



The ESL Parrot

Your ARC newsletter by and for ESL, multicultural, international students, new Californians, and, well, anybody really...

Issue # 15

Fall 2007

ESL Student Talks Karate with **The Parrot**

Nasrin, what's your full name ?

Nasrin Varshochi

Where are you from?

Iran

How long have you been here?

Almost 5 and a half years.

Are you a U.S citizen right now?

No, I just have the green card. Maybe, at the end of this year, I'll apply for citizenship.

Do you like it here?

Yeah, mostly. I don't really like the food here; it's sometimes so greasy. I do like the environment and the schools here.

What is the thing that you like most here?

I think it's the rules; people are forced to respect each other. It's really important to me. I also like the freedom here very much, too.

Have you ever gone back to Iran for a visit?

Yeah, we did last year. I missed my parents a lot, and I went back mainly just to visit them. I didn't manage my work schedule at that time; some students dropped my class and enrolled in others because they couldn't wait 3 months for me to come back. So I am really not sure when I will go back again. It's hard for a busy person like me.

How about ARC? Do you like it ? Have any friends on campus?

Yeah. Everything is good; people and services are nice. However I hate seeing people smoking around the campus. I have some friends from here, some are from Russia, and even from my country. I like also like to have parties with them.



Do you have any children?

I have two kids. My daughter is 8 years old; my son is 11 years old.

How many units are you taking now?

Now I take 6 units because I don't have much time to study. I'm so busy.

Do you think your English is improving?

I don't really know but I feel uncomfortable speaking English with people around. However, I think I need to learn more and more vocabulary. I always write correct sentences, but make mistake while talking.

What is the biggest difficulty you've had to face here?

It's the language. Because I am so busy taking care of my kids — they are so important to me — I don't have too much time practicing English. I usually just take one English class every semester but this semester I'm taking two: ESL writing and reading.

How about your kids? Do they speak English well?

Oh yeah, they don't have to worry about anything but school. My husband and I make the best conditions for them to study so they can concentrate on school. Also, they are young; they go to school everyday, speak English a lot at school. That helps them.

Did they have problems adjusting to the U.S at the time when you moved here?

Yeah, it was such a hard time. My kids were so close to their grandparents when they were in Iran. Therefore, they cried a lot as they didn't live with them anymore. Moreover, schools were tough too. But I'm glad that everything is going OK now.

How about your husband? What does he do?

He is a mechanic. He is also attending ARC to learn English.

So how did you get involved in this sport?

Karate is a form of martial arts in which people who have had years and years of training can, using only their hands and feet, make some of the worst movies in the history of the world

Dave Barry



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I started to learn karate when I was eleven years old, before the revolution in my country in 1978.

What happened after the revolution?

After the revolution, practicing karate was banned for all women in Iran because the government thought that only men should learn martial arts.

How did you finally, then, become a karate expert in Iran?

I had many meetings and karate demonstrations in front of the authorities and finally they let me conduct classes.

So what made you become a karate teacher?

Continued on page 12

Student Chirpings

Overeating Solutions

Twenty years ago my favorite hobby was eating. At that time, I really enjoyed it. My father was mad at me because of my bad eating behavior. He always encouraged me to find a better activity than eating. Everyday he asked me, "What is your biggest wish?" and I had a hard time finding a good answer to his question. He was worried about my future. He used all the techniques he knew to stop my overeating behavior. I still remember one of those days when he repeated his famous question, and I answered him, "My biggest wish is to have a computer." The next day, he bought me a computer and taught me how to use it. I enjoyed learning some basic computer language much more than overeating. So, here's my advice to stop overeating: install the necessary equipment in your dining room, eat slowly, and perform some activities after eating.

Before eating, install a six by four mirror in your dining room. Make sure you see your side view before sitting at the dining table. It may help you to eat less because when you see the size of your stomach, you will think more about your figure. Write these words: "Fat, ugly, sick, bad, stupid, lazy, unattractive, ... eat less" on a placard and place it on the table. Make sure you see the placard while eating. Install a

digital scale under your seat in such way that will measure your net weight and put the screen of the scale on the table. It will help you to decrease your appetite. By using these techniques, I solved my overeating behavior. While eating, look at the placard, the green scale, and those photographs.

Eat very slowly; that will help your



brain to calculate the empty volume of your stomach. There is a time delay between the human brain and the sense of fullness. If you eat fast, your stomach will overflow with food before your brain knows it, so you won't know when you are full. Chew your food like gum, then swallow it slowly because our taste cells are located on our tongues and they are connected to our brain; therefore, those taste cells sense enough good taste to help us lose our appetite. Always go to a fancy restaurant to eat, so you will not get too much food and you

may not order another dish because it is expensive. Eat a piece of chocolate before your food. It may also help you to lose your appetite.

After eating, go to a dance club; you will hate yourself if you overeat because you can't dance with those beautiful girls in the dance club. I guarantee that you will remember that situation for a long time. This may help you to eat less the next time. Always try to eat before the hardest part of your work, so you can burn some calories. However, you may not be able to work hard and that may be a risk of losing your job. Therefore, you would not overeat next time. Find another hobby for yourself instead of eating. Many people love to eat because they don't have anything else to love.

In short, overeating is a result of the lack of better things to do. The human soul is always searching for a hobby to enjoy doing. As soon as your soul finds such a task, it will force our your body to do it. So, we should be provided with lots of good tasks (things known by people at this time as good behavior) for our soul to have more choices.

Farhad Sahand, W50

Parrot Warbling



Grappling with Grammar

Contrasting Ideas

There are a number of formulas when contrasting ideas in English. Here are some of the most common.

Formula	Example	Explanation
Main statement, but contrasting statement	I'd really like to come to the film, but I have to study tonight.	Use a comma or semi colon (;) with 'but'.
Main statement, however , contrasting statement	She is a very intelligent girl; however, her tendency to not pay attention in class causes her problems.	Use 'however' preceded by a semi-colon (;) and followed by a comma (,).
Main statement, in spite of contrasting statement	They continued on their journey, in spite of the pouring rain	Use 'in spite of' plus a noun, noun phrase or gerund
Main statement, although contrasting statement	We wanted to buy a sports car, although we knew that fast cars can be dangerous.	Use 'although' with a subject and verb to make a subordinate clause

Rigoberto's Riddles

What do elves learn in school?

The elf-abet

What is the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet?

The Christmas alphabet has No L (Noel)

Why does Santa Claus have three gardens?

So he can hoe hoe hoe



Idiom Attic



Rock bottom

(1) Physically or emotionally, **rock bottom** means *the very lowest*. "It's like being way, way down at the bottom of the sea," Bighead said. "My spirits have touched rock bottom today and I feel miserable!" "If I were you, I wouldn't worry about him," Eggmont said. "He always says that he hits rock bottom when the tourist boats are due to arrive." (2) When you visit shops that advertise things at **rock bottom prices**, you expect to find *the lowest prices* in town. In money terms, rock bottom means the cheapest price. "A real estate agent told me it was still possible to find land selling at rock bottom on one of the nearby islands."

Questions/ Comments? Please let us know what we can do to improve the "ESL Parrot" We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Send us an e-mail, call, or just drop by Professor Bracco's office D387 (Davies Hall) (916) 484-8988 Student editors— **Christian Valenzuela , Andrea Carrero, Natalia Arboleda.**

English — How COOL is it?

- According to Illinois state law, it is illegal to speak English. The officially recognized language is "American."
- The word "queue" is the only word in the English language that is still pronounced the same way when the last four letters are removed.
- The word "honcho" comes from a Japanese word meaning "squad leader" and first came into usage in the English language during the American occupation of Japan following World War II.
- There are only two sequences of four consecutive letters that can be found in the English language: "rstu" and "mnop." Examples of each are "understudy" and "gynophobia".



Out of The Cage

Friday, December 14, 2007
4:24 pm

The 2008 American River Review Release Party and Literary Reading

Location: Raef Hall 160.

Admission: FREE

Join us for the unveiling of the most ambitious issue

ARC has ever produced. Artists, patrons, writers, and staff may pick up their complimentary copy, and anyone can buy as many copies as they like at \$15 per issue. Previous issues of the magazine will be available at reduced prices—just in time for the holidays.

Special features this year: dessert recipes by students in ARC's culinary program and fashion design by ARC fashion students! The program—including student presentations of art, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction—goes 7pm - 9pm. Free Oak Café desserts, free Starbucks coffee!



Friday, December 14, 2007

ARC Jazz Combos Showcase

The Jazz Combo Showcase will feature several of American River College's instrumental jazz combos performing jazz standards and original compositions.

The concert will be held in the ARC Theater at 8PM.

Tickets are \$8/General and \$5/Students & Seniors.



Thursday, January 31, 2008
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

Primed for the Primary

Yes, it's time for the Presidential Primary! Are you ready? Join the Political Science Department for a discussion of the February 5, 2008 California Presidential Primary.



Location: Raef Hall 160

Nothing much else going on unless you think a hefty bearded dude in red velvet driving a sleigh drawn by parrots is special

On, Polly, on Feathers, on Beak, on Squawker ...



Dear Granny,

I am 18 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in THE PARROT, it's so." Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?



Virginia

Dear Virginia,

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. For further details please go to

<http://www.newseum.org/yesvirginia/>

Dear Granny,

I'm an ESL student. Sometimes I feel lost on the ARC campus. It has taken me a long time to find places. How can I get some help?

Mercedes Padierna

Dear Mercedes,

My research: "Orientation is required of all students who are new to ARC. They have the option of doing their orientation online or in-person. We recommend that students do orientation in-person but either way is acceptable. During orientation students have the opportunity to learn about how to enroll, student services, and other information they need to know to start off successfully. They also receive a campus tour and have a meeting with a counselor to plan their courses for the upcoming semester." For more:

orientation@arc.losrios.edu

Dear Granny,

I would like an "A" in my ESL writing class. Do you think you can arrange that?

An "A" student

Dear "A",

Who do you think I am, Santa Claus?



Dear Granny,

What are you doing for New Year's?

Resolved to Party

Dear Resolved,

Is that an invitation? Actually, I'm curling up with a cup of hot chocolate, a copy of The Parrot, and Focus on Grammar. What a way to start the New Year!

Aunt Zahra

Years before

In my grand father's house

In that big and old house, in my native city, in Kermanshah

Two eyes were watching me, not just me
They were watching the yard and the world
They were watching the sparrows

The chickens, the cats, and many mice

They were counting how many times

The crows drank the pool's water

How many times the roosters fought over a worm

How many times the spider grabbed a poor fly

On the web that was on the tree trunk

They were looking to the sky

Today is sunny, rainy, or windy

Who came to the yard, what did that person wear

Why the baker shop boy came late and

Why did he give us just five breads tonight

Two eyes were watching the kids

Parisa, Farah, Elahe and Reza

Where they spread their rugs

How many times they fought

And if they threw their dolls in the middle of the yard

Two eyes were hidden behind

One of the glass windows of the three doors room

Two eyes were my Aunt Zahra's eyes

That beautiful lady, braided hair and honey eyed

She had always a scarf and she was extremely shy

She always sat behind her window

And she was watching her world

She didn't want to miss the time when Uncle Ali arrived

When the winds swept the dried leaves and

When our janitor limping, limping came in the yard

Two eyes sometimes read some news

Aunt Zahra always told us how many cars had crashed

How many people drowned in the pool or

How many people lightening killed

How many kids died when they were running in the yard

Aunt Zahra was always in her room

Nobody asked her what color she liked

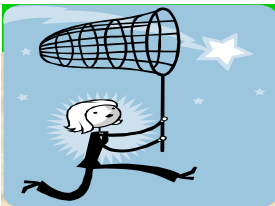
Which city she wanted to see and why did she always sit

in her spot

Now, Aunt Zahra is watching me, not in her room

But from the top of the world.

Parisa Samedi



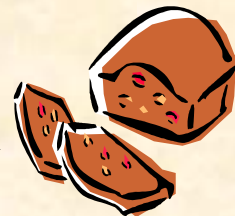
NET Escape - Articles from the net.

Days to Daze

Fruitcake Toss Day

When : January 3rd

Fruitcake Toss Day is your opportunity to finally throw away the old fruitcake. After the holidays are over, it's time to bring in the new, and toss out the old. Today is the day that the fruit cake goes...hooray! There is no one way to toss out the old fruitcake. Why not make a little fun out of it? Gather up a few friends who also are fortunate enough to have received a fruitcake for the holidays. Go out to a field and see who can toss it the farthest. Caution: do not toss the cake at anyone. This weighty steel-like mass of sugar, flour and fruits could injure someone, if they are hit by it.



Important Note: Fruitcake Tossing runs counter to the tradition of many people to pass the fruitcake around from one person to the next. In this tradition, the person who is holding the fruitcake on New Year's, must store it away until the next Christmas season.

Bubble Bath Day

When: January 8th



Bubble baths are so much fun. We wish every day could be Bubble Bath Day. Today is a fun day to relax and enjoy the warm and soothing pleasures of a bubble bath. Best of all, it can be enjoyed by kids and adults. For kids, it's playtime. For adults, it's a soothing pleasure.

On Bubble Bath Day, there are a couple of ways to enjoy your bubble bath. It depends upon how old you are. For kids, it's simple.... Just fill the tub with bubbles and toys. Then hop in and play!

For the ladies, its time to relax! Fill the tub with bubbly water. Hop in and just enjoy the soothing water and bubbles. Before hopping in, set the mood with candles placed (safely) around the bathroom and tub. Add a radio playing softly on the sink counter.

For the guys: Don't feel left out! With permission, you can hop in, too! Get in touch with your feminine side, and make sure the candles are lit. You can relax and/or play. The proper sequence is relax, play, relax. We highly recommend both! Oh, and don't forget your rubber duckie!

National Pharmacist Day

When : January 12th

National Pharmacist Day honors pharmacists, and recognizes their important role in medical care. A pharmacist must be knowledgeable of the chemistry of all medicines.



They can inform you of a drug's side effects, and all aspects of prescription medicine. Very importantly, they understand and recognize the interaction of drugs together...many people take numerous drugs.

National Pharmacist Day recognizes this important role. If you are in the pharmacy today, make sure to wish your pharmacist a good day. Gifts and cards are not required.

Origin: You can be sure that National Pharmacists Day was created by a pharmacist group. However, we have yet to discover the group that started it.

Dress Up Your Pet Day

When : January 14th

Dress Up Your Pet Day gives you the opportunity to you guessed it.....dress up your pet!

Some pets like to get dressed up. Others, want nothing to do with it. This day is an opportunity to really dress up your pet(s). Make something for them to wear. Or, go to a pet store and buy an outfit. It's winter, so something warm is best.

Sorry, we don't have any ideas on how to dress up goldfish.



National Hat Day

When : January 15th

National Hat Day is set aside to wear and enjoy a hat of your choice and style.

Isn't it great that hats come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and styles? There's one to fit every size head and personality. Often, hats are used to make a statement, or to promote a cause or a product.

Oh yeah... hats have logical uses, too. Some hats (aka helmets), offer safety protection. Some hats keep your head warm....how boring! National Hat Day is not intended to just keep you warm. It's a chance to make a statement and to display you favorite headgear. We suggest you wear a number of different hats over the course of the day.



Winnie the Pooh Day

When : January 18th

Winnie the Pooh Day is an opportunity to enjoy your favorite bear and all of his friends. This day was created to celebrate the birth of A.A. Milne in 1882. He was an author of children's story books, and created Winnie the Pooh and his friends. Winnie's pals include Christopher Robin, Tigger, Eeyore, Piglet, and Roo. Have some fun today. Celebrate Winnie the Pooh Day by reading some storybooks about the adventures of Winnie and his friends. Don't read them alone. Read them with young children.

Did you Know? In his works, he was known as A.A. Milne. The initials stand for Allan Alexander.



National Handwriting Day

When : January 23rd

National Handwriting Day is an opportunity to reintroduce yourself to a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. In this day of computers, more and more information, notes, and letters are sent back and forth via a keyboard and cyberspace.

According to the [Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association](#) (WIMA) website "The purpose of National Handwriting Day is to alert the public to the importance of handwriting. According to WIMA, National Handwriting Day is a chance for all of us to re-explore the purity and power of handwriting." Some of the available documentation we read, suggests concern by stationary, paper companies, and pen and pencil manufacturers that the electronic world will shrink demand for their products. But, indeed, statistics show that pen (or pencil) and paper are alive and well, with a growing demand.

Participate in National Handwriting Day by writing a note or letter to someone. Love letters are cool. Notes to people who are ill or incapacitated will be well received.

Origin of National Handwriting Day:

National Handwriting Day was established by the Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association in 1977. Their motive is obvious...to promote the consumption of pens, pencils, and writing paper. January 23rd was chosen because this is the birthday of John Hancock. John Hancock was the first person to sign the Declaration of Independence. In response to our inquiry, WIMA informed us that they did not obtain a presidential proclamation or an act of Congress when designating the day. An official "National" day requires an act of Congress

Penguin Awareness Day and World Penguin Day

When:

Penguin Awareness Day: Always January 20

World Penguin Day: Always April 25th

About Penguin Awareness Day, and World Penguin Day:

Penguin Awareness Day, and World Penguin Day are great opportunities to learn about and appreciate one of the few natives of Antarctica. On these days, spend a little time learning about them.... a pictorial book or internet site is fun. You can also watch a documentary of these cute and popular, grounded birds. These days are also a time to wear black and white---penguin colors. However, wearing a tuxedo in their honor is optional. It is also popular today to tell a penguin joke or two.

More about Penguin Days:

World Penguin Day coincides with the annual northward migration of penguins. This happens each year on or around April 25th. Penguins do not fly. Rather, they walk, or waddle their way to and from.



Spouses Day and Military Spouses Day

When :

Spouse's Day is always on January 26th

Military Spouse's Day is held on the Friday before Mother's Day

Spouse's Day is a time to enjoy and appreciate your better half. You can use this day as a prelude or warm up to Valentine's Day, perhaps. But, it's not as much of a gift-giving event. Rather, use it as a time to show your spouse that you care and appreciate all of the things that he/she does for you and for the household. Over the long years of a relationship, it's easy to take for granted the many things your spouse does. He/she's always there. They do so many big and little things as a routine event. So, take today to notice and to say thanks. As for the "enjoyment" part of the day...we will leave that up to you to enjoy your spouse however the two of your desire....

Military Spouses Day is a day to recognize and honor the real backbone of the military..... the spouses of our soldiers. This day recognizes the contributions made by military spouses to the spirit and well being of soldiers and military communities. Where would military morale be without their spouses behind them?

Origin of Spouse's Day:



We have yet to discover who created Spouse's Day in January, or the date of creation.

Military Spouses Day was created by President Ronald Reagan in 1984. Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger established the Friday before Mother's Day as Military Spouse's Day.



Little Piccola — A Holiday Story from Elsewhere

In the sunny land of France there lived many years ago a sweet little maid named Piccola.

Her father had died when she was a baby, and her mother was very poor and had to work hard all day in the fields for a few sous.

Little Piccola had no dolls and toys, and she was often hungry and cold, but she was never sad nor lonely.

What if there were no children for her to play with! What if she did not have fine clothes and beautiful toys! In summer there were always the birds in the forest, and the flowers in the fields and meadows, -- the birds sang so sweetly, and the flowers were so bright and pretty!

In the winter when the ground was covered with snow, Piccola helped her mother, and knit long stockings of blue wool.

The snow-birds had to be fed with crumbs, if she could find any, and then, there was Christmas Day.

But one year her mother was ill and could not earn any money. Piccola worked hard all the day long, and sold the stockings which she knit, even when her own little bare feet were blue with the cold.

As Christmas Day drew near she said to her mother, "I wonder what the good Saint Nicholas will bring me

this year. I cannot hang my stocking in the fireplace, but I shall put my wooden shoe on the hearth for him.

He will not forget me, I am sure."

"Do not think of it this year, my dear child," replied her mother. "We must be glad if we have bread enough to eat."



But Piccola could not believe that the good saint would forget her. On Christmas Eve she put her little wooden pattern on the hearth before the fire, and went to sleep to dream of Saint Nicholas.

As the poor mother looked at the little shoe, she thought how unhappy her dear child would be to find it empty in the morning, and wished that she had something, even if it were only a tiny cake, for a Christmas gift. There was nothing in the house but a few sous, and these must be saved to buy bread.

When the morning dawned Piccola awoke and ran to her shoe.

Saint Nicholas had come in the night. He had not forgotten the little child who had thought of him with such faith.

See what he had brought her. It lay in the wooden patten, looking up at her with its two bright eyes, and chirping contentedly as she stroked its soft feathers.

A little swallow, cold and hungry, had flown into the chimney and down to the room, and had crept into the shoe for warmth.

Piccola danced for joy, and clasped the shivering swallow to her breast.

She ran to her mother's bedside. "Look, look!" she cried. "A Christmas gift, a gift from the good Saint Nicholas!" And she danced again in her little bare feet.

Then she fed and warmed the bird, and cared for it tenderly all winter long; teaching it to take crumbs from her hand and her lips, and to sit on her shoulder while she was working.

In the spring she opened the window for it to fly away, but it lived in the woods near by all summer, and came often in the early morning to sing its sweetest songs at her door.

More Student Chirpings

Everyone Save, Save You?

I think that there is nothing more important than the environment. However, we human beings, tend to ignore the earth and environment. We just waste water too much, don't recycle trash, drive cars too often. Day by day, the earth is getting a disease more and more. Saving the earth should be done by not only scientists but also by all of us. There are many things that we can do for our earth. To recycle trash is one of them. It is important to recycle, because thrown trash can be used once more or twice more.

First, I used to collect garbage similar in kind in Korea. When I threw away garbage, I sorted it out. There was a paper box which was used for used paper. My family and I threw paper away into it. There was a bucket for used beverage cans or other kinds of can. I think it is very good to do it for the earth. However, they don't do it in the States. I live in an apartment complex, and there is one big trash can. People just throw their trash into it. I don't know why it doesn't work in America. Actually, I feel much more comfortable here because I don't have to

separate rubbish every time. Anyway, I used to do it in Korea, and I will do it after going back to Korea.

Second, I used to bring used newspapers to an organization in Korea. The organization is a kind of environmental or-



ganization. I did it because of my habit. I used to bring used newspapers to school when I was an elementary school student. I didn't know why I had to do it, but I did it because of the grade. If one didn't bring them, teachers checked and left out grades. The more I brought, the better grade I got. So throwing away newspapers was a scary thing for me at that time. I still feel bad when I throw away newspapers. So I brought them to the organization instead of throwing them away when

I was in Korea. However, this is also one of the things that I don't do since I came to the States. It's because I don't know where the organization is in Sacramento. Besides, I seldom buy newspapers, so I don't have to worry about it.

Last, I go to a recycling place about every two weeks here because I buy lots of bottle of water, orange juice, milk, beer, vodka, some things like that. So after drinking them, I have too much trash. But it is not trash for me. It is money. I sell them to a recycling place. It is very good not only for recycling but also for money. I strongly recommend it to all of my friends, but they don't do it. So whenever I visit my friends, I take all milk cartons, and beer cans, or something like that from their houses. It is good for my pocket money.

I think keeping the environment is really important, and recycling is one of the easiest ways to do it. So I'm doing a lot for the earth. Let's get started. It is not only for the earth but also for all of us.

by Sohyun Lee, R320

A Love Home

Many people are born with some good talents; thus, they are often better than others in many fields and easily successful in life. On the other hand, some others are not the same. However hard these people work, they will never succeed. This is not because they are lazy, but because they are incompetent. They usually have miserable lives. In these cases, the rich, who are luckier, should do the poor some favors. Five year ago, in my country, Vietnam, there was a project named "A Little for the Poor". The project's purpose was to help families in need, families who were extremely poor, to build a small house. Each ten "wealthy-person" groups, who were volunteers, would help an unlucky family build or repair its dilapidated house, and I was a participant in a group.

Our group was sent to a family which lived in a suburban district. We were to visit the family on a weekend, and we departed enthusiastically as if we went out for pleasure. However, such joy vanished when we saw the devastated house. Or rather, it was not a real house, and it was so dilapidated. The house was built for four persons; however, there

were eight people living in it. Moreover, the children were dirty, and they were bare-footed. The family's meal was nothing but just some vegetables and fish, which they had raised by themselves around their place. We were all speechless, and honestly, we did not know how to do the best for



them. Finally, we asked the owner, "What do you need the most now?" He answered, "We just need a place to cover ourselves when it rains".

We tried to find the best way to build the house. During the next five months, we collected 60,000,000 VND, which was approximately 5,000 US dollars, an equivalent to a small house in Vietnam. We then hired a friendly contractor; we told him the story and asked him to do that family a

favor. The contractor immediately accepted our proposal, and he offered us twenty percents discount for the labor. We took turns going to the suburbs to help the contractor every week while he was building the house. Finally, a nice house was finished after two months construction.

On the day the house was given, the owner sobbed. He said, "I do not have any words to express my gratitude. I am just able to thank God for sending all of you to our family." We were all sobbing, too.

Seeing the feeling of the owner and his family, we decided that we must continue our project. Before this event, we had never thought that we could help someone so much by a little endeavor like that. Frankly, we recognized that we helped ourselves after all, because we felt so happy, too.

On the way home, someone read a poem that I still remember now,

"Thank God, each morning I wake up, I've got one more day to love someone."

Even More Student Chirpings

A Found Loss

Our life has acquisitions and losses. We often buy something, learn some new skills and experiences, meet our new friends. We are happy in this time. Sometimes we lose something, too, even though we want it or we don't. Sometimes we lose our jobs, money, friends, time. Usually we are unhappy when it happens. I remember some old good advice: "If you acquire something, don't be pleased, and if you lose something, don't cry." We can have good experiences from our losses, and we can be happy after that. I'll never forget one day in my life when I lost some valuable things, and then I got them back.

Twenty-two years ago, I worked in Russia. It was seasonal work. My friends and I weeded sugar-beets on a "Akolkhoz" (a common, general farm in Soviet Union). It was very hard work. We began our work at 5:00 A.M. and finished at 9:00 P.M. every day without weekends and holidays for two months. For that season, I weeded 6 hectares of sugar-beets and earned about 1,000 rubles (. 1,000 dollars). After that, I went to Ukraine to my family. I went by train about 1000 kilometers and arrived in Brest (this city is situated in Belarus, near Poland). Here, I was waiting for a bus at a bus station to go to

Ukraine. When the bus arrived, I was hurrying, and I left my purse on a bench. In the purse was all my money, my passport and my Bible (in the Soviet Union, the Bible was the forbidden book). I went by bus about 100 kilometers, when I remembered my purse. In the first minute, I felt a shock. I looked for it in the bus, and asked my friends; maybe they held it. But it wasn't there. I decided to go back to Brest because there were



very valuable things for me: my money, my passport and my Bible. I requested of the bus driver to stop the bus and went out. I was standing on the roadside. I tried to stop any cars to reach Brest. Finally, a big truck stopped. Two truck drivers agreed to give me a lift to Brest, but they saw me as a prostitute. I had to lie that I was going to a burial. I sat in the truck and cried for a long time. When we almost reached Brest, the truck driver told me they needed to turn right. Big trucks weren't allowed to go into a big city. I thanked them and

got out. After that, I walked about 2 kilometers. Then I stopped a taxi and it carried me to the bus station of Brest. What did I see? My red purse was lying on the bench where I had left it! I couldn't believe my eyes! I ran and gripped it when I opened my purse, there was all my money, passport, and my Bible. I was ecstatic! Now, I could go home with good news. What did I learn from this event? I learned to listen to God's voice. When I was still in the bus, my friends told me, "Don't return to Brest now. Go home, and you'll go back tomorrow." But a voice inside of me said, "Return to Brest right now, and you'll get your purse back. Tomorrow will be too late." It would be a dangerous trip for a young girl alone, but I decided to obey. I learned to be confident when under God's protection. I got my purse back at the crowded place after four hours. Of course, I was happy to get my money, passport and Bible back, but I was happier about the choice I made. I had a good experience from this story. It helped me many times in my life, but those are other stories.



Tatiana Lashchuk, W50

Continued from page 1

I love karate. Actually, I love every sport, but especially karate. I started when I was so young. After getting some certificates, I began teaching at some places. I taught the karate instructor class, I taught the referee class in which the students wanted to get a certificate of "karate referee". I was also the head coach of the women's national karate team in Tehran, Iran. I've been such a busy person. I did very hard work when I was in my country. Now, everything has changed a bit. They're all so new to me: new culture, new language....I'm in the process of getting used to it.

Where are you teaching right now?

My class is on Madison. It's not so far from ARC. Last year, my class was in Roseville; we've just moved. If any one wants to take karate lessons, my cell phone is (916) 780-1512 and my e-mail address is varshochinasrin@yahoo.com.

Does it cost a lot to participate in your class?

I think it's not really expensive, because it's almost new and just a few people here know about it. Most regular karate classes will cost you about 150 dollars/month, but you just need 80 dollars/month to get into my class.

Besides the benefit of self-defense, what are the other benefits of taking karate class?

I think karate is one of the best exercises. We all need exercising to keep in shape, to be healthy, and karate for sure will help you build up the technique of self-defense. Although it's really interesting and useful, there are some people still afraid of taking the class. They would say, "Oh, it's dangerous, I should not take it. I'll choose another kind of exercise." But actually it's not. If a person takes a class, keeps it going for a few years; he or she will feel more confident, calm, even relaxed.

How long does it take karate students to get the black belt, which is the highest level that they can reach as far as I know?

Yeah, the highest level is the black belt. How long it takes depends on how often they practice. Just like in other subjects, the more they practice, the sooner they reach the highest level. Besides the class time, some practice at home. It would help them improve their skills a lot. If they really work hard in it, approximately, they can get the black belt after 4 years.

Can you tell us the order of colors of the belts in term of levels in karate?

White, orange, green, blue, brown, and finally black.

So, am I right to say karate is very popular in your country, Iran?

Yes, it is. Iranians have done very well in international karate competitions.

T'was a Computer Christmas (author unknown)

T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the shop,
The computers were whirring; they never do stop.
The power was on and the temperature right,
In hopes that the input would feed back that night.

The system was ready, the program was coded,
And memory drums had been carefully loaded;
While adding a Christmasy glow to the scene,
The lights on the console, flashed red, white and green.

When out in the hall there arose such a clatter,
The programmer ran to see what was the matter.
Away to the hallway he flew like a flash,
Forgetting his key in his curious dash.
He stood in the hallway and looked all about,
When the door slammed behind him, and he was locked out.

Then, in the computer room what should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer;
And a little old man, who with scarcely a pause,
Chuckled: "My name is Santa...the last name is Claus."

The computer was startled, confused by the name,
Then it buzzed as it heard the old fellow exclaim:
"This is Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen,
And Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen."

With all these odd names, it was puzzled anew;
It hummed and it clanked, and a main circuit blew.
It searched in its memory core, trying to "think";
Then the multi-line printer went out on the blink.

Unable to do its electronic job,
It said in a voice that was almost a sob:

"Your eyes - how they twinkle - your dimples so merry,
Your cheeks so like roses, your nose like a cherry,

Your smile - all these things, I've been programmed to know,
And at data-recall, I am more than so-so;
But your name and your address (computers can't lie),
Are things that I just cannot identify.

You've a jolly old face and a little round belly,
That shakes when you laugh like a bowlful of jelly;
My scanners can see you, but still I insist,
Since you're not in my program, you cannot exist!"

Old Santa just chuckled a merry "ho, ho",
And sat down to type out a quick word or so.
The keyboard clack-clattered, its sound sharp and clean,
As Santa fed this "data" to the machine:

"Kids everywhere know me; I come every year;
The presents I bring add to everyone's cheer;
But you won't get anything - that's plain to see;
Too bad your programmers forgot about me."

Then he faced the machine and said with a shrug,
"Merry Christmas to All," as he pulled out its plug!

