

# J-1 Journeys

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## DUAL ISSUE: POLITICS AND THANKSGIVING



### In This Issue of J-1 Journeys:

Page 1 IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION

Page 2 PHOTO CONTEST

Page 3 EXCHANGE VISITOR  
OF THE MONTH

Page 4 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Page 5 WHAT IS THE  
ELECTORAL COLLEGE?

Page 6 WHAT'S YOUR  
FAVORITE AMERICAN MOVIE  
ABOUT POLITICS?

Page 7 POLITICAL JARGON

Page 8 WASHINGTON, DC

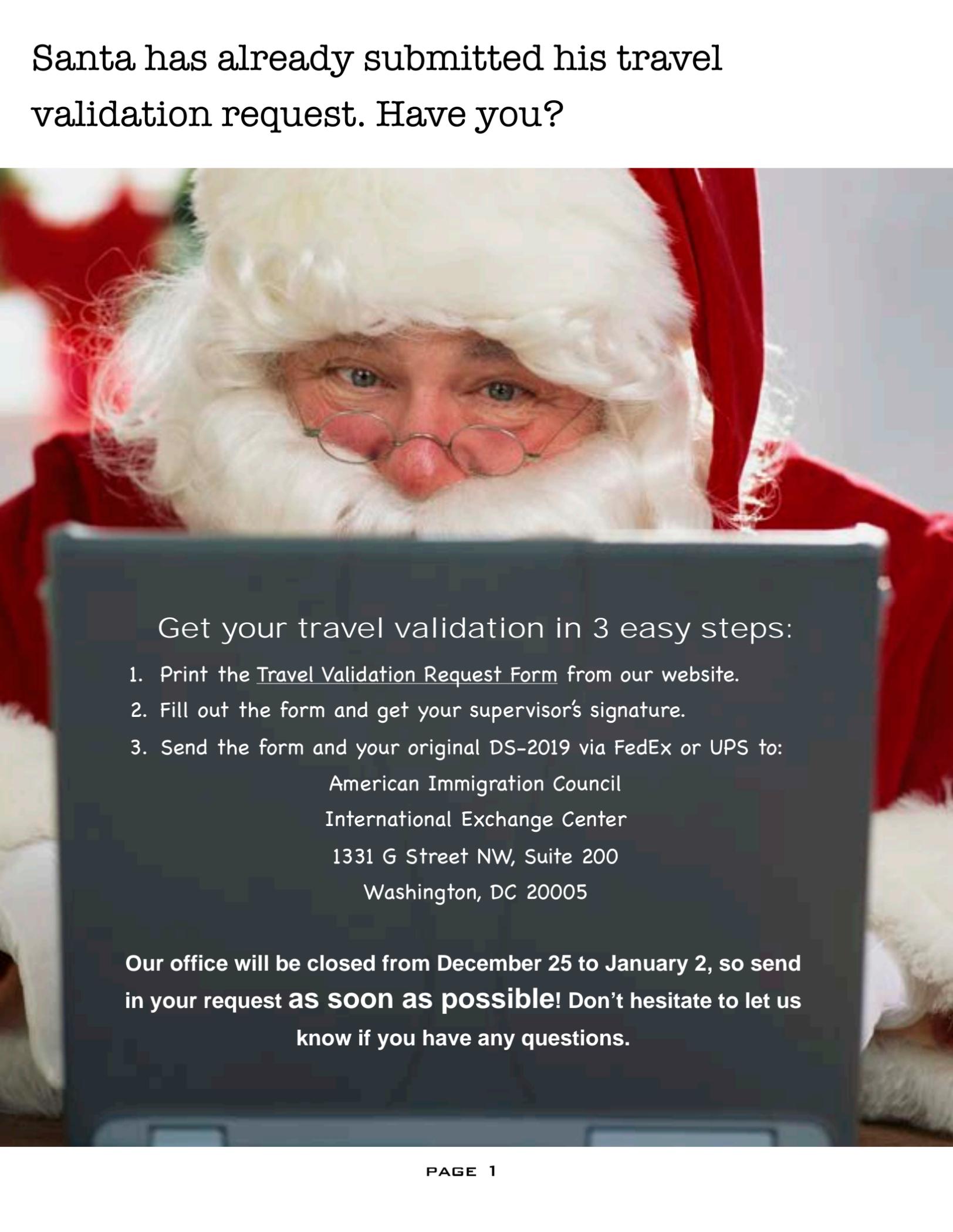
Page 9 PLYMOUTH, MA

Page 10 THANKSGIVING  
PLANS

Page 11 FALL FOOD

Page 12 CONTACT US!

Santa has already submitted his travel validation request. Have you?

A close-up photograph of Santa Claus, wearing his traditional red suit and white fur trim. He has a white beard and is wearing round, thin-rimmed glasses. He is holding a dark grey tablet in front of his chest, which displays text. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of his suit and some festive decorations.

Get your travel validation in 3 easy steps:

1. Print the [Travel Validation Request Form](#) from our website.
2. Fill out the form and get your supervisor's signature.
3. Send the form and your original DS-2019 via FedEx or UPS to:

American Immigration Council  
International Exchange Center  
1331 G Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005

**Our office will be closed from December 25 to January 2, so send in your request **as soon as possible!** Don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.**



**Submit a photo that represents your life as a J-1 exchange visitor in the United States, and you might win a \$50 gift card!**

To submit your photo, please send it before **November 30** as an email attachment to [internationalexchangecenter@gmail.com](mailto:internationalexchangecenter@gmail.com).

In the text of the email, please include:

- 1) Your name**
- 2) The location of the photo**
- 3) Permission from the person who took the photo for us to reproduce it on our website and in print form**
- 4) One to three sentences about how the photo represents your life in the US.**

For all other inquiries not related to the photo contest, please contact us at our regular email address:

[J1Program@immcouncil.org](mailto:J1Program@immcouncil.org)

# Esteban Roman

From: Mexico

Occupation: Journalist

Status: J-1 Trainee

Field of Training: Journalism

Currently Resides in: Miami, Florida

Read the complete  
interview on our  
[website](#).

## What advice do you have for other J-1 Trainees and Interns?

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions, because people here might assume that you understand what they are saying. Let them know when you're not coming from the same cultural context.
2. Watch out for the sales tax! Usually, in other countries, the price displayed in the store is the actual price. In the US, it's always a surprise!

## What are the differences between journalism in the US and in Mexico?

The quality level of journalism is different here from Mexico. In Mexico, election coverage is about recording and publishing what the candidates say. Here, some journalists and media outlets try to go beyond that.

There's a fact-checking tradition here. There's a drive to see if what the candidates say is really accurate.

## What are your thoughts on Miami?

Miami is a great place to get to know Latin America. It is like the capital of Latin America because the people of every Latin American country are represented here.

Miami is known as the "capital of shallowness". You hear about plastic surgery, luxury cars and huge amounts of money. But actually, that's not true. If you really get to know many different types of people in different areas of Miami - the people who have to work hard every day to make a living, you will find that there is more to Miami than beaches, sand and night clubs.

# J-1 Program Alum Matthias Nienaber

**Now that you've returned to Germany, what are some ways you're using what you learned during your J-1 training program in the US?**

Language—I'm taking MA classes in English here in Germany, so my time speaking English in the US has definitely helped.

Accounting—the things I learned in my training program give me the edge in my studies now.

People skills—During my training program, I was encouraged to just go anywhere and talk to people rather than just writing emails. I learned that meeting with people can be much more illuminating than communicating by email.

**Do you have any advice for exchange visitors in the US on how to make new friends?**

Find groups of people on sites like [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) and [couchsurfing.org](https://www.couchsurfing.org). Visit churches and attend activities at universities that are open to the public.

**Do you have any advice on how to deal with cross-cultural communication?**

Be patient and don't be afraid. Fear is irrational. People are very open.

**Did you have any reverse culture shock after returning to Germany?**

I forgot that we have clutch driving over here, so the first time I got in a car, I choked it.

**Do you have any regrets about your time in the United States?**

I wish I would have taken more time to go traveling. You need a lot of time to see the US—it's so big!



# WHAT IS THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE?

Did you know that on Election Day in the United States, citizens are not directly voting for the next president of the United States?



The authors of the Constitution debated about how the President should be selected. Some wanted Congress to elect the president while others wanted a popular vote by the citizens. A compromise was reached by establishing the Electoral College.

The Electoral College is a body of voting electors who directly select the next president of the United States. Each state has their own allotment of electors which is taken from the number of their representative members in the House of Representatives and the Senate. There are 538 electors, 435 from the House of

Representatives, in addition to 100 electors from the Senate, and then three for the District of Columbia. A majority of 270 electoral votes are needed to secure the presidency. When US citizens vote on election day, they vote for a person to represent them in voting for the president.

Some argue that the Electoral College does not truly represent the will of the people, while others say that the Electoral College prevents a tyranny of the majority, giving a voice to minority interests. What do you think?

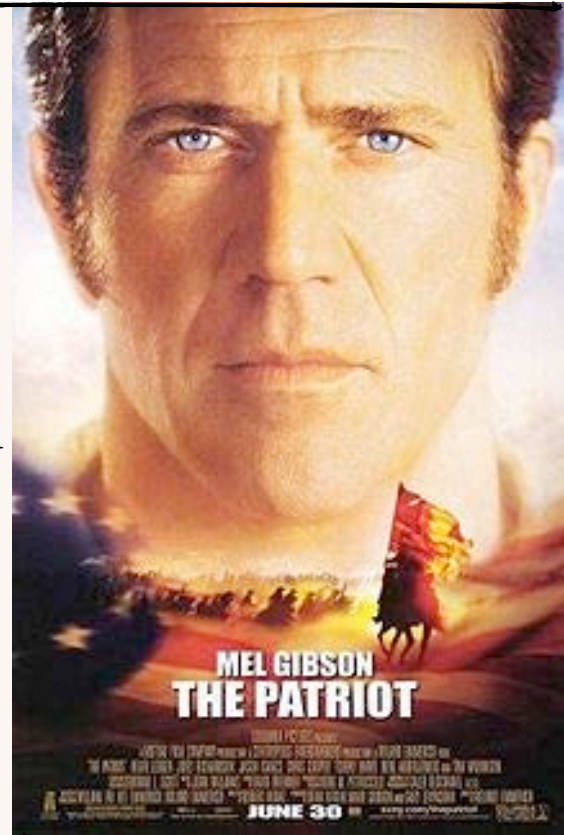
# What Are Your Favorite American Political Movies?



**The Patriot** characterizes the beginning of America's historical path and independence from the English.

**Pearl Harbor** is a movie known worldwide because of the love story, of course, but also because it gives a good idea of America's role in World War II and the reasons that led America's leaders to step in and actually get involved in this war.

-Sandra Oliveira, J-1 Trainee in New York from Portugal



## **Erin Brockovich**

I love it as this person was willing to go all the way to get to the truth and facts. Very smart and witty approach to get the information needed.

For **Charlie Wilson's War**, I love the way the director and writers portray it in a very witty and southern charming ways.

-Nadrah Zaabar, J-1 Trainee in California from Malaysia



# Having Trouble Understanding the Political Jargon on TV?

## Here's your handy guide!

### Red state and blue state

On the map of the electoral college, the red states vote Republican and the blue states vote Democrat.

### The donkey and the elephant

The donkey is a symbol of the Democratic Party and the elephant is a symbol of the Republican Party.

### Lame duck

The term “lame duck” refers to an official in elected office who has lost his re-election campaign.

### GOP

GOP stands for “Grand Old Party”. It refers to the Republican Party.

### Grassroots

A grassroots movement or campaign is driven by active members of a local community, rather than by prominent national leaders or organizations.

# Washington, DC



The capital city of the United States needs no introduction-- but if you're visiting Washington, DC, you'll need a guide. Check our Facebook page this month for tips on where to go!



# Plymouth



**Curious about the history of the Thanksgiving holiday in the US? Visit  
Plymouth, Massachusetts, the legendary site of the first Pilgrim  
Thanksgiving celebration! Visit our Facebook page for more.**



# What Are Your Thanksgiving Plans?



"For international trainees at my company, the Thanksgiving break is a great opportunity to travel somewhere further. Together with my international colleagues, I'm going to Puerto Rico. As we currently reside in Boston and the winter is coming, we decided to go somewhere warm. I will not celebrate Thanksgiving in the same way as the Americans do, although I think it would be a great experience to participate in the traditional Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and pumpkin pie. Maybe we will have a chance to try these dishes in Puerto Rico! If not, I hope I will get a chance to celebrate Thanksgiving with locals next year."

-Aleksandra Kaminska from Poland, J-1 Trainee in Massachusetts

Since 1989, the President of the United States has pardoned turkeys each year to save them from being eaten at the Thanksgiving feast! Last year, President Obama pardoned two turkeys from Minnesota, named Liberty and Peace. After the ceremony, the turkeys were sent to enjoy the rest of their lives at Mount Vernon, the beautiful Virginia home of the first president, George Washington.



## **Here are some more ideas for how to celebrate Thanksgiving:**

1. Write a list of everything you're thankful for.
2. Write a thank you letter to someone who has impacted your life.
3. Take advantage of the big sales on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving when stores offer huge bargains.
4. Volunteer to help the less fortunate by serving food at a soup kitchen.
5. Watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.
6. Bake a pumpkin pie! (See next page)

# Fall Food

**Hungry? Grab a pumpkin and fix up one of the mouth-watering dishes in these recipes online:**

[Toasted Pumpkin Seeds](#)

[Pumpkin Gingerbread](#)

[Pumpkin Pancakes](#)

[Pumpkin Bread](#)

[Pumpkin Soup](#)

[Pumpkin Pie](#)



# STAY CONNECTED...

## CONTACT US:

[Jlprogram@immcouncil.org](mailto:Jlprogram@immcouncil.org)

202-507-7500

[www.internationalexchangecenter.org](http://www.internationalexchangecenter.org)



**INTERNATIONAL  
EXCHANGE  
CENTER**

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

## Mailing Address:

**THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE CENTER**

**AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL**

**1331 G STREET NW**

**SUITE 200**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005**

**USA**

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**340**

Exchange Visitors connected  
with us on Facebook?

