos, an endangered bird species from Indonesia. They can make vocalizations which Alana O'Sullivan, senior keeper of the ornithology department which studies birds, said "don't even sound like they're from this planet."

Viewers are then treated to see the courtship rituals maleos undertake, consisting of the

birds sharing peanuts, which O'Sullivan describes as "maleo crack." However, the series could do better at giving viewers more context and basic information about the animals, such as noting how many maleos remain in Indonesia and how many the Bronx Zoo has, in order to really sell the conservation mission as well as explaining how its work applies to the study of birds.

Overall, "The Zoo" is a great documentary series that is easy to get into. It shows that the Bronx Zoo is not only a place to display animals that the public would normally never see, but also a haven for endangered and unique animals. This focus on rare animals make each episode stand out from a typical zoo visit, and does a fine job of shining a spotlight on what makes the Bronx Zoo special.

New episodes of "The Zoo" air on Saturdays on Animal Planet.

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## ReelAbilities Returns to Lehman

By Leonel Henriquez



Merrill Parra looks on as Kitty Lunn, star of "Dancing on Wheels," shares her experience with the audience. Photo by Leonel Henriquez.

On March 6 and 7, the ninth annual ReelAbilities Film Festival: New York returned to Lehman for the fifth year running. The festival showcased ten films from all over the world---features, narrative shorts, and documentaries---on the lives of individuals with a wide range of disabilities and their families as they cope with their day-to-day lives. Some were born with disabilities such as Autism or Down syndrome, while others acquired them later in life through



traumatic experience, illness or disease. “By bringing these films to the campus we’re really trying to raise awareness,” said Merrill Parra, the Director of Student Disabilities Services at Lehman. “The bottom line is that disability is only one characteristic of what a person is all about.” The festival aims not only to educate people about the lives of the disabled, but also to show the commonality of the human condition shared by everyone, and that each person has a struggle to overcome in life.

For James Roll, a 2009 Lehman grad with an M.A. in recreation attending for the fourth time, the best part of the festival is, “trying to get some of the other students who don’t have disabilities or people in their

lives with disabilities to come in to watch and see how much like everybody else they really are. They’re really just like anybody else.”

This year was the first time Doreen Mendez, a 50-year-old who survived a stroke five years ago, attended the festival. Now suffering from aphasia, a form of language impairment, Mendez came because, “I am interested in advocacy for disabled people after this happened to me. That’s why I wanted to see other people that are going through the same thing and what else they need that I have not seen yet.”

One festival highlight was an appearance by Kitty Lunn, the subject of the film directed by Qingzi Fan, “Dancing on Wheels.”

Lunn, 66, is a dancer who was paralyzed from the waist down after falling on ice in front of her building in Manhattan in 1990. She spent three years in the hospital and underwent five spinal surgeries.

“Being a dancer was my identity,” she told the audience. “It’s one thing when a dancer decides they want to stop dancing and do something else but that’s their choice. I felt like my identity had been stripped away from me and I didn’t really know who I was.”

The film chronicles her life as a wheelchair dancer, teacher and choreographer and is an inspirational testimony to her struggle to identify as a disabled dancer. “I was terrified,” she recalled. “I had been dancing since I was eight years old, but I had to find a way.”

# Netflix Adapts “A Series of Unfortunate Events” for the Small Screen

By Leah Liceaga

Are you familiar with the Baudelaire orphans? The three are the protagonists in Daniel Handler’s book series, “A Series of Unfortunate Events,” written under the pen name Lemony Snicket. The books have been turned into a Netflix series, with the first season already up and a second one promised. Neil Patrick Harris stars as Count Olaf, Patrick Warburton as narrator Lemony

Snicket, Malina Weissman as Violet, and Louis Hynes as Klaus. Baby Sunny is played by Presley Smith, and voiced by Tara Strong.

Before I begin my review of the series, I will introduce the Baudelaire family for those who may be unfamiliar with Handler’s work.

The orphans consist of the eldest child, Violet, an inventor; middle child, Klaus,

the only boy, with a brilliant mind, who never forgets what he reads; and baby Sunny, the biter, whose teeth can cut through almost anything. Their sad tale of misery and woe filled a total of 13 books, published from 1999 to 2006. Since the final book was published, someone who seems to have taken depraved pleasure in their pain concocted the dreadful



Photo by Leah Liceaga.

idea of bringing the Baudelaires' as they spend a few uneasy days with woes from ink and paper to television. Mr. Poe's family, and the disappointment

With actor Patrick Warburton in the role of narrator Lemony Snicket, the first season depicts the first four books of the series over eight episodes; "The Bad Beginning," "The Reptile Room," "The Wide Window," and "The Miserable Mill." The show follows all of the books quite faithfully, which many fans, like myself, will no doubt find satisfying. It includes all of the Baudelaires' tragic luck after the death of their parents.

In the first episode, the audience is shown the heartbreaking reaction of the Baudelaire children as they learn they are now the Baudelaire orphans from the family banker Mr. Poe, played by K. Todd Freeman. The loneliness and uncertainty of what will become of them

in discovering the squalor they will live in with their selfish guardian Count Olaf (Neil Patrick Harris) is admittedly depressing to watch. Olaf quickly reveals that he only wants the Baudelaires' fortune and treats them like servants. It is a depressing, but fitting, start to the show.

As in the books, the Baudelaire orphans rise to the challenges thrown at them, and they discover that they did not know everything about their parents. With the

possibility that one of those secrets may have resulted in the Baudelaire parents' deaths, the children try to find out more. With sardonic humor to lighten the woefully depressing, and the depressingly woeful, hardships of the children as they fight to uncover the past, their journey

comes to life flawlessly on the screen.

There are divergences from the book, however, that make the show's storyline differ from the original story, particularly if one has read the books beforehand like myself. There is subplot with Mr. Poe's assistant, Jacquelyn Scieszka (Sara Canning) working incognito. She likely has the answers the Baudelaires are seeking about their parents' pasts, but must chase after Count Olaf to stop his nefarious schemes against the orphans.

There was no such subplot mentioned in the books, but it is interesting to watch--along with the character Jacquelyn--as she does everything she can to aid the Baudelaires and stop Olaf.

Each episode is also nearly an hour long, which may tempt some viewers to fast-forward to get to the excitement; the inevitable confrontation between Olaf and the Baudelaires. When his schemes are on the edge of succeeding, the orphans must act to save themselves.

The entire first season awaits those brave enough to watch, though I implore you once more, if this review has not done its job, to find a more cheerful source of entertainment. I believe Lemony Snicket recommended a book called "The Littlest Elf."

# A “Day Without Immigrants” Strike Creates Solidarity---Within Limits

By Juan B. García



Exterior of Mole Poblano, open for business, located at 290 New Main St., Yonkers, New York. Photo by Juan B. Garcia.

The Trump administration's hard-line stances on a range of policies have precipitated ongoing protests across the U.S., with immigration law one of the most hotly contested issues. These efforts to mobilize public coalitions are creating new popular alliances. While these attempts remain a work in progress, they seek to build broader solidarity among and between diverse groups, as demonstrated by the nationwide strike, a “Day Without Immigrants,” that took place on Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017. To protest Donald Trump's plans to build a wall and deport millions of undocumented immigrants, the campaign asked foreign-born people, regardless of legal status, not to work



or shop to demonstrate the importance of their labor and consumer spending on the U.S. economy. The idea was to make merchants feel the absence of immigrant workers. In 2014, Pew Research Center estimated that there were 43.6 million foreign-born people in the U.S. Out of those 43.6 million, 11.1 million were unauthorized immigrants. The campaign spread mostly on Facebook and via WhatsApp, and many workers and businesses participated. “I [closed my restaurant] to express my solidarity with the [immigrant] community, to support the cause and to show that undocumented immigrants are [an important] part of the economy,” said César García, 38, owner of Mole Poblano, a Mexican restaurant located in Yonkers. García said, on the day of the strike, most of the restaurants in Yonkers closed. His employees didn’t go to work and were pleased that García supported the strike.

However, the somewhat haphazard way he became involved in the action demonstrates the vicissitudes of decentralized protest organized on social media. A few days before joining the strike, César García read a post on Facebook announcing it. There is a lot of fake news on the internet and he wanted to make sure that the strike was real. He started to investigate by

calling Qué Buena 92.7 FM, a radio station that broadcasts a Spanish language regional Mexican format--- owned by Univision’s radio division--- where he talked to DJ José Luis Arcos. Then García called The Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute at CUNY, located on the second floor of Carman Hall at Lehman. The institute serves as a resource for the Mexican community in New York promoting college enrollment, research and advocacy.

**“I believe a more organized event [was] needed to make a real impact.”**

**- Yohan García,  
Anchoring Achievement  
Coordinator at The  
Jaime Lucero**

Yohan García, Anchoring Achievement Coordinator at The Jaime Lucero, answered and told César García that the strike was real but that there was no organization behind it. Yohan García and his colleagues at The Jaime Lucero talked about the campaign and its lack of centralization.

The day of the strike Yohan García did his daily Thursday routine, taking his niece to school and then going to school himself, to Fordham University where he is a graduate student. He happened to be off from work.

“My niece asked to be taken to school,” said Yohan García. He added that he didn’t feel he was really a part of the strike. “I’m a grad student at Fordham and since I pay my tuition out of pocket, I don’t give myself the option of missing classes. Each day of class cost me more than \$400 dollars,” García said. “I’m glad that a lot of community members participated, yet, I believe a more organized event [was] needed to make a real impact,” said Yohan García. His colleague, Interim Director of the Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute José Higuera López, mentioned that although the nationwide strike a “Day Without Immigrants” was eventful and it had an impact on [the Bronx] community, it would have been much more impactful if it had a clear organizing body, leadership roles, and guidelines.

According to a 2017 article in The New York Times about the strike “owners of some smaller businesses said that they supported the idea but that the campaign was too hastily organized to justify closing.” Several activists said

that “as far as they knew there was no national organization behind [the campaign].” A problem a protest like this presented was that it worked for middle and upper class people that could afford

to take a day off from work without getting fired. NBC News reported that “dozens of protesters across the country were fired from their jobs after skipping work to take part in last week’s ‘Day Without Immigrants’ demonstration.” “I think that the employers who fired immigrants that did not go to work were not supporting the movement,” said Neil Omacharan, 23, a junior at Lehman.

“I think it was unfair and unjust to fire them,” he continued. He also said that the day of the strike immigrants just wanted to let everyone know the importance they have in this country.

Higuera López remarked that the Women’s March provided clear leadership and a message that rallied national support. “Other marches like the ones organized by Make the Road New York, in which I and other colleagues have also participated on our own personal time and weekends,” said Higuera López, “established clear guidelines and time frames that

allowed all people participating to understand the rules of engagement.”

Compared to the “Day Without Immigrants” strike, upcoming marches and pacific rallies on immigrants such as La Marcha de Mayo, May Day and No Ban/No Wall Vigil are centralized and organized and provide specific hours and places of gathering.

The next day after the strike, César García said that his customers reacted positively to his solidarity. “They were happy that we were supporting the cause,” he said.



The day of the national strike, Mole Poblano closed in solidarity with the immigrant community. Photo by Juan B. Garcia.



# Lehman Students Don't Get a Break this Spring

By Shivani Boodhoo

In movies like “Spring Breakers,” “National Lampoon’s Spring Break,” and “22 Jump Street,” spring break is portrayed as a wild time when college students go on drinking binges and do lots of thrilling, and illegal, activities. However, in real life, many Lehman students have a much tamer experience due to a backlog of school work and lack of funds.

Edgenis Abreu, 22, an environmental science major, laments, “Having time to yourself without having to think about school is always great, but every year it

seems like I have either a project or a final to worry about after the break is over.”

Mariah Dwyer, 21-year-old English major focusing on creative writing and minoring in professional communication, is also tied down by academic obligations. This year, she doesn’t have concrete plans, but said, “Normally if I’m not given an essay or reading to do for spring break, I try to do future assignments.” So, she keeps her break local, and plans to hang out with friends picnicking in Central Park. “If I’m not doing any of those things,” she added, “I’d be binge watching a TV show on Netflix.”

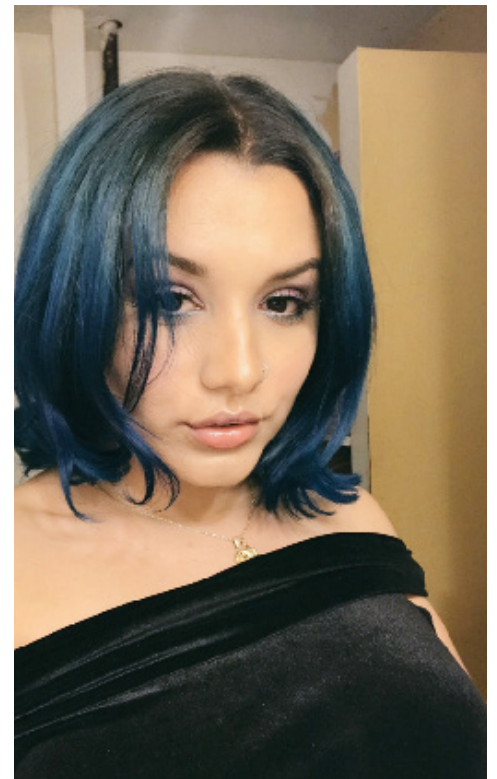
Tana Cambrelen, 20, another creative writing major and Netflix addict, agrees that “Spring break is a tease.” She isn’t that excited about it because she is not going on vacation---she too will be doing schoolwork. “I don’t get assigned any spring break homework, but I always end up getting ahead on work that’s due because I feel guilty just sitting around.” She appreciates the time off, but having to go back to school “is always the hardest because I got a little taste of freedom.” However, she decided not to pick up more shifts at her job during the break because she wanted time to relax.

Since she can’t legally drink, Cambrelen adds “I’ve never been on a spring break vacation since I’m not 21 yet. Next year should be exciting.”

For other students keeping their breaks local, the Bronx Zoo offers free admission for CUNY students. The New York Botanical Garden’s annual Orchid Show is ongoing as well, and the Tribeca Film Festival will run from April 19-30 in Manhattan. Whatever you choose to do, you’d better enjoy it, because once April is over, finals seem to hit worse than a hurricane.



Mariah Dwyer enjoys break at Wave Hill Gardens.



Tana Cambrelen gets ready for spring break 2017.

# Hungry Students Put Price First, Health and Taste Second

By Keidy Gómez



Carman Hall Café, where friends are made. Jerlisa Ware, Daisy DeJesus, Courtne Comrie. Photo by Keidy Gomez.

When the food we're eating is good, we want to continue savoring the moment. Unfortunately for many Lehman students on tight budgets, that happens only once in a blue moon. Even with a new program to cut food costs, most students we talked to said that they choose food that is convenient and affordable over what they actually want to eat, which means they don't always make healthy choices when it comes to eating on campus.

I like to eat junk food, but, sometimes I go for a pizza," said Courtne Comrie, a 24-year-old Lehman sophomore who's majoring in creative writing. "When I feel naughty, I eat greasy pizza," said Jerlisa Ware, a 25-year-old Lehman senior, also majoring in creative writing and minoring in education. "When I'm hungry, I eat whatever is available." Ware often goes to the taco truck on Goulden Avenue outside campus, when she wants something quick to eat and is on the go, but when she feels like having

a food adventure she eats halal. Students like Ware and Comrie don't usually savor their food experiences as much on campus, where food is relatively expensive. A soda from Carman Hall Café costs \$1.91, while in a bodega it costs only \$1.25. Plain pizza costs \$2, and a full meal can cost \$8 to 10 including a drink and tax. So rather than splurging for taste, more often than not, students on a budget just eat for sustenance.

To help students cut costs a bit, last



semester Lehman began offering Dining Dollars, a program that lets students use their student ID card to pay for food. Students can put \$25 dollars on their student ID card and they don't pay tax. If they add \$50 dollars they get \$2.50 back. The funds, however, expire at the end of every spring semester. Daisy DeJesus, the cashier at the Carman Hall Café,

“When I feel naughty, I eat greasy pizza.”

-Jerlisa Ware, Lehman Senior and creative writing major

explains it as “a debit card that you can add money [to] and have savings.”

DeJesus herself goes above and beyond to help out students who are trying to make ends meet. “Some students leave their money in the classroom and forget to bring it. I take their name and number and let them pay me later,” she said. “If a friend of mine is hungry and can't pay, I pay out of pocket for them. I know how hard it is when you are hungry and broke.”

# A Lehman Student's First Day in Seoul

By Yara Palin



Some of the treats that can be found on the streets near Sungshin Women's University. Photos by Yara Palin.

On the cold, wet evening of Feb. 22, after a 14-hour non-stop flight, I arrived in Seoul, South Korea, where I am spending the semester through the Lehman-Sungshin Exchange Program. The local time was around 6 p.m., but in New York it was 3 a.m., and after a one-hour bus ride to my dorm I was ready to turn in. I would soon find out that while some things here work just like in New York City, others are a world apart.

My adventure began the next morning, when I woke refreshed and energized to explore the city. More populous than New York City, Seoul is home to 10 million people, compared to New York's 8 million, and the main streets are always bustling. While there are many

businesses known to Americans such as Subway, McDonald's, and KFC, you cannot come to Korea and not try the street food.

However, if you're craving a taste of home you still can't go wrong with going into a more familiar establishment. Most of the food tastes the same, and there are even additions made to the menu that feel more Korean. A lot of people may understand what you're saying but not all employees will speak English so keep that in mind while ordering and be prepared to point A LOT.

The nightlife in Seoul is "can't miss." First stop was Hongdae, and of course, I would have to take the Seoul Metro to get there. Seoul's equivalent to New York City's MetroCard is the T-money card which works the same way but is way cooler. If you purchase a T-money card at a convenience store, you can ask the clerk to give you a card with your favorite K-pop idol. Or if you're like me, you can purchase your card at a kiosk at any train station. This option does not offer customization.

Costing about \$3, the card can be

reloaded with any amount that you choose, and can also be used to pay for some taxis and in certain convenience stores. Thankfully, the vending machines that sell these cards have English language capabilities.

Once my T-Money card was loaded I was ready to board the train. The main difference between the train stations in Seoul and New York City is how much cleaner they are here. Although trash cans are practically nonexistent in the train stations---and pretty much everywhere else---there is zero garbage



Photos by Yara Palin.



on the floor. At the edge of the platform is a sliding door that only opens when the train arrives, to prevent people from falling onto the tracks.

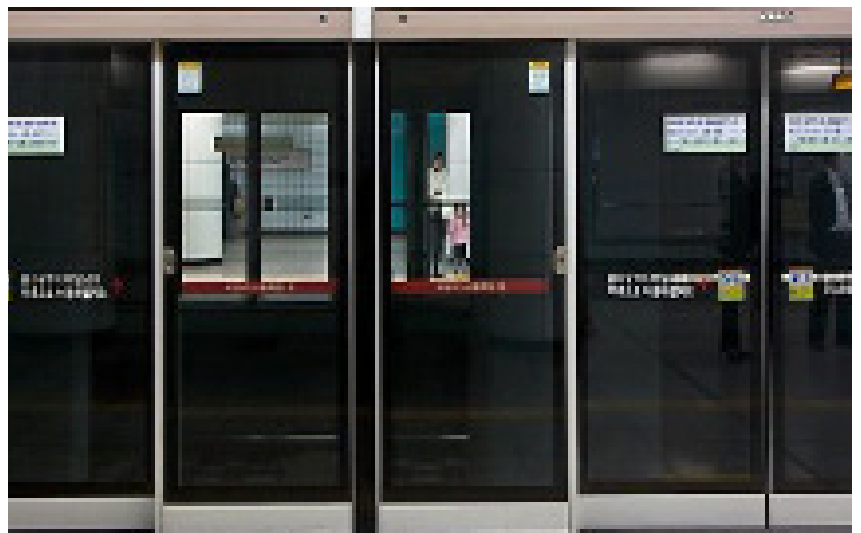
Once you're on the train, show time is over. That's right, you won't find any performers or anyone asking for money on the trains in Seoul because it's considered impolite to be loud on all forms of public transportation. Anything louder than a whisper can draw stares and side eye. There are also seats on each end of the car for pregnant women, the elderly, or the disabled. Do not even think of sitting there.

Hongdae is a college town near Hongik University known for its urban arts and indie music culture, clubs and entertainment scene. The one thing everyone kept recommending was Chimaek (치맥). This is a compound word formed from chicken and maekju, the Korean word for beer. An entire platter of chicken comes out to 10,000 Korean won, which is less than \$10 and a pint of draft beer was only \$2.

My friends and I had one more surprise lesson about the train system. We were shocked to be ejected from the train exactly one stop before the Sungshin

Women's University Station. It turns out that the trains in Seoul stop running at midnight sharp, so we were forced to hail a cab home. After a good twenty minutes of waving our arms helplessly into the night, we caught the attention of a cab driver willing to drive us back to our dorm for the reasonable fee of around \$3!

So ended my first day and night on the town in Seoul. As I looked out my window and saw the famous Namsan Tower, I went to sleep excited for what the next day had in store for me.



Sungshin Women's University Station. Photos by Yara Palin.



# MAY DAY

MAKE LEHMAN SAFE AGAIN

MEET AT THE QUAD

12:15 P.M.



[SANCTUARYLEHMAN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SANCTUARYLEHMAN@GMAIL.COM)