

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



# The Parrot



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Inside This Issue

## I'm Here To Help! ARC President: Lisa Cardoza



### How does it feel to be the first Latina President of American River College?

It feels surreal. I think sometimes I'm still trying to fully comprehend what that means. It was never a path that I set for myself. I have always just wanted to do good work, and I have worked hard, especially to help students, and people have noticed that. So, to be able to lead such a large and tremendously beneficial institution is such an honor and a privilege, and I feel a lot of responsibility with that.

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## Chasing the Aurora in California: A Colorful Journey!



It was the night of May 11, 2024. I was homesick and ready for bed when I suddenly heard on the news that a powerful geo-storm was hitting Earth, causing strong northern lights to appear on the northern side of the world.

A geo-storm, or geomagnetic storm, is a temporary disturbance of the earth's magnetic field, caused by changes in the solar wind, coronal mass ejections or other outer space weather events. These storms are powerful and may cause various effects such as northern lights and disturbance in radio and internet connectiv-

*Continue on page 29*

# Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship

## Recipient: Svitlana Kolesnyk, Spring 2024

Hello, my name is *Svitlana Kolesnyk*, and I came to this wonderful city of Sacramento from Ukraine five years ago. Like many Ukrainians, I speak Ukrainian and Russian. Over the course of three semesters at American River College, I have been taking ESL classes in order to be ready for further study. My goal is to get into a nursing program and transfer to a 4-year college. As a single mom, I have to work two jobs to pay the bills. I was lucky to get a job at the front desk of the Beaver Cares Center at ARC, where I can not only help students, but also improve my English skills. To earn extra income, I work in delivery on the weekends, so I was very excited to learn that I was selected to receive The Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship. Regrettably, I wasn't fortunate enough to have had classes with Professor Pezone, the esteemed individual in whose honor this scholarship was established. Nevertheless, I am confident in acknowledging her as an exceptional professor, whose legacy we respectfully commemorate through this scholarship. I am grateful to every teacher for their work, patience and attention, because I believe that this profession requires enormous dedication and love for people. For immigrant students, I would advise to read the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, since at different ages this book is understood differently. Also, *Breaking Through*, by Francisco Jimenez, will be a great book in which every student immigrant can find something similar to their personal immigration story. Therefore, my advice to you is, take your time, understand what you want, set a goal and move towards it. No matter how difficult it is. You can do more than you think. Good luck to every student!

**Thanks to the generous donations of the family and friends of Professor Susan Pezone, Svitlana received a \$500 scholarship to help her continue her studies at American River College.**

*\*\*\*Do you want to apply for the Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship? The time to apply is Oct. 1 to Oct. 31, 2024. Watch for the application information in the next issue of The Parrot, or ask your ESL instructor for more information.*



## The Unseen

I see you I swear, I can  
 I have seen what lights you up,  
 like a thunder bright the night  
 You just need someone to  
 Reach your hand

You just need so little,  
 Yet it is all you have,  
 How much does it cost to make someone smile?  
 If you could witness what I saw  
 The brighter light came from his soul

It cost a couple of dollars  
 An apple, water  
 A prayer, a good intention,  
 A smile, a bow of your head  
 Give him something I beg you  
 I need to see him light up again

You will have in return,  
 A ripple effect, someone is watching  
 Is always there, is a powerful source, and is un-  
 seen  
 Your soul recognizes it, it knows what it is  
 It knows that this presence is an invisible source  
 The unseen always comes when it is called

It is present in Goodness  
 It is present in your joy  
 It is present when you see others  
 It is present where there is peace  
 It is present where there is love  
 It is present where it is needed

Don't ever forget you know it, you sense it, you  
 just need to believe

To make it seen.

**By Emma La Torre Gonzalez - ESL L41**





## Unfair Treatment

Did you experience discrimination in your life? Many people experience unfair situations in their life, but they solve them in different ways. Some of them didn't want to risk losing their jobs and preferred not to speak up. Other people cannot be silent and stand up against unfair treatment. One time I had an experience with salary discrimination.

I am from Saki, Ukraine. Saki is a small town that is located near the Black Sea. There are no industrial factories, but only hotels and hospitals. People do not have enough work. At that time, I worked at a hospital as a nurse. Once the hospital administration did not pay the workers their salary for three months because the company took the salary and invested it. It was hard to live without money. People did not have enough money for a living, but the workers were frightened to speak up about the company violating their rights. They did not want to lose their jobs, so they decided to be silent. I did not speak to my coworkers about that problem. My family was in a hard financial situation. When I spent all my saving, I decided to stand up to the hospital administration. I went to the director and asked him to pay me my salary. I explained to him I had four children, and I had no money. The director was very rude and said that he did not care about my family. He did not allow me to talk to him one more time. Cesar Chavez (in the story "His Fight for Farm Workers" by Barbara Bloom) and I are different. Cesar did not receive enough money for his farm work. He began talking with other workers. He organized a boycott, asking

people not to buy or sell grapes. I didn't do that.

I did not know what I should do. My tears flowed down my cheeks. I was very upset and embarrassed. I did not expect the director to be so cruel to me. On my way home, I thought about what I should do. Maybe I should make a sign and go to the town center square and stand there with it. I did not like that idea because I was scared that the police would arrest me. Another idea came to me. I must go to court and sue the hospital director. I felt that my decision was correct. I went to the court and the judge said the hospital administration violated my right. The director was forced to give

back the salary to all the workers, not only me. Nobody fired me. Ida, in the story "Justice for All" by Lynn Rymarz, was like me. She fought for equal rights with other people. She was a brave woman and was not afraid. She refused to get off the first class car. Ida was alone in that fight. Ida sued the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Although she had lost her battle with the railroad, she

continued to fight against injustice. We both stood up and fought against injustice.

Sometimes in our life, unfair events happen. It depends on us what we will do: we will stand up against injustice or we will be afraid to say something. I experienced pay discrimination. I stood up against it even though other people were afraid to lose their jobs. I did it alone. Ida wells did it alone, too. I hope my story encourages you not to be afraid and to fight against injustice.

**Hanna Matafonova – ESL 47  
Narrative Essay**





## It Is Time to Add More “I” in Our Life!

How often do we hear from parents, or other senior family members, “I know what is best for you,” “You will thank me for this,” or “You are too young to understand”? I think each of us has heard things like this at least once in our lives. But let’s think about how often we listen to family members’ advice and whether we should blindly trust them.

When I was 7 years old, I asked my parents to take me to an art school. I really wanted to learn to play the violin. My mom agreed and brought me to singing classes. Naturally, I asked, “When will we go to violin lessons?” And my mother replied, “Let’s practice singing now. Learn how to sing beautifully. This will be useful for you. You will perform at concerts.” It is almost useless for a child to try to resist the opinion of adults. For 7 years I continued to go to the singing classes without much desire, because I would not have been able to attend other subjects at the art school otherwise. Did this skill come in handy for me? No. Moreover, any amateur activity causes me negative feelings. The same thing happened when I chose a university. I really wanted to go to law school. I was preparing to take exams, but my parents said, “You can’t be a lawyer. It’s hard work for which you need to be attentive and be able to speak beautifully and correctly.” As a result, at the last moment I decided to listen to my mother and went to study engineering. I joylessly went to college, joylessly did my homework, and eventually dropped out

of school. But even this did not make me doubt the advice from my family. When I chose a job, I also relied on their opinion and chose an office job. Although the job was quite profitable, it didn’t bring me happiness. This was the next destination of my “joyless hikes.” In one of the “wonderful” working days, I thought to myself,

“What do I need to do to feel happy? Why doesn’t what I do bring me pleasure?”

And suddenly I realized that maybe I was asking myself the wrong questions. Perhaps it’s worth asking, “What shouldn’t I do more to change my life?”

After analyzing my actions over the past few years, I noticed that every time I did something or chose something, I did not choose what I wanted or liked. I put my interests on the back burner and wasted my time. 7 years of art school, 2 years of college (after all, I never finished my studies), and 7 years of unloved work. If we take the last 2 periods, we get 9 years of age. During this time, I could have graduated from law school and started working in the field that I am really interested in. Horrified by this conclusion, I decided to talk to my family.

As I expected, the conversation was difficult but interesting. I shared my opinion and calculations and I heard: “We were worried about your future and didn’t want you to waste your time. We didn’t want you to miss the chance to get a useful skill or a good job.” A paradox! A paradox that has ruled my life for several years. This phrase was a turning point

in my life. I realized that by blindly trusting the opinion of my family, I did not make myself or my parents happy, because the result was completely different from what they wanted. It was time for me to listen to myself.

As soon as I started to trust myself more, my life began to change. I was able to afford to do what I really like. I stopped perceiving any difficulties as a tragedy. I began to see difficulties as experiences that I gain on the way to achieving my goal. I began to look at things more positively. Have you noticed how many "I"s are in the last couple of sentences? Finally, my desires and my opinion came to the fore. Strangely enough, my relationship with my parents has also improved. Now I have no resentment against them for doing what they

imposed on me or against myself because I continued to unquestioningly carry out what was imposed. Now, I understand what Atticus Finch means in "To Kill a Mockingbird," by Harper Lee, when he says that "before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself." And it is really true.

This moment of reinvention has become really important in my life. I began to separate the three concepts of "Hearing," "Listening," and "Obediently performing." Of course, my family still has the right to express their opinions, but I reserve the right not to listen.

**Irina Lazareva - ESL 315  
Personal Narrative Essay**

## Car Oil Change

America is a country of many cars. Every car needs to be serviced and repaired. The engine oil should be changed every 10,000 miles. It costs about \$150. If you want to save this money, I will tell you how you can do it yourself.

What is needed for this?

- New oil and new oil filter
- Jack and jack stand
- Sheet of cardboard
- Large bowl
- 17 mm wrench
- Trash bag
- Paper napkins
- Cup of coffee
- Piece of cake



How will I do this? Park the car on level ground. The engine must cool down. Then jack up the front of the car and put a sheet of cardboard under the car. After that, put a bowl under the engine and unscrew the oil drain bolt using a 17 mm wrench. Each motor has an oil drain hole. It's clearly visible and located at the very bottom. The oil is drained for about 15-30 minutes. It's time for a cup of coffee and a piece of cake. Then replace the oil filter and screw the bolt into the oil drain hole. Pour new oil into the engine and wipe all dirty places with napkins. Now attention! Do not throw old oil into regular trash. Bring old oil to AutoZone to recycle it.

Work is done. Congratulations, you saved \$100. It may not be a lot of money, but the work is good. If you have any questions, you can call me. Never be afraid to do things yourself.

**Oleh Yurchak - ESL 37  
Process Paragraph**

## Let's Think Together!

Are you confrontational? The philosopher Immanuel Kant believes that people can be divided into two categories, depending on how they were raised: peaceful or confrontational. In my opinion, I have several main qualities. I'm friendly and peaceful.

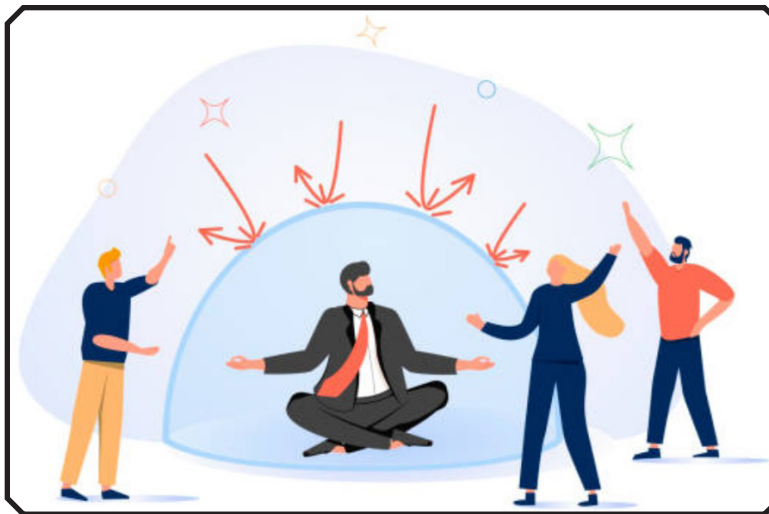
My first main quality is being friendly. I have many friends. I try to maintain friendly relations with my friends. For example, I invite friends to visit me. I also go to visit them when they invite me. We communicate a lot. Last week, we went to see nature in the mountains together. I help them when they need any help, and when difficult situations happen, I try to help my friends. For example, a few months ago my friend Bohdan moved with his family to a new house, and I decided to help him in moving his belongings. I'm glad that my quality of being friendly helps me to have friends. In the story "The Basket Weaver," the girl Yo'ee didn't seem friendly at first because she didn't communicate much with people due to her shyness. Also, Yo'ee wasn't sociable and this prevented her from having friends. She is very different from me because I'm sociable and friendly. I'm happy that I can be needed by someone and have friends for communication.

My second important quality is being peaceful. I never get into conflicts. I try to avoid conflict situations because sometimes conflicts situations can destroy friendships. If I tell a lie about my friend to others, and my friend finds out, it can destroy the friendship. When I feel guilty for telling a lie about my friend, I ask for his forgiveness.

In 2021, my friend Ivan and I had a conflict

situation brewing. He was told by other friends that I told a lie about him. I decided to be the first to approach him to discuss that situation. In the end, we came to an understanding and asked for each other's forgiveness and again our relationship improved. In the story "Miss Perfect," there was a strained relationship between Kim and Amanda. Kim was jealous of her sister and this could develop into a conflict, but Kim understood her fault and hugged her sister Amanda with love. When Kim and I saw that the relationship with our friends was deteriorating, we tried to understand our mistake in the relationship and fix our relationship so that no conflict would arise.

In the end, when I have peace with everyone, I feel very happy. Being friendly and peaceful are very important qualities. Those who have these qualities and continue to work on them will have many friends. My dream is to maintain friendly relations with my friends. I think this is the happiness of a person.



**Mykola Kudymenko – ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**



## ***Don't Get Scammed!***

### ***The Importance of Knowing English***

If you emigrated to another country, what would be more important to you first? My family emigrated to the USA in the state of California. California is a state of immigrants. There are a lot of immigrants here. The first reason is that there are many opportunities to easily adapt and get back on your feet. There are many different communities speaking immigrants' native languages. So, everyone can find absolutely all they need for life in their community in their languages. Unfortunately, many of them believe that they do not have to learn the language of this country because they can have all that they need. They think like that, because they can visit hospitals, shops, churches and many other places where their native language is spoken or there are easy-to-find translators. But this is a very wrong decision. In my bitter experience I will tell why.

When we arrived in the USA, I understood that I needed to learn a new language. It was difficult to go to school at the time, having a family with 4 children, but it was necessary. I felt very dejected when solving everyday issues. I had to ask someone to help me translate or explain something.

I started studying in the College in ESL30 courses. New world of possibilities opened up for me. We learn not only English, but also how to live in this country. Although we couldn't speak very well, we learned to understand each other as best we could. The professors helped us to communicate. Also, studying new topics, write simple essays and discussions, all of these revealed very important principles of life in this new country. We learn how to behave in the stores, hospitals, parks, how to look for work and communicate with friends. It was all

fascinating and educational. At the same time, living year by year, you are used to many new things, but also understand how important knowing the language, and being literate in the country where you live, and being able to protect yourself and your family from various scammers.

So, one day, I welcomed one woman into my house because she really got my attention with her offer. She came up to us when we were outside with my kids. Her name was Galina and she spoke in my native language. While we talked, I answered her questions and shared that one of my kids has an allergy. She expected this answer and then she started representing her company that distributed allergy devices. She intriguingly talked to me about her job and said that they will give away those devices as a gift. It should be a lottery and Galina invited me to participate in it. She took my information and promised to call me if I was the winner. I was so surprised



when the next day, in the evening, she stood on the doorstep of my house with huge boxes. I didn't have experiences in situations like it and was a little confused because my kids were already going to bed. Despite this, I accepted her coming to my house. This woman came up very quickly, dragged her boxes to the middle room and suggested all my family members sit comfortably around her. Galina began to unpack boxes and pulled out something like a big vacuum with numerous attachments. I had a feeling of anxiety and dissatisfaction inside me, but I tried to control myself. I tried to clarify what all that means because I am waiting for only one gift. She ignored me and began a presentation of the products of her company. Initially it was interesting, but when I looked at the wall clock and her actions, I realized she didn't plan to be brief. An hour later

I tried to tell her about the late time, but she again completely ignored me. My husband and kids were captivated by her presentation, and I didn't know how to behave correctly. Finally, my youngest child cried from fatigue, and I said that I needed to go. Galina quickly changed her show and began to persuade us to buy her products, which cost \$3,500. That was unbelievable! I was very angry. She saw my reaction and quickly changed her tactic and offered to sign a contract for one month to work with her. That means we have to help her with her presentation during one month and after that our purchases will be totally paid. I was ready to take her out of my house, but my husband and my oldest kids began to convince me that it was a good deal.

Maybe because I was very tired at the end of the day, maybe because I wanted to get rid of her quickly, I agreed to her offer. We signed some papers without reading, because we did not understand very well in English. We just trusted her. After the last signature Galina left our house and left an air cleaner device and a lot of small things. Several days passed, but Galina didn't answer our calls; she just wrote that she is very busy and will call back later. We really wanted to pay for all the goods as quickly as possible. I had a bad feeling inside about this incident.

A couple of days later my friend visited me. As soon as she walked into my house, she saw my new air cleaner, and her first question made me sink into the chair next to me. She asked: "You also got scammed, didn't you?" This question made my eyes darken. I felt deceived! My friend told me her situation; it was the same as mine. I realize that I am not the first and not last who were deceived by this woman. Turns out we blindly signed an agreement for a job, but it was deceptive. A lot of people who couldn't read English well, also completely trusted her and also were deceived, because it was a contract for credit in the bank. Besides, we had to put in

a lot of effort until we found a bank where we, without knowing it, opened a credit card for \$3500. We weren't ready for this, and it was a challenge for us, so that was a terribly hard lesson. I was devastated. I called the bank, found the address and went to this company, tried to explain my situation, but everywhere I was ignored, because the contract has mine and my husband's original signature. It was a struggle for 6 months. I began to learn my right, looking for ways to solve my problem. Finally, I was able to win. The company took back their air cleaner and closed my credit account in the bank. Many victims were looking for Galina, but she disappeared, and nobody could find her. Since then, I have learned a great lesson about how important it is to understand what you are signing. It is very important to



know rights in different situations and know what needs to be done to protect yourself and your family.

In conclusion, it is very important to know the language of the country where you live. Doesn't matter what environment you're in, and it doesn't matter that

you can easily find an interpreter, there still comes a time when you need to make your own decision. That's why it is important to study and improve literacy. While studying in college, I was always amazed at how much necessary information we get from reading different articles, and also studying various topics that enrich our knowledge in many situations such as banking issues, fraud, professions, place to live and many others. This means that even if you are an ESL student in college, you aren't just studying English and improving your literacy, but also learning how to live in this new country. So, if you emigrate to another country, it is very important to learn the language where you start living!

**Sveltana Polichshuk - ESL325**  
**Narrative Essay**



## Grammar Project!

By Mané Yepremyan, ESL G41



“What are they doing?”

This was the question from ESL Professor Beth Specker to her students. The students described the picture and then also identified the grammar using different colors. Here is the excellent work of Mané Yepremyan.

A few days ago, Mrs. Jensen **was** at **the** beach. She **had** a vacation. Mrs. Jensen **was** there with **her** husband. They **like to go to** **the** beach. Today **is** a sunny day and they **are** at **the** same beach again. Since Mrs. Jensen **likes to read**, she always carries **a** book with **her**. Now, she **is reading** **her** favorite book, and **her** husband **is listening**. There **are** many children here. They **are playing** different games. Three small girls **are playing** with sand. They **are making** a castle. **The** little boy also **is running** to play with **the** sand. **The** couple **is walking** next to **the** children. Another little boy **is swimming**. Last year he **couldn't** swim, but now he **can**. He **likes swimming**. Two boys **are sitting** on a beach mat with **their** mother. **The** boys **are eating** a sandwich, and **their** mother **is eating** an apple. **The** ducks **are** next to them. They also **want to eat**. A little girl **is taking** a photo of **a** crab. She **likes to photograph** animals. A mother with two children **is sitting** under **an** umbrella on the beach. They **are enjoying** the beautiful weather. Grandpa and grandma **were looking** for this beach on **the** website yesterday and **found** some interesting information about **it**. Now they **are sitting** on **the** chairs and resting. Grandfather **is reading** and grandmother **is smiling**. Maybe grandpa **is reading** a funny story. **No one** is sad. **Everyone** is smiling. **Everything** is great and people **are** happy. They are going to enjoy **their** vacation on **the** next weekend as well.



### *In my paragraph I used*

1. *Articles A/An and The*
2. *Possessive Pronouns, Subject and Object Pronouns*
3. *Indefinite Pronouns*
4. *Ability or Possibility*
5. *Present Progressive*
6. *Past Progressive*
7. *Simple Past*
8. *Infinitives and Gerunds*
9. *Future with Be Going To*

## What Do You Miss About Your Home Country?



Lake Synevyr

### Ukraine

Do you know where Ukraine is? I was born in Zakarpatska region in Ukraine. My hometown is in the center of Europe. My region has really beautiful places which I like to visit.

First, Bukovel is a holiday resort place in the Carpathians. The Carpathians are the beautiful mountains in Ukraine. This place is perfect in any time of year. I especially liked visiting Bukovel in the winter. There were great ski tracks. Also, there were different amusements. For example, there was a vat of hot water under which a fire burns and people

bathe in it. This is a cool place for spending time with family. In my opinion, the nature in the Carpathians was extremely beautiful. In short, Bukovel was my favorite place for winter vacation.

Second, Palanok Castle is one of the castles in Zakarpatska region. This is a wonderful vintage building. Palanok Castle was built approximately in the 11th century. I liked to visit this place with my family. My kids especially liked to walk in the old halls. Palanok Castle has different interesting things. For example, there is an extremely deep well. Its depth is over 80 meters. Also, in Palanok Castle there is a museum. In summary, if you want to see a vintage place, you can visit Palanok Castle.

Next, Lake Synevyr is a mountain lake, and I liked to visit it. This lake is in the mountains. Lake Synevyr is very cold. People call this lake "eye of Carpathians". I liked to visit Lake Synevyr with my family and friends. There is fresh air. There are a lot of tourists. They have wonderful traditions. For instance, a tourist who came to Lake Synevyr for the first time threw corn in the lake. The bottom of the lake was covered with corn, and it is very shiny. Indeed, Lake Synevyr left me wonderful memories



Palanok Castle



Bukovel

about my hometown.

In conclusion, my region has a lot of wonderful places, and Bukovel and Palanok Castle are my favorites. In my opinion, Zakarpatska region has the best nature, mountains, and lakes.

**Maryna Dudash - ESL 47**  
**Descriptive Essay**



## Afghanistan

I am from Afghanistan, but I moved to America six years ago. I left my country because there was war. We had to immigrate to America. I miss many things in my country. For example, I miss the food, weather, neighbors, parties, restaurants, job, medicines, and holidays. The things I miss the most are my house, my friends, the chandelier of my room and my family.

First, my house was very important to me, so I miss it. It was a big house. My house had three floors. I lived with my husband and kids on the first floor. My husband's parents lived on the other two floors. The floor where I lived had four bedrooms, two bathrooms, two kitchens and a big backyard. I spend most of my time in the kitchen. The master room was my favorite room. It had a big walk-in closet. The backyard was big. There were apple, pomegranate, grape, and cherry trees. My house was in a good location. It was near a school, mosque, parks and shops. I walked my children to school. It had a large parking lot, where four cars could be parked. The neighbors were all very kind, and my mother's house was very close for me to go and visit. Indeed, my house was a big, beautiful house in a great location.

My friends were nice and helpful to me, and I miss them too. I had many friends, such as Hodia, Nahid, Sofia and Almas. I miss Froozan the most; she was my best friend. She was a good student. For example, she sometimes helped with my homework. We also used to shop together. Sometimes we ate together in restaurants. Most of the time she paid for the food. She was a beautiful girl. She was of medium height and had long black hair. She was very stylish. Now she is the mother of four children. In sum, my friends were all wonderful, so I miss them.

Another thing I really miss about my country is the chandelier in my bedroom. My sister had woven it from beads and small mirrors. She used black and white beads in it. The white beads were bigger than the black beads. She had woven its beads into the shapes of flowers and leaves. The mirrors

used in it were of different sizes. The large ones were squares, and the small ones were circles. She worked very hard to make it. My sister had woven it seven years ago. I like it very much. My room looked very beautiful with it. It was a gift from my sister. In short, my bedroom chandelier was so beautiful, and I miss it.

My family is very important to me, and I miss them. I miss my mom, my sisters and my brothers. My mom is so kind. When I was in my country she helped me with my homework. She was a very good seamstress, and she sewed clothes for us. She always encouraged me in all areas of life. In addition, I have three lovely sisters. They are all younger than me. Two of them were teachers. We always had fun together. They were all very skilled in cooking. One of them is married and has a cute baby daughter. I have five brothers. Four of them are married. I miss my little brother so much. My brother is a very funny person. He always made trouble for me. He loved ice cream, and every time he came to my house, we went to get ice cream together for the family. He is studying in a college now. Lastly, my family is very special to me and I miss them.

I miss many things in my country, but the things I miss a lot are my house, my friends, the chandelier of my room, and my family. My family is special and important to me, and I miss them.

**Anisa Bakhshi - ESL 47**  
**Descriptive Essay**





## A Grain of Sand and a Pearl



September 1 in many countries is the celebration of the beginning of a new school year. This day is called the Day of Knowledge, the Day of the First Bell. The smell of autumn on the street, lush bouquets of flowers in the hands of schoolchildren, big white bows woven into the pigtails of girls, lace aprons and cuffs, starched white collars of boys. The whole city in the morning turns into rivers of schoolchildren and their parents walking to the schools of the city. Everywhere there are songs about the importance of knowledge and reading. The first educational line of the new school year. Sound congratulations to teachers, parents. There are concerts of high school students, the school banner is raised and the first day of school is announced. A senior student takes a little girl first-grader by the hand and a big bell. The first bell rings. And everyone is invited to the first traditional lesson - the lesson of peace! Children cross the threshold of the school! It was the most awaited day for me, because I crossed the school threshold for the first time! Thus began my journey into the world of literacy, which brought not only joy but also tears.

I remember how much I wanted to go to school! I started preparing for it in the winter. I remember I bought a briefcase, my first pencil case, with a beautiful pen, pencil and notebooks. I always asked my mom to teach me to read. My mom started teaching me the letters. So when I went to school I knew all the letters, how they were spelled and named. I already knew how to write them and not to confuse them with each other. But there was no way I could learn to read. I did not understand how to put letters into words. One day my teacher asked me to read the words, but I couldn't. I named all the letters, but I could not read the words. One phrase pounded in my brain - "I can't read! I can't read! I can't read!" I was very embarrassed. I remember the teacher asked me to tell my mom to come to school. I remember when my mom came home; she was very upset and cried a lot. I asked her, "Why you are crying and who has hurt you?" But she just stroked my head and told me that a grain of sand had gotten into her eye. I remember how my father sat down to read with me every evening afterwards, but he did not have the patience and ability to explain to me how the letters form words. He would shout, and that made me even more confused. I remember when my mom asked her friend who was a teacher to tutor me. This beautiful woman, my friend's mom, brought an old edition of the Primer book. I remember sitting in her chair with candy and cubes with letters on them as we learned to put words together. After a few lessons, things shifted! Turns out the mistake was that I knew the names of the letters, and when reading, you have to use sounds. It was very important to memorize the sound that the letter stands for. For example, when showing the letter "M", you need to teach not what it is called in the alphabet (em), but the sound that this letter stands for (jerky m).

I still remember my first page in the Primer where I realized how to read words! It was the "B" page. It was late in the evening, about 9 o'clock! I started reading word by word, page by page. I remember I was sitting on the red couch and my

mom was ironing my school uniform and she cried again. I asked her, "How did the grain of sand get in your eye again?" However, my mom said she was crying from happiness and that she was very happy that I had learned to read. I asked, "Mommy, can I not go to bed? I'm afraid. What if I can't read again tomorrow?" I remember that my mom suggested that I put the book under my pillow so that I would not forget anything and so that the words would not run away from my mind. I remember that I got up in the morning, quickly pulled the primer out from under my pillow, and started checking to see if I had forgotten how to read overnight. From then on, I always put the book under my pillow to better memorize the material. I remember how I shouted "hurrah" when I could read "Primer" the next day. Then our school announced that there would be a reading test. The head of the educational department herself took it. I remember that I read 20 words per minute. That was a high score.

I really loved to read. I could read sitting on the couch, standing on the toilet, and I read day and night. I always studied very well. I graduated from high school with a medal. I remember that after high school my mom insisted that we go to my first teacher. I did not understand why my mom insisted on it. Imagine only 11 years later I found out that my first teacher recommended that my mom put me in a special school for children with dementia be-

cause I did not understand how to read. The school had a special committee of teachers to decide this. And that reading test, where I showed brilliant results, was invented specially to test my abilities. Now, I understand why my mom cried. And what grain of sand was causing tears to come from her eyes. That conversation about my false dementia was the grain of sand that made my mom worry and cry. Now, I understand why my mom really wanted to show me, a graduate with a medal, to my first teacher. My mom was very proud of me. My mom really wanted to show how wrong my first teacher was. Although my mom did not say anything to this woman, I think our visit was a silent rebuke to her.

Of course, today, from the perspective of age and time, I understand what pain and fear my mother went through. I could hold a grudge against my first teacher. But in my heart there is no resentment towards this woman; in my heart there is only a deep understanding that one should not draw hasty conclusions. Pearls are formed by a grain of sand that falls into the shell of an oyster. The grain of sand that brought my mother to tears actually created the pearls that adorned our family.

**Tatiana Tutulova - ESL 325**  
**Opinion Essay**





## Parrot Pastimes - My Hobbies

### The Joy of Movie Watching: A Timeless Hobby

From a very early age, I have always had a strong passion for watching movies. Movie watching always offers a unique blend of entertainment and enrichment to me. My hobby of movie watching is the basis for so many of my current insights and my understanding of the world in a better way. Indeed, this hobby served as a platform to connect me with so many other cultures, rituals, customs and how people in other parts of the world deal with their life under different circumstances.

I have always felt a strong and magical power in watching movies. Watching movies can transport us to different worlds, let us live vicariously through diverse characters, and evoke a wide range of emotions in us. Watching some movies can inspire hope and resilience, while watching some other movies can invoke deep reflection in our nature. Watching movies, even from the comfort of our own home, gives us the ability to experience such a broad spectrum of feelings and thoughts. In my childhood, I was more interested in watching Bollywood movies than Hollywood movies because Bollywood movies are from India. I was able to connect more to Bollywood movies because I could understand the language better, and also, since I'm from Afghanistan, Bollywood movies resonated with me more due to the similarity of my culture, customs and lifestyle at the time with India.

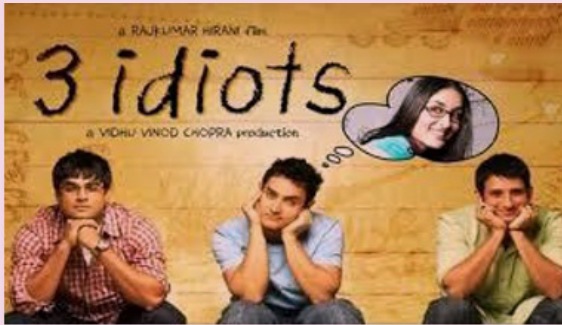
However, soon after I learned English, I got interested in watching Hollywood movies and then got addicted to watching Hollywood

movies. I can name a few of my favorite movies from Bollywood and also from the Hollywood: my favorite Bollywood movies are *PK*, *Jawan*, *3 Idiots*, and *Rowdy Rathore*. My favorite Hollywood movies are *Taken*, *Lucy*, and *Blood and Bones*.

There are so many benefits to having the hobby of watching movies. The first benefit of movie watching can be emotional connection and empathy; I believe watching movies can foster a deep sense of empathy in us. By watching movies, we can experience the lives of characters from different backgrounds and circumstances and can gain insights into our perspectives that we cannot encounter in our daily lives. This emotional engagement can lead us to a better understanding of the world and the people around us. Next, I want to mention the cultural-education-and-awareness benefit of movie watching; movies always reflect the culture, values, and social issues of the times in which they are made. International cinema in particular offers a window into the customs, traditions and societal issues of other countries. Through movies we can gain a broader understanding of the global community. Finally, I can add the stress release and entertainment benefits of movie watching; personally, for me, watching movies is a great way to relax, unwind and disconnect myself from all the stresses and worries I have in my routine life. Cinema allows us to escape from the stress of daily life, offering a temporary respite and a chance to recharge ourselves to be ready to get back to real life.

As technology continues to advance, the future of movie watching develops and looks brighter. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) promise to create even more immer-





2. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0346631/>
3. <https://www.indiatoday.in/movies/bollywood/story/jawan-movie-cast-plot-trailer-runtime-all-you-need-to-know-shah-rukh-khan-at-lee-2431994-2023-09-06>
4. <https://moviesanywhere.com/movie/taken>

sive viewing experiences. Personalized recommendations powered by artificial intelligence (AI) can tailor film suggestions to individual tastes, making it easier to discover new favorites.

Overall, movie watching is more than just a hobby; it's a celebration of storytelling, culture, and human experience. The world of cinema offers endless opportunities for enjoyment, learning, and connection to all viewers.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi**

**Sources:**

1. <https://www.jiocinema.com/videos/3-idiots-official-trailer/3404169>

*Continued from page 1*

**What significance do you think your achievement holds for the Latino community, being the first Latina to lead such an influential institution?**

On one hand again, it is an honor, and on another hand, it's really sad that I'm the first. We have a large Latino community here in Sacramento and Sacramento region, and I know that I am the first Latino president at American River College; however, I'm not the first Latina president at an educational institution in the Sacramento area. They've had other Latinos in such powerful positions and it shows to the community that we are here to be leaders, and that we can step up and lead large complex organizations.

When I first started at American River College and we had to shut down Davies Hall, it was a really difficult decision and there were so many people who were angry, but there was someone from the community who said, "The community will have your back," and I didn't quite understand what that meant at the time; however, after being awarded by the Sacramento Bee as "A Latino Change Maker," I truly felt the support and love from the community. For me, it felt like that was the community saying, "We believe in you."

**Since most ESL students are immigrants, would you tell us a little about the immigrants in your family?**

This was the question that I asked my family for the most help with. I grew up in deep South Texas. I was born in Brownsville, which is the southernmost tip of Texas, right by Mexico. Even though we didn't have any family in Mexico, we would go

there a lot to get medical and dental treatments, and we would also cross the border regularly to eat and to party. At the time when I was growing up, it did feel like a border (we had to cross the Rio Grande River), but since there were less restrictions, it didn't feel like how it is now. We would go back and forth all the time. My parents, my sisters and I were all born in the United States, but my great-grandparents on my dad's side used to own a farm in Mexico, so they would go back and forth. My sisters and I are third generation born and raised here in the United States.

**As a third generation, was it easy for you to learn Spanish? How is your relationship with Spanish?**

Growing up along the border, there were a lot of recent immigrants, so the language was all around me; however, since my parents were bullied in school and even hit by their teachers for speaking Spanish, they did not raise us speaking Spanish because they didn't want my five sisters and I to go through the same bad experiences they went through. However, I took some Spanish classes in school growing up, so I understand Spanish much better than I could speak it. I remember my grandparents speaking to us in Spanish and us responding in English. It was an

interesting dynamic that is very common for Latino families who are raising their children here in the U.S. knowing another language. Especially in California, it is an asset. So, if you know how to speak another language besides English, it's important to pass it on to future generations.

**Learning English gives ESL students experiences that are sometimes funny, mind-opening, embarrassing, or empowering. How about you? Growing up in Texas, were you always bilingual?**





### **What's your language story?**

I'll share this answer on how I was educated. I got pregnant when I was finishing high school, when I was 16 years old, but I was fortunate to be able to finish my education. I got into Stanford and did my undergrad there. Studying there, I learned about a Mexican author named Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa, who was a researcher, academic, and poet who wrote a book called *Borderlands*. She grew up close to where I grew up. She writes about this, "Mestiza consciousness", about how a mestiza kind of lives in two worlds. For her it was living with a mentality of a Mexican and an American, English and Spanish, right on the border. So, when I read her work, I saw myself in her. One theory that she espoused in her book was that we use the mestiza consciousness to our advantage when we make decisions as leaders. We can see both sides, and we are able to relate better to both sides. So, even while I'm not an expert in Spanish, I have the ability to understand two different worlds.

### **How do you empower the next generation of leaders?**

Every day I hope that I am able to give the skills, or the advice, or the tools that they need to feel empowered to do what they want to do. I sit on a lot of community boards also. I sit on the board of "Improve Your Tomorrow", which works with young men of color to make sure that they get to and through college. I also sit on "The Girl Scout Board" so that I hopefully influence young girls in their leadership quest. I sit on the "Urban League" where we work with communities in Del Paso Heights to make sure that they have access to training and/or resources that they need. Also, we just started a Latinx leadership program called, "Creciente", which translates to "growing".

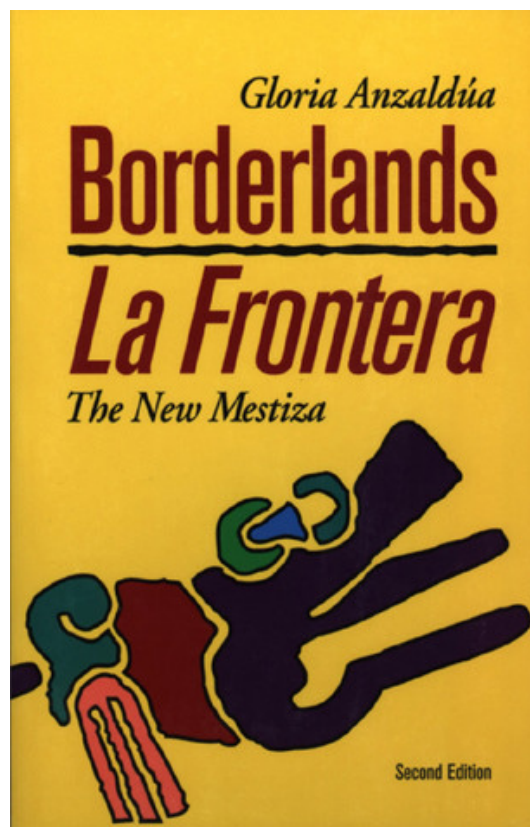
Through that, and through sharing my story about getting pregnant in high school and still being able to go to college and get my degree and accomplish the things I have so far. I was a non-traditional student, a non-traditional researcher and a non-traditional leader in higher education, and still made my way through the challenges and tribulations. And now, being a divorced mother of two boys, and still being able to lead such a prestigious institution makes me feel proud and empowered, and hopefully is a good example for other people, especially women, to feel inspired and empowered.

I'm sharing my story so that others can see it and say: if she could do it, I can do it too! And then I always offer myself to help for whatever you need! I just hope that I can empower, not only our students, but our faculty and staff also, especially our staff.

### **How was it for you growing up in the USA?**

It was very interesting. Even though I grew up in South Texas surrounded by immigrants, mainly from Mexico, I always wanted a more diverse experience. I wanted to meet people from all over the country, so when I got into Stanford and moved to California, I loved it. The diversity at Stanford was incredible. I remember that in

my junior year, they had a Chicano Latino Association group; however, I never identified with those terms. In Texas, we were just called Hispanics or Mexicans. However, since it was my junior year and I didn't socialize much because I was married at the time and had my son, and I also was feeling homesick, I decided to join. I felt so at home, I said, "this is *familia*". You can find it in so many different ways and it can be called different things, but once you find what feels familiar to you, you know that you belong. I love California, and now Sacramento,





because of the diversity.

**Many of our students want their children to learn their heritage language. Did your two boys grow up speaking Spanish?**

No, unfortunately. I even tried to get their grandmother on their dad's side to speak Spanish to them. So, we missed out with the boys. Like I said, it makes me sad every day, but they've taken Spanish. Oh, I remember what I was going to say to one of the earlier questions about something funny. When I was growing up with the boys. Their dad and I would speak in Spanish when we didn't want them to understand and that's just really sad. That was one of my life missed opportunities.

**Being president of a college must be super busy and stressful. What experiences taught you to work so hard? And what do you do to relax?**

My family works so hard. Besides that, my parents come from migrant farm worker families. So, the back-breaking work that they did in the fields, and then my dad is a Marine and he served in Vietnam. I feel very privileged, even though we didn't grow up with a lot, we shared everything.

We never had more than one pair of shoes. My son makes fun of me because his little brother has more than one pair of shoes—that wasn't normal for us. We didn't get a new pair of shoes until they fell apart. He's spoiled and I'm earning more now so that I can afford it.

I want to make my parents proud and the community, too. I think the fact that I got pregnant,

I was like yeah, you know, I let them down. I just wanted to do everything I could to prove that they could still be proud of me. So I think that's where I get my work ethic, and from my parents. My dad had a lot of businesses that he owned. He's an entrepreneur. They even had a funeral home. He's a business person.

I also learned a lot from President Nelsen. [Robert S. Nelsen retired as president of Sac State in 2023.] President Nelsen lost his son to suicide when he was, I think he was 25 years old or so. I watched



President Nelsen treat every student on campus like they were his own child. Because I worked with him in Texas and here as well, I saw how he worked.

To your second question. I didn't know how to relax. I was like go, go, you know all the time because that's how I learned it, from my parents always working, then raising a kid so young and then from President Nelsen who I think never wanted to slow down.

I'm such an extrovert, though, so I like to relax in communities. I like to hang out with good friends here. It's also funny that the pandemic scared me because as I just said, I'm a very social person. I thought, "We're all alone, what am I going to do?" But I think it did teach me how to be in solitude a little bit. I learned to meditate a little bit. I don't do it as often, but I'll do some yoga because I don't have a lot of time, but I just do like 5 or 10 minutes. It is better than nothing. For me, I think spending time with good people who refill my cup, who make me laugh, make me feel loved, so that's pretty good.

**You've been at ARC for a year now. What has been**

***one or two of the little things that have surprised you in a good way?***

So, again coming from Texas, where we weren't very diverse, I got to Sac State and it's very, very diverse. Then, I came to ARC, where it's even more diverse. But I think the one thing that has pleasantly surprised me about the diversity here at ARC is the language. I can walk across campus, and I can hear so many different languages and it's beautiful to me. It's so beautiful because even at Sac State, I think people are still inclined to speak English. It's just really beautiful to me, but the other thing too is just the actual diversity at ARC. It's not just race and ethnicity, it's religion. It's age diversity. I've sat in classrooms and you can see it, right? You can see older students coming back.

***What word of advice do you have for those immigrant students who may feel like they don't belong?***

It breaks my heart to even imagine that. I will say one of the things that attracted me to American River College was when you walked around campus, those banners that say, "You belong here!" When I worked with student service offices, like Financial Aid, I would remind all my employees that it may be the tenth student who's complaining to your office, but for that student, you're the first person that they're seeing. You always must represent the college and the campus. You're the very first one that they're seeing even if you've had a bad day. So my advice would be if you have an interaction with someone who doesn't seem helpful, find someone else. Because there are so many people around this campus who want to help. There are so many people who will go out of their way, who will bend over backwards to make sure that our students feel included and that they belong here.

***What is your favorite Latino dish?***

What we did as a family, one of the dishes that we made often was enchiladas as a family. Some of us would cook, some would shred cheese, others would roll them. Then my mom would make rice and beans. To me, it signifies the gathering of

family. I remember when we were little, we did try to make tamales with my grandmother, but now there's this store in South Texas that perfected the tamales and so we just buy them now.

***What will ARC do to keep you here for a long time?***

I've worked at my institutions previously for long tenures. I was 10 years at the University of Texas Pan-American and eight years at Sac State; so, I hope to be here for a very long time. I think as long as we're willing to work together and put students first because that's always my priority. Understanding though that I need to, that we all need to, support our faculty and staff. I think, as long as I feel like we're progressing; I feel like I'm making an impact; as long as I feel like I can make an impact, I will proudly serve ARC.

***Thank you so much, President, for spending your time for the interview. We wish you all the best.***

***Parrot Staff Interviewers: Snow and Manny***

## Beginner Reading Comprehension

### My Birthday

My birthday is on the 24th of January. I am going to be 12 years old. This year, I planned a big birthday party for my friends. I invited all of my friends in my class to my party. My mom arranged games, food and music for the party. I also invited my teacher and his wife to the party. My mom said that I could go to the movie theater with my friends after the party. We went to the movie theater to watch *Avatar II*. It took us 3 hours to watch it. The movie was so good. I am so happy because I had a great birthday party.

*Parrot Staff Writer: Phong Nguyen*

### Can you answer these questions?

#### 1. How old is the writer?

- A) He is 12 years old.
- B) He is 24 years old.
- C) His birthday was on 24th January.

#### 2. Who did he invite to his birthday party?

- A) He invited his teacher's wife.
- B) He invited his teacher.
- C) He invited all his friends in his class.
- D) A, B, and C.

#### 3. What did his mom arrange for his birthday?

- A) She invited his guests for him.
- B) She made a cake for him.
- C) She arranged games, food and music.

#### 4. What did he do after the party?

- A) He went to see a movie with his friends.
- B) He went to market with his family.







**Would you like to  
contribute to *The Parrot* ?**

If you want to share your work, art,  
opinion, or anything else with  
*The Parrot*, please email us at  
[TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu). We would be  
happy to hear from you and will try to  
respond ASAP.

*The Parrot* welcomes all ESL student  
matters!



## Restaurant Review

### Essy's Kabob

5207 Madison Ave. Ste. A, Sacramento, CA 95841

Open 11AM- 9 PM Tues.-Sunday. Closed Mondays.



It was my first time here for a group meeting with the *Parrot* staff. I liked the simple but cozy decoration of this restaurant. The food was served quickly after we had placed the order. We had chicken and beef kabob dishes together with lamb shank served with basmati rice. The chicken kabob and lamb shank were my favorite because they were so tasty. You should stop by when you want to try a unique flavor.

–Phong Nguyen

I had a great time meeting my ARC *Parrot* newsletter colleagues at Essy's Kabob for the first time in person. We had great cultural exchange



discussions over different topics while having our lunch there. The customer service provided during our lunch was outstanding. Although all the dishes we ordered were delicious, out of all the dishes I tried, I loved the rack of lamb and *koobideh* kabob the most. The rack of lamb was grilled and seasoned perfectly and the taste was super delicious. *Koobideh* kabob at Essy's Kabob restaurant is a must-try dish. It was cooked in a way that was balanced between crispy and juicy, which made it extra special and extra tasty. Both dishes were served with a different style of rice, grilled tomato, and jalapeño on the sides. Overall, I enjoyed the food served, the discussion we had during our meal, and the services provided during the lunch there.

–Edres Sadiqi



As a non-Afghani, I was very happy to be with two *Parrot* staff members from Afghanistan while visiting Essy's Kabob, which serves Afghani and Iranian food. I liked all the food, but here is my ranking in reverse order. I'll save the best for last.

When I took a bite of the roasted lamb, *koobdeh*, I time-traveled back to my childhood because that may have been the last time I was in a kitchen where lamb was cooked. The smell and even the crackling sound of fat from the oven all came back to me. The *koobdeh* was juicy and flavorful. It had



been so long since I had tasted lamb meat that the characteristic flavor surprised me a bit because it was much stronger than beef. The rack of lamb was good and I enjoyed seconds, but I liked the kabobs better.

The beef kabob, which was ground beef rather than chunks, was simple and tasty, and to my surprise, there was no skewer in it. I had expected the meat to still be on a skewer, but it was a lot easier to eat not having to deal with that. The chicken kabob, which came on a combo plate (*jojeh soltani*) with the beef, was some of the best chicken I've had. The seasonings were not spicy or fancy, but the meat was simply delicious.

I wasn't expecting anything special when we ordered the hummus because I've had hummus many times, but surprise! This one had a unique blend with tahini, lemon, olive oil, garlic, and salt. It was thicker than other hummus I've had, but it was great. I would say it was fantastic, but I want to save "fantastic" for the *fesenjoon*.

The menu had a star by "*fesenjoon*" as a "most popular dish," so I wanted to try this Iranian dish. It's a dark stew made from ground walnut and pomegranate mixed together with a few large pieces of grilled chicken tossed in. Honestly, it didn't look very good to my American brain, but this was my favorite dish, truly exceptional. Sweet yet savory. After one bite, I knew I would need to return to Essy's just for this. It was served with rice and was good on the rice, but I ate it straight to finish it off. I'm not sure how necessary the chicken was to create the flavor, but I would have been happy to eat it without chicken or to substitute potato or maybe cauliflower for the chicken. That's just my way of emphasizing how fantastic *fesenjoon* is all by itself. I don't put bumper stickers on my cat, but I'm ready to tell the world, "I ♥ *fesenjoon*!"

I have saved the yogurt sauce for last because I thought it was just plain yogurt. Surprise! It wasn't. It was a perfect blend of sweet and tangy, tending more to sweet, with a slight fruity taste. Again, I don't think I had ever tasted

anything quite like it. I dipped the Afghani flatbread in it. I poured it on *shirazi* salad (diced tomato, cucumber, feta cheese and "angle dressing.") I felt like a genius when I tried it with the hummus. That was an outstanding combo. I would have tried it on the meat, but like I said, I had ignored it until the end of the meal, and all the meat was gone. I loved this white yogurt sauce!  
**-Patrick Hoggan**





## Movie Review of "Alternative Math"

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

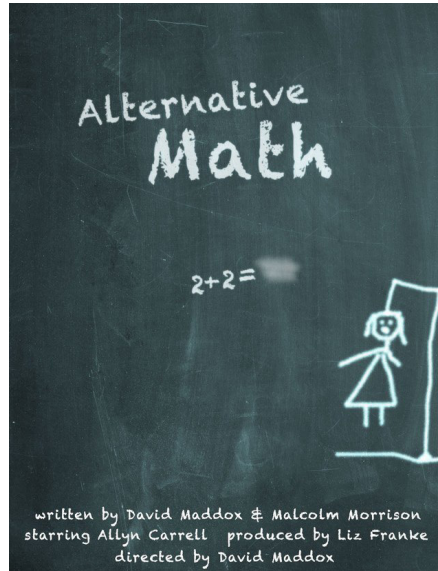
**Director:** David Maddox

**Duration:** 8 minutes

**Production:** 2017

**Rating:** 8/10

*Alternative Math* is a short film that satirizes the story of a mathematics teacher who pits her grades against an educational system that takes an unconventional or "alternative" approach to evaluating answers. The evaluation focuses on the principle of probability and not the principle of right and wrong, even with mathematical operations that only require one answer. The story began when the teacher decided to strictly correct a student's answer to a simple mathematics question, but the student was not prepared to accept the reality that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , as he saw that it equaled 22. The teacher was shocked that she was in the middle of a fierce confrontation with parents, the administration, the media, and politicians. Her simple story became an issue of public opinion, the focus of talk on various television programs, and even protest demonstrations led by parents who saw that trying to convince students that  $2 + 2 = 4$  was a stereotype of ideas, a limitation of freedom, and a "new Nazism." The professor was not ready to give up her convictions about her method of teaching despite being brought before an accountability committee and threatened with expulsion. Still, she preferred to give up her work instead of giving up what she saw as self-evident and did not require all this noise. The funny thing is the way the short film ended. The professor prevailed



by using a clever trick that shocked all those who followed her. Most importantly, she demonstrated through it that her methodological choices derived from mathematical logic are compatible with the reality in which we live.

It should be noted that the film summarized the events of a school week, beginning on Monday morning and concluding on Saturday morning.

Since the film is short, the characters are limited but expressive and strong. The character of the teacher embodies toughness and insistence on principles in the face of society's ignorance and cynicism. The actors' performance was outstanding, and they were able to present the film's message clearly and effectively.

The film satirizes the idea of "alternative facts" that have become common in some societies, where scientific and logical facts are distorted to suit the whims of individuals or groups. Through the escalation of events, the film reflects how a simple truth can turn into a societal controversy when



concepts are manipulated and judgements are deemed relative. The main message is to defend the truth and adhere to scientific and logical principles, whatever the challenges.

The film sends several implicit messages that can be summarized as

follows:

The film presents a critique of the educa-

tional system that may sacrifice scientific and logical principles in favor of policies to satisfy various parties. The film highlights how educational institutions can become an arena for unscientific controversy when matters are managed based on personal opinions rather than objective facts. The film shows the teacher as an example of someone who stands up to the system in order to maintain the integrity of education.

On the other hand, the largest part of the film's philosophy lies in the conflict between adhering to principles and facts in the face of societal and political pressures. The teacher represents the character who insists on the truth and defends it regardless of the consequences. In contrast, the educational system, administration, and parents represent the society that tends to adopt alternative facts to achieve comfort and acceptance.

In addition, the film raises the issue of academic freedom and the independence of teachers in an educational system that may restrict them and force them to follow policies that are not in line with correct educational principles. The film reflects how compromising this freedom can deteriorate the quality of education and undermine trust in educational institutions.

The film emphasizes the importance of critical education and critical thinking by depicting

a teacher who insists on teaching her students the truth. The film highlights that education should be about motivating students to think deeply and understand scientific facts rather than accepting any information without analysis or thought.

In conclusion, what I liked about this artistic work is that *Alternative Math* is not just a satirical film but rather a work that carries within it a critical philosophy that reflects many of the challenges facing contemporary societies in the field of education and dealing with facts. Therefore, I recommend watching it, as it combines enjoyment, fun, benefit, and sarcastic criticism. Perhaps what makes it interesting to watch is that it is a short film, and its language is simple, and ESL students will not need any help to understand the details of the film.



## English Practice Hour

It will be in person and online.

**Talk Time meets in Zoom once a week on Wednesdays and in-person once a month on Saturdays. We talk about holidays like Labor Day, but we also just check in with each other, telling highs and lows of our week. Students can email me, Professor Denise Saur, at [saurd@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:saurd@arc.losrios.edu) to get the time, locations, or link.**



## English Conversation Group

● ● ● *Fridays 5:00-6:00 | North Natomas library*

### **Want to practice speaking English? Join our friendly group!**

All languages and levels welcome. No registration. Meet new people and share experiences. This is not a class; it's more a social group for practicing.

Check "Events" for **more locations and times** at [www.saclibrary.org](http://www.saclibrary.org).

#### **Topics:**

- Everyday life & things to do
- American culture
- News, pop culture
- Other...You help decide!

Groups are led by a trained facilitator. We hope to see you there!



*Continued from page 1*



ity. Geo-storms are measured on a scale from G1 (minor) to G5 (extreme), and on that night, it was reported to be a G5 storm.

I heard the reporter say that there was a slight chance to see the northern lights from California, a rare occurrence that had only happened once before in 2003. So, I decided to take a chance and try to spot them, hoping to capture the moment with my camera and lens. After taking some NyQuil, I invited my sister to join me, grabbed my camera, and drove east towards Lake Tahoe, where the sky is generally darker.

As we drove, we started to see something in the sky. It looked like crystals dancing, with some fading away and others growing brighter. I had never seen anything like it before! Although it appeared hazy and dim to our eyes, a glowing red hue dominated the sky, punctuated by patches of green and blue.

I was so amazed by the Aurora that I couldn't think of a beautiful scenic spot to stop by and capture photos, but then we came across a vista point off the I-80 called "[Emigrant Gap Scenic Overlook](#)", which offers a northern view perfect for witnessing the northern lights. So, we pulled over, and the real show began.

The number of people gathered with us in that small spot was roughly equivalent to two full ARC cafeterias. They were all capturing photos with their phones and joking about how, the next day at work, they would regret staying up late. The northern lights were initially elusive: at first, they appeared dimmed, and all I could capture with my camera was a faint green line just above the horizon. However, after nearly four hours, the spectacle began. Beautiful blue and violet lights started to intensify and draw closer to us. Although they were slightly hazy at first, a colorful explosion erupted



in the sky within minutes. Everyone was electrified, and all we could exclaim was: "WOW!" It almost felt as if the lights were harmonizing, or at least I thought I could hear a sound, like the crackle of lightning or the hum of electricity from power lines.

I can proudly say that I captured all the photos shown in this article. They were all single shots taken with my Nikon Z8 and wide-angle lens. The beauty of photography lies in the fact that, with the right settings, you can extract the best colors and details from every situation. I used a technique called 'long exposure' to take these photos, which involves capturing images for extended periods (15 seconds, for example), allowing the sensor to gather more information, such as light and color. This technique is ideal for capturing moments like this, so editing these photos wasn't a lengthy process. I simply added some contrast, dehazed, and enhanced the existing colors in the photos. Nights like these serve as a great reminder of why I love photography so much. A photograph is more than just an image; it's the moment, the preparation, and the experience. And experiences like this may only happen once in a lifetime.

Follow me on Instagram to see more of my work:

[Instagram.com/emrado](https://www.instagram.com/emrado)





## Living in My Dreams: The Light Festival

One of the most outstanding events that I attended with my family in 2024 was a light festival. It took place on April 2, at the East Park Reservoir in Stonyford, California up in Colusa County. It was



one of the few great events I have attended in my whole life.

I have always loved watching the moon and stars when

location for the event was beside a lake surrounded by beautiful little hills covered with trees and grass. The weather was perfect, and thousands of families were camping. There was a stage decorated with thousands of candle-lights, which created a really romantic and beautiful scene.

Every attendee gets a lantern, wristband, and a pen, as part of their ticket. However, if the attendee wants to have more lanterns, they can buy them. Once they get their lanterns, they choose a spot to set up their picnic chairs, rug and food items that they were pre-notified to bring. There were some food trucks as well, where attendees could go and buy pizza, popcorn, chicken wings, smoothies and other snacks.

The event was officially opened with a very warm welcome by the management team. Then, it was followed by live music by two different New Generation singers. I really don't remember their names because I mostly just listen to Persian music, but they were super great singers.

After that, all attendees wrote messages, dreams, and whatever they wanted on the lanterns. Everyone wrote different designs and made beautiful and artful messages

the night is getting dark. It gives me so much relaxation and connects me with my inner thoughts. The light festival for me was like having a chance to see the stars and moon in the sky a lot closer. Seeing the lighted lanterns flying in the sky, with my family and thousands of people, I enjoyed the event very much.

For me and my family, this amazing event started by driving about two hours from Sacramento to Stonyford. The way was so beautiful. Both sides of the road were beautiful hills covered with trees and green grass. Some parts were hilly and some were flat with great views on both sides of the road. We enjoyed every mile. The





on their lanterns. When it got dark, the magical moment of the event began. The management team initially trained everyone how to light the lanterns and fly them, and then announced when to light and release the lanterns to the sky. All the attendees followed the event management instructions and the magical moment was created. The whole sky was dark and, in a few seconds, thousands of lighted lanterns were released into the sky. The view and moment that was created were beyond words. At that moment, I really forgot all the worries I have in my life, and it felt like I was living in my dreams.

The light festival was an amazing experience for me and my family, and I strongly recommend for all to experience this amazing event at least once in your life and enjoy a magical moment with your family and loved ones.

**Parrot Staff Writer: S. Edres Sadiqi**

**Sources:**

1. <https://thelightsfest.com/sky-lantern-events/sacramento/>
2. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/193514115210656053/>
3. <https://www.festivals.com/sacramento-sky-lantern-festival-by-lights-over-america-49985>
4. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/341921796709816964/>



## Recipe Art: Kimchi Vietnamese Style



### **Bowl 1:**

Combine 1 kg (2.2lb) napa cabbage cut into medium pieces or separated + 150g (5.3oz) salt + 2 liters (32 oz) clean water. Soak 2 hours. After 2 hours, wash at least 3 times. Then squeeze all the water out.

### **Bowl 2:**

90g (3.2oz) non-spicy pepper + 10g (0.35 oz) spicy pepper + 750g (3.17 cups) water ->grind.

### **Bowl 3:**

50g (1.8oz) sticky rice flour mixed with 100g (3.5oz) water -> set aside.



### **Bowl 4:**

Mix 13g (0.45oz) salt + 3g (0.1oz) seasoning + 10g (0.35oz) sugar + optional 10g (0.35oz) MSG + 40g( 1.5oz) parika + 100g (3.5oz) chili sauce + 10g (0.35oz) minced ginger+ 10g (0.35oz) minced garlic + 5g (0.18oz) chopped shallot.

### **Bowl 5:**

Get juice from a pear or an apple to get 50g (1.8oz) -> set aside.

### **Bowl 6:**

Julienne cut 1 medium carrot and make a long cut of a handful of chives



**Bowl 7:**

Add bowl 2 + bowl 4 in a sauce pot to cook at medium heat. When the mixture is boiled, add bowl 3. Then turn off the heat, mix well. Let it cool down.

**Bowl 8:**

Mix bowl 5 + bowl 6 into bowl 7 (bowl 7 must be cool not hot).

**Bowl 9:**

Apply the mixture in bowl 8 on the napa cabbage evenly.



Put them in a clean jar -> close tightly.

Depending on the temperature, leave it outside for around 1 to 3 days. Open the jar every day to check if it's ready. When it's sour enough -> put it in the fridge to stop the fermentation.



## Salty Sweet-Sweet

Have you ever tried something super sweet and salty at the same time? It's interesting to taste the combination. If you see it, I believe you would like to try it. It's malt plum candy (kẹo mạch nha xí muối). It is really cheap in Vietnam, but it is a little pricy here. I bought it for around \$1 each 2 or 3 years ago. When I first went to Vietnam, I saw it at the grocery store. The seller told me it was a candy. I thought it was a piece of art made by crystal or glass. It costs only 2 or 3 cents in 2008. So, I tried it and loved it. I think the plum is salted and the candy is made from sugar. I saw some different flavors added in the candy, like strawberry or orange, but I still love the original one--plain malt candy. I haven't tried it since I was back here. I think everyone will love this sweet except people who don't have a sweet tooth!



*Parrot Staff Writer: Phong Nguyen*

## Little Tips–Big Help!

*Are you tired of using your computer mouse all the time? Do you wish there were a faster way to do things? There is! Here are some tech tips to save you time from Edres Sadiqi, our Parrot staff tech consultant.*

### Top 10 General Shortcuts for Windows:

- 1. Ctrl + C: Copy** - Copies the selected item to the clipboard.
- 2. Ctrl + X: Cut** - Cuts the selected item and copies it to the clipboard.
- 3. Ctrl + V: Paste** - Pastes the item from the clipboard to the current location.
- 4. Ctrl + Z: Undo** - Reverses the last action.
- 5. Ctrl + Y: Redo** - Repeats the last action that was undone.
- 6. Ctrl + A: Select All** - Selects all items in the current window or document.
- 7. Ctrl + F: Find** - Opens the search or find window in most applications.
- 8. Ctrl + S: Save** - Saves the current document or file.
- 9. Ctrl + P: Print** - Opens the print dialog to print the current document.

**10. Ctrl + N: New** - Creates a new document or window in most applications.

### Top 10 Windows Management Shortcuts:

- 1. Alt + F4: Close Window** - Closes the current application or window.
- 2. Win + D: Show Desktop** - Minimizes all open windows and shows the desktop.
- 3. Win + M: Minimize All Windows** - Minimizes all open windows.
- 4. Win + E: Open File Explorer** - Opens File Explorer to browse files.
- 5. Win + L: Lock Computer** - Locks the computer and returns to the login screen.
- 6. Win + R: Open Run Dialog** - Opens the Run dialog to execute commands.
- 7. Win + S: Search** - Opens the search bar.
- 8. Win + PrtScn: Screenshot** - Takes a screenshot and saves it to the Pictures folder.
- 9. Win + Plus (+): Zoom In (Magnifier)** - Opens Magnifier and zooms in.
- 10. Win + Minus (-): Zoom Out (Magnifier)**

# Poem

## Invictus

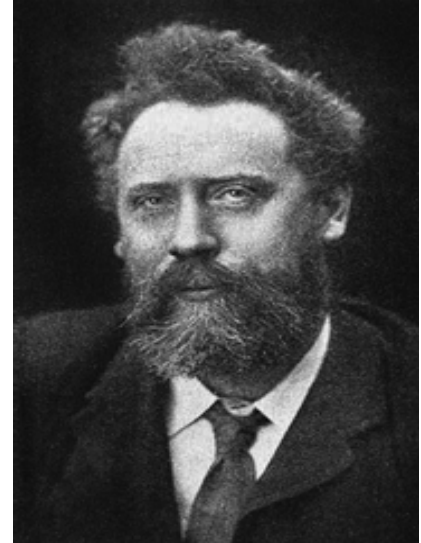
[William Ernest Henley](#) 1849 –1903

Out of the night that covers me,  
    Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
    For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
    My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
    Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
    Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
    I am the captain of my soul.



**William Ernest Henley**  
**1849 –1903**

William Ernest Henley, born August 23, 1849, was an influential British poet, perhaps best known for his poem "Invictus" (1875). He is the author of *A Song of Speed* (D. Nutt, 1903), *Hawthorn & Lavender with Other Verses* (D. Nutt, 1901), and *For England's Sake: Verses and Songs in Time of War* (D. Nutt, 1900), among others. He died in Woking, England, on July 11, 1903.

## Volunteer Opportunity



### Help for Refugee Children



Starting Point is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting newly arrived refugee children in the greater Sacramento area.

The organization strives to give them a warm welcome by providing basic necessities and programs as they begin their new lives in the U.S. They do things like meet refugee families with children at the airport, give them welcome baskets, and provide basic ESL and computer lessons, and they have even started a very popular soccer team for the kids. Visit the website and click on [REQUEST HELP](#).

Starting Point is directed by Vickee Moy, a professor of English as a Second Language in Sacramento. She launched Starting Point in June 2017 after being deeply touched by her refugee students' stories about their lives in their native countries and about their new lives in the U.S. Starting Point is one way she hopes to honor and

remember their incredible stories and beautiful lessons about perseverance, strength, hope, and humanity.

As a child of immigrants, Vickee feels a connection with new arrivals and is passionate about helping them begin successful lives in their new country. Along with her husband and three sons, she is excited to reach out to this growing community of newcomers.

<https://www.startingpointworld.com/>

### Want to Help?

There are several ways that you can help Starting Point to help children. You can put together a welcome basket, assemble a backpack with supplies, help buy shoes, assist with lessons and program development for SPARK (Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge), or even coach and support a soccer team!

Donations to Starting Point are tax deductible. Please visit the [Starting Point Volunteer Page](#) for more information.





Scan QR Code

### Zoom Hours

MON - 8am to 12:30pm

THU - 11am to 7pm

FRI - 8am to 4:30pm

# ESL Center

**Open On Campus  
in the LRC!**

**Monday thru Thursday  
8:00 AM to 7:00 PM**

The ESL Center helps all multilingual students with their classes and questions. We speak Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Russian, Ukranian, Spanish, and more. Come see us!



## Granny Noetal

**Welcome to the Granny Noetal Column! Our student staff is pleased to share valuable tips and advice to support you on your academic journey at ARC.**

Dear Granny,

*Should I tell my professor if I am having a personal problem that is making it hard to study? --Struggling Student.*

Dear Struggling Student,

I asked my friend Manny from the Parrot staff to answer your question. Here is what he had to say!

Something valuable I've learned during my time as a student at ARC is that professors genuinely care about their students. Their passion for teaching extends far beyond grading notes and delivering lessons. They care about students' well-being and success. If you're going through a tough time that may interfere with your attendance and grades, be honest and talk to your professor. If you demonstrate drive and a genuine interest in your classes, most professors will be understanding and will always find a way to make things work out.

Growing up in Colombia, I often heard people say that college and university professors didn't genuinely care about



personal situations that might affect grades, so I was initially skeptical about reaching out to my professors when I faced a family situation last semester. However, after experiencing the supportive community at ARC, I decided to reach out to my professors, as I didn't want to risk failing. Reaching out to your professor doesn't guarantee a passing grade, but it can lead to opportunities like extra credit work or deadline extensions on essays, which can make a significant difference in your academic journey.

Dear Readers,

I hope you found Manny's advice helpful. I'm grateful for the experience he shared. **If you need some advice, please send your questions to:**

**Granny Noetal at  
TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu**

Thanks,

Granny Noetal



ChatGPT

## Introduction to ChatGPT and Its Ethical Usage

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, is an advanced language model designed to generate human-like text based on the input it receives. It has a wide range of applications, from providing customer support to aiding in educational activities. As a user, I have found ChatGPT to be a valuable learning tool that enhances my understanding and productivity. However, it is important to use this technology ethically.

One key aspect of ethical usage is to avoid using ChatGPT for copy-pasting content directly. Instead, I recommend utilizing it to support your learning process. By engaging with AI, you can gain insights, clarify doubts, and expand your knowledge, but it's crucial to process the information critically and make it your own.

For me, ChatGPT has been incredibly beneficial in brainstorming ideas, understanding complex topics, and improving my writing skills. It serves as a supplementary tool that augments my learning without replacing my efforts. By approaching ChatGPT in this manner, you can ensure that it enhances your educational journey without compromising academic integrity.

In summary, while ChatGPT is a powerful tool, its ethical usage involves using it to learn and grow rather than simply copying its outputs. This approach has been effective for me, and I believe it can significantly benefit others in their learning processes as well.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi**



## My Lovely PC Laptop

**By Husam Alkhafaji, ESL 350**

My PC is a lovely rose, the world's delight.

From him the scent of technology comes out.

My PC is a friend of mine.

When it clicks, the keyboard shines.

He is awesome and kind.

When I see my red PC, I feel fine.

Sits on my lap and clicks.

With him, I feel happy wasting my time.

When it's late and time to sleep, he shows signs.

My PC is caring; that means he loves me.

That is a good sign!

His clicks are like a fine-tuned violin.

My PC is an awesome friend of mine.



## Out of the Cage

LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# TRANSFER DAYS

[www.losrios.edu/transfer-days](http://www.losrios.edu/transfer-days)

### Transfer Day at American River College

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

During our Fall 2024 Transfer Day, students can learn about transferring to more than 50 colleges and universities, including:

**California State Universities (CSU) — Universities of California (UC)**

**Independent and private colleges and universities—Out-of-state colleges and universities**

Meet directly with college and university representatives who can answer your questions about transfer, admissions, financial aid, and more!

Pre-registration is not required. Stop by whenever it is convenient for you!

**Location: ARC Student Center**

### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Student Editors: **Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed Elmrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Phong Nguyen, and Asila Sadiqi.**

Faculty Advisors: **Patrick Hoggan and David Evans**

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](mailto:TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu). To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>

[edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter](https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter)

