



The Parrot

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

Issue # 100 B

Spring 2016

The Best of The Parrot- 100th Issue!



Simply Everyone Reads The Parrot !

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ARC

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Warbling

Hoggan's Hero

Parrot: Welcome to the world, Mr. Hoggan?

Baby Hoggan: Thank you very much, Mr. Parrot, sir. And please, call me Gabriel. I don't want people to confuse me with my father, Mr. Hoggan, the professor.

Parrot: Do you really think that people will mix the two of you up?

Baby Hoggan: It's possible. I was ten pounds at birth. 22.5 inches! Give me a couple of years, and I'll be looking down at my dad's bald spot.

Parrot: Does your dad really have a bald spot?

Baby Hoggan: He does, but a lot of people don't notice it because he is so tall. However, every time he leans over me to change my diaper, I have to cover my eyes because there is a strong glare reflecting off his head.

Parrot: Is he worried about that?

Baby Hoggan: He used to be worried about that, but now he's not because I was born with so much hair. He can relax because he knows that I can be a hair donor for him in the future.

Parrot: Are you happy that you were born on September 25?

Baby Hoggan: Definitely. It was a great day to be born because it was also the birthday of Mark Hamill?

Parrot: Who is that?

Baby Hoggan: He is the actor who played "Luke" in Star Wars.

Parrot: So are you a big Star Wars fan?

Baby Hoggan: Not yet, I have never seen any movies. But my dad has the complete "Star Wars" collec-

tion. In fact, before I was born, my mom and dad sometimes called me "Baby Luke" because my dad is a Star Wars fan, and he thought it would be funny to say, "Luke, I am your father."

Parrot: Do your parents always call you "Gabriel" or do they have any nicknames for you?

Baby Hoggan: Sometimes they call me Gabe. My dad occasionally calls me "Gables." He also calls me "Bubba." Mom calls me "Sweetie" and "Cutie."



Parrot: I know that a lot of children sleep with a stuffed animal. Do you have a favorite stuffed animal?

Baby Hoggan: Well, I like giraffes a lot because my mom likes giraffes because she lived in South Africa for a while and had some close encounters with giraffes. I think there are about 6 or 7 giraffe figures in my bedroom. I also have several pieces of clothing.

Parrot: What do you mean by "close encounters with giraffes"?

Baby Hoggan: Well, she was once chased by a giraffe at a nature preserve in South Africa. Her

friends had to save her by driving their car between her and the charging giraffe.

Parrot: Can giraffes really run that fast?

Baby Hoggan: Yes, as a matter of fact. But my mom used to run track, so she is pretty fast, too.

Parrot: I understand that your middle name is "Reid." Why did your parents choose that name?

Baby Hoggan: My mom's father is Reid Minster, and his mother's maiden name was Reid, so I'm named after my grandpa and his mother's family.

Parrot: Now that you have been in Sacramento for a week, what has impressed you most?

Baby Hoggan: For starters, vacuum cleaners. Wow!

They make such a relaxing noise. I love those things! Leaves are really great, too. My grandma took me outside a couple of days ago, and I was blown away by the leaves. There are so many of them on trees! Great concept! I hope there's a lot more of them out there.

Parrot: Thanks for your time, Gabriel. It was nice getting to know you.

Baby Hoggan: Oh, no. thank you, Mr. Parrot. See you later!

Arnie Meets Big Mike

On March 16th, Big Mike Spiridonov, ESL student and student worker, had occasion to meet Governor Schwarzenegger. We tracked Mike down to ask how it went.

Parrot: Michael, so I'm curious, Governor Schwarzenegger was on campus? Why did he go to your department? Where do you work, first of all?

Michael: I work in the welding department, but I study in the electronics department.

Parrot: Why did Schwarzenegger go to the electronics department?

Michael: Because the government was giving some money to the school for solar panels.

Parrot: Why did he speak to you though? How did that happen?

Michael: Maybe he saw my face; it was like begging, "talk to me".

Parrot: He just picked you out!

Michael: There was a crowd of people and I was in his way.

Parrot: You are very tall too; maybe that's why. How tall are you?

Michael: 6 foot 4. I saw myself on KCRA TV. I was really bigger than him.

Parrot: So what did he say to you?

Michael: He asked me about the program, how the stuff works.

Parrot: What did he ask you personally? Did he know you weren't American?

Michael: Yeah, he recognized my accent, he said something like, he respects... I lost what he said. He said something about accent, about himself, and he

likes when people try to do their best; he compared himself little bit.

Parrot: With you?

Michael: Yeah (chuckle).

Parrot: So did he give you his telephone number? Anything?

Michael: I didn't ask him; he didn't offer.

Parrot: What did your family say when you told them?



Michael: Oh, everybody was surprised because we knew about him before we came to America. He is a really famous actor and his image was like a big strong guy. When I talked to him, I was a little bit nervous; it was a little bit surreal.

Parrot: You are from Ukraine, right? Did

you tell, your friends back in Ukraine?

Michael: Not yet.

Parrot: Do you have the news program on video?

Michael: Unfortunately, no.

Parrot: You didn't tape it? You should call them. Or photograph, did you take a photograph?

Michael: Yeah, yeah. I can show you it on the government website. Sixteenth of March.

Parrot: You and him?

Michael: Yes.

Parrot: So is Schwarzenegger the first famous person you've ever met?

Michael: Yes, just him, but I talked to the mayor Kevin Johnson.

Parrot: Was he there, too?

Michael: Yes.

Parrot: You're taller than him, too?

Michael: Yes, (laughter), my main advantage!

Parrot: Thanks Mike!

Sony Hacks Parrot, Blames N. Korea

Sony Corporation comma having apparently hacked the operating system of The Parrot comma is denying all responsibility for the outrage and blaming North Korea to boot period The incursion came to the attention of student editors Olga Cuzeac and Emma Jaques as they struggled to put the finishing touches on an upcoming issue period It appears that that an insidious punctuation virus had rendered all writing devoid

of punctuation dash commas comma periods comma questions marks comma quotation marks comma semi hyphen colons comma dashes comma and even exclamation marks exclamation mark quotation marks ESL students suffer enough trying to decipher the vagaries and challenges of punctuation in reading and writing comma quotation marks declared the student editors period quotation marks Maybe Sony wants our students to watch more film and

read less period quotation marks It is surmised that long standing talks between Sony and ARC for the purchase of The Parrot and the filming of its birth had broken down and comma in frustration c o m m

a the media giant d e c i d e d p l a y i n g h a r d b a l l with both American River College and longt ime foe North Korea in one fell swoop would be a Machiavellian stroke period An ARC spokesperson wishing to remain any-

mous hinted that former NBA basketball star Dennis Rodman may be summoned to somehow broker this mess and help The Parrot recover all its missing markings period Ironically comma a request for an interview of a Sony big hyphen wig was declined period

**I like
cooking my family
and my pets.**

**Use commas.
Don't be a psycho.**

Mim's Cafe



Hello again! I hope your spring semester is going well. This second recipe- Curry Chicken - is calorie-friendlier than the last one. However, gathering the necessary ingredients may require a little work. If you haven't dabbled in Southeast Asian cooking, then you will have to go to your local grocery stores and look in the "Asian Food" or "Oriental Food" sections for coconut milk, curry paste (or powder), fish sauce, lemon grass, and kaffir lime leaves. Raley's carries quite a few products by the brand, A Taste of Thai. If you go to a Chinese, Vietnamese, or Thai grocery store along Stockton Blvd, you'll find more selections. I recommend the SF Supermarket (on the corner of 65th and Stockton Blvd) because that's a one-stop shop. For many of my curry dishes, I buy MAESRI brand's Panang Curry Paste because of its mild taste and flavor. If you like your curry hot and spicy, you can use red, green, or yellow curry paste. You can also substitute the vegetables below with the ones you like. Sometimes I use snow peas, pineapples, bamboo shoots, and or tomatoes. Most of the time, what my curry looks and tastes like depend on what vegetables I find in my fridge. As for the fish sauce, look for the one that doesn't have much sodium. The lemon grass and kaffir lime leaves are used to flavor the curry but is not eaten. Also, you can substitute fillet fish or shrimp if you prefer seafood. This dish serves four people and is best served hot with Jasmine rice. I dare you; TRY IT and email me, Mim Montgomery, at montgot@arc.losrios.edu with your comments



Prof. Montgomery with happy eater.

Chicken Curry

Ingredients

- 1 pound of chopped boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breast
- 1 bell pepper (red or green – 1 inch cube)
- 1 Japanese eggplant (cut it diagonally about a quarter inch thick)
- 1 cup of yellow onion (cubed or chopped lengthwise)
- 2 tablespoons of Panang curry paste (or less for lighter flavor)
- 2 tablespoons of fish sauce
- 3 tablespoons of sugar
- 1 cup of coconut milk (you can use more for a richer taste)
- 1 cup of chicken broth
- 1 stalk of lemon grass
- 2-3 kaffir lime leaves



Cooking Instructions

1. Heat ½ cup of coconut milk in a small pot – use low to medium heat (don't let it boil)
 2. Add kaffir lime leaves and lemon grass (cut into 4-5 inches in length, pound it first to release the flavor)
 3. Stir and add the Panang curry paste. Then add the chicken (wait if you are using fish or shrimp)
 4. Add fish sauce and sugar and raise heat to high to cook chicken (3-5 minutes or until cooked)
 5. Add eggplant, onion, and bell pepper, and chicken stock (let it boil and then reduce heat) (If you are using fish or shrimp, add it here – cook for 3-5 minutes)
- Add leftover coconut milk and remove pot from heat
- Chicken Curry
- Prof. Montgomery with happy eater.



Presenting the Past — The Accidental Historian

Sutter's Fort

One of the best things about living in Midtown Sacramento is that you don't have to look too hard to find something of historical interest. Walking out to meet friends a few nights ago, I passed Sutter's Fort at 27th and I Streets. It's pretty astounding to think that the birthplace of modern Sacramento, with its important connection to the Gold Rush, sits quietly just a few blocks from my house. Everyone knows that the discovery of gold drastically changed California and the west. But few know the story of how it affected John Sutter, a Swiss immigrant who is considered the founder of American agriculture in California, and who had no loftier dream than trading in goods from his fort.

In 1839, the Mexican government granted some land to John Sutter. To qualify for this grant, he became a Mexican citizen and was appointed "Captain of Sacramento Troops" as part of the land grant. He built the white adobe fort, which he called "New Helvetia" (New Switzerland) and quickly put together a workforce which included local Indians. The mid-sized fort included quarters for himself and some of his workers, a bakery, a blanket factory, a blacksmith

shop, a carpenter shop and other workshops. His operation also included a tannery located on the American River and a fort he purchased from a Russian settlement near present-day Bodega Bay. He farmed wheat, barley, peas, and beans, distilled whiskey and brandy, and traded in cotton. This empire established Sacramento's earliest settlement and the first non-Indian settlement in California's Central Valley. The fort also had a good reputation and was known for its hospitality, making it a first stop for many immigrants to the area.

During this time, the fort flew the Mexican flag, and Sutter maintained a friendly relationship with the Mexican government. Then, the American government began military maneuvers against Mexico's presence in California. The fort was taken over by Captain John Fremont during this time, though Sutter remained in the fort and continued his operations. Eventually, control of the fort was given back to John Sutter, who then raised the American flag above the fort. His manufacturing and trading had made him a wealthy man, and the settlement around New Helvetia was growing as the result of his efforts.

As part of the expansion of his operations, he acquired some land on the American River, about 50 miles from the fort in present-day Coloma. In 1847, he began construction of a sawmill on this land. In January 1848, during this construction, gold was discovered on Sutter's land. He tried to keep the discovery quiet until the mill was finished, but word leaked out and Sutter very quickly lost control of his entire empire.

Practically overnight, his agricultural and trading enterprises collapsed, especially when the new and more convenient town of Sacramento diverted settlement and business away from New Helvetia. His white employees deserted New Helvetia for the gold camps. Unsavory prospectors took advantage of the fort's hospitality, stole Sutter's cattle, squatted on his land, and ousted the area's friendly Indians. By the mid-1860s, the fort was mostly destroyed and John Sutter had lost everything. All that remained of the fort was the central building, which had been Sutter's home and workspace. The walls and workshops were gone, and so was John Sutter.

Today, the rebuilt fort stands on its original site as a testament to the spirit of the old west and the destructive nature of the greed that brought so many to California seeking a share of the gold found here and contributed to the downfall of Sutter's New Helvetia. The Native Sons of the Golden West were influential in the restoration of the Fort, which began in 1891 and was completed in 1893. It was furnished and reconstructed to reflect its 1846 appearance. Donated to the State of California, Sutter's Fort became a part of the California State Park System in 1947. It is the oldest restored fort in the United States. Volunteers work at the fort, wearing period dress and demonstrating for visitors how daily tasks, from making rope to baking bread, were accomplished. It's a fun and fascinating tour that shouldn't be missed!

(Information compiled from the following sources:

www.militarymuseum.org/Sutter.html

www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=485

www.pashnit.com/roads/cal/SuttersFort.htm)



ESL Prof. Brenda
McTighe



Contact Prof. McTighe: McTigheB@arc.losrios.edu

Squawking

Dear Granny,

A few weeks ago, there were some very unpleasant people on our campus saying bad things about Islam. I'm not a Muslim, but I left campus feeling a bit sad about the whole situation. What's up with this kind of thing?

Horace (used to be "Pissed-off Student")

Dear Horace,

Hi, Horace. I'm so glad you've changed your name. You know, I'm just a simple gal. Seems to me – "It seems to me" I should've said (The ESL department likes to keep tabs on me J) – that what happened on our campus is nothing new in that there will always be people who want to say something, create a stir, and have any kind of impact, but who are often uninformed or "underinformed", mistaken, or who "have an axe to grind." Our whole country has pride in

freedom of expression and our courts are always talking about what freedom of expression is. Still, there's a responsibility that comes with free speech. Volatile, incendiary remarks are so, so not cool. In fact, "dissing" other religions appears to be ignorant and not very gentlemanly or ladylike in Granny's book. All of the world's religions respect and extol (I looked that one up) the virtues of a good education. Education – yeah! If these mean people say things like this again, suggest (nicely) they take one of our lovely humanities classes, sociology classes, history classes, psychology classes, art history classes, etc. We've got "hecka good" (again, apologies, my ESL friends) professors that can help us understand religion's (all religions!) place in the world.

Granny



Dear Granny Noetal,

There's this guy in two of my classes who's always asking me if he can carry my laptop for me after class. He speaks funny – he's from another country I guess -- and seems nice enough, but I don't know why he's doing that. I can carry my own laptop – I'm on the women's volleyball team. I just say no thank you. Does he think I'm weak or something?

Zelda Brown

Dear Zelda,

A cynical me would say to watch out – he's got his eye on your laptop. The more romantic me would say it's his way of indicating he likes you. When I was a young bobby-soxer (teenager in the WWII days), a lot

of young men were offering to carry my books, which were a lot heavier than a laptop. After a few weeks of carrying a gal's books, a boy might say something like, "Aw, shucks, would you be my girl?" Maybe this young man is both very modern and old-fashioned. He may be very much infatuated with you, doesn't know how to say it in his new language, English, and by carrying your laptop, not your books, he's trying to show he's a 21st century guy, really with it. Why not offer to carry his laptop (or books) and see how he reacts? Of course, if you feel he may get the wrong idea, see if he'd like to chat and you can explain things to him. If you feel uncomfortable with that, just hand him this issue of The Parrot. He can even write me with his own question.

Sincerely,

Granny



Dear Granny Noetal,

What are you doing this summer – just sitting around on your butt like most of the teachers?

W. Eisenkopf

Dear W,

So nice of you to take the time to write! So succinct and to the point! So caring that you should consider the welfare of my “butt”. Sorry, but Granny and her fanny seem so off-limits to write about and, gosh, that word “butt” I still have a difficult time accepting in polite discourse.

Nonetheless, to satisfy your curiosity, I plan to do quite a bit this summer. I have a trip planned to



the Galapagos to see the wonders of nature. I’m also going to read two novels and two non-fiction books. In addition to that, I’m going to tend to my tomatoes, walk my dogs, learn something about bee-keeping, mend my fence, polish my brass, build a koi pond, swim a mile every day, sew a quilt, learn how to make baba gnoush, mind my great-grandchildren, practice my taekwondo, write some poetry, further research my ancestry, backpack in the Sierras, refurbish my ‘57 Chevy and take it to the levee, write to my congressman, sing in my choir, drill a well, and, oh yes, just sit around.

Granny

Dear Granny,

What did you do over spring break?

Karla Koloscapi

Dear Karla,

Well, funny you should ask. I actually had a marvelous spring break, better than past ones. I asked my granddaughter what’s “hip” to do over spring break and she said a popular thing to do is to go to Cancun. So there I was sitting at my computer, contemplating whether or not to buy a plane tickets to Cancun, Mexico, and before I knew it, I was on my way to the airport! When I got to Cancun, it was kind of interesting. I didn’t really know



what to expect, but when I got there, all I saw were young college kids! Thousands of them, like locusts! I had booked a room at this super-nice all-inclusive resort and was excited to have some fun, maybe some dominoes, maybe some Parcheesi! Kids were drinking everywhere heading down to the beach, and I soon began to realize this wasn’t really the place for me to be. I enjoyed my time in Cancun and met some youngsters my own age but realized after getting home that sitting in my favorite chair knitting hats and scarves is what I should have been doing. I’ll leave the partying to the young-ins!

**Love,
Granny**

How Well Do You Know Your Campus?

→ The Oak Café

- Serves a higher purpose
- Serves Beaver Breakfast Burritos
- Serves absolutely scrumptious food
- Serves students with a 4.0 GPA
- "a" and "c"



→ The parking garage (structure)



- Is open for picnics
- Is open for tours
- Is open 24 hours
- Is open for skateboarding
- None of the above

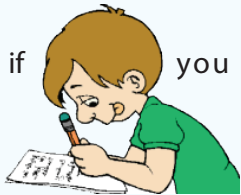
→ The physics department

- Is selling The God Particle
- Believes "a" is the only answer you need to know for a rational existence
- Is highly creative but "a" and "b" are false



→ The Assessment Center

- Tests you and tells you if you're cool or not
- Tests you on English and math
- Detests you
- Is located in the Student Services Building
- "b" and "d" and even "a" if you talk to them nicely



→ Bike racks

- Are many and can be found all around the campus
- Are hard to steal if you want one for your den
- Are taking up valuable parking space for cars
- Are only for people in spandex
- Only "a" is correct, which makes you wonder why there is an "e"



→ Public Telephones

- Actually exist
- Are located in front of the Administration Building and a number of other places on campus
- Require coins – pieces of metal with pictures of dead guys
- All of the above



→ Parking citations

- Are surprisingly easy to get
- Are not awards you can brag about
- Sadden and depress parking officers
- Can be paid for with Beaver Buttons
- "a", "b", and "c"



NBA Sensation Jeremy Lin to Attend ARC for Summer Session

New York Knick point guard and California native Jeremy Lin has announced that he will attend ARC in the summer session. Linn did not specify which classes he would take. When asked why return to school and why to California, Lin replied, "You know, a Harvard education in my back pocket is fine – it opens up a few doors -- but for fired up



teaching that'll rock your world you can't beat at CC, and ARC's got game! Besides, the social life in The Big Apple is not all it's cracked up to be. Give me some Sacramento sun and a chance to wear shorts full-time – no can do on 5th Avenue. I also hear ARC's getting a new student center so I'm jazzed about that. Hey, anybody got a couch I can crash on?"

Students Occupy Parrot – Administration Expects Long-Term Battle

ARC students are reputed to have occupied The Parrot office to protest the fact that 99% of the campus does not receive The Parrot and must scratch and claw to get their hands on a hard copy. To date there is no film footage of the occupation and reporters for The



Current are at their wit's end trying to locate the cubicle that passes for The Parrot office. Estimates of the number of occupiers range from three non-descript student-types to thousands of agitated "dissidents" wearing The Parrot t-shirts.

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 per-
 son 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 hon-
 ey eyed
 She had always a scarf and she was ex-
 tremely shy
 She always sat behind her window
 And she was watching her world
 She didn't want to miss the time when Un-

de 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 run-
 ning 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.

By Parisa Samadi

Away

When the night comes,
 I start to long for the moon back home
 Since I see the moon shining through my
 window like I used to
 As I stare at the moon,
 I can see the shadow of loneliness and cold-
 ness
 Suddenly my tears start to form
 When I sleep in the darkened night,
 I need a shining star's light
 To lead me through the hours of darkness
 As the cold wind blows through my mind,
 My memories of home are carried away
 And my mind falls into deep slumber
 When the next day comes,
 I yearn for home

By Masha Smirnova

Student Chirpings

No More Cheating

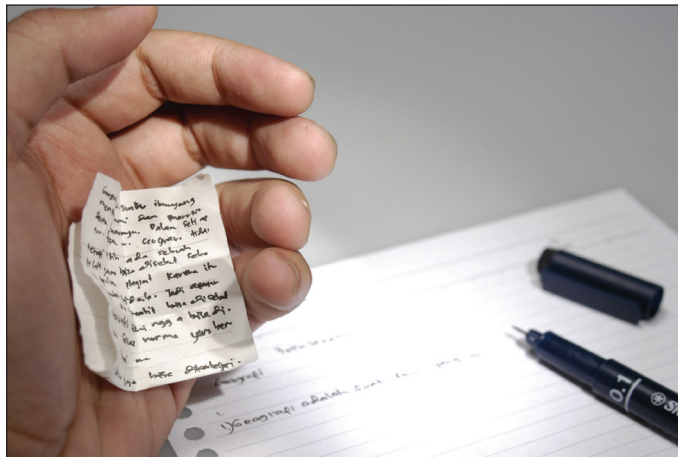
Everyone who has gone to school or who has gone to college or who is currently attending college or university had a situation when they weren't prepared for some test, quiz, or even final exam. When you're not ready for a test in high school, it's not a big deal because you almost always can retake it. But when you're not ready for a test or exam in college, it's more serious. You cannot cheat there. You need to have good grades if you want to go to the university and continue to study. In the past I had a situation in which I could have been well prepared for an exam, but I preferred to cheat.

In Ukraine, where I used to live, I studied at a university for four years. My major was social pedagogics. I wanted to be a social worker and work at some social organization to help people who have some problems, for example, to help people who don't have a job, home, and food, and who have many kids in the family can't take care of them. I wanted to help people that have mental or physical problems and because of their diseases, they can't be successful. During those years that I studied, I learned a lot. I also knew when you need to be prepared for the class, and when you didn't have to be prepared for class. Some of the teachers checked the homework and some of them didn't care about it. Usually, I was doing my homework and I was studying a couple of days before I had some tests or quizzes. It was easy to study. I was alone, no husband, no kids. All my free time I spent with my books.

When I was in my third course, I got married. From that time some things changed, but still it wasn't very hard to learn. But then, six months after my wedding, I got pregnant. It was our first baby, and we were very excited. My education wasn't very

important to me anymore, even though I continued to study. I wanted to finish university and get a bachelor's degree. I was working hard to reach that goal.

At the end of the year, we were going to have four final exams. I was very scared of that because I knew that it would be not easy for me to be well prepared. It was hard to combine studying and pregnancy. I often didn't have the desire to study and I felt powerless. Even though I felt bad, I was trying to do my best to prepare for the exams.



The finals began. We had three to four days to study before each exam. I studied really hard for the first three exams, but then I quit. My last one was social pedagogics. I was so tired from studying that I decided to cheat by looking at little notes. I had three days before my exam. All of the three days I was just writing notes on little pieces of paper. I wrote almost everything I would need to answer the questions. Time flew so fast that I didn't even realize it.

Time flew so fast that I didn't even realize it.

I was eight months pregnant at that time and I had a pretty big belly. That's why the teachers were kind and had a special approach to me. They were also tolerant, sympathetic, and created a good atmosphere in the classroom. Still I was very nervous; my hands were shaking, and I was all sweaty. When I received my questions, I went and sat down at the desk. I wasn't ready for the exam. My best hope was to cheat. It was difficult to look down and find what I needed because teachers were always looking around. They didn't say anything to me even though they saw that I was cheating. I think they just closed their eyes to the poor, pregnant woman.

After I finished, I went to the front of the class

to tell them what I wrote. I was just reading instead of talking from my mind. I couldn't get my eyes off the paper because I didn't know what I wrote. They were listening carefully. After I finished, they asked just one question: How do you feel? I said that I was fine; however, in reality I didn't feel good about myself. It wasn't about my health; it was about what I had done. I lied to myself. The teachers gave me a good grade, but I wasn't as happy as I would have been if I had studied.

It's very important to study and not to cheat. If you are learning something it will stay in your memory for a long time. To have good results, you have to study a couple of days before your final, not just one

day before.

I was disappointed in myself and at what I had done. Maybe for some people it's not a big problem and after they cheat they feel comfortable, and their conscience is clear. But I felt guilty. I cannot bring time back and change what I want but I can not do it in the future. I wasn't cheating anymore. I better spend my time and learn what I need rather than do something that will waste my time and won't help me.

Evelina Demchuk
ESLW50

A Gift From God

On the earth, there are good and helpful people who always have good advice for others. They like to help others with all that they can: good advice, food, clothes, and a roof above their heads. They are always surrounded by friends, and that makes them happy and fulfilled.

I remember a nice, beautiful, smart, little girl like an angel, whose name was Gabriela. I called her a "gift from God." When I met her, she was 6-years-old, like my son Andrei. She was enrolled in his class. Later I found out that she was living with her poor relatives near my house. I was shocked to hear of her incredible life story. Her mother was killed by her father in the train station. Gabriela saw all that happen. That image remains in her innocent mind even today. I tried as much as I could to help her, to be there when she needed me. I knew she was a special child, a special student from my son's class. So I invited her to my home after school to have lunch together, to help her with homework. I always encouraged her to study more and to read interesting books. My son Andrei was also happy to play with Gabi, to share different things with her, even his chocolate. We all loved her so much, and



she loved us. We spent a lot of time together and I was delighted when I saw her happy when she laughed or sat at the table with my whole family.

Every evening she went home with tears in her eyes. We were sorry for her when she heard that we would move to the U.S.A. She was sad and she asked me to take her to America. I didn't have another choice. Maybe in the future we will be able to bring her here. We now keep in touch. We have talked on the phone, we have seen her on Facebook and last year, before Christmas, we sent her a big package with American toys and clothes.

I'm always happy when I help other people. It gives me a great feeling and more confidence in myself and other people. Gabriela remains for me, "a gift from God."



Simona Sigartau
ESLW30

My Sacred Place

Have you ever tried to escape from problems that surrounded you? Have you ever tried to find a place where you can calm down and relax? I tried, but all of my efforts were useless. Finally, I realized that the best way to find the place I had been searching for was to create it. It wasn't easy. However, I did it. I remodeled my room in my parents' apartment to fit my lifestyle. I love my room.

My room, as a part of my parents' flat, was situated on the eighth floor in a big, long building. This was in my country, Belarus. It was not very big but it had enough space to smell like the spirit of freedom. At first sight, my room looked like the casual room of a crazy young man. There was a huge French window on the left side and it was covered with dark purple blinds. A big closet from the floor to the ceiling found its place in the right corner of the room. It was brown, covered with glaze, with different scratches that gave it an old vintage appearance. The room's capacity shocked me. I used to lose a lot of stuff there. In the middle of the room was my king size bed. Sometimes I thought that it was much bigger. It was low, and had the most comfortable mattress in the universe. Besides that, there was a massive book closet. I lost count of how many books were there; it was a perfect collection. The final touch of furniture in my room was a very old table which served me as a computer table. That was all the furniture that I had. It was enough for me. It was the lifeless part of my room.

My ambitions, dreams, lifestyle, deeds, and individuality were represented in minor stuff that crowded my room. First of all, my four walls had different colors. There was beige, dark pink, purple, and light gray. Although I was satisfied with the colors, one day I got tired of the gray wall and drew a huge variety of flowers in yellow, red, black, light green, and orange. It was so realistic that when you looked at them, you could feel the light smell of flowers. More than that, all the walls in my room were decorated with self-made paintings. They had been drawn

in an impressionistic style, with a huge variety of colors, and a very positive mood. That mood became a part of my room's atmosphere. Very close to my bed, there was the artificial pelt of a white bear. As I used to paint while on the floor, actually on that pelt, the pelt changed color from white to the full spectrum of colors. It looked very funny, and I always told stories how I had killed the unseen bear. More than that, a lot of shelves protruded from the walls of my room. All of them were full of small knick-knacks that evoked a variety of memories. To illustrate, there was a shell that I had found on the beach during my vacation; there was my self-made wooden tank, which I made when I was six. All of that memorabilia made my room very pleasing, creative; in other words, it was my shelter from the cruel world.



Everyone has bad days, dark strips in life. Constant stress makes our lives impossible and hopeless. My room helped me to deal with that in different ways. For example, I would come home in a bad mood, and I didn't want to do anything. I closed myself in my room, turned on soft, relaxing music, and lay on my bed. In ten minutes I was back to life. My room inspired and stimulated me. Sometimes my room became the workshop of an artist, where my imagination had possibility to paint gray reality. When I was very tired, I could just enjoy the urban scenery from my window.

Everything is changing. Time is passing. I moved to another country. I've lost my reliable spot. I'll do my best to find a new one, actually, to create a new one. But it would be just a new one. The new room will not replace in me my old one. I miss my room very much because I really loved it. Sometimes I pretend that my room is a real person, and one day I will bring her here to keep sharing my life with her, as in old times.

*Egor Aranovich
ESLW50*

It Belongs to Me

"Are you leaving?" The question was asked with a soft voice. "Yes, I am." The answer from the other person is short but it is very clear, and it is loud enough so the person who is asking will understand. My husband is asking me when he sees me getting up from my chair. I am looking at my dog. She is getting up and picking up her toy. She is ready, and she understands what is going to happen in a moment. We are going to our special place which belongs to us, is comfortable, and is the happiest place for us.

My special place is an extra bedroom. I use it for my office. It is next to the family room. I decorated my room with my favorite colors, which are black and white, and some beautiful combinations of American and Asian decorations. For example, I have a big Chinese flowerpot full of fake flowers made of silk. I also have a big American flag is hanging behind the door. Whenever I open the door of this room, I feel like this is my world. Next to the door, there is a white bookshelf which is always filled with all kinds of books, such as American cook books, Thai recipe books, school books, and magazines. Some books are standing upright. Some books are lying down. Next to the bookshelf, there are two calendars hanging on the wall, side by side. One is a Thai calendar and the other is an American calendar. On those calendars I always have a red pen. I have to write down what special is coming up with our family. In addition, I have a white table in the middle of the room. On the table, there is my family's picture in a woodcarved frame. I have my own computer as well. Next to the table, I have a T.V which is on the black T.V table. I have a lot of Thai music and Thai

movies. I always watch Thai movies in this room because I don't want to bother my husband.

I always spend time in this room after I finish dinner, clean up the kitchen, and sit down in the family room with my husband for a while. This room is so comfortable for me. Everything I use and see are mine. I can do anything I want in here. For example, I talk on the phone to my friends or my family in my native language without bothering my husband, who doesn't understand Thai.



I remember that my teacher says when you are writing your essay try to turn on music that you like. It will help you to enjoy writing. Also, it can help you get some ideas. I'm doing that now. I'm turning Thai music on very softly, and I'm writing my essay. "Yes, it works". I'm so happy, and I want to say thank you to my teacher

too. This is good advice. My dog is sleeping, and she is lying beside my chair and she is snoring. I think she is as happy as I am. I'm looking at her and I feel like it doesn't matter if you are a human being or an animal. We always find a place that's so special and make ourselves happy.

Spend more time and look around you. You will find a space for yourself which is very close to you but you didn't know before. It isn't a big place and it doesn't require any money to travel to find it. A special place is just for you and your happy time.

*Venus Coons
ESLW50*

My Unusual Neighbor

I recently moved to a new place, and the first thing I noticed wasn't our new house or even the street; it was our new neighbor. He's not a particular person that people usually see on the streets. He's not even just an unusual person that people can rarely meet. Because of his appearance and his way of life, it evokes mixed feelings, such as fun, embarrassment, confusion, or perplexity. My neighbor is the person who makes you think about how boring your life is.

My neighbor's manner of dress is what people first can notice unusual in him. His clothes are not just strange. It's even hard to call them clothes. He wears a big, wide hat with a belt around it, which is bigger than my neighbor's actual pants belt. By the way, on his actual belt there are four knives of different style, shapes, and length, that he probably doesn't use or uses for unknown reasons. These knives don't bother him when he walks because his long, tight pants do. Every step that he makes is not as easy as it seems, although at first sight you can think that he was always paralyzed and just learned to walk. However, he could walk a little bit easier if he didn't wear deep, black leather, heavy boots with shiny steel buckles that make more noise than the railroad station we live near.

A not-less-shocking attribute of my neighbor's style is his hobby. There's actually nothing wrong with it because there are a lot of miners here in Sacramento, but my neighbor is so crazy about gold mining. I'm afraid about my front yard, because I might wake up one morning and find that he com-

pletely dug it up in order to find some gold... (but, in fact, that gold is mine!) He even looks at the sand at Home Depot pretty suspiciously.



He has a big red truck that he drives to go mining, and on the car's hood he has a pretty metal miner guy with a silver shovel, who is so big and realistic that he probably helps my neighbor to dig. The love of mining and the strange manner of dress makes me see my neighbor as an alien from the past. The dirty shirt that holds all the secrets of his gold searching, the dark-brown leather coat with lots of holes in it, the long red beard he always caresses when he is looking at my front yard - all of these attributes make him look like an old, experienced voyager or sea dog. My imagination works at the highest level when he's passing by. If he had only one leg and one eye, he would look like a real pirate.

I think that my neighbor has a remarkable and decidedly not boring life. People like him help you realize that you can always change your life to an interesting and unforgettable adventure. I won't be so surprised if he, when home alone, draws the curtains, locks the door, goes down to his cellar, takes out his parrot which says "Piastres!", and counts all his gold.

Andrey Arakelyan
ESLW50

The Ways of Treating Old People

In Korea, treating old people with respect is the most important value of cherished values. We Koreans have learned from early childhood how we should treat old people. We consider it as a kind of "law" that we must follow. However, when I read one American book, one young boy said to one old lady who was living next door, "You're my friend!" I was little and I didn't know there were many differences between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in America and other countries. I am still sometimes surprised when Americans treat old people in a way different from the way in my country. Here are three differences between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in America.

The first difference between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in America is the way of speaking to old people. In Korea, we have two different forms of speaking. One form is longer and more polite. Another one is shorter and less polite so we use it to speak to our friends and younger people, never to old people. We also should be careful when we choose words for old people. We have to speak as politely as we can to them. It sounds hard and it might make us confused but it isn't at all because we have been educated with it since we were in our mothers' wombs. What makes me confused is the American way of treating old people. I am still confused whether I can use some words to old people or not. When I came to America for the first time, I used only "Hello!" to old people because I thought 'Hello' must be more polite than just saying "Hi!" But after I saw many Americans using 'Hi' to anyone, no matter how old they were, I realized that there was no big difference between 'Hello' and 'Hi'. It looked totally strange to me. Koreans also can't call old people by their names. It would be a super rude thing and if a boy called an old lady who is his neighbor by her name, he would not be able to go back to his town anymore. However, last semester, I met a good ESL writing teacher and she said, "Just call

me, Judy!" on the first day of class and I thought she was joking or a very friendly person. Now, I realize she was not joking and it was just a part of American culture, but I still hesitate when I should call someone by his/her name.

The second difference between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in America is the way of thinking about them. In Korea, we think of old people as a group of people we should help. They no longer have enough

strength or are quick enough mentally. This is what Koreans think about old people and the reason why they help old people willingly. In the bus, if I am sitting on a seat and an old lady gets onto the bus at the next bus stop, I will stand up and say to her, "Take my seat,

ma'am" because I think it is better that I stand than that she stands in the bus for a long time. However, in America, Americans don't think of old people as weak people. They think old people can still work until they get 'real' old, and they have a good sense of humor, wit, and enough energy to stand up in the bus. When I went to New York, I took

a lot of buses and the subway many times. I was surprised that the old people waited for buses for about one hour with us. They were all standing and carrying their stuff(it seemed heavy!) and didn't want anyone to help them. They were just smiling, talking with strangers (like my mom and me) and making funny jokes for people who were waiting for the bus together. If they were Korean old people, they would be angry at young people not helping them.

The last difference between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in America is people can be friends with old people in America. In Korea, we can never, ever be friends with old people. It is the rudest thing that I can imagine. My grandma and I, for example, are so close to each other. She always cares about me and worries about my family and I also try to meet and call her as much as possible but it doesn't mean than I can treat her as a friend: I am never going to say that she is my friend. That's why the boy in the book impressed me so much who said,



American movies, also, many young people would say "Oh, she was my best friend" or "He plays ball with me" when they talk about old people. I was so confused when I saw these situations for the first time. But now I'm getting used to American culture so I sometimes ask myself, "If my grandparents and I were American, could we be friends with each other?" Maybe I could at least be good friends with Michael, my new next-door neighbor. He is such a good old man and is so nice to me but I am still confused sometimes whether I can treat him as a friend or just an old person like in Korea.

In conclusion, there are so many differences between the way of treating old people in Korea and the way of treating old people in the U.S. In Korea, we treat them with more respect. We use more polite words for them, give our seats to them to make them comfortable, and don't act like a friend to them. In contrast,

Americans think of the elderly as their friends and don't consider them as weaklings. Americans try to treat seniors the same as they would people of other ages. Therefore, old people will not think of themselves as old. I think the differences between Korea and America come from the differences of cultures. Koreans think that respect for old people is the most important and essential thing and Americans think the friendly relationship with people is an important thing. No matter what people think about the elderly, the most important thing is that all people love old people. Seniors have wisdom from their lives and we always learn from them. I'm Korean but I'm living in America, so I'm going to take both sides. I'm going to treat old people in a friendly manner and with great respect.

Seojin Tak
ESLW310

My Survival Towel

Everyone has their own thing that they loved when they were young, something that could remind them of childhood. It could be like a doll or many kinds of toys. I remember when I was eight years old, I had my favorite towel. I didn't use it after I took a shower or washed my hair, but I slept with it every night. I can say that I couldn't live without it at that time until my grandma seized my lovely towel to throw it away.

My lovely towel was not too big and not too small. It was a white towel with red flowers and also looked dirty because I never cleaned it. The towel had four corners and when I had a runny nose, I liked to put one edge of the towel inside my nose. I felt that I could breathe better and after that I did the same thing every night.

I used the edge of the towel to put inside my nose until there was not an edge in the corner anymore. I put it inside my nose every night, even if I didn't have a runny nose because it felt ticklish. That

made me feel comfortable until I fell asleep. Every night was a good night for me with an edge of my lovely towel inside my nose.

After many years of using this towel, it turned from a white towel to gray. All of my snot and saliva on my lovely towel was one part of my life until my grandma took it to clean. After that I felt so mad. I was crying and felt that it was not the same towel anymore. However, I still used it but after the second time that my grandma hid it from me to wash it, I couldn't see it anymore. I knew that my grandma threw it away, and the night after that was horrible for me without my lovely towel.

Until now, I still survive without the edge of the towel inside my nose. Every night is still a good night for me. I should thank my grandma for helping me stop my weird habit, even though I still miss my lovely towel!



Chanyanuch Laorchawee
ESLW50

The Lucky Chain

A long time ago, my family, specifically my grandmother, used to keep antique, shabby chic, and old stuff. They used to have a variety of things, such as old TVs, gramophones, old radios, very expensive vases back to the Ottoman era, and very huge, old paintings by different famous artists. I remember when I went to my grandfather's house, I imagined I was at a museum, not a house. They used to keep all this shabby-chic stuff in a big room, organized and neat. My grandmother used to clean it every day. I always dreamed of getting something for myself to keep forever; fortunately, finally I had something that I would never take off my neck. In my family we call it, "The Lucky Chain."

The chain looks very simple. It's made of a gemstone. I'm not sure what kind it is, but it's brown and surrounded with a gold grip. My grandmother used to wear it all the time. She always talked about it, and how it was important and precious for her. She said that her mother-in-law gave it to her on her wedding day, and told her not to take it off as long as she was alive, unless she had a daughter. She also asked her to give it to her daughter on her wedding day, too. However, my grandmother didn't give it to any of her four girls, until she made a wise decision by choosing one of her daughters to have the chance and get it.

One day my grandmother called my mom and asked her to come over for tea, and also called my aunts and asked them to be at my grandmother's house at a specific time. They all agreed. When all of us arrived at my grandmother's house, there were four small boxes on the table. We were wondering what was in them. My grandmother smiled and said, "Each of you, my dear daughters, will choose randomly a box. It's a little gift from me to remember." Everyone chose one box. My mother was the lucky daughter. My first aunt had a nice old gold ring, the

second aunt had lovely pearl earrings, the third one had a white gold bangle, and my mom had "The Lucky Chain." They all were happy at the end, especially my mom, because she had a priceless gift from her mom. Assuredly my grandmother did the right thing by making them choose their gifts.



When the time came, and I turned 18 years old, my mom gave the chain to me as a birthday gift. She didn't have to do the same thing that my grandmother did because I'm the only daughter and she didn't want to wait until I get married because

she told me that it was time for me to have it. She also asked me to give it to my daughter in the future. I was very happy, and I promised her that I would never take it off as long as I'm alive. Indeed, I have never taken it off, unless there was a party and I had to wear another necklace. When the party was over, I ran and put it on again. I feel uncomfortable not wearing it. It means everything to me.

When I look at myself in the mirror, the first thing I see is the chain. I'm afraid to lose it because it's a special gift from my mother. It also reminds me of my dear grandmother, who unfortunately passed away and this is the only memory that I have of her. I loved her so much. I appreciate that I wear her chain now. When I see the chain hanging on my chest, I smile because I remember her voice and how nice she was. I smell her best perfume that she used to wear. What also comes to mind is the sound of the old songs coming out of the old gramophone, and I imagine her sitting in her favorite chair next to the fireplace, drinking her coffee. This chain brings all the nice memories back. I wish to turn back time and have a chance to see her, and thank her for giving me the chance to have "the Lucky Chain."

*Lubna Saleh
ESLW50*

The Poverty of the Mind

By the end of the year 2006, I was graduating from high school, clueless of what I should do with my life. I wanted to follow my best friends' steps by majoring in engineering in one of the best universities of Bogota, Colombia, the place I used to live in. Going to college in Bogota was the trend of most of my classmates after graduation and my parents thought it was the best for me. However, I wanted to quit the synchronized lifestyle of an average teenager in my country. A couple of days before registration, I talked to my parents and decided to take a break from my studies. I thought a break from monotony to do other stuff would widen my teenage mind. So I started to study English in an institute and to do community service in the YMCA-Colombia.

Once in the YMCA, other volunteers and I dedicated our time to help vulnerable communities in the poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods of Bogota. I was a very sheltered kid and that was my first direct contact with poverty, an everyday reality in Colombia as well as in all Latin America. While in the slums, I realized that the cause of these people's condition was the lack of opportunities. For instance, in Colombia, not everyone has access to public education. There are public schools and universities but not enough for everyone and their costs are still unreachable for many. While working with these communities, I met many bright young people that have the capability to become engineers, lawyers, doctors, you name it. Nevertheless, their opportunities were limited and their future was taken for granted because going to college was just an expensive dream. Then I learned that poverty existed mostly because of the low accessibility to education. At least, that's what I thought until I came to the U.S.

A couple of months later, I was done with my English classes and decided to come to California to start with my college studies. After months of going to college, talking with people, learning from the American culture, I understood that there is another type of poverty: the poverty of the mind. California is considered the 7th largest economy in the world, above countries like Canada and Italy. Not only is California one of the richest states within the U.S., it has one of the best and cheapest public college and university systems in the world. Even though there is so much wealth and opportunities, people still don't take advantage of them.



For instance, one of my co-workers at the ARC Bookstore decided that he wasn't going to college anymore. I asked him why and he told me that financial aid was giving him only a hundred bucks to go to college. Ok, let's put this down. The government not only pays for all your classes but also gives you a hundred bucks as an incentive to go to school and you think it is not fair? Now he works at a pizza place earning the minimum

wage. He says he feels better making money than going to school and getting ONLY a hundred bucks. On another occasion, I invited a couple of my classmates to apply for the ARC Foundation scholarships, a great opportunity to earn money for college. My classmates didn't apply because, according to them, there are many other people more intelligent than them. "Still," they say, "a five hundred buck scholarship isn't worth the time." I guess filling out a simple application and answering four questions online to get some money and recognition is not worth the time. Also, while working at the ARC Bookstore, I found it amazing that the school, through the EOP&S program, would give vouchers to students to buy their books and supplies. The students also get to sell their books back to the bookstore and get cash for them. I think this is an excellent aid for

students because, sometimes, your books can cost more than going to school itself. Not only does the school cover books and supplies, but also caps and gowns for graduation, and you can get cash out of it. I, seriously, find that incredible. However, it is sad to see that many people either don't know about this aid or just don't want to apply.

My belief about the world is that one always tries to increase and improve one's opportunities to get a better quality of life. The reason why there are poor people in my country is because, among other reasons, they don't have the opportunity to get quality education, which directly affects the chances of getting a job, which directly affects one's

quality of life. However, when I see the high rate of student drop outs at school, I wonder if people drop out of school because they can't afford it or because they wanted to. Such cultural aspects have taught me something very valuable to not only my career but also my life: Poverty is not only an economic condition but also a mental state in which people do not appreciate the opportunities that life has presented to them.

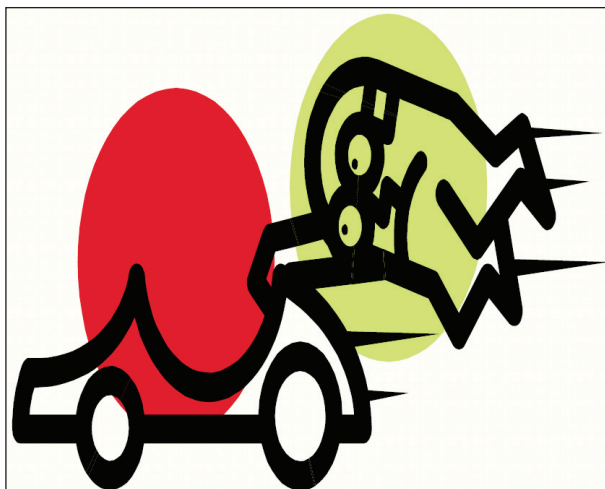
*Paulo Morales,
International Student*

Spring Will Always Come

It was the morning of a green and shiny spring day, in 1986. As I walked out of my home, in a small town in western part of Iran, I breathed in a deep gulp of refreshing air. I smelled the fresh spring odor, which radiated through my body. Gliding and dancing, I was going to work. On my way, I saw the trees, which blossomed and I heard the chirruping of the birds. The beauty, vitality, and freshness of spring rejoiced me. I was amazed by the sights and sounds around me, and I appreciated every moment I had. I thought how lucky and happy I was. After crossing the first street, I arrived at the city plaza. The clamor of the people awakened me and I realized that I was late for work. I decided to take a taxi cab the rest of my way. I entered a gray Paykan that already had four passengers. They were all going to the clinic where I worked. I closed the heavy metal door and the car immediately sped off.

As the Paykan traveled farther, its speed increased, and it passed by people and trees in a mad

and wild fashion. Fear engulfed my entire body, and I held onto the door handle for dear life. The other passengers remained speechless and calm. I looked out of the car window to see the shops, people, and those glorious trees, but I was no longer enjoying the



beauty of spring. I wanted to scream, "Stop! You are going to crash!" but at that moment, I first glimpsed the face of the driver. No! It couldn't be! My eyes couldn't see very well but, as I stared at him, I recognized who he was. He was known as a criminal in that town. Neighborhood gossiped that he had cruelly murdered his daughter and badly injured his innocent wife. He stared with a strange look at the street ahead and as he flexed his arm around the

steering wheel, he pushed his back against the rough cushioned seat, almost aching for a speed increase. He was deep in thought and maybe, just maybe, he forgot that there were other people in the car, or it could have been that he did not care at all. Fear, hatred, and anxiety were all that I could feel, and I almost forgot all about the glorious spring day.

We were very close to the clinic. I saw the clinic through the front window, but I saw more than that. A scrawny yellow dog was crossing the street. He was slow and maybe he was enjoying the spring day as well. He paid no heed, and he seemingly forgot that he was in human land, where the cars raced by cruelly. Here, the bombs dot the street. Here, there is war and the sounds of shooting and anti-aircraft guns have temporarily ceased fire, but they might reappear at any moment. The dog had passed one fourth of the street, when I yelled, "Stop! Mister! I leave here." The other passengers responded and agreed, "Yes! The clinic is here." Somehow he did not hear us, and it seemed he was intent on some action. Yes, that was it. He increased his speed only intent on hitting the innocent dog. And he did. The bumper of the car hit the fragile body of the yellow dog. I closed my eyes. The heart-wrenching moan of the dog was heard, and I screamed again, "Stop, Stop!" Other passengers tapped the shoulder of the driver, and they tried to wake him from his trance, "Are you crazy, mister? Stop!" The driver somehow relaxed. He had accomplished his goal, and his muscles relaxed.

He decreased the speed of the Paykan, and stopped close to the curb like any normal driver. I got out of the car and I threw some coins toward him. I heard the clatter of some coins that hit the asphalt

of the road. The car had stopped far from the clinic, and I had to walk all the way back. I was shaking with anger and sadness. I didn't want to go to the clinic. I didn't want to cross the street. But, I couldn't stand there alone either. I had to go to the clinic. I had to cross the street. While I was crossing the busy road, I saw some people gathered around the dog and they wanted to help it. I started to run. I arrived at the clinic. I sat on the steps leading to the clinic door to relax a little. My eyes pondered at the clinic trees. They were also spring trees and I could see the new flower buds shining in the golden rays of the sun. The sparrows were chasing each other from branch to branch. I told myself spring exists here. Spring does not care that a dog has been killed on a human street. Spring does not care whether a war is occurring in a corner of the world, and every day people struggle for their daily bread. Spring does not care that an innocent girl has been murdered by her ruthless father. Spring is coming with all her beauty and life must continue. I felt calm. Maybe the sparrow's song refreshed me. I stood up and entered the clinic, and suddenly I saw the gray Paykan pass in front of me. He turned back and with five new passengers returned to the town plaza



Parisa Samadi

Hours in School Shouldn't Be Longer

When I came here to the US, I realized that the children stay in school fewer hours than students in Korea. At the beginning of school in the US, my kids and I took time to get adjusted to having more time at home. Compared with schools in Korea, here in the US, primary schools don't have a variety of after-school programs. I wondered what they could learn at school. Many young children in Korea spend more time to learn math, science, and English at school or in after-school programs. In addition, they learn sports or music in school programs as well. Most parents in Korea think if kids don't learn at a young age, the kids will be behind other children. For that reason, they teach children to be competitive. Therefore the primary school

life in Korea is much more competitive and stressful than US children's school life. Some parents still think that children should spend more time at school to learn and participate in a variety of school activities as much as possible at a young age. However, I believe that there are several good reasons school hours shouldn't be longer.

The first reason why children's school hours shouldn't be longer is because children need enough time with their families. There was one famous comedy program in Korea a few years ago. It showed one family at the kitchen table and showed their conversation. They were talking about social or political issues in a comic way. However, the fam

ily in the show basically gave us the messages that children are too busy to talk with their parents or even to have dinner at home with parents. This program correctly showed how the children in Korea are stressed out. My children also had a busy school life in Korea but now they spend more time at home with me. Since last summer, I started to have more time with my kids. I could see what my children need and the importance of home education. I met some homeschooling families in the US, and it was quite a shock to me. Most Korean parents think that if the children don't go to school and instead study at home with their parents, the children might have some problems with school or friends; also parents think the children might not learn as many things as school-going children do. However, despite the ideas of Korean parents, the homeschooled kids learn as well as the school-going children do or even better. The program provided good homeschool instruction and was very organized with certain levels. Having more time with family rather than spending a longer time at school doesn't mean children can't learn more.

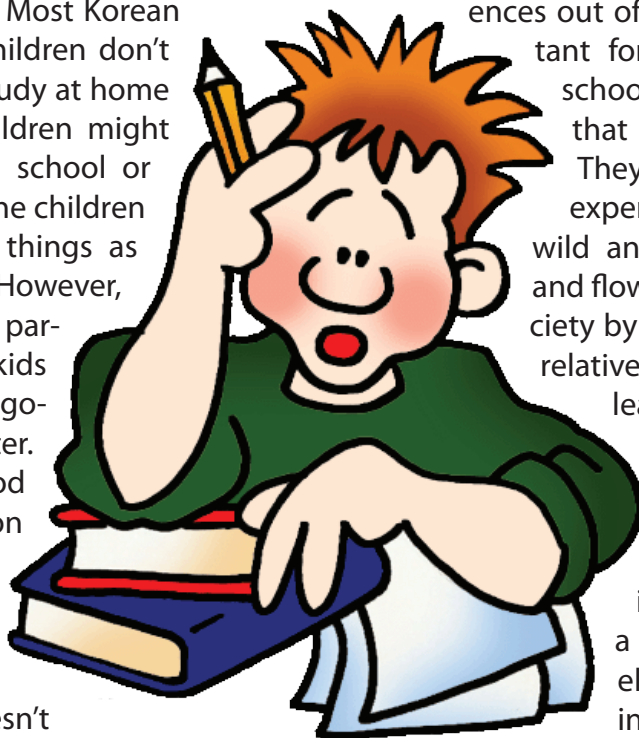
The second reason why hours in school shouldn't be longer is because children need enough rest at home after school activities. When my kids came home from school in Korea, it was about three or four p.m. Monday through Friday the kids left home at eight a.m. and came home around three or four p.m. You can imagine how busy the kids were to spend seven or eight hours at school every day. In addition, if they had some homework or school projects, they sometimes had to do it on weekends. Then they couldn't get enough free time, even on the weekend. This situation causes lots of stress for school children. School should be a place where all children want to go every day. Because of that, my kids wanted to skip

school sometimes. They often said that they wanted to stay home instead of going to school. School was not a fun place to go for my kids at that time. Spending lot of time in the same building or same place each day must be very stressful for young students. They should be given enough free time to have fun out of school.

Finally, hours in school shouldn't be longer because children should have a variety of experiences out of school. School life is important for school children. However, school can't provide everything that children need in their lives. They can develop their emotional experience in nature by chasing wild animals or playing with trees and flowers. They can learn about society by visiting different friends and relatives in different places. They can learn about the world by seeing or meeting or playing. If children stayed at school seven or eight hours a day, they would miss this very important opportunity to get a variety of experiences. Since elementary school ends early in the US, my kids can enjoy cooking at home, which is my kids' favorite hobby and we can have enough time to play music all together. We finish dinner earlier and play the piano and the violin. Having family music fun is one of my family's favorite times. If children spend a longer time at their school, it's not easy to have those fun activities at home.

In conclusion, children need enough extra time to get lots of benefits out of school that they can't get at school. Spending time with family, in nature, and with a variety of experiences that the school can't provide is very important at their age.

Yongsun Yoon
ESLW50



To Save the Teacher

Everyone can be in danger. Even teachers need help sometimes. There are many ways to help your teacher. Some students make grammatical mistakes in order to provide teachers' job security because we don't need teachers if we don't make mistakes. Others care about the lesson time limitation for hard working teachers by reminding them to finish the lesson when its time is over. Some students even ask to leave class earlier in order to give the teacher more time for rest. All listed help is important but I had a situation which challenged me to save the teacher from real danger. I did everything I could and even missed my writing class.

It was a usual evening until I decided to relax before going to bed. My wife refused to scratch my back while I lay on the sofa and watched TV. She was angry and gave me her explanation for such a bad mood: "You always return tired from your writing class. Also, you waste the whole weekend on this boring subject. You've lost your ability to speak as a regular man. Everything you say consists of 'introduction', 'context', and 'conclusion'. I am tired of your endless, boring talk. Can you speak like other people? More than that, I've noticed you pay no attention to me. You should make a choice between me and the writing class or I will sue your writing class teacher for ruining my family. My patience has expired!" I had nothing to say. I was so scared and nervous that I couldn't sleep. I began to think about finding a solution.

The next morning was the start of a regular day, but I received a sign. A huge, black cat crossed my path in front of me when I went to my car to drive to college. At first look, it seemed like a witch, but later I figured out that there is no reason for an American witch to change into a cat. They have the legal right for their activity and most of them

moved to financial businesses and politics. In fact, it was a really big cat and seemed like a KGB or CIA agent after plastic surgery. Regardless of its origin, the cat was a sign. Older people say that a black cat which crosses your path is a very bad sign. I don't believe in magic but who knows? Then I started to suspect that it could be a sign of my teacher's future in jail. I decided to skip my writing class and returned home. I felt a vital need to do something in order to save my teacher from danger. I came back home and had this conversation with



wife:

She: Did you forget something? Me: No. The teacher called me and said that I could stay home today. He said, "You work too hard and spend too much time on your homework. You had better spend this day and weekend with your wife. So, you have no homework; just smell the flowers.

Good luck!"

She: Oh, I see, he is not as bad a person as people say.

Me: Oh, yes, as I told you – people like to accuse each other. Do you still want to sue him?

She: No, I was wrong. It was a lie but it worked and my anxiety vanished. I started to feel better and for sure that teacher is no longer in danger.

Of course, someone can accuse me of lying to my wife about my absence from the class. It could be right from the formal view, but who are we if we can not help each other or save each other? I'm pretty sure that everyone who accepts my excuse for being absent and shares my attitude towards humanity belongs to a class of good people, like me.

Valdimir Rachynskyy
ESLW50

A Magic Box

Forty years ago, when I was a little girl in my small city, television was not as popular as it is now. On our street, my family was the only household that had TV, and most of our neighbors, especially the kids, came to our home to watch TV. Our TV was in an entertainment cabinet and the box had a door. The day that stayed forever in my family mind, and we laugh every time we remember it, was the day that one of my great-grandmother's relative came to our home. She was an old, simple woman who lived in a very small village. In the evening when all of the family was watching TV and focusing on a TV series without paying attention to anything else, suddenly the old woman cried, "Help! Your next-door neighbor's room is on fire!" At that time, a fire scene was being broadcast; since she had never seen TV before, she thought the door of the TV box was our next-door neighbor's window and the fire was flaring from there! For sure when she returned to her village, she described television as an odd thing. In the past few decades, technology has developed quickly, and our lives have grown dependent on many technologies; one of them being laptops. In my imagination, if that old lady was still alive and she saw my laptop, she would be shocked by that strange box. She could describe it for her fellow citizens in astonishment.

In order to describe my laptop, she would probably say, "Fariba has a, small, light and partly-smooth magic box in black with its outer part made from a kind of plastic. On both sides of that, there are several buttonhole shape slits. When you open the lid it has two sections. The upper inner part has been made from a kind of glass that shows everything. In the middle of this part there is a tiny round hole that is a camera. The lower inner section has been made from plastic and has several black

buttons with some letters, numbers, and strange shapes on them; this box should be plugged into a socket with a long cord to work. When you turn it on, at the beginning a very brilliant and colorful light come out from the window, and you can see some small shapes on a very colorful picture of a ranch. The box smells very strange; it is like a very weak perfume, because Fariba always cleans it with a smelling tissue.



The sound of my laptop would be described in her words as a magical sound. Maybe she would say, "When the box is off, there is no sound from that at all, but when you turn it on, it has a sound like a duck. The sound is variable because you can make it louder or softer. It does not look like a radio or television but you can hear radio and television program voices via this box. You can also hear musical sounds if you use it as a phonograph."

I think the most amazing part of her commentary would be about how my laptop can be used. She would be very excited and say, "This box that Fariba named "Laptop," a ridiculous name, is truly a wonderful box. It has many abilities that are amazing. Fariba uses it for entertaining and talking with her family and friends. In addition, it is the same as a photo album, a notebook, television, radio, calculator, camera, and so on. All of these could be easily done by touching a pad, located in the box, and moving your finger on that. If you do that, you will see a little arrow on the screen; there is a relationship between your finger movement and moving the little arrow. By bringing the arrow near an every small shape that is placed on the screen and tapping the pad, it brings you to a new different window. These amazing, powerful and magical shapes are different from each other; every one of them has its ability and usage; because of them, the box is such a magic device. Fariba connects the

box to something that is called "Internet." I have not seen it ever, and I do not know how she connects the box to a thing that never exists! However, if you do that, the box will be even more magical. You can shop, do your banking, or even talk and see friends and family that are far from you. At the same time, the magic box is very handy, because it is portable; you can use it wherever you like.

She could sum up her description about appearance, sound, and function of my laptop in a small paragraph: "Fariba's box is a small, thin, black

box with an amazing bright window and wonderful voice; you can do a lot of work and use many services; you can do everything you want with this little box. Although Fariba carries a lot of files, pictures, documents, and many other things in her magic box, it is still light, portable, comfortable and handy."

Fariba Darvishi
ESLW50

Moving to a New Country

Many people like to move for various reasons. Some of them move from a small to a big city and others from one country to another. One of the most important reasons why people move is to look for a comfortable place that helps them to achieve their goals and ambitions. Moving a family is not an easy step because there are many effects on a family when it moves to a new country.

The first effect on a family moving to a new country is on their economic status. When a family moves to a new place, it has to start from the beginning. They need to find jobs to get money that will help in building their new lives and buy homes, furniture, and food. They have to learn the financial system of the new place, which may be different from the one in their countries. In some countries people ask for the credit history of people who want to rent a home or buy a car. One of my classmates at American River College told me that he was shocked when he found



out that he

couldn't rent a home without credit history even if he had the money. Ten years ago, my cousin and her family moved to Germany. She told me that they faced difficult times there at the beginning because only her husband got a job and his income couldn't cover all their expenses, so they lived in a small apartment with basic require

ments till she got a job. For me, I faced the same problem when my family and I moved to the United States. It is so hard to get a job with a good income after moving to a new country. I worked for a company and my income covered only the rent and bills, so I found difficulties to meet any other needs.

The second effect on a family moving to a new country is the family recognizing the need for further education. Each country has its own level of education and it has special educational requirements to get a job. When the family moves to a new country, it has to learn and study to ar-

rive at a certain level which allows them to get a job, so they need to learn new things besides what they learned in their previous countries. Their knowledge will increase. I had a friend who speaks three languages. She is from Kurdistan. She speaks Kurdish. Her family moved to the middle of central Iraq in 1980 and they lived there until 2000, so she learned to speak Arabic. In 2000, she moved with her family to Sweden. She took a course in Swedish there, and she speaks Swedish now. She told me that she got a lot of offers to work in different places which require three languages. My cousin's kids were born in Libya, and her kids completed their primary school there. She told me that when she moved with her family to Iraq six years ago, her kids suffered a lot in school because they were used to opening books during tests in Libya while in Iraq, they don't allow that. However, she told me that she is happy that her kids learned to remember things better than just depending on books. My friend's sister moved with her husband and two boys from Iraq to the United States two years ago. She told me that she suffered a lot for her two boys when she was in Iraq, because her boys wanted to drop out of school many times and find a job, but when her two boys came to the United States, she was surprised that the school sent her a letter informing her that her elder son won a prize as the student who wrote the best poem in English. Her second son got high grades. She was so happy with the improvement of her two boys. Moving to a better place can help to raise the level of education.

The third effect on a family moving to a new country is on their traditions. After moving to a new country, it won't be easy to use your old traditions like wearing your traditional clothing to work or celebrating in the same way as in your country. Most families will try to learn the tradition of the new country in order to participate. I had Kurdish colleagues from the north of Iraq. They used to wear their special clothing

even at their work in Kurdistan, but when they moved with their families to live in Jordan, they told me they couldn't wear their traditional grab as before because it would be funny, not like in their country, which was normal, so they kept it for private occasions. One of my relatives published pictures of her kids on Facebook wearing special clothes or costumes like a bee, Star Wars figures, and Batman. When I asked her about the occasion, she told me that they had spring celebration in Germany, and all kids would wear new costumes. Her kids look forward to this occasion to wear the new costumes every year. She told me that her kids liked the traditions or celebrations of Germany more than the Iraqi ones, because using another country's tradition would look strange. In my previous work at Apple, my coworker from Iraq told me that his family doesn't like to celebrate Iraqi holidays in the United States because they came on a normal working day and his family didn't have time to prepare for them, so they liked to celebrate American occasions because they would have a holiday. Therefore, most families who move to new country like to learn the new country's traditions to participate.

In summary, many families move to new places or countries looking for a better future. Moving is not an easy decision and it will have some effects on the family life, on their economic status, on their educational needs, and on their traditions. Some families are happy with the decision to move, especially after achieving their goals, while some of them aren't and they want to return because they didn't plan ahead to be ready for this step. Moving a family is one of the bravest decisions that people can make.

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