



The Parrot

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

Issue # 100 A

Spring 2016

The Best of The Parrot- 100th Issue!



Simply Everyone Reads The Parrot !

Inside this Issue

Warbling 2-7

Chirping 12-27

Squawking 7-11

Upcoming 28



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Warbling

Judging ARC's New ESL Professor: Simon Cowell -- An Interview

So, how long have you been teaching?

Well, it seems like all my life. Growing up in England, I often told my classmates what to do, when to do it, why, etc. Very teacher-like, I was. I believe they benefited from that.

Do you?

Yes, absolutely. On top of that, I always considered myself a good judge of character. I have this understanding of people and compassion, as well, that will really serve me well as an ESL instructor.

I see. Well, Simon, tell us: What makes you well suited to teach English as a Second Language?

Well, first off, I'd be the only one in the ESL department that actually speaks bloody English as it should be spoken! I speak the Queen's English, not some cheap knock-off dialect as if I were a Minnesota barman, a NY garbage man, or a Stanford graduate. Have you ever heard some of these professors speak? It's enough to make me want to listen to a Paula Abdul album.

Ah hem... So, Simon, I see you're going out of your way to ingratiate yourself! Indeed, what has the reaction been to your hiring?

To date, not many people know that I've been hired. The ESL department, in all fairness to them, has been ever so nice in making me feel welcome, although I've yet to set foot on campus. I understand I will be having my own office somewhere near the stadium – I'm a huge football fan – Eng-

lish, of course – so that sounds quite right. Then, one or two of the professors, unabashed fans of American Idol, have e-mailed me that they're prepared to show me around the town, see the sights, etc. very well intentioned lads, perhaps a bit on the unsophisticated side – as if I'd like to go to the Railroad Museum and a place called Chucky Cheese! Ha, ha. You know, I have lived in LA for the past six years!



Simon, what experience do you have in the ESL field?

Experience? You know, if you think about American Idol, it's all about the American Dream! Experience isn't what counts! It's the "yo" factor, put-

ting your own stamp on the tried and true, pursuing your dream despite an onslaught of mean-spirited criticism and self-serving remarks.

So, you have no experience?

Well, no.

Don't you think your new ESL colleagues, all of whom have labored for years, attended the very best schools, and studied the very best of methodologies will see you as a bit of an upstart, an opportunist, a fraud, a charlatan, a jerk, an evil presence?

Ouch! You know, I like your style! What a vocabulary, what a way with words -- you almost sound Canadian! American Idol is looking for people like

you!

Let's not change the subject. What classes will you be teaching?

I'll be concentrating exclusively on listening/speaking classes. (I'm really not very keen on the reading/writing thing) As you might imagine, there will be a lot of singing in class, not unlike the attached photo of me teaching young African youngsters, "God Save the Queen". I will be grading fairly and squarely in the American Idol tradition. Winners – I mean those who pass (my class will be called "American Idle" – quite clever, don't you think?) -- will undoubtedly get a crack at doing play-by-play at ARC cricket matches.

Uh, Simon, we don't do cricket at ARC. Listen, any future you can share with our readers?

Well, a lot of my Hollywood friends have also expressed an interest in dabbling in the education field – after all, how hard could it be? So, I might

spend office hours on my mobile phone, recruiting some of my mates – Davie Beckham, Lily Allen, Sir Tony Hopkins, Helen Mirren --- who might get a kick out of doing what the ESL teachers do – you know, open the book, point to the page, assign the homework, and ask the poor buggers to spit it back out. Again, we're not talking rocket science here... And, of course, I will continue with American Idol.

Simon, are you sure they've put your office at the stadium and not at a satellite campus, say, in Placerville? In any case, Simon, any last questions for or about ARC?

I understand there will be a compressed schedule – I really must plead ignorance here – is this some sort of American colonial thing?

Perhaps, Simon, perhaps...

An Interview with The Beaver (translated into English)

Beaver: So you want me to tell you the story of my life.

Parrot: Like I said, that's what I do. I interview people. I'm a collector of lives.

Beaver: You'll need a lot of tape for my story.

Parrot: No problem. I got a bag full of tape.

Beaver: You followed me here, didn't you?

Parrot: Yeah, I suppose I did.

Parrot: What do you say we get started? What do you do?

Beaver: I'm a beaver.

Parrot: You believe this, don't you?

Beaver: Yes

Parrot: So, you're the ARC ascot! For our readers, what exactly is an ascot?

Beaver: Not "ascot"! Mascot! A mascot is a kind of

symbol, a kind of pet that a school can rally around.

Parrot: What do you mean by rally?

Beaver: Well, you know, when times are tough, people can look to the mascot for, like, leadership.

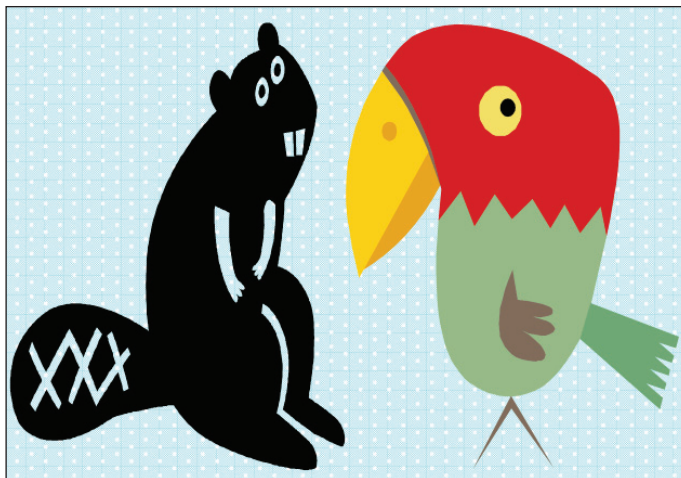
Parrot: Do you mean mascot is like an alternative for "president"?

Beaver: Well, not exactly, but people think I'm cute and often that's what people want in a leader.

Parrot: Do you mean cute like Churchill or cute like Paris Hilton? Never mind; no answer needed. Beave, with all due respect, you're not exactly what I'd call "cute", what with those big buck teeth

and that big flapping tail hanging out of your low-riding underwear.

Beaver: What? Not only I am "with it" vis a vis fashion, we beavers 've always been considered cute. Think



Bucky Beaver, 50's icon, who promoted Ipana toothpaste. Kids everywhere brushed, as a result.

Parrot: 50's icon? Do you realize that was 50 years ago! Beavers are out, bud! I bet if you took a poll, not one in three people would know that you are the ARC mascot. One in two wouldn't know what a mascot is or does and 2 out of three wouldn't know a beaver from a cleaver.

Beaver: And you? You're a

Parrot! Look at that beak! Think you got anything on me?

Parrot: Listen, dude, you're lucky I speak Beaverese. You don't even speak English! What's up with that?

Beaver: Well, I really haven't had time.

Parrot: You've been the mascot for over 50 years at an academic institution and haven't even bothered to learn the main lingo!

Beaver: Unlike parrots, I don't sit around and run my mouth. Beavers are a symbol of industriousness. I'm often offcampus consulting with the Corps of Engineers on dambuilding. And I've got great fur.

Parrot: Dude, fur is out – endangered species thing – good for you actually. In any case, all well and good what you say, but don't you think you should be spending more time on campus? Look at me. I'm relatively new here, already got me a newsletter, got me a voice. I got plumage, man, I got wings, I know Johnny Depp, I got contacts all over bird world with the bird population. You're a rodent, dude, and when people hear "rodent," they think "rat." That's so not cool!

Beaver: Listen, Parrot, the rat's my cousin and if you think...

Parrot: No, you listen, my plump, water-logged friend. I know firsthand that people would like to see a new mascot, a parrot, perhaps as a symbol of ARC, and not an over-hydrated, steroid-looking lump like yourself.

Beaver: What, what makes you say that? What have you heard?

Parrot: Well, word out on the street – in the corridors and classrooms, that is – is that you're old school, set in your ways, falling all over yourself, can't see the forest for the trees, metaphorically building dams where none are needed and, I might add, literally building one where none was needed – in the racing pool next to the gym back in '87! Remember?

Beaver: What, what makes you say that? What have you heard?

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Beaver: Look I couldn't help myself – I'd had too much salmon -- that was over twenty years ago – give a guy a break. I'm a changed animal.

Parrot: Look. Don't get me wrong. You've served a purpose, I suppose. But times change. Animals don't. Students are looking for new inspiration. Retire. Move to Arizona – to Hoover Dam – or, if you still want "to work" (wink-wink), think New Orleans.

Beaver: Listen, cracker-breath! I'm not going away just like that. I'm willing to meet you anytime, any place to discuss the issue in front of the students. A College- Hour venue would be perfect, perhaps hosted by one of our crack political science professors to keep it civil.

Parrot: Fine, Muskrat!

Beaver: That's Mascot!

Parrot: Whatever. Actually, it would serve the student population well to discuss the role and responsibilities of a mascot.

Beaver: You know, Parrot, we're both animals. Instead of us bumping heads, we should take a look at the logo on the ARC website.

Parrot: Logo? What logo?

Beaver: There's a picture of a small oak tree. What's that all about?

Parrot: I don't know. It's bad enough I'm talking to a **beaver**; don't suggest I go talk to a tree.

Beaver: You think I like talking to a parrot? You're not even from around here!

Parrot: I live here now, pal, and I've got my rights. I'm an animal just like you. Didn't you say we animals are all the same?

Beaver: Let's just get this debate thing going with an audience. We beavers are much more impressive in person than on paper.

Parrot: I think you mean "in animal". Ha! "Impressive" and "beaver" in the same sentence -- that's a first! Listen, thank you for coming. I know it wasn't easy getting time off from whatever you do.

Beaver: There you go again.

ARC President Cornered on Name Change of Parrot to Cockroach

The Cockroach: President Viar, this is the inaugural issue of The Cockroach. What brought you and the Los Rios CC Board of Trustees to such momentous decision, the decision to change the name of the beloved “The Parrot” to “The Cockroach?”

President Viar: Well, while The Parrot has served as a useful symbol for ESL and international students, we simply felt that the time had come for a change – hence, The Cockroach.

The Cockroach: With all due respect, the parrot as a symbol seemed perfect. After all, its multi-colored feathers reflect the multiethnic composition of our ESL and international student body. The parrot is also one of the few creatures that speak another language. How is the cockroach an improvement?

President Viar: Well, the cockroach is a creature that is indomitable. It has been in existence for millions of years, can be found simply in every grandmother’s kitchen on the planet, and will probably be on the earth for eons. In addition, there are probably hundreds, if not thousands of types of cockroach – diversity! We see the cockroach as a force whose time has come, an icon for ARC that better reflects ARC’s future in the world than a parrot or even a beaver can hope to do.

The Cockroach: President Viar, you certainly have a unique perspective. Most people share a particularly loathsome view of the cockroach. I’ve never heard of an athletic team named after a bug, there are no cockroach jokes out there as there are parrot jokes, no cute images of pirates with cockroaches on their shoulders, and people just don’t have cockroaches as pets! When people see a cockroach, they shudder, they stomp their feet, they scream!



President Viar: Shudder, stomp their feet, scream?! Well, that’s exactly the kind of reaction we want out of people when they hear the name, “The ARC Cockroaches”! Think of the publicity, the clamor, the acclaim! I’m thinking Oprah, Jay Leno, letterman! I’m talking about the talk in the NY Times, the Wall Street Journal, People Magazine, even our own dear The Current! I can see Paris Hilton, Angelina Jolie, Kid Rock, Kobe Bryant sporting cockroach tattoos! I can imagine cockroaches replacing puppies as White House pets! Picture Mt. Rushmore with ...

The Cockroach: Well, I’ve got to hand it to you, President Viar, you’ve a certain Howard Dean quality about you. Up until now, we thought your primary concerns were simple ho-hum issues such as parking, tuition fees, and classroom space. Your perspective is... how shall we put it? Singular? Special? Nuts? Tell us, please, were there any other names considered besides “cockroach”?

President Viar: The Board bandied about names as diverse as the bison, the raccoon, the lemur, the condor, the piranha, the titmouse, the platypus, and my favorite – the locust. We literally spent months in bitter negotiations at the Sacramento Zoo, at bird sanctuaries, at animal hospitals, at aquariums, at kennels, and at Petco before we came to our decision.

The Cockroach: So, what are the future plans for The Cockroach?

President Viar: As you may know, Governor Schwarzenegger has a lot to do with the state budget and there has been rumor of his opposition to the funding of The Cockroach. The truth is the Cockroach is

run on a shoe-string budget – the student editors have no office, use a salvaged Commodore 2000 word processor, and are alleged to be working out of the back of an illegally parked 84 Toyota. In my view, they are to be commended for their fortitude and perseverance. I defy any plans to vanquish The Cockroach! As long as Prof. Bracco is the faculty advisor, there will always be a cockroach on campus!!

The Cockroach: Don't you mean "The Cockroach" on campus?

President Viar: Whatever...

The Cockroach: Well, President Viar, thank you for your time. Clearly you're a man of vision. We at the newly-christened "The Cockroach" will do our best to spread The Cockroach to all corners of the campus.

*Carlos Cucaracha
ESLW50*

Edward Snowden Taking Distance

Editor's note: Edward Snowden agreed to meet with a young staffer of The Parrot at an undisclosed, unknown location for this interview – we think.

Parrot: Hi, Mr. Snowmen.

Snowden: It's "Snowden", not "Snowmen". Where are you from, anyway?

Parrot: Sorry, English not my first language.

Snowden: Ah, I've been dealing with that for a while it's starting to get on my nerves.

Parrot: Sorry. I'm in new country, like you. Little birdie said us you sign up for distance learning class in ARC. It's truth?

Snowden: Yes.

Parrot: I guess next question is why. Why?

Snowden: First of all, I was looking for a distance learning class because my commute would be unbearable. On top of that, I wanted coursework with some rigor, low tuition fees, and crackerjack teachers, so ARC was the natural choice. The job market has been tough -- I've been unemployed for a while and, for some reason I can't fathom, I've not been getting any unemployment checks. So I want to make myself more attractive for the marketplace, maybe even reinvent myself.

Parrot: Reinvent yourself?

Snowden: Yeah. Some people see me either as a hero or a scoundrel -- those don't appear to be good career choices. You know, ARC counselors think I'd be a natural as a talk show host, that I really connect



with people on a visceral level and have a knack for getting at their deepest of secrets.

Parrot: What is "crackerjack teachers"?

Snowden: Good teachers, good teachers, man.

Parrot: You wanted "bearable commute"? What is meaning? Sounds dangerous.

Snowden: Let's just say I like distance learning.

Parrot: Okie-dokie.

Parrot: So how is life at Russia for you?

Snowden: Everyone's been very nice but I'm still adjusting to the food. I've tapped into their food stamp program in Russia but it's mostly limited to buying beets and sour cream. Let's just say I'm adapting.

Parrot: How about time living in airport terminal? Very funny. Describe.

Snowden: Not funny, tough. The benches were hard. I got little sleep and I existed on fast food. The Russian McDonald's has the McMoscow -- a type of hard rye breakfast muffin -- and the McLenin and the Mc-

Stalin – two unrelenting hard-line burgers you're supposed to share equally with friends but nobody does.

Parrot: Get back to course work – what class you taking?

Snowden: Well, I'd rather not say but, you know, I'm the type of guy who can't keep a secret for very long so here it is: an information technology course. I want to get a D2L site –got a lot of stuff I want to upload but am not sure where and how to begin.

Parrot: Great! I love D2L. Everything there when works. Now is time to say you NSA and CIA and FBI and campus police read The Parrot. They won't admit it – most people doesn't admit reading The Parrot -- so if we will print this, your plans become what professor say is "common knowledge".

Snowden: Common knowledge is what I'm all about, dude.

Parrot: Clever but I not dude, maybe dudess. Listen, Edward -- may I call you Edward?

Snowden: No.

Parrot: Okie-dokie, Mr. Snowden, I want ask typical The Parrot questions now.

Snowden: Okie-dokie – I mean OK – you've got me saying that now...

Parrot: So, Pepsi or Coke?

Snowden: Neither. I now like this Russian soda called "Kvas" – very dark, like cola without the sugar and a hint of gasoline. Picture of a monk on the label.

Parrot: It was "or" question, not own answer

Snowden: Look, you wanted the truth, didn't you?

Parrot: Editor says we must push The Parrot -- truth not so important – clever answers better.

Snowden: I'm beginning to question your journalistic integrity.

Parrot: You don't ask questions, my job is ask questions.

Snowden: OK, OK, you ask the questions, you ask the questions...

Parrot: Good. What you prefer – dinner with Lady Gaga, the Pope, Lionel Messi, Joe Biden?

Snowden: Who's buying?

Parrot: Clever answer! Editor loves clever. One last question: I read it from paper. "What advice would you give your former self?"

Snowden: Read The Current!

Squawking

Dear Granny,

My American boyfriend got me a game of Scrabble for my birthday. I was insulted because in my country guys give girls flowers and candy. I'm sure he gave me Scrabble because I'm an ESL student. I asked him about that and he said Scrabble would be good for us as a couple, that we could share a quiet evening together making up words. I said, "What about dinner and clubbing?" He said, 'Anybody can go out and eat and dance on Valentine's Day, but not many couples can sit at home at the kitchen table and play with language.' Am I being too sensitive? Is he making a good point? I just can't figure



out American guys!

Enna Jada

Dear Enna,

Hmph! Sounds like my third husband! OK, so he likes language! Tell him the "language of love" is hearts and flowers and candy and sweet words and he'd better learn that foreign language – fast! Then Scrabble! Tell him to play with that language or he'll end up with a lot of blank pieces with no double scores as he plays his beloved Scrabble alone!

Granny

Dear Granny Noetal,

The students in our ESL class want to get a gift for our teacher. We always do this in our country at the end of the class. I heard that American teachers don't like this. Is this true?

Gifted Student

Dear Gifted,

Teachers in the US do not expect gifts from their students at the end of the semester. We do have images in our history of students periodically placing a nice, shiny, red, apple on the teacher's desk. Nonetheless, the ESL teachers do not expect anything from you except hard work and good attendance. Their reward is seeing you progress. Having said that, I will say that all of the ESL teachers are (still)



human and would find it hard not to be gracious if they were given a token of thanks -- a candy, perhaps, or a trip to Bermuda (just joking). Your question is a good one because the teachers themselves are not always sure what to do or say --- such is the case whenever two different

cultural traditions meet. So, Gifted, thanks

for your question. I'm sure you and your classmates will arrive at a good decision.

If your dilemma gets to be too much, you can always get a gift for Granny -- like another letter! (It makes me feel young)

Granny

Dear Granny Noetal,

I've noticed in my classes that after class, my teachers look like "powdered doughnuts" because of all the chalk on the chalkboards. What can we do about that?

Sincerely,

Hungry Student

Dear Hungry,

Are you concerned about your teachers' health or about their cleaning bills? Doughnuts? I suggest you have a good breakfast



before going to your classes. Let's make sure that you are hungry for knowledge and not doughnuts; otherwise I'd suggest you get a job at Krispy Kreme. In any case, The Parrot is aware that there was a recent "flap" about this issue (pun intended). Professor Rau, chairman of the boards, was consulted, as well as the fledgling staff of The Parrot and, as a result, re-usable sponges will soon be seen in the classrooms for the express purpose of keeping down the dust. Student staffers have suggested that, after a class, the sponge be issued to the student in the classroom who always seems to have his hand up, a type of "honor", I suppose.

Granny

How Well Do You Know Your Campus



1. The cafeteria serves

- Borscht
- Pizza that tastes like borscht
- A five-dollar-foot-long
- An array of delicacies to whet your palate and tickle your sensibilities
- People with cash
- d and e

2. Parking permits can be had at

- Walmart
- Any AM/PM
- 3 a.m. on a Wednesday
- The business office

3. E-Services

- Can help you with your edema
- Can help you with your electricity bill
- Can help you with your “electronic” class registration
- Can help you with your annoying “e-e-e-e” laugh
- Can not help you

4. The Health Care office provides

- Band-aids
- Open-heart surgery
- Sympathy, Compassion, Medical Advice
- All of the above
- a and c

5. The Theater Arts Building

- Has delightful plays
- Has plush, comfortable seats
- Has a box office to serve your needs
- Has greasepaint and the roar of the crowd
- Has a, b, c, d, and e

6. The LRC

- Stands for Likeable Resource Center
- Has computers
- Has tutors
- Has Parrots outside the restrooms
- b, c, and d

7. The Math Dept.

- Has 3.12 x 72 offices?
- Is long on division
- Is $(a+b) - c+d$
- Just doesn't add up

8. Student Services is responsible for.

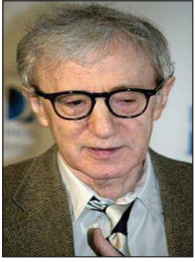
- Students
- Services
- Career counseling
- Financial aid



Should You Drop Out? Read On for the Startling Truth



Brad Pitt: “Yeah, I’m successful. But I wish I had taken some community college classes. The truth is I have a hard time reading scripts. Me and Tarentino both. Look how he spelled “Inglorious Basterds”!”



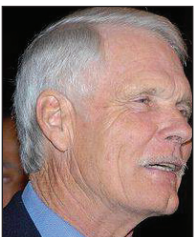
Woody Allen: “Sure, I’m an intellectual but I got kicked out of NYU for texting in class” (OK, there were no cell phones in the early ‘50’s.) Had there been a good community college in the area, I could have brushed up my screenwriting skills and made a real movie like Avatar!”



Bill Gates: “Yes, after dropping out of Harvard, I done prity good, and Harvard give me an honorary degree. But truth be told, I lack in somme basic skills, skills like writing that I could of picked up at the local commmunity college. Write now, all I can write is checks.



Tom Hanks: “It’s not easy acting like I’m smart. Sometimes I can’t see the forest for the gump. I actually attended CSUS for a while but I should have gone to ARC first just to work with the very fine drama department and the phys ed department . With that extra bit of thespian training and weight training, I would had more range and could have gotten better roles; could have starred in movies like Gladiator or The Terminator.

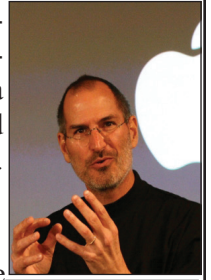


Ted Turner: “Yes, I got expelled from Brown University for having a girl in my dorm room. It almost ruined my life. Although I was rich, I was a bit immature, not to mention too frugal to get a motel room. Had I gone to a community college, I wouldn’t have had a room in which to get myself in trouble. I could also have gotten a solid grounding in journalism and broadcasting and come up with better acronyms than CNN and TNT.”

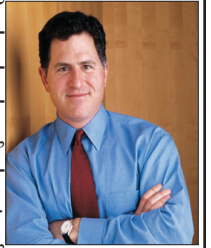


Ellen DeGeneres: “People think I’m funny – yeah, on the outside, maybe, but my heart yearns, quite simply, to have walked up to a podium and receive – not just give. If I had an AA, I’d swing my tassel all over the place!”

Steve Jobs: “ I found Reed College in Portland too distracting – party, party, party. You can focus at a community college and I understand the computer labs are just awesome.



Michael Dell: “Yeah, I dropped out of the University of Texas to start my own computer company, which later became Dell Computers. Yeah, I missed the whole college experience – the cafeteria food and food fights, the parking, the endless regulations, the sappy college newspapers, the hot professors... Yes, I think community college would have, in the very least, better prepared me for my own company, with its parking problems, cafeteria food and food fights, complex work guidelines, cheesy newsletter, and hot programmers



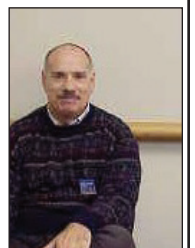
John Glenn: “You know, I was the first man to orbit the earth and a Senator to boot. I studied chemistry at Muskingum College in Ohio but never got a degree; I earned my pilot’s license. Looking back, a good two-year degree in communications might’ve helped me along in my career, might have been the right stuff for all of us space cowboys in the face of all that media. About the best we could come up with when asked tough questions was “A-OK”.



Marisa Tomei: “Yes, I know I was hot in “The Wrestler” and adored in “My Cousin Vinny.” I’m proud of that. I’m ashamed to say, however, that I dropped out of NYU, you know, to star in soap operas. I tried to take some community college classes on the side but found the academic demands surprisingly rigorous. I kept confusing my soap opera lines with test answers in my philosophy class, which led my prof” to think I was on drugs. Nice drugs, though.”



Luap Occarb: Well, I didn’t exactly drop out of school, but I was warned that if I didn’t start proofreading and editing my written work in English class, the authorities would gladly “drop me out” and make me a candidate for distance learning, “real distance.” If I could go back and do it all again, I would have spent time at a community college first, perhaps at Marisa Tomei’s, to work on my basic skills and, you know, just to encourage her.



Daaye

Every afternoon
 At sunset, when everybody rushed home
 "Daaye," our janitor
 Free of everyday work
 Wore his only old, grey, and faded suit
 Sprinkled water on the brick floor of our
 front door
 Daaye took a piece of cardboard
 And with a limp went to put it on the stony
 step
 Behind the heavy brown door
 Which was opened to the street
 That piece of cardboard was his mat
 Where he could sit, watch, and discover new
 Things
 He liked to watch his special show
 People who were coming and going
 Many different cars that were passing on the
 street
 The blinking neon lights of stores
 The greetings of the corner grocer
 And the loud voice of the lemonade vendor
 Sitting and watching the street
 Drowning in his dreams
 Was part of his routine
 And sometimes taking a small nap
 Made him refreshed and ready for the night
 When he listened to the radio's night story
 And had his cardamom tea with sugar candy
 Sometimes as a child
 I tiptoed behind him
 And put my hands on his eyes
 He touched my fingers
 And told me, I know who you are
 Come and sit here my dear
 Now, years and years after that time
 Sometimes, I close my eyes
 And sit near him and watch his sight
 Enjoying myself in my dreams
 Just like Daaye's routine

By Parisa Samadi

Spring

When the lovely blossoms
 are swirling down to the ground,
 dear, tell me why we fall in love again.
 When a mindless robin
 is chirping over our heads,
 and the morning mist wets my sleeves,
 tell me dear, what love gives us.
 Love is not all.
 It gives us neither bread, nor drink
 Nor cloth, nor even a piece of blanket.
 But I wish
 flowers, birds, stars in the sky,
 even the universe
 were the things that were doomed to
 vanish away in an instant,
 if it were not love,
 if it were not a miracle.

By Olivia

SO one very unusual man
 Told me to write a poem again,
 It takes some time to write
 And I have to figure out what's wrong and
 what's right
 Usually, I can't find a special word,
 But my teacher is strict and "A" is the
 reward
 So, now a dictionary is my best friend
 I guess it will be until the end
 And through semesters, college, life
 Dictionary, you are my spouse and wife.
 Hope I'll satisfy this unusual man,
 Otherwise in my soul there will be rain
 Pure and a little bit gray,
 Teacher, please give me an "A"

By Masha Smirnova

Student Chirpings

Milking a Cow

One of the protein resources in the human diet is milk. Unfortunately, more than half the human population does not produce milk in their bodies; male bodies don't produce it, nor do children bodies and old bodies. The only one who produces milk is a mother who just had a baby, so humans invented the skill of how to milk a cow. There are critical points for how to milk a cow.

First of all, you should make sure that it is a female cow. If you tried to milk a bird, you couldn't get any milk because it doesn't have a nipple. If you tried to milk a cat, you could possibly get some milk, but it isn't cow's milk. You need a female cow to get some milk of a cow. Furthermore, when choosing a cow, let a woman make the decision because the female cow knows that a woman milks more sympathetically than a man, so the cow will be nicer to her. Communicating with your cow while milking is as important as communication with your lover.

Second, you should have an appropriate place to milk the cow. Do not ever try to milk a cow in a supermarket because the people will think that you are crazy; later, the security will catch you and put you behind bars. Also, don't try to milk a cow in a school, especially in an elementary school. The students are going to absorb what

they see and apply it to their own experience, so they may milk each other. Treat the cow as if she is the most important lady that you have ever had your hands on, or else she will put her foot either on your stomach or on your foot. As a female, she will not let you touch her udder in any place that you want.

The most important advice on how to milk



a cow is to get a friend who has experience with milking a cow. If you forget the steps for milking a cow, you can ask him right away. At least, he can demonstrate it for you. Do not rush. You are supposed to do it gently. Take hold of two teats gently, but firmly, and squeeze your fingers in sequence from the top down. Keep your hands pushed up slightly against the udder; do not pull! You are copying the sucking movement of the calf's tongue and mouth.

After reading the steps above, I hope you have a little knowledge of how to milk a cow. The result of the above suggestions may vary; it is not suitable for everybody. Remember that even the nicest cow can kick, so always be aware of this. If you are nervous or too rough with her, this will cause problems. Got milk?

Richard Hutasoit
ESLW50

My Dangerous Life

Dangerous accidents can happen in the life of each person. Especially, if you like adventures or new situations, you might be in danger. I had dangerous situations too. I'd like to share one example. It was in Germany in 1990 and it was a very dangerous moment for me. I dreamed to see Europe, because "perestroika" opened borders to the former USSR and once my friends, who had gotten to Germany 3 years before, invited me to Germany. It was a very interesting trip because I saw amazing laces, architecture, and gothic temples and I met new people, but I wanted to connect a pleasure with profit. I searched for a job on foot and used public transportation, and in a couple of days I saw, by chance, a big circus. Probably the director of the circus was in a good mood, and it took me five minutes to get a job in this circus.



I took care of an elephant. I cleaned this huge animal and fed it. I didn't have any previous experience in the job with any animals but I said nothing to the director because I wanted to keep my job. The elephant was always very aggressive to me; it tried to hit me with its legs, screamed, waved its trunk, and wagged its tail, but I liked my work and continued to try to become friends with it. I liked the elephant; it was a part of my romantic legend. I imagined myself as a hero in the African Savannah. I brought loaves of bread and carrots to the elephant on my time off. But nothing changed its relation to me.

Once I was close to its trunk. I have to say, that I usually worked in the back of the elephant's trunk. I tried to be safe, and the elephant was peaceful on this day, but I forgot the danger. Suddenly, the elephant pointed its long trunk in my side, and caught me around the neck. I couldn't

scream; I felt just weakness... the elephant pulled me forward toward its own tusks. These long seconds dragged on. Suddenly, I felt my energy came back to me and I started to resist, and I kicked it... Nothing helped...and...I inserted a finger in the wet tip of the trunk, in its nostril...The elephant opened his eyes wildly, and surprisingly, straightened the trunk and neezed loudly...It was a miracle; I had saved myself. I'd escaped from the deadly hug.

Each animal has its trainer. Trainers bring up animals and teach them to do tricks. When the trainer of the elephant found out about this event, he complained to me. He said that I should have told him about the elephant's aggressive behavior much earlier. Then he called me to the tent with the elephant. He took a long stick. The el-

ephant saw the stick and shook. He hit the animal. The elephant screamed loudly. I was sorry for the elephant. If you do your job and get used to doing it, usually you like it, especially if it's regarding animals. I thought of the trainer, "What a fascist!" The trainer told me that fear helps control the animals.

Since that time, the elephant changed its behavior. It began to behave very well with me. It started to obey me. If I told him "down", the elephant lay down. It was very convenient for me because I had to clean his back. Eventually, I understood that it is a myth that animals like people. Animals are taken from natural environments. They will always want freedom. People should be careful with animals.

Mikhail Spiridonov
ESLW 310

Cyrus Was Born Again

On a cloudy winter day, I was working in my quiet lab, which was in a small clinic on the border of Iran and Iraq. It was in the year 1985 and it was in the middle of the war with Iraq. Kermanshah, a big city on the border, was evacuated and its people had gone to small towns where there were no factories, industrial buildings, or army houses, which were the important target for Iraq's bombardment. Harsine, a small town where I worked, was 30 minutes away from Kermanshah, and I could hear the sound of missiles which were thrown onto Kermanshah in the middle of the night and the airplanes' vibrations when they flew over the top of the city, trying to break the sound barrier. This town was very poor, and it had just a few small stores, one bank, one post office and two small clinics, and at that time it was the host of many people who had chosen this city as a shelter for themselves. It was almost 11 o'clock in the morning, and I had finished collecting samples from my patients. I started to work on each sample and was looking through the eyepiece of my microscope when a knock on my door drew my attention.

I stood up and I opened the door. I saw a man and a woman standing here. The woman wore a black chador while she held a small boy in her arms. She was very pale and sad. The man, who was trying to be calm, came to me with a small smile, and he said hello. Both of them were very young, but poverty and anxiety made them seem old. The man, who wore an old, green overcoat with faded shoulder blades that had turned grey, handed me a white piece of paper that was nothing more than a doctor's request. The request was in the name of Cyrus Valizadeh.

I asked, "Is Cyrus this child?" They answered "Yes." I asked, "How old is he?" They answered, "Two years old." I said, "Please come in and have a seat." The woman brought out Cyrus from her chador and I saw

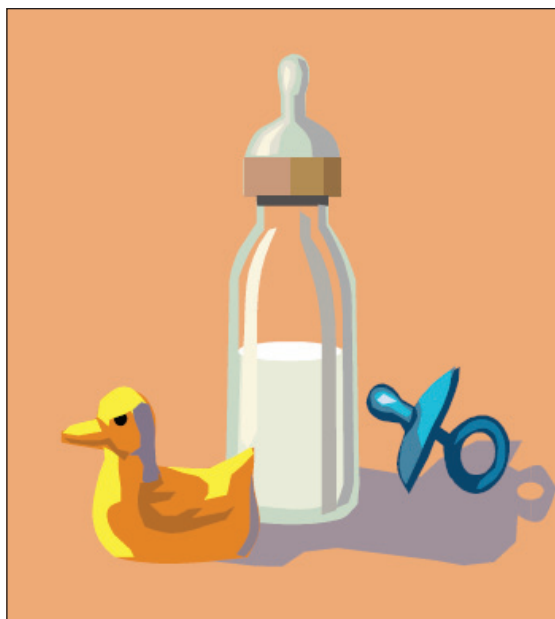
that he was a very chubby and cute boy with blond and curly hair. I took his hand and I tried to make him happy. I talked to him in a childlike manner, "How are you Cyrus?" He laughed at me and he hid his head in his mother's bosom. I made everything ready to take his blood sample. I asked, "What's his problem?" His father told me, "He has Thalassemia*." I asked, "Are you sure?" They said, "Yes, every month we go to the city and we give him new blood, but now, because of the war and Iraq's bombardment, we can't go to the city, so we try to do everything here. I stared at Cyrus, and I thought what a hard and challenging road he had

to face in his life if he wanted to stay alive. His mother said that he had had a fever since the previous week. His spleen was so big that they had to take it out and now he didn't sleep very well. I wondered — now, here in this small town, with these modest possibilities, with the war, and the poverty of his parents, what would happen to him.

I took his hand, which was adorned with a bracelet of blue pearls. Some people in this land believe that blue can bless people and take away every bad thing. I got his blood sample and I gave him a piece of candy. He was crying and was trying to press his head to his mother's

chest. That was the best place for escaping from every pain. He didn't look at me at all, and they went. His father came back to get the results of the test. Next month, they came back. Cyrus was feeling worse. After a while, when the war quieted, Cyrus didn't come to my lab anymore, but, one day, I saw his father in the clinic and I asked about his son. The tears flooded from his eyes and he told me that Cyrus had died. This news was very tragic, and I didn't want to believe it, but it was true. Mr. Valizadeh left the clinic, but I was thinking about Cyrus' face and those blue pearls.

A few months later, while I was working I saw Mr. Valizadeh and his wife standing at the door



again. I considered that they might have forgotten the death of their son. I asked them, "How's it going?" They showed me a newborn baby and told me that they were worried about him. I was shocked. How could they have had another child? This innocent baby didn't move a lot. I got his blood sample and unfortunately he had severe anemia. I told them to take him to the doctor immediately. When I wanted

to write the report of the test, I asked them that what his name was. His father told me Cyrus. I became very mad, very sad, and I tried to prevent myself from crying. I told them, "Here you are; take the report of Cyrus. They went and I started to cry loudly because I couldn't understand why Cyrus was born again.

Parisa Samadi

My "Silent" Friend

I have always been fascinated by nature, especially, by trees. Whenever I am out enjoying nature, I like to look at trees, hug them, talk to them, and think of them. I have always been amazed by them since childhood. When I moved to Sacramento, I was surprised to see a birch tree growing next to a palm tree. It was unusual for me. I have seen a lot of different types of trees around California and Colorado. Not long ago one tree caught my eye and it keeps me coming back.

I have been a member of the North Highlands-Antelope library for two years. I use the library a lot because I like reading so much. But one day I came before the library was opened. I looked around and found a bench, sat down to wait and... my heart leapt. Right in front of me I saw a gorgeous big tree. A tall powerful majestic king stood. His strong brown trunk stood straight proudly and tried to reach triumphantly to the sky. His bigger branches had many curly ways to grow. It looked like my king tree had a lot of curly arms. The bright green leaves were all around his smaller branches like his hair. That's why he looked fluffy. He could be climbed like a ladder to the top by all his branches. The huge root system was spread intensely, deeply and spaciouly. When I saw a moving shadow, it seemed to me like he had a long train of dress. I can feel him turn around through the whole day and his train moves together with him.

He is a giant, but I don't feel a cruel, merciless energy going from him. He doesn't try to make me scared. He is a kind and humane type of giant. Look at all those birds and nimble squirrels that are jumping all over him! His generous souls let them make the nests



and houses in a safe place. I hear a bird's song and how he tries to sing with it by his rustling leaves. I think everything tells me he is a friendly, reliable, and loving king tree. He is saying, "The sun! The life! The life to live!" It is very noisy around: two big streets, a lot of cars on the road, gas station, stores. Next to him – like another world – quietly, calm, nothing can bother you. Just you and the tree.

At the same time I feel his independent and mature power. But what can make him so strong and confident? And many questions just come up in my mind in one second. How old is he? What does he keep in his memories? Does he remember the pioneers who discovered the Sacramento area? Was he scared of builders who built all the neighborhoods around him? Was he crying about his brothers or sisters that were cut down? Was he lonely? How much pain does he hide from my eyes? Was he happy to see that the library was built next to him? Does he try to tell me something?

Can I understand him? Do I have an open heart to hear his whisper? Then he was young, and now he is old and wise. What kind of amazing story, destiny, he is hiding I will never know. It will always be a secret for me. This secret belongs only to him.

Since my first meeting with the king tree, several months went by. This special meeting helped me to pay attention to people and life around me. Life is the whole universe, even if it is the life of a tree. Now, when I visit the library, I look at my silent friend and ask him, "How are you? What is up, friend?" and feel how he smiles back at me.

*Ganna Schorn
ESLW50*

Baghdad Problems

I was born in Baghdad. It is the capital of Iraq. Baghdad is divided by the great river The Tigris into two main counties. The county which is located on the right side of the river is named Al-Karkh, and on the left side the county is named Al-Rasafa. There are seven bridges connecting these two counties. All the government institutions were located in Al-Karkh county while all the ministries were located in AL-Rasafa county. Baghdad was built in 765 BC, so it is one of the oldest capitals in the Middle East. The weather in Baghdad is very hot in summer, and it is cold in winter. There is not much rain in winter. Iraq was colonized by Great Britain from 1921 to 1944. During that time, the British government built many bridges, many hospitals, many streets, and train stations, and established the first system of the basic utilities for the country. The British government focused on Baghdad because it is the capital. We still use all the buildings, and the systems which were built by the British government. The building is very old, but none of the regimes in authority made any improvements in all these systems. They are still as they were originally built. Baghdad is a beautiful city, but there is nothing perfect. There are three main problems in Baghdad: having a very bad sewer system, very limited public transportation, and a lack of freshwater.



The first problem in Baghdad is the bad sewer system. I lived in Baghdad – Al karkh for more than forty years. As Arab people, we are not interested in moving from one place to another, which means I spent all my life in the same house. The sewer system is very old. It was built in the forties of the last century and modified in the sixties. I remember in winter 1995 the rain was heavier than the standard level. That day most of the houses filled with bad water

which came from the toilets and bathrooms. The water covered the floors of the first story of the houses. Most people stayed on the second floor of the house for hours until the city workers came and withdrew the water. The furniture was dancing on the surface of the water. You can imagine the bad effect of that water on the health of people. Moreover, the water brought with it rats, thousands of rats, which caused many diseases and last till this time. For our home, when my father built it he knew this problem, so he built a concrete base twenty centimeters higher than the street. That made our sewer higher than the main sewer of the street, so it kept the water at a low level compared to our home, and that saved us from the flooding.

The second problem in Baghdad is a limit in public transportation. We used the buses which the British government gave us within Baghdad. The buses were very old. I remember when the regime replaced them with new ones in 1978. When I left Baghdad in 2006 they were using the same buses. We needed to wait almost an hour for the bus,

and if you missed it you had to wait another hour. The route of the buses didn't cover the whole city because Baghdad has changed since 1944. The city extended horizontally, but they kept the route as it was. Many people didn't have cars so they suffered a lot. This made the crisis become larger because of the shortage of buses. For my family I was lucky because my father was an executive manager in Al-Rafideen bank so he had two cars. We didn't suffer like others.

The third problem in Baghdad is the lack of fresh water. This problem appeared in Al-Rasafa county more than Al-Karkh because all the government buildings were in AL-Karkh, so the county got more attention. When I married, I lived with my husband in Al-Rasafa County. We suffered from a lack of pure water during summer. The distribution system

of fresh water was very old, and the pipes were leaking. We used to store water in water tanks. All of the people in Al-Rasafa County suffered from this problem, and in some areas they used water from the river. I remember one day, my husband and I went to my parents' home and brought water with us because we were out of water for three days, and our stock of it was finished. Many people used water to set water from the main pipes. Other people dug wells in their gardens to have water for plants, toilets, and laundry.

In conclusion, Baghdad is the capital of Iraq,

and it was a beautiful city, but as my grandmother said, "Nothing is perfect." Having a very bad sewer system, an inefficient Student ChirpingsBaghdad Problems The Parrot public transportation, and a shortage of fresh water are the main problems in the capital of Iraq. These problems will last long because none of the regimes which governed Iraq have been interested in developing the country. All of them were only interested in developing their wealth.

*Hind Hanna
ESLW50*

A Perfect Liar

Do you lie sometimes? If you say you never do, I might think you are lying right now. Do you know whether if men or women are the best liars? My colleague Dick is a perfect liar.

I really admired the way he told a lie. It occurred when we worked together in Hong Kong two years ago. I would say he was a professional liar. He spoke with caring and sincere tones when he was talking to his wife on the phone. He mentioned that there was a sudden need for him to have a business meeting that evening, he was unwilling to attend but he was only an unimportant workman and earned a little money in his life, so he was forced to stay in the office. Otherwise, he would enjoy eating at home and spending some time with his family. I speculated that his wife probably felt sorry for him and tried to calm him down. However, when he put the phone down, he joined us in a lounge bar that evening.

He not only lied at home but also at work. When his boss assigned him to handle a project, he said his baby was sick and he needed to take a few days off to care for the child and he might not be

able to concentrate on his work during that period of time. His boss ended up passing the project to others and hoped his baby would get better. In addition to that, colleagues were all anxious about his baby's health until the day one of our co-workers, Linda, saw him in her friend's photo.



That was the day when Linda was invited to her friend's house for dinner. Her friend had been to Japan recently, she shared some pictures with Linda, and told her that she had joined in a twenty-person tour to Japan and she had had a wonderful trip. Linda discovered Dick in her photo when she was looking at her friend's group picture on the Japan tour. And that was the same day Dick had taken off because his baby was sick. Now, we all knew what had happened.

I think that Dick might harm his relationships: his friends, family or a spouse. His lying has broken trust and damaged his reputation. Now we all know that he is a liar, he no longer has our trust, and his continuous lying story came to an end. Eventually, he resigned from his position.

*Wai King Wong
ESLR340*

Dating and Courtship in Different Generations

Dating. What a nice time for every couple! It's a time of shiny eyes and smiles for no reason. It's a time of sleepless nights and expectations. This is the time that our parents and grandparents keep in their hearts for all their lives like something precious. Later they share their memories with their kids and grandkids as fairy tales. I assume that while there were some differences, there were far more similarities between dating and courtship in my parents' generation and my grandparents' generation. All of those stories were full of romance.

The first similarity is that all of those stories started with the phrase, "When I first saw him (her)..." Honestly, usually women are tellers of love stories, so most stories that I have heard started with the phrase, "When I first saw him..." When my grandmother met my grandfather, she was working in a factory. One day a group of beginner engineers came to the factory for practice. When my grandmother saw him, she thought, "How handsome... what a lucky woman he must be dating!" In a couple of days, she found out that he was single. He noticed her and she was praying every day, "When will he talk to me? Why doesn't he talk to me?" My grandfather was very shy but in a month or so he eventually ventured to talk to her. Similarly, when my mother first saw my father, she didn't like him. "I already knew that he was trouble." He was the loudest in the company of guys fooling around. When he asked her out, she said, "No." They used to study in medical university together and eventually one day she said, "Yes." There was something similar in the beginning of dating in my parents' generation and my grandparents' generation, but that is almost not real anymore. Maybe there was something special about first sight or first impression, so our parents and grandparents still remember that so well.



The second similarity is the way that our parents and grandparents dated. That was common for both generations' scenario: movies, walk in the park, ice cream, dancing, theater. Now people include restaurants on this list. However, I'm talking about the 50's and 80's in Ukraine. Young people usually couldn't afford restaurants back then. To make a gift of something that there was a shortage of was considered as the greatest sign of attention. My grandfather bought a gold watch for my grandmother. That cost more than his monthly income. Only very wealthy people could have access to such a luxurious thing.

The third similarity in the generations of my parents and grandparents were their expectations. Dating somebody, women expected to get married some day, be together, and live happily ever after. Men had the same attitude. I have a feeling that it is different now from what it used to be. It seems as if women and men were more patient, more respectful of each other. My grandma told me that that my grandfather asked her out almost every day. He talked to her about history and astronomy, about space and stars, but she was thinking only, "When is he going to take my hand?" In my parents' generation, couples dated for a long time before starting living together. It was the same in my grandparents' generation.

Beautiful love stories were common for our parents' and grandparents' generations. Maybe people back then had different visions, different ways of thinking, and different types of minds. I don't know what the reason was. However, there were more similarities between my grandparents' generation and my parents' generation than between my parents' generation and our generation. There were three main similarities: first impressions were very strong and memorable, dating had almost the same scenario, and people had similar expectations in both generations.

*Olena Kovalyova
ESLW50*

Step-by-Step with Your Mother-in-law

A popular joke says, "Eve was the luckiest women in the world because she had no mother-in-law." A relationship between a mother-in-law and her son's wife is one of the most complicated and tension-filled relationships. Many women look at their mother-in-law or daughter-in-law as a rival; however, the reason behind that is not clear most of the time. If you are from the group of women who have lost their mothers-in-law, you don't need to read this guideline any further.

Take my advice, and act like your late mother-in-law to make yourself and your husband happy; Kate Middleton could be the best prototype for you. Otherwise, you have a tricky way ahead if you live with, or close to, your mother-in-law. Knowing a lot of tips and tricks and practices is necessary to win her over and have a happy life with your pleasant husband. You will never be the winner in this relationship unless you follow three major steps.

As the first step to win over your new mother-in-law, you have to create a fabulous image and view of her in your mind, and never presume her to be evil. She is the first love of your beloved husband, and is not really a "monster-in-law." The idea that she is a monster could lead you astray, make your husband unhappy, and ruin your marriage. To avoid this idea, take these small steps carefully. First of all, get to know her personality, thinking, favorites, and preferences. Ask your husband to help you do that. After that, find the good sides of her character. Instead of judging her, try to think positively about her. She is a woman with all of her strengths and weakness, as you and your mother are. Finally, don't forget she is the mother of your husband, and not

your opponent; life is not a hide-and-seek game. If you try to take your mother-in-law's place in the new family, or capture all of her son's devotion, you will create a problem for yourself. She raised your dear husband, and knows him even more than you do; she will never lose the game that you've started. Indeed, she is a woman who thinks with her heart, as you do; so act with more wisdom, and don't involve yourself in a foolish competition.



The second main step that you should take to overcome your lovely mother-in-law is an art, the art of friendship. You should design a kind and respectful friendship plan. At the beginning of this plan, remember that she has been the first lady in the family's domain for decades, so respect her all the time. A famous politician says, "There are two things in life that you cannot achieve without closing your eyes a bit: peace and love." Therefore, instead of arguing with her about minor issues, close your eyes and compliment her; she will fall in love with you,

for sure.

In addition, your husband will love you much more. The second important thing that you should put in your plan is excellent communication with your mother-in-law. Call her regularly, ask her advice, visit her in her home, invite her to a restaurant or your home, and converse with her about your chores or your husband and children. After that, she will surprise you when she tells her secrets to you. Kindness is the last, but not least, subject that is necessary for your plan. Don't forget that she is a woman, the same as you; a pretty, decent, generous, gentle, and fragile creature. Sometimes assess yourself and make sure that there is no fault from your own side. Meanwhile, be kind and compassionate with her, especially if she is in suffering and ill. Sometimes give her a gift, particularly on her birthday, anniversary,

and Mother's Day. However, while you try to be an artist, be careful about being an "actress." She might have a very strong sense to realize your role, and it will backfire, eventually.

The last major step to win over your mother-in-law is a very delicate step: clarify any misunderstandings that may occur. If despite all of your efforts, she is still a devil, look for the motivation of her behavior. A reason might be behind her behavior, so be careful and don't be frustrated and weepy. You have two options in this situation. You can choose a challenging way, for example, by ordering a special T-shirt as a gift for her that says "I love my Daughter-In-Law" with a huge picture of your face on it. This I read on the Internet. Otherwise, easily follow these small steps: first of all, protect your emotional boundaries such as beliefs, behaviors, choices, and so on, through every way that you are able to, and advise her, with patience and forbearance, when she is crossing the boundaries. However, there is a tip in this situation; never do that alone. Try to explain the situation to your husband and get help from him. Then, make a balance in your relationship with her if the conflict still persists. So don't be too close to and not too far from her. Just maintain your distance with respect. At the same time, try to find the reasons behind her behavior. Maybe she is very jealous or she thinks you are a woman who has come to spoil the

existing mother-son relationship. Therefore, find the cause of conflict, avoid it, and look for tactics that can solve it. Meanwhile, try to clarify the source of problem for her and your husband. It is possible if you know how to react with wisdom. For instance, don't involve yourself in the mother-son relationship. Remember that your husband, the man of your life, is still her "little son," even if he is over fifty.

In conclusion, the mother and daughter-in-law relationship is one of the most complicated and unpredictable relationships in a family. While some mothers-in-law are sweet, others are unpleasant. If your mother-in-law belongs to the second group, but you are in love with your husband, take three simple steps to win her over, and keep your marital status in a happiness mode. First, create a fabulous image and view of her in your mind; she is not your enemy at all. Then use the art of friendship and make a kind and respectful friendship plan with her. In the end, despite all of your efforts, if the conflict between you is still steady, clarify any misunderstandings and avoid them. I also have a suggestion for you: keep these simple steps in your mind for the day that your position in the family will change and you will be a mother-in-law!

Fariba Darvishi
ESLW50

Maddy and I

Love me, love my dog". This was my situation when I made a decision to marry a man who loves dogs very much. After our wedding, I moved to my husband's house. I didn't have any problems with Max, the male dog, because he was very friendly. I just gave him a hotdog, and he accepted me in this house easily. However, with Maddy, the female dog, I didn't know how to get along with her, because she always gazed at me very carefully and coldly. After Max died, Maddy didn't want to leave the backyard. She just wanted to lie down inside the house, or to follow me everywhere in the house to watch me. Day after day, month after month, finally I found some similarities between her and me although she is a dog.

The first similarity between Maddy and me is we like to walk. We walk to the hill or the park near our house. Whenever my husband opens the door, Maddy likes to run out the door as fast as she can. She jumps up and down, and barks when she sees some squirrels or rabbits. She likes to hunt. While she feels excited about some animals, I feel relaxed. Any season, spring or winter, the view of this hill is very peaceful, and the air is fresh. Some cows chew grass very slowly on the hill. We like to walk around the park, too. There are many big trees in the park. In the spring, flowers bloom around the park. Some little boys practice football with their fathers or their coaches. Although we walk until we feel tired, Maddy doesn't want to go back. She usually stops walking and turns her head to

look at the view behind her. I always say, "Come on, Maddy. We will come back tomorrow or next weekend. "We go home with nostalgia after our wonderful walk.

The second similarity between Maddy and me is we don't like fast food. Before I moved to this house, Maddy ate dog food that my husband bought at Costco everyday without complaint. After tasting the food I cook such as beef sauté, grilled chicken, or shrimp tempura, she didn't eat her food again, unless I didn't have anything for her throughout the day. If I didn't make any food for her, she was very happy with a boiled egg.

Whenever I threw an egg to her, she caught the egg cleanly before the egg fell on the floor. Now she always waits to eat the food I make. If she doesn't get any food from me, she walks forward to her bowl that is full of fast food sadly and despairingly. Like Maddy, I really love my meals, too. I prepare breakfast and dinner for my husband and me. Sometimes I don't have enough time to cook something because I go to work after my classes. I buy some fast food such as Healthy Choice, instant pizza, or instant noodles, but I rarely eat that food. Like Maddy, I have a boiled egg with a cookie when I am in a hurry.



The third similarity between Maddy and me is we try to communicate with my husband. Believe it or not, Maddy tries to talk to us with her language. After Max died, Maddy seemed very bored because nobody fought with her to get a bone, nobody ran around the house with her, and nobody shared her games again. That's why she tries to talk to us. The first time I heard her voice, "whoo, whoo, whoo", I recognized that that voice was totally different from her voice when she barks. I told my husband, "Listen honey, Maddy is trying to talk". My husband didn't believe that, and he laughed at me a lot. After listening to her many times, my husband said, "You're right. Maddy is trying to talk." She listens to our conversations carefully, and tries to explain her idea with the voice "whoo, whoo". She uses this word with different tones, high, deep, short

or long. Last Saturday, when I asked my husband, "Hi honey, would you like an omelet for breakfast?" Maddy lay down next to me, and she said, "Whoo whoo whoo whoo". She had us in hysterics. My husband said, "It means she wants an omelet, too". Although my English vocabulary is more copious than the "whoo, whoo" of Maddy, to communicate with everyone around me is very difficult for me. Usually everyone that I meet such as my teachers, my classmates, my boss, my co-workers, or my neighbors speak English. In addition, my husband is American. Therefore, I don't have another choice. I have to speak English whether or not

I want to. I have to speak English to my husband every day although my English is terrible. Maybe for my husband, it is difficult to understand my English because I always make errors. If I try to finish a sentence without any grammar errors, my pronunciation is not correct. If I try to pronounce very clearly every word, I use the wrong words. My husband has to try to guess the right pronunciation, the right word, or the correct

grammar to understand me. Although Maddy and I use different languages, our purpose is the same. That is how to make my husband understand us more.

Since finding some similarities between Maddy and me, I get along with her, and she loves me a lot. Now my husband is very happy when he sees Maddy lie down next to me and lick my hand and I scratch her head. I remember one of my aunts believed that trees and plants have spirits and need the love. She believed that after my grandfather died, some of those trees died too, although she took care of the trees around my grandfather's house very carefully. My aunt said, "Those trees missed your grandfather and died." I don't believe that. I just believe the smart animals such as monkeys, dogs, elephants or dolphins not only need food, but they also need love. I hope with my love, Maddy doesn't feel alone again. Now I can walk with Maddy without my husband. I know with her love for me, Maddy will fight any animals or a bad person to protect me.

*Thao Tran
ESLW50*

How My Mom Taught Me to Not Give Up

Some people are very purposeful; even if they meet the wall, they just break it and move farther. However, other kinds of people, such as I am, sometimes need a good kick to start acting. These people usually don't even want to try hard things, but, after their goal is reached, they're happy about daring to do this. Fifteen years ago, when I went to high school in Russia, I met this kind of "wall" and decided not to break my forehead on it. I let things go, but my mother didn't. I'll never forget the time when my mom forced me to pass my chemistry exam.

I almost failed my final exam in chemistry.

The question was if I would receive C or D. It was my ninth grade in Russia, and I had never had a C before. However, that year there was a hard time with work in our small city in the Magadan region, and my mom had to work as a geologist in the middle of the tundra very far from home. When she was home, she didn't have enough time to check on all of my grades, and, of course, I told her I didn't have any problems at school. In fact, I had them. I didn't understand something in chemistry at the beginning of the year, then something else, and finally, I just gave in up and began to get D's on chemistry. I was fourteen and my relations with friends were more important for me than whichever grades, and I knew that my mom wouldn't let me breathe freely until I fixed my grades, so I kept silent. By the end of the school year, I'd decided the result was clear and told her about it.

I saw the fire come out of my mom's eyes, ready to burn me to ash. Both my parents majored in chemistry at university. "It's not going to happen! You must take an exam and get an A to fix the final grade!" In ninth grade we had two required exams of math and Russian, and two or three we could choose from twelve subjects. Of course, students chose music, art and physical education, but not chemistry. I tried to argue with my mom, telling her that it

was just two weeks before finals, and I didn't have enough time even if I could understand some of that crazy stuff. I didn't open the book during the whole year; how could I make it in two weeks? My mother was unshaken. Then I told her I would be the only student from the entire school who would take this exam, and how embarrassed I would feel in front of the committee of several teachers. Nothing worked! My mom divided my topics for ten days and threatened that I wouldn't have summer vacation unless I got an A on my chemistry exam. Although she explained a lot to me, it was a terrible time for me anyway; I almost broke my brain with all those tasks, numbers, formulas, and terminology, but I had to learn everything.



Several days before exams in Russian schools, we usually have counseling with the teacher. Students can ask questions they have about the exam or the material they've learned, and the teacher checks their preparation. My teacher met me with sarcasm in her gaze, but fifteen minutes later she didn't know what else she could ask me. I knew all the formulas, solved any task she gave me, and was able to describe the Mendel Table of Elements with my eyes closed. The last question was who my tutor was. "My mom and her belt," I replied. My teacher was delighted. A couple of days later I came and got an A on my exam, and I've never had any problem in chemistry since then.

Today I'm very thankful to my mom for that experience. I've learned not to give up if you can't do something on the first try. We can always fix most of our mistakes instead of letting them go. It's always hard when someone makes you do something you don't want to do, but the result is often worth all the energy and time you've spent to reach the goal.

Svetlana Guseva
ESLW50

Fairytale in a Backyard

Have you ever been in a country from a children's storybook? In a country where animals talk, people do little miracles and fight against dragons? Well, I guess most of us have been there at least in our imagination. And some places help us to bring our dreams to life. Those places we like the most. I will always remember my own fantasy kingdom.

When I was age five, my family moved to a new place. This was an old brick house with a fancy roof and smell of dust and antiques inside. It also had a really nice backyard. The backyard was big enough to fit two tennis courts in but what I liked about it was there was neither court nor swimming pool. The backyard

had an actual piece of forest! Yes, yes, yes! A bunch of trees, bushes, tall grass... For a five-year-old kid the place looked giant and amazing. This was love at first sight.

When you went through the house, eventually you would get to an old wooden door to the backyard. Outside were three steps and the start of a sidewalk sidewalk, my "central road". It was around the whole backyard in the shape of a wavy circle. It was big enough for one person at the time and sometimes you needed to set really low to get through. And as soon as you took the first step you were lost for the outside world. All of a sudden you found yourself in the middle of a rain forest. On both sides all kind of plants - old oaks, apple trees,

different bushes and a lot of grass were growing. Sometimes the plants were higher than me. I really liked to hide in them and felt like Robin Hood or Indiana Jones. Although I liked all my "forest", there was a special place I liked the most.

In the far left corner behind the gooseberry bushes, there was a little glade. This was my own castle and playground at the same time.



It was really hard to get there. I always had scratches from bushes, but was worth it. Every day there was some new game going on. One day I was a ruler of the Tenth Kingdom, next - I was looking for fairies. And the day after this I just hid from everyone and imagined myself to be Robinson Crusoe. Sometimes I simply lay and looked at the sky,

enjoying the smell of flowers and singing of birds.

That backyard helped me to create my own fairytale. I loved that place and still remember it. Whenever I think about childhood, I always bring to memory that place and right away I feel warm and safe. It is amazing how a regular backyard can bring happiness to your life!

*Bogdan Komlyk
ESLW50*

Meeting At Window 21

It was not just a particular usual day but such an important day that I could not afford to fail. As I was approaching the consulate building, I started to question myself, "How can I possibly get a visa with that many applicants in line?" I walked very quickly to the very end of the queue, wishing that I had arrived earlier. It was only six in the morning and everything was supposed to be quiet. Those people in line were all very well dressed, holding their very important documents carefully. Some were talking about having booked their ticket to the United States, and others were happily accompanied by family. "I hope they are not here to get the same type of visa I am trying to obtain," I thought secretly as the line moved toward that grand tall building where the U.S. Consulate proudly stood.

There was a proud, tall, young security guard standing at the entrance, whistling at the people to follow his direction. He raised his hands to signal people to form in two lines. When he walked to the back of the line, I asked him which line I needed, as I was confused. He looked at me with slight scorn, telling me to read the sign that was far in front and almost impossible to read. Then he told me not to make any sound at such an occasion. What kind of rule was that? Didn't he have the least courtesy to at least answer my question? I would have reasoned with him, but I understood clearly that I couldn't, not on that day, not at that place and not for that case. I would swallow my pride to minimize the chance of getting denied. Instead, I nodded my head to thank him before I stepped to the "non-immigration" line.

When I walked into the office building, I realized how small I actually was and felt that my dream about going to that beautiful country could fall through in seconds. I was assigned to

sit on a chair in the front row where I could see the consular officers from different windows. I noticed that the old lady at window 21 looked extremely serious during the interview, and many unhappy faces left that window reluctantly.

Without a doubt, they did not get the visa they had been looking forward to. I had heard that the consular officer could reject the applicant for financial status, purpose of going to the country, or no reason at all. "Where will my future

be if I get denied?" I could not think any further but wished myself luck. I was holding my deep breath when my name was called in the air. What luck! To window 21! At that point, could I pull my courage together to face the biggest challenge I ever had? "Do you speak English?" she asked me that question with a straight look. Having learned English for many years, I answered her question politely and confidently. As I was hoping, the interview went on smoothly. A few minutes later, she slid me a piece of paper with a pink slip through that tiny window with a beautiful smile on her face, "Congratulations! Your visa has been approved. You can now start planning your trip to the United States."

I finally succeeded in getting my visa to the country I had been dreaming about! I was so thrilled that I almost jumped off the ground. I encountered many difficult situations afterward, but the valuable experience I had with the U.S. Consulate has given me the courage to face any of them.



Haiping Wu
ESLW310

How To Wash an Alligator

Most Americans love pets. According to an article from "People" magazine, about sixty three percent of Americans live with one or more animals. About thirty nine percent of households have at least one dog. Thirty four percent own at least one cat. In addition, Americans buy birds, rats, snakes, chickens, and pigs. However, only a few people own alligators because a lot of Americans don't know how to take care of them. Many Americans don't even know how to wash them! Washing an alligator is easy if you follow these steps.

The first step is to find an alligator. You have to practice before buying your own alligator. Ask your friends, relatives or neighbors where you can find an alligator. Maybe they saw one somewhere. If they don't know, find information on the Internet about where alligators dwell near your house. If you find a swamp with alligators, go with a fishing rod and catch one. If you don't, go to the nearest zoo and steal an alligator (but return it after washing). Don't forget to leave a note, "Went to take a shower. Will come back soon."

The next step in the process is to prepare the place where you will wash the alligator. Choose the backyard for this. The first step is to lay an oilcloth and bring some supplies for washing. It can be shampoo, body wash, soap, and a bath sponge. Make sure you have a hose with water because it's easier to rinse an alligator with it than with a bucket of water. Next, bring a rope, soft towels, and toothpaste. After that, check that your neighbors don't watch secretly because they could think you are crazy. Before you start, turn on classical music. Your alligator will feel relaxed with it.

The last step is to start to wash your alligator. First, tie the mouth of your alligator with a rope because it can bite off your hand, leg, or head. After that, tie the claws because your alligator can crawl away. Don't forget to bind the tail to a tree or to a pole because the tail can hit you. Then moisten your alligator with warm water and soap it, starting with its head. Wash your alligator very carefully because this is a sensitive animal. After that, rinse it with warm



water and wipe with a soft towel. Finally, untie the mouth of your alligator and clean it with toothpaste because of the bad smell. But be careful; it's dangerous because not all alligators like to clean their mouths. As soon as possible, return your clean alligator to the zoo or to

the swamp where you got it from.

As you can see, it's not very difficult to wash an alligator. After you read the instructions I have given you, you will probably want to go to a pet store and buy one. Just don't be afraid to take care of it. Alligators are very smart and beautiful animals. You will enjoy having one. But if you grow tired of washing your alligator and taking care of it, you can kill it and make beautiful shoes or handbag from alligator leather. It's also not difficult, but that's another story.

Olga Strizheus
ESLW50

Losing My Brother

No one in Iraq can forget the Iran-Iraq War from September, 1980 to August, 1988. It was a terrible time for our country. My younger brother, Moayad, joined the Iraqi military on January 15, 1986. He was 22 years old. He hoped to live a long and happy life, but that didn't happen. On March 28, 1988, I received the worst telephone call of my life, and my awful day began.

At 10 AM that day, the Iraqi military called to give me the bad news. My brother was killed in the northern Iraqi city of Sulaymania. He was 24 years old. The official told me to pick up his body. When he called me, I was at my home in Baghdad. After I heard this news, I was very sad. I did not know what to do. I just got on the bus and rode to Sulaymania to get my brother. It took eight hours to get there. Then I took a taxi from the bus station to the Sulaymania Military Hospital.

At last, I arrived at the hospital at 9 a.m. on March 29. I requested to see my brother's body. The officials wanted to make sure that it was the right body and that he really was my brother. Soon, they brought me his body, and I confirmed it was Moayad. His body was wounded very badly, and his blood stains still remained. His face was destroyed, and mostly it was just his lower body. His clothing was filled with blood. I cried and was very sad. My heart was broken, and I was in shock because I never expected to lose my brother so early. The war was almost over, and we thought he would come back home. I was deeply hurt emotionally, and there was nothing else to do than just cry.

Next, I met some more military officers and

soldiers at the hospital. They worked there. I saw hundreds and hundreds of bodies on top of each other. All had to go to the hospital morgue. It was a terrible scene. Before I could pick up my brother's body, I needed to see a special officer. I was shocked because he said I could not take the body. He wanted to send the body back home to us on a military plane with the other dead soldiers. I refused, so I asked to speak to another officer. I explained my situation. I told him that I rode the bus for eight hours to get my brother! Finally, the officer was humbled and decided to let me take the body. I was very thankful and pleased by the officer's care and atten-

tion. At the same time, I was still miserable and heartbroken.



At last, the officers brought the body inside a casket and covered it with the Iraqi national flag. I called a taxi to take us to Baghdad. I put my brother's casket on top of the taxi and tied it

down. We left the hospital around 11 a.m. and arrived in Baghdad at 7 p.m. Immediately, we drove directly to the Baghdad Baha'i Cemetery and buried my brother. During the burial, my close friends came and said prayers. I did not have my parents join us because I did not want them to suffer more grief.

That terrible experience in Iraq was twenty-four years ago, but I remember everything. I still miss Moayad.

A.K.
ESLW30

A Great Day of my Life

One day, in May 2008, I went to Mexico, the country where I grew up. I usually go there every year. But I cannot forget the year 2008. I met an older woman who really needed help. Marta Salcedo was her name. She had a terrible disease and no one gave her the help she needed. That day changed the rest of my life because I did something for someone that I didn't know and that made me feel very proud of myself.

My family lives in Michoacan, Mexico. May is a beautiful month in my country. It is because the weather is perfect. It isn't too cold and it isn't too hot. The sun shines every morning and the nights are very beautiful. The sky is full of stars every night. I went there because I had vacation from my job, working at a Mexican restaurant. I was happy in my job but sometimes, like in any job, it was so stressed. I was so happy to go there. When I arrived in my country, everything looked perfect. My family was happy to see me again and I felt the same way. Every year, when I go to Mexico, I usually go to the church. But that day went different than other days.

I am Catholic and I was praying to my Guadalupe Virgin inside of the church. Perhaps, I felt a cold air came through the door of the church and a beautiful voice singing an amazing song behind me. When I turned to see who was singing, I was really surprised. There was a old blind woman. The weirdest thing was that this woman looked a lot like the Guadalupe Virgin. She was wearing a black dress and her shoes were torn and old. She had long and black hair. Her skin was the same color as the virgin of Guadalupe. It was a kind of brunette skin. I was really surprise how much she looked like the virgin. I went where she was to tell her how beautiful she was singing and the only thing that she told me was that she was hungry, and asked me for some money. I saw that the woman was blind and I asked her if she wanted some food instead of money. She asked me if I had not disgust for her because nobody wanted to help her. I couldn't believe what she was asking me. I took her to the church's garden. It was in front of the church. I asked her what she wanted to

eat. She wanted tacos and I left her in the garden and went to buy the tacos and fresh water too. She was starving so she ate in two minutes. I was so sad when I saw how hungry she was. While she was eating, I was thinking what a miserable life that old woman had. She was very grateful to me.



After she finished eating, I asked her if she had family and why she was blind. She told me that she had only one daughter, who did not love her, and she was alone. The terrible disease that she had was diabetes. That was the reason she was blind. I felt really sad about her history, but I had to go, but not before promising her that I would see her again soon. When I told her that, she was very happy and her face had a big smile. When I came back home, I could not stop thinking about that old and poor woman. Whenever I went to church, I brought her food and always talk with her about her life. She told me she suffered a lot in the past and her present but she was happy because she learned that life is worth it even if your life is not perfect. She always told me that she was really proud of me because nobody never did anything for her like I did. It really made me feel so proud of myself and it helped me to understand how many things we can do to help others who need our help.

Many people around the world are sick, hungry, sad, or lonely and I cannot do something for all of them, but I feel very proud of myself because I tried to help to make somebody happy at least for a couple of days. Whenever I go to Mexico and visit the church, I remember those days and I feel sad and happy at the same time because the woman died a year after I met her. On the other hand, I feel glad because I know I did something for her and she taught me a lot of valuable things about life. For all those days that I spent with her, I really feel proud of myself and it changed my life in a positive way.

Ana Valencia
ESLW50

Out of the Cage

Interview Success Workshop

Thursday February 18, 2016
11am – 12pm

This workshop includes information on researching the organization, reviewing anticipated questions, specific strategies, assessing your skills, making a professional presentation, and body language and presentation.

Please call the Career Center and register for this workshop. 916-484-8492

Location: DSPS Conference Room

Drug Culture of the 19th Century

Thu Feb 18, 2016
12:15pm – 1:15pm

Did you know that heroin was once sold over the counter, without a prescription? Or that babies were given heroin for pain relief and issues with sleep? Did you know the President Lincoln's wife Mary was addicted to laudanum (a form of morphine) as were many of our most important leaders and artists throughout history? Enjoy this lively presentation on the ever-evolving understanding of "illicit" or "healthy" drugs..

Location: Raef Hall 160

Discover UC Davis Trip Sponsored by University of Davis

Friday, February 26, 2016
9am – 3pm Pacific Time

Discover UC Davis Trip Sponsored by University of Davis. Stop by the Transfer Center to sign up on our list for this free event. As soon as the register date opens to fill out your confirmation form, the Transfer Center will call you or email you to come in to do this.

Location: Davis, CA, USA

Women's HerStory Month: Honoring Women in Public Service

Thursday, March 3, 2016
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

Join us in celebrating Women's Herstory Month by honoring two women who have devoted their professional lives to public service. Former Assemblywoman Pamela Haynes and former State Senator Deborah Ortiz, both current members of the Los Rios Community College Board of Trustees, will share their journeys and achievements.

Location: Raef Hall 160



Questions/Comments?

Student Editors: **Elaf Khafaja and Ngoc Truong.**

Please let us know what we can do to improve "The 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 D337 (Davies Hall), call (916) 484-8988, or e-mail Braccop@arc.losrios.edu. To see The Parrot in color go to http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Programs_of_Study/Humanities/ESL/The_Parrot.htm