

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



The Parrot



ISSUE #179
SPRING 2024

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Parrots in Star Wars?!

Seven "Parrot Eggs" in a Galaxy Far, Far Away

You may know that there are several birds in the *Star Wars* universe: the cuddly-cute porg, the fierce rawka, the owl-like convor, the legendary star bird and the blue-blooded shyyyo. But unless you are a truly obsessed *Star Wars* fan, you probably have not heard these seven fun facts about parrots hidden deep in the data-drive of R2D2. These parrot references are not actual "[Easter eggs](#)" in the way that many movies have hidden messages because these "parrot eggs" are not necessarily hidden--they are just little known bits of trivia. Remember these for your next party to wow your "rebel" fans (or your "imperial" wannabes).



1. George Lucas has a huge collection of exotic parrots, and he originally

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The Legend of Zelda: Year of the Parrot

Though most of the staff of *The Parrot* don't play the video game *The Legend of Zelda*, some of our



family members play it, so we have become fans. There are at least 20 *The Legend of Zelda* games depending on how you want to count "game" (see Jessej for a deeper dive into this question). They are exceptionally popular all over the world with many age groups for many reasons. One reason we love the game is because of the detailed cultures that the game has created. The cultures of the Gorons, the Zoras and the Gerudo in *Ocarina of Time* are especially noteworthy (see Franqui). In addition, another fascinating culture is that of

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The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year. --Mark Twain

Weird College Courses That Really Exist

weird (adjective)

Definition: Very strange and unusual, unexpected, or not natural.

Sample sentence: *Some college courses are so weird, you won't believe they are real!*

Real or Fake?

Without using Google, can you identify which classes in the list below are real and which one is fake? Test yourself! They are all actual university courses with the exception of one.

1. The Science of Harry Potter
2. Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse
3. How to Watch Television
4. The Joy of Garbage
5. Wasting Time on the Internet
6. Patternmaking for Dog Garments
7. Walking (an online course)
8. Tree Climbing
9. How to Stage a Revolution
10. Knife Throwing
11. Elvish (The language invented by J.R.R. Tolkien for *The Lord of the Rings*)
12. Wine Tasting, Beer Tasting, Fine Spirits
13. Philosophy and *Star Trek*
14. Lady Gaga and the Sociology of Fame
15. How to Do an April Fools' Prank



Answers: If you believe what you find on the Internet, then all of the classes above are real courses offered by real universities except for the last one. You have to learn to do April Fools' jokes on your own!

If you doubt us, check out these links:

[Ridiculous College Courses](#) and [Strange College Classes](#).

April's Wisdom

"I have great faith in fools: self-confidence, my friends call it."

- Edgar Allan Poe

"A sense of humor is the ability to understand a joke--and that the joke is oneself."

- Clifton Paul Fadiman, American Editor

"It is human nature to think wisely and act foolishly."

- Anatole France

"Better a witty fool than a foolish wit."

- William Shakespeare

"The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year."

- Mark Twain

"The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes."

- Sir Winston Churchill

"A fool flatters himself, a wise man flatters the fool."

- Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton, English Writer

"Lord, what fools these mortals be."

- William Shakespeare

"If every fool wore a crown, we should all be kings."

- Welsh Proverb

"Mix a little foolishness with your prudence: It's good to be silly at the right moment."

- Horace

"We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance."

- Japanese Proverb

Source: <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/quote-archive1/april-fools-day>

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planned for Jar Jar Binks and the Gungans to be parratoids.

2. The [dianoga](#) (the tentacled carivore in the trash compactor in Episode 4 that almost eats Luke for lunch) has a beak fashioned after an African grey parrot.

3. The word “sith” (as in “Darth Maul”, who technically speaking was no longer a Sith Lord after his defeat on Naboo) actually translates from an ancient Sith word for “parrot hunter.” The “parrot” in this case refers to the Mandalorians because “Mandalorian” means “Clan of the Parrots.” It should be noted that, on Mandalor, the species of bird known as a “parrot” had more scaly-leathery plumage with a reptilian feel as well as a bifurcated beak curiously tinged with trace elements of [beskar](#).

5. Of course, this parrot-focused backstory was no coincidence since George Lucas was playing with Spanish when he came up with the word “Mandalorian.” Lucas simply altered the Spanish phrase *mano del loro*, which literally means “hand of the parrot.” Interestingly, it’s also a homophone for another Spanish phrase *mano del oro* meaning “hand of the gold.”

6. In his drive for authenticity, George Lucas had his team create elaborate origin stories for almost every creature in the *Star Wars* uni-

verse. When C3PO asserts that he is fluent in over 11,000,000 forms of communication, the creators of C3PO were tasked to make a complete list of all 11,000,000. Among those are 15 varieties of parrot language from three neighboring solar systems. Non-verbal elements of communication that add semantic depth to “Parrotidian” (the term used by the *Star Wars* team to refer to the family of parrot languages) include wing position, posture, tail feather rigidity, and eye lid elevation. In the book version of *Star Wars*, C3PO can actually display tail feathers and wings if an interpreting context were to require it, but this was too difficult for even the geniuses at [Industrial Light & Magic](#), so this feature was scrapped when the movies came out.

7. Chewbacca and his clan of wookies on Kashyyk were famous for having learned to ride “parrotodons,” giant hirsute parrots. Also known as “Kashyykian Pterydactyls,” these parrotodons developed the ability to communicate semi-fluently with most wookies because wookie languages (the most common dialects being Shyriiwook, Thykarann and Xaczik) are mostly guttural and lingual without the need for labial plosives or fricatives. The structure of the wookie vocal tract that makes it impossible for them to speak the *Star Wars* lingua franca of “Galactic Base” are nearly identical to those of the parrotodons’s vocal tract. Thus, this “limitation” has enabled these two species to develop a symbiosis quite similar to that of humans and dogs.

If you look closely, there are other parrot references in every *Star Wars* book and movie. These were George Lucas’s favorite “Easter Eggs” hidden just for the truest of fans.

Parrot Staff Writer: Makin Itallup



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“the Rito tribe, which was first introduced in *The Wind Waker*. They are bird-like creatures evolved from the Zoras, who dwell high in the mountains and use their home as Post Office for those on the islands scattered over the Great Sea. The Rito are a close-knit, proud community with rites of passage, music and spirits all of their own. This tribe is reminiscent of South American cultures – particularly those from the Andes Mountains – and the influence is noticeable in their clothes and architecture” (Franquil). Did you catch that? The Rito is a tribe of “bird-like creatures” who basically bring you a monthly newsletter. The Rito tribe was not the inspiration that started [The Parrot ESL Newsletter back in 2006](#), but it inspires us because the Rito tribe uses a base-7 counting system (three toes on each of two claws plus one beak = $3 + 3 + 1 = 7$), and so it also has a calendar system with 7-hour days, 7-day weeks, 7-week months, 7-month years, a 7-year cycle called a “septade”, a 7-septade era called a “jubilatory” (a poorly blended coinage of the English words “jubilee” and “century”), and a 777-jubilatory epoch (see Grossluger). To guide the Rito through these time segments of 7 is a zodiac of seven creatures known to the Rito but which would be basically equivalent to these creatures on Earth: a minnow, a mosquito, a plaid oyster, a palm tree, an ox-sized chinchilla, a cat-sized elephant, and a parrot. Yes, a parrot! It is, therefore, with no small pleasure that we, the staff of *The Parrot*, announce to our readers that in this year 2024, which is year 400124 among the ancient Rito tribe, we are celebrating “The Year of the Parrot.” With that history in mind, and with genuine respect for the imaginary culture of the Rito, we end with the traditional Rito new year blessing:

*May your nest be full of eggs,
your meadow be strewn with sun-dried seeds,
your trees thick with leaves,
and the wind beneath your wings!*

Parrot Staff Writer: Bigol Fibberman

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Parrot Songs

*The History Behind the History: Before "La Bamba"
There Was "The Parrot"*

by Parrot Staff Writer: Uvbeen Messedwith

According to TeachRock.org, "La Bamba is one of the few songs at the fiber of Mexican folklore. Traditionally a wedding dance from the region of Veracruz, it is often performed to this day even at weddings north of the border. The origin of the word 'bamba' is African, meaning 'wood' ... it referred to what the dancers originally performed upon, emphasizing footwork that showed a heavy Spanish influence. The highlight of the dance would be one solo couple tying a ribbon, using just their feet, to symbolize unity. The song itself is an old *huapango*, a Mexican song consisting of nonsense verses, which usually have undertoned meanings, often private in context." You can read or even listen to more of the conventional history about the origins of this song in this NPR story about [La Bamba from All Things Considered](#).

But *The Parrot* staff has been hard at work, and now we want to share the history behind the history. What rock historians recently discovered is that before recording the version of "La Bamba" that became famous, Ritchie Valens, first recorded this song with totally different lyrics under the title "[What Is a Parrot?](#)" It turns out that young Ritchie had a pet parrot and spent hours not only teaching his bird to talk but also to sing. In 7th grade at Pacoima Junior High School in Los Angeles, Ritchie and Mentoroso, his parrot, sang "What Is a Parrot?" as a duet and even won 4th place at the annual spring talent show. That 7th grade success was darkened when Mentoroso refused to do a duet in Ritchie's 8th grade show. In the summer between 7th and 8th grade, Ritchie and Mentoroso sang "What Is a Parrot?" during intermissions at the local cinema. That summer, they watched *On the Waterfront*, starring Marlon Brando, every day for 12 straight weeks. The parrot learned the iconic phrase, "[I coulda been a contender!](#)" from watching the movie. When it came time to enter the 8th grade talent show,

Mentoroso would only say, "I coulda been a contender." When the day of the talent show audition came, and Mentoroso once again moaned, "I coulda been a contender," Ritchie decided to go solo with the lyrics we know today as "La Bamba". He worked the song to perfection and finally won 1st place in his senior year talent show. Watch this historic video footage of Ritchie wowing the crowd at his talent show with [La Bamba](#).

Finally, we hope you enjoy this newly published cover of "What Is a Parrot?" since no recording of Ritchie Valens' original can be found.

[Watch the music video of: "What Is a Parrot?"](#)

If you know about other parrot-themed songs, please email us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu.



The Old Oaken Bucket (Original Version)

by Samuel Woodworth (1784-1842)

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew;
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill which stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket which hung in the well —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hail as a treasure;
For often, at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.

How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing!
How quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
Though filled with the nectar that Jupiter sips.
And now, far removed from the loved situation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hangs in the well —
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hangs in the well.

Samuel Woodworth (January 13, 1784 – December 9, 1842) was an American author, literary journalist, playwright, librettist, and poet. He is best remembered for the poem "The Old Oaken Bucket" (1817), but he is also the first American to write a historical novel. The family homestead described in the poem is known as [The Ancient Ell](#), and is located in Scituate, Massachusetts.

Woodworth is best known for the poem "The Old Oaken Bucket" (1817).

In 1826 the poem was set to music by George Kiallmark and by the early 20th Century it became one of America's most popular songs. It was recorded in 1899 by The Haydn Quartet, a famous barbershop quartet, and was released on Berliner Gramophone.



The Old Oaken Bucket

(As revised by the Board of Health)

Anonymous

With what anguish of mind I remember my childhood,
Recalled in the light of knowledge since gained,
The malarious farm, the wet fungus-grown wildwood,
The chills then contracted that since have remained;
The scum-covered duck-pond, the pig-sty close by it,
The ditch where the sour-smelling house drainage fell,
The damp, shaded dwelling, the foul barnyard nigh it —
But worse than all else was that terrible well,
And the old oaken bucket, the mold-crust'd bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hung in the well.
Just think of it! Moss on the vessel that lifted
The water I drank in the days called to mind;
Ere I knew what professors and scientists gifted
In the waters of wells by analysis find;
The rotting wood-fiber, the oxide of iron,
The algae, the frog of unusual size,
The water as clear as the verses of Byron,
Are things I remember with tears in my eyes.

Oh, had I but realized in time to avoid them —
The dangers that lurked in that pestilent draft —
I'd have tested for organic germs and destroyed them
With potassic permanganate ere I had quaffed.
Or perchance I'd have boiled it, and afterwards strained it
Through filters of charcoal and gravel combined;

Or, after distilling, condensed and regained it
 In potable form with its filth left behind.

How little I knew of the enteric fever
 Which lurked in the water I ventured to drink,
 But since I've become a devoted believer
 In the teachings of science, I shudder to think.
 And now, far removed from the scenes I'm describing,
 The story of warning to others I tell,
 As memory reverts to my youthful imbibing
 And I gag at the thought of that terrible well,
 And the old oaken bucket, the fungus-grown bucket,
 In fact, the slop-bucket — that hung in the well.



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

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Please let us know what we can do to improve *The Parrot*. We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu. To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>

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