

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



The Parrot



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Inside This Issue

Ryan Payne: ESL, Accents, & Magic!



Ryan Payne, the lead instructional assistant at the ESL Center, is a supportive and skilled navigator for ESL students, helping them excel in their English language journey. I chose to interview Ryan to introduce him to more ESL students, enabling them to benefit from his guidance and effective strategies. During my time at the ESL Center, I strongly recall Ryan's engaging presentation on a podcast about laughter. His approachable teaching style and ability to make learning enjoyable have made him an invaluable resource.

**Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to interview you for *The Parrot*
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Honors Ball 2024

Would you like to contribute to *The Parrot*?

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Greetings to all, *Las Estrellas!*

Just like the stars light up the night sky, the Student Center at ARC was filled with the brightest students at the Honors Ball 2024 on December 6.

"I'm organizing a special event to honor the graduates of this fall and the honors students, celebrate academic achievements, and highlight their contributions to our college community," Esperanza Booher, the Vice President of Fellowship in our [Phi Theta Kappa](#) (PTK) chapter, told us during a meeting. I was intrigued by her words and amazed by her effort to create something special.

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How to sign up for ESL Assessment

1. Scan the QR code below with your phone, or click on English as a Second Language (ESL) Assessment if you are on a computer.
2. Read all the information, and then scroll to the bottom of the page to choose if you want an in-person or an online ESL Assessment session.
3. After you choose in-person or online, sign up using your student ID number and birth date.



Need help?
esl-assessment@arc.losrios.edu

Ode to My Home

By Susan Raof, ESL 350

You are the shelter to which I seek refuge

You protect me from the dangers of life

Where would I go

If it weren't for you

We grew up together

You know all about me

And I know all about you

My haven on earth

The secret of my happiness

I'm sorry if I ever made a mistake

If I was neglectful or careless

We are doing our best together

My home may be small and can't accommodate all my friends

But it is strong

It shelters me from harsh winter storms

And burning hot summers

I start my day in it

And end my day in it

It holds all my memories

My dreams

And my goals

How beautiful it is, the sunlight coming from my window

My home remembers my laughter and sadness

My joy and stability

Within it, I meet with my loved ones

And sleep comfortably knowing it embraces my children

There is no place in the world like the home that contains me

It is safe and secure



A Big Journey in My Life

Sometimes we have to leave our family, our friends, our country and our life. That time is the most difficult moment in life. We don't know what will happen, whether we can do it or not, but we have to start. And that was the time when I left my country Afghanistan after the Taliban came.

In August 2021, the Taliban entered Afghanistan.

At that time, I was living in Kabul with my husband. After the Taliban entered Kabul, everyone was very scared, and people were hiding in their houses for fear of fighting. Then the Americans

took their workers back to America. My husband and my father-in-law were among the people who worked with the American forces. We had to leave the country because they said that the Taliban were killing people who were working with the Americans.

Five months after the Taliban entered Afghanistan, in February 2022, my husband was called at ten o'clock at night. The person who was in charge of the process of transferring American workers to America sent the address of a hotel and said that our journey would start tonight, and we should be there by twelve o'clock. I had a strange feeling even though it had been two months, I had not seen my

parents and siblings. I left for a trip that night without saying goodbye. Our journey started towards Jalalabad province of Afghanistan. On the way, we were interrogated by Taliban forces in several places, and I trembled with great fear like a tree that shakes in a storm. This was my last visit to my dear Afghanistan.



We had a very difficult journey. I was pregnant and had a one-year-old child. Although my husband helped me a lot, the journey loomed like a stormy sea. We reached Jalalabad at seven in the morning. After that, we went to Peshawar, Pakistan, and from Peshawar to Islamabad, Pakistan. We

stayed in a hotel for three nights and went to Doha, Qatar by air, and then spent forty-seven days there and came to California.

Now I live in Sacramento, California, and I have a good life. I live without fear, and I can study. I have a life without war, but sometimes I think if I were in Afghanistan, I could see my mother and my family. I miss them, and this journey changed me from a shy girl to a strong woman.

**Khadija Sediqi - ESL 47
Narrative Essay**

My Life as a Doctor in 2019

It is not easy to forget the year 2019 when the coronavirus began, and many people got sick, and others died. The coronavirus is a virus which causes respiratory tract infections that can range from mild to lethal. That's when my journey as a doctor began because I never knew my father would be my first critical patient. My scary experience treating Covid-19 shaped my appreciation for the health of my family.

In 2019, I was working in a community clinic. It was an hour away from home. As I was attending patients with Covid-19, I felt different feelings such as anxiety, frustration and stress. I was restless with my hands and feet, rapidly breathing because I knew that the virus was unknown. There was no cure, and I was seeing many people dying. I did not want my parents to get that virus.



My worst nightmare came true when my dad contracted the virus. I was terrified. My mind was unable to think of anything else. My dad was very sick. He was struggling to breathe

like a fish out of water. He also had a fever, cough, fatigue and digestive symptoms such as diarrhea and stomachache; he lost a lot of weight in just 20 days. He needed to go to the hospital, but he did not want it. He said, "There were more diseases in the hospital", and I understood his point of view. My mom and I were frantic because we did not want to lose him.

I put into practice all the knowledge that I acquired, and I decided to take care of him at home. I tried to be strong and calm, to think clearly, to know what treatment would be best for him. I took some days off work and started the treatment. I designed a treatment plan to know what time I had to give him each medication. I gave him antibiotics, cough medicine, vitamins, and fever medicine, among other stuff. I had to keep an eye on his temperature, blood pressure, respiratory rate and heart rate. I realized my dad was a strong man because he was fighting for his life. As the days went by with the treatment, he began to feel better. His cough was decreasing, he had no fever and his breathing improved.

Since this experience, I always make sure that my dad gets his routine laboratory test done every 6 months. I am more sharp-eyed, and I can act quickly in any situation. Life is fragile and we must take advantage of it with the people we love. That's why I make sure my parents' health is taken care of. My intense experience treating Covid-19 has deepened my gratitude for the health and well-being of my family.

Loyda Munoz - ESL 47
Narrative Essay

The Impossible Is Possible

Before, when I was watching a commercial on TV, I always wanted to change the channel or press the skip button. When I became a mom, I started watching commercials with kids, as it was relevant to me at that time. The kids are cute in the screen; they are always nice to look at. One day, I caught myself thinking about how cool it must be to have own child filmed in a commercial — after all, it's a memory for a lifetime! But I was sure that it was an unrealistic dream for common kids; only for actors' or directors' kids is this possibility available. For me, the world of movie and television seemed like another planet. How wrong I was...

In the spring of 2016, my husband, my almost two-year-old son, and I flew to Thailand on vacation. One day, on the beach, a woman came up to me and



asked in Russian, "Was your son in a film commercial for a children's store?" I said, "No, we are a typical family. We don't know anyone from television and can't get into commercials." She responded, "You're wrong! This is quite realistic. You just need to register on a special website, add a photo of your child, and wait

for an invitation to the casting. Then come to the casting and wait for confirmation for a role in a commercial or a movie." This woman told me about her friend's story, that her child got a role on a commercial in this way. She also praised my son, saying how handsome and sweet he was. I listened to her politely, thanked her, and forgot about everything for the rest of the day.



A few days later, I met the woman again, and she asked me, "Have you registered your son on that site?" I answered, "Yes." It was a lie, because it was uncomfortable to say that I still don't believe in the reality of her story and don't take it seriously. However, I felt embarrassed that I had lied, so I opened the site and registered my son there. I did it and forgot about it.

Two years passed. I accidentally opened the spam folder in my mail and was very surprised — there were a lot of emails inviting my child to auditions. Something happened in my head at that moment. I asked myself the question, "Is this a sign?" Maybe we should try it! I went to the site, updated photos and personal information, and started exploring. I plunged into this case with my head, read on the Internet about the movie industry for children, about children's modeling, recommendations, tips, and reviews.

The next day, I received an invitation to the casting again. This time, there was no doubt—we will go! You have to see with your own eyes what it is and how it happens! My husband laughed and said I was naive and asinine if I believed that our child could just be taken and filmed in a commercial or movie. We stood in a long queue of a crowd of children and their mothers and were called. I was very scared but excited. Unlike

me, my son was only slightly embarrassed. He answered all the questions of the casting director on camera, completed several tasks—laughing, repeating some phrases with the right emotion, etc.—and after that we went home. The date of the commercial shooting was indicated in the casting. I was waiting for an approval letter, but didn't receive anything. It was clear that another child had been chosen. My husband calmed me down, repeating that it was unrealistic and that the idea was stupid.

After some time, I received a letter that my son had been chosen for the fashion show of a well-known brand of children's clothing. My husband still refused to believe it; he was sure they would demand money from us for participating in this project. But it didn't

work out that way. There were three days of rehearsals and fashion shows, and we didn't pay anything. Instead, our son was given a \$200 store gift card! He was insanely happy, having really enjoyed the whole process. Despite the fact that he was only 4.5 years old, he coped with everything. From that day on, a new stage of our life began.

Our new hobby turned into a real job. My son was invited to photo shoots as a model and had 1-3 shoots a week. They paid him money for this and gave him the clothes in which he was photographed and gift cards from children's stores. We also went to auditions for children's commercials and movies. In three years, my son starred in 15 commercials, 8 films and TV series, more than 100 photo shoots and many children's TV shows. Sometimes I couldn't believe it was happening to us. My opinion has changed 180 degrees. Yes, it's not an easy job for mom and child, but it's very cool, and a tremendous experience for my son. How many emotions he had when he saw himself on TV! How many interesting acquaintances and behind-the-scenes moments! We recorded a lot of samples and learned a

lot of texts and scripts. Sometimes, when there was no "approved" for a long time, my hands dropped. But only mom's hands dropped. My son just wrote down the samples and forgot about them. It was mom who was waiting for an answer.

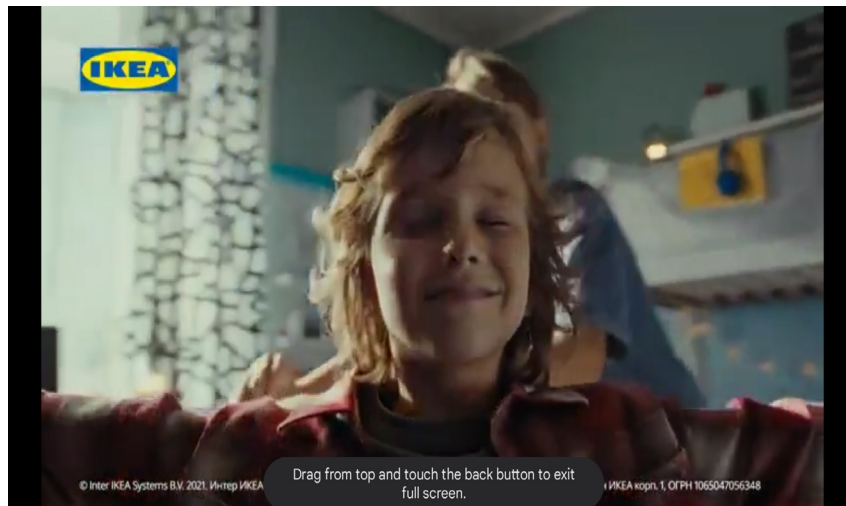
Everything was fine, but the war in Ukraine started, and we had to leave Russia. In April 2022, we came to America, gave up everything, and started life with a clean slate. My son asked me, "Mom, when are we going to the casting? Will I be filming here?" I wanted to cry, as if there was a lump in my throat. I understood how much effort and time had been invested in this activity, and now everything is gone. He doesn't know the language, he doesn't have American citizenship, he doesn't have a work permit, and I don't know anything

about how things work here. It flashed through my mind that it was unrealistic to repeat the same path. However, I pushed that thought away and started looking for the information I needed.

Today I know that everything is real; the world of movies and television isn't another planet!

You have to not give up; you have to set a goal and go for it. Even if nothing works out, you have to try to do something! After a year of living in America, my son learned the language a little, we got him a work permit, and I studied the necessary information on this topic. Last March, he got his first commercial role. Then there were two more projects. I know it's not much, but we're not sitting still. I believe he will definitely have many good projects ahead of him!

Yuliia Apykova - ESL 315
Narrative Essay



The Attitude of Gratitude

Grateful in My Life

People around the world are grateful for many things. Have you ever had things that you are grateful for? Sometimes, I am thankful for different things. Now, I am really thankful for three things such as my backyard, my bike, and my ability to study.

First of all, my backyard is very important to me. Although the backyard is not big, it is incredibly cozy. My family and I have a good time in the backyard. During the day, we like to sunbathe, and in the evening we like to look at the stars. Sometimes we do a BBQ. In addition, we grow beautiful flowers. I like to grow fruit trees. In the backyard, I grow a few trees, such as orange and avocado. After a delicious lunch, we like to relax in the shade of fruit trees. Also, we grow vegetables. For example, my wife likes to grow cucumbers and tomatoes. In short, my backyard is significantly important in my life, and I am grateful for it.

Second, I feel deeply thankful for the ability to study. I study at A.R.C. American River College is very beautiful. It has many wonderful buildings. There is even a library and a stadium. Moreover, there are many benches and green trees around the buildings. For instance, after classes, it is convenient to sit in the coolness of green trees. And if you are hungry, you can go to a cozy café to drink a cup of coffee and eat a bun. The teachers at A.R.C. are exceptionally

polite. Furthermore, they support me learning English. The college atmosphere itself helps me develop my abilities. I like to study at A.R.C. In brief, I feel a lot of gratitude for my ability to study and that A.R.C. gives me an opportunity to learn English.

Last of all, I want to thank my bike. My bike is a very important part of my life. I like to race on my bike. My neighbor also has a bicycle, so sometimes we ride together. Moreover, we are competing to see who can get to the lake faster. My bike is exceptionally



fast because it has 10 speeds and sports wheels. When I am flying across a road, I don't remember anything; I only have speed. In addition, my bike is my friend. For example, sometimes I think that my bike understands me. The

bike has a red color, and I enjoy it. Lastly, I express gratitude for my bike.

In conclusion, my fast bike, my beautiful backyard, and especially my ability to study are extremely important in my life, and I am really grateful for all of them. I think everybody needs to have gratitude. If you have gratitude, you will have good health.

Andrey Selvasyuk - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

My Blessed Life

Have you ever thought that it is very important to be grateful for something in your life? Different people are grateful for different blessings in their lives. I am thankful for my mosque, my cat, and the ability to walk.

First of all, the mosque is a very holy place for me. The mosque is more than just a building where we pray. It is a place of peace like a piece of heaven. It is where we come together as a community to worship Allah and support each other. For example, during Ramadan, the mosque becomes a place of charity, and everyone brings food to share with those people who need it. I feel gratitude that I have such a special place in my life. The mosque helps me to remember the importance of kindness and helping others. It shows me that faith is not just about praying alone but also caring for the people around us and working together to build a better world. It is also a place where I can recharge spiritually when I am tired of problems. It is a bit like a garden, where every prayer is a seed that grows into something beautiful. Indeed, I'm thankful that I have this place that I can go to pray and enjoy.

Second, my cat's name is Luna. She is very beautiful and I love her. She has beautiful and bright eyes. For example, her eyes at night become like a laser. At first, I was nervous about having a pet and didn't know how to take care of her. But my cat helps me feel better by gently coming to me and purring softly, making me feel safe. Now, I am so grateful for her, as she is my little friend and brings so much happiness into my life. She is very friendly for instance, when I go home, she already waiting for me in front of the door. She has soft hair like a pillow. Luna does not like to sleep in her house. In addition, when I go to bed, I put her in her house,

but after five minutes I feel something is under my feet, stays calm to jump suddenly into my face. She is just about 6 months old, but she seems like a big cat because she eats a lot. Indeed, I love my cat very much. She made me laugh, so I don't feel tired when I'm at home alone, and I'm lucky that I have Luna.

Last of all, one of the abilities that I'm really grateful for is my ability to walk. The ability to walk is a precious and empowering skill that many of us rely on every day. It connects us to the world, allowing us to travel from one place to another with ease and independence. It is very important for me that I can walk without anyone to help me.



For example, many people do not have this blessing in their life, so they need someone to help them to move. Furthermore, one of my close relatives, her name was Samera, when she was born, she didn't

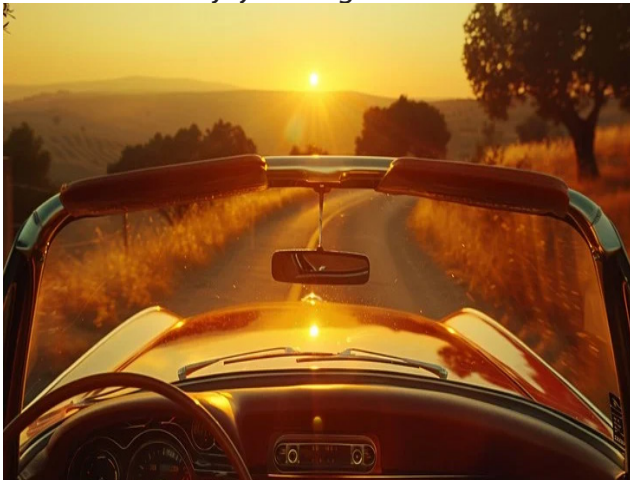
have any foot. When she was a child, she wanted to play like us, but she couldn't; she was very sad that she always needed someone to help her move. Walking is not just about moving, it is about enjoying your life the way that you like, the things that you like to do. Indeed, the ability to walk is one of the special blessings from Allah to me. And I'm grateful that I have the ability to walk all by myself, without anyone to help.

In conclusion, I'm really grateful for these significant blessings that I have in my life. These are very important blessings to me. Without one of these blessings, I think I'm not complete. These help me to become a better person.

Hobby Corner: Driving and Movies

What are a few of your favorite hobbies? I know that many people on earth have hobbies. I want to tell you about my two favorite hobbies: driving a car and watching movies.

First of all, I like driving a car because it gives me pleasure. I can see a lot of interesting things. For example, one day I saw a deer with little fawns near road. I saw a snake running across the road. Sometimes I increase the speed and catch strong emotions. This looks fun. Every week I try to find time to travel to enjoy the road and scenery. For me, driving a car is not just a means of transportation, but also a way to relax, and clean my mind. I especially enjoy driving in the evening when the roads are empty, and the city is full of lights. Indeed, I am very glad that I can enjoy driving a car.



The second reason why I enjoy driving is comfort. I don't have to stand in line at the bus stop. I can save my time. I have small children, and it is very convenient for me to get to the places I need by car. I feel very comfortable driving a car. For instance, I can stop whenever I want. I can enjoy the temperature in the car. In the car I always feel warm in winter and cool in summer. I like that I can listen to music at any volume. Indeed, I can't imagine life without my favorite activity.

Thirdly, driving a car helps me develop. Car trips are a time when I can think about important things. This is the time when I can be alone with

myself. Driving helps me develop concentration and attention. Driving makes me be organized and disciplined. This hobby helps me stay active and on the move. Driving helps me better understand the map of the area and develops navigation skills. I become more patient, especially in traffic jams or on difficult sections of the road. Driving a car improves my coordination. Indeed, I am very glad that I can improve myself while driving.



Last of all, my favorite hobby is watching movies. This activity allows me to spend time at home, and creates a cozy atmosphere. Watching movies is a way to learn more about the culture, art, and religion of other people. Movies inspire me to be creative. I like watching movies because then my family can get together. I like to observe characters and find something is common with myself. This hobby connects me with other people. For example, I can share my impressions and experiences with friends. Watching a movie helps me dream and hope for the best. Indeed, I like watching movies.

In conclusion, my favorite hobbies are driving a car and watching a movie because I get comfort, development, pleasure, and rest. These activities give me a sense of freedom and independence.

Snizhana Gerasymova - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

Hobby Corner: Fishing

Everyone has their own special hobby, which is different and helps them to spend free time in a pleasant way. One of my favorite hobbies is fishing. I really like to go fishing with my youngest son and friends. Fishing relaxes me and relieves everyday stress. Fishing gives me the opportunity to feel peace and quiet and restore my emotional state, and it allows me to meditate in harmony with nature.



First of all, every fishing trip is a holiday for me. I'm happy when I can get out to the river or lake, prepare my fishing rods, choose the right baits, and wait for the fish to bite. I don't always manage to catch fish, but the fishing process

itself is exciting for me. I feel like a part of nature. I enjoy the clean air and blue sky. I like to watch the birds that live near the lake or river. I love to enjoy the silence of nature.

Secondly, fishing gives me the opportunity to develop skills. I learn new techniques. I can experiment with different types of baits. I study the rivers and lakes and different types of fish in California. Each fishing trip is a new experience. That gives me new knowledge and understanding of uniting with nature.

Finally, there are different techniques and rules in fishing. Before going to the water, you need to purchase a license and read about the rules that

apply in the state of California. You can fish with different techniques such as float, spinning, jig, and carp fishing. I like spinning fishing because you can feel it in your hand when the fish bite. In winter, they fish on ice with a jig fishing. Carp fishing is a long waiting process until the fish swallows the bait well. All these types are interesting. Each river and lake has its own characteristics.

In conclusion, fishing is a hobby that unites people of different age groups. It is a wonderful time spent with friends and family in nature. It is a hobby that develops patience and attentiveness. It is important to remember that the real pleasure is the process itself, and not in the number of fish caught.

***Petro Shvaykovskyy - ESL 47
Descriptive Essay***



Parrot Plumes: Poetry

Passing Ngang (Horizontal) Pass

by Bà Huyện Thanh Quan

When I arrive at Ngang Pass, the sun has set low

Trees crowd themselves against rocks, leaves
against flowers.

Several woodcutters stoop themselves at the foot of
a mountain

Several houses of minority people scatter near a
riverbank.

Missing its lost country, a heartbroken watercock
cries

Calling for its homeland, a [francolin](#) tires out its
beak.

Stopping here, I'm surrounded by sky, mountains,
and waters

I'm full of emotions but I have only myself to share.

Translated by Nhien Nguyen, MD

Below is the original Vietnamese text.

QUA ĐÈO NGANG

Bước tới đèo Ngang bóng xế tà

Cỏ cây chen đá, lá chen hoa

Lom khom dưới núi, tiều vài chú

Lác đác bên sông, rợ mấy nhà

Nhớ nước đau lòng con quốc quốc

Thương nhà mỗi miệng cái gia gia

Dừng chân đứng lại, trời, non, nước

Một mảnh tình riêng, ta với ta

By Bà Huyện Thanh Quan

Why did I choose this poem?

I learned and wrote many analysis paragraphs about this poem when I was in middle school in Vietnam; however, I couldn't understand all the beautiful things about it. I learned it by heart. Even now, I can recite it out loud because I still remember it. It brings back memories about my school time. It is wonderful to understand and feel the beautiful scenery behind it.

Parrot Staff Writer: Tuyen Le

Source: [Poemhunter](#)

Further of analysis for this poem: [Across Ngang Pass](#)



Salt

J.C. Scharl

Don't salt your food before you taste it,
my mother used to say.
It might insult the cook—
my mother, keen-eyed little chef
forever serving up those heaping dishes
of her own life, and I,
unthinking, tasteless, salting.

Jane Clark Scharl is an American poet, playwright, and critic. Her poetry has appeared in many American and European outlets, including the BBC, The Hopkins Review, The New Ohio Review, The American Journal of Poetry, The Lamp, Measure Review, and others. Her criticism has appeared in Dappled Things, Fare Forward, Plough Quarterly, and others. Her first verse drama, Sonnez Les Matines, was published by Wiseblood Books in February 2023.

Source: <https://www.ekstasismagazine.com/poetry/2023/salt>



What Do You Miss About Your Home Country?

I am from Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a mountainous country and has an ancient history. I moved to America in 2017 because I got married and my husband was in America. I have been away from my country for almost six years, and that is why I miss many things in my country. In particular, I miss my city where I was born, I miss my parents' house, my country's traditional food, and Eid celebration with my family.



First, my city is unbelievably beautiful. I miss my city a lot. I was born in Kabul city, which is the capital of Afghanistan. Kabul is one of the largest cities of Afghanistan. Kabul is in the eastern half of Afghanistan. Kabul is a genuinely nice city and has a big population. Kabul has extremely big shopping malls. For example, there is Park Mall shopping center, Kabul City shopping center, Gul Bahar shopping center and Majid Mall shopping center. My favorite shopping mall is Park Mall, which is located near to my parents' house. Kabul has many large parks. For example, it has City Park, Habibzai park, Ariana Park, and New City Park. My favorite park is Ariana Park, and I miss it. Kabul also has very romantic weather. For instance, it has warm summers and cold winters. In addition, my city has unbelievably delicious fruits such as watermelon. I had a lot of friends in Kabul, and I miss them so much. Sometimes I wish to be with them. In addition, Kabul has exceptionally beautiful recreational places. For example, Qargha and Paghman are very interesting places for a picnic. Indeed, I miss everything about my city.

Next, I miss my parents' house. My parents' house is in Kabul. My parents' house is very beautiful and big and the most comfortable place for me. My parents' house has three floors, and each floor has two rooms and a bathroom. In total, my parents' house has 6 rooms, 3 bathrooms, a big hall and a very large kitchen.

My parents' house has a big and nice backyard, and the backyard has a lot of trees with flowers. In the middle of the yard, there is a bird bath on the left side, and they have a big space for parking cars because in Afghanistan all people park their cars in the backyard. And my parents' house has a beautiful front yard. In the front yard my father has a big grocery shop. In short, I really love my parents' house. My parents' house is the most comfortable place for me. I am very sad because I have been away from my parents for almost six years. I miss them a lot.

Another thing that I really miss about my country is the food. My country has many traditional foods, and my favorite food that I really miss is *bolani*. I have very good memories of preparing *bolani* from my family. I didn't know how to prepare *bolani* at all, and I had to prepare *bolani* for my in-laws. That is why I called my mother and I asked her to tell me how to prepare *bolani*. My mother told me. First, prepare the dough and let it rest for an hour. Next, boil the potatoes. Actually *bolani* is cooked and prepared in different ways with various vegetables. *Bolani* is usually prepared with potatoes, gourd, pumpkin and mung beans. The most common *bolani* made from potatoes. That is why my mother told me how to prepare *bolani* from potatoes. She told me after the potatoes are boiled, to grate them, and add a little salt, red paper, black paper, coriander and mix them with potatoes. After that, we put the potatoes inside the dough and fry it for three minutes. Then the *bolani* is ready to eat. Finally, I prepared *bolani* with the help of my mother and it was so delicious and all my in-laws said it was so tasty. Indeed, I was very happy and I still miss all the dishes that I used to prepare for my family, especially *bolani*, which is my favorite.

Last of all, I really miss celebrating Eid with my family. In Afghanistan, Eid celebration is one of the most important celebrations for Muslims. I like the preparation of the Eid that Muslims people do. Muslims have two Eids: One is Eid al-Fitr, which is called small Eid, and the other is Eid-al-Adha, which is called a big Eid. My favorite Eid is Eid-al-Fitr because it comes after Ramadan. When I was single, I began preparation one week before the Eid. I really miss those times that I went with my mom for Eid's shopping. And I decorated my parents' house for Eid. I made delicious food for them. For example, I made

manto and *qabuli palow*. On the first day of the Eid, we used to go to the mosque with our family to offer Eid prayers, and then I got ready with Afghani dress. I received money from my parents as an Eid gift. In short, I really miss those times and I really miss my mom and dad, and celebrating Eid in my country.

In conclusion my hometown is the most comfortable and enjoyable place for me. I really miss everything of my country especially my parents' house, my city, the food and Eid celebration.

Elahe Gheyasi - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

Robinhood

A Simple and Easy App for Investing

Robinhood is a free application available in the App Store, and anyone can download and use it. I personally found it really easy to use. It is designed especially for beginners who want to start investing in stocks and cryptocurrencies. The application is simple to navigate, and you don't need to be an expert to understand how to make trades.

One of the best things about *Robinhood* is that there are no fees when buying and selling stocks or crypto. This makes it great for new learners because you can start investing without worrying about extra costs. The application makes trading easy to learn, and you can start with small amounts, which is perfect if you are just getting into investing.

Another thing I like about *Robinhood* is that it feels secure and trustworthy. You can invest with peace of mind knowing that your money and personal information are safe. The application also has useful features like price alerts and real-time market updates, which help you stay on top of your investments.

I also like that *Robinhood* allows you to buy fractional shares. This means you don't have to buy a full share of an expensive stock; you can invest whatever amount you want, which makes it really flexible.

Please remember that it's really important to first understand how the stock market works and how to make a profit before you start investing. Make sure to follow daily news trends and learn about stocks and cryptocurrencies so you know what you're getting into. If you invest without knowing how the market works or without staying

updated on the latest news, there's a good chance you could lose your money.

Overall, I think *Robinhood* is a great application for people who are new to investing. It's easy to use, there are no extra fees, and it's a secure platform. If you're looking for a simple way to start investing, I'd definitely recommend trying *Robinhood*.

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Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi





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. We would be
happy to hear from you and will try to
respond ASAP.

The Parrot welcomes all ESL student
matters!



Intermediate Reading Comprehension



My Personal Library

I love to read. I have a lot of books. So many that I started building my personal library in my room. I have 20 books. They are all in English. Most of them are fantasies and thrillers. They are my favorite genres. I love these genres because they allow me to dive into fictional worlds. My favorite fantasy book is *Fourth Wing*, by Rebecca Yarros.

I also started reading other genres. For instance, I have contemporary fiction in my library. This genre is very interesting because it explores issues in modern society. I also started to get to know classic American literature. These are great additions to my personal library.

I love to read because it improves my imagination and English skills. I plan to read even more. Also, I plan to add more books to my personal library and make it very big.

Parrot Staff Writer: Sofia Kovalko

Can you answer these questions?

1. What are the writer's favorite genres?

- A) Drama and romance
- B) Fantasies and thrillers
- C) Horror and crime fiction

2. What is the writer's favorite book?

- A) *Fourth Wing*, by Rebecca Yarros
- B) *Harry Potter*, by J.K. Rowling
- C) *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins

3. What new books did the writer add to the library?

- A) Poems
- B) Memoirs
- C) Classic American literature

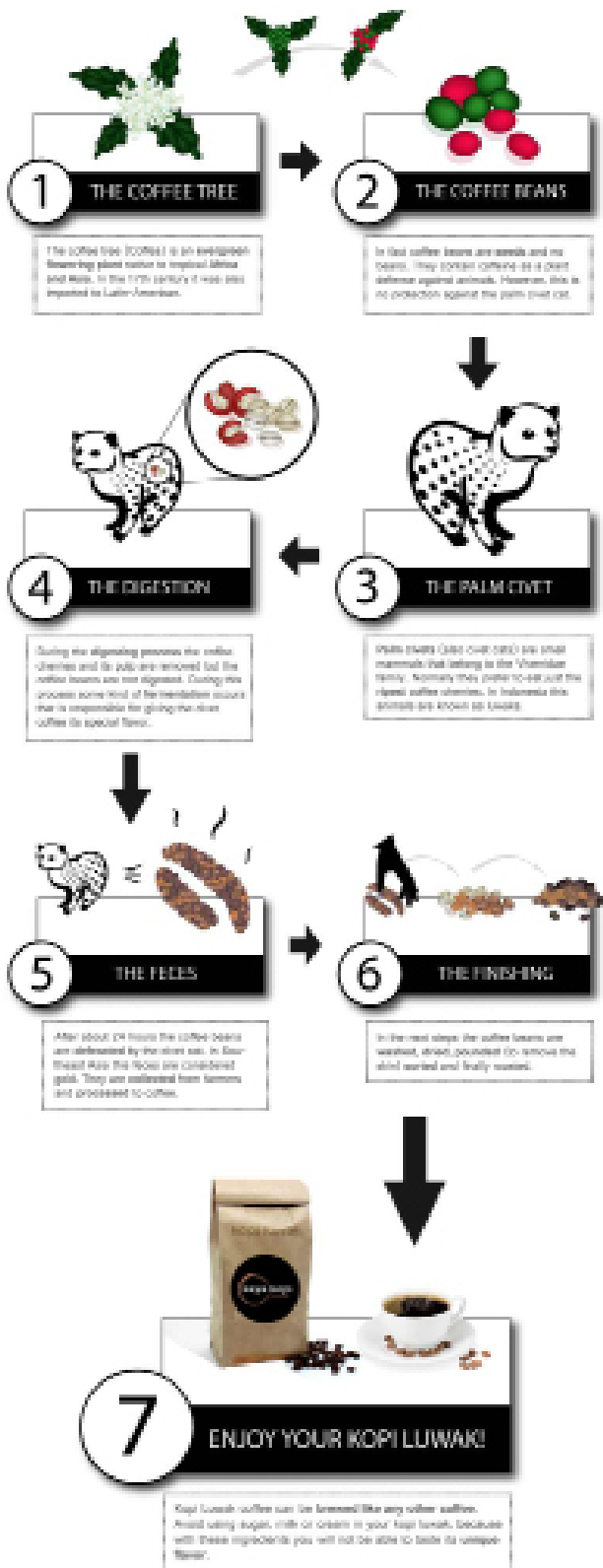
4. What are the writer's plans for the future?

- A) To read more
- B) To write her own book
- C) To stop reading



Around the World

From the tree to the cup



Let us tell you about some fascinating things around the world. You may know about many types of coffee in our country, such as espresso, cappuccino, latte, or Columbian coffee. Have you ever heard of **kopi luwak**? It is the most expensive coffee in the world. Let's see the process of this coffee and why it is so exclusive.

The main factor of its high price is the uncommon method of production. It is produced from coffee beans which have been partially digested by the Indonesian palm civet and then excreted. Yes, it sounds kind of gross, but not to worry! The outer layer of the coffee bean is removed during processing and the remaining beans are completely cleaned before being roasted and sent to you.

If you have an opportunity, would you try this coffee?

Source: Read more [here](#).



Continued from page 1

Newsletter at ARC. I believe many ESL students, like me, are already familiar with your support and are grateful for it.

Ryan: Thank you. That's kind of you to say.

Can you share what inspired you to pursue a career in ESL education and management?

Ryan: It wasn't my original plan. My degree wasn't even in teaching initially. I was taking an English class as part of general education, and the professor, who also coordinated an English 50 class, asked if I wanted to tutor. I said yes. It was a great opportunity to work on campus. Early on, I noticed how ESL students were treated and supported, which was sometimes frustrating. For example, I recall one student from Ukraine who had three master's degrees. She wrote an essay with great structure but had minor grammar issues. Instead of recognizing her strengths, the professor sent her to the ESL lab. That moment made me realize many ESL students only need a little extra help and encouragement. Over time, I became increasingly interested in working with ESL students. They often put in double or triple the effort of native speakers, and I wanted to be a part of their journey. My work at Sac State's Writing Center and teaching later solidified my passion for helping them succeed.

So, would you say most of your work focuses on supporting ESL students?

Ryan: Partly, yes. While I've worked with American students too, I naturally gravitated toward helping ESL students. Their challenges resonated with me. Imagine trying to attend college in a foreign language; it's an incredible feat. Some students aren't even in their second language; it's their fifth or sixth. That level of determina-

tion deserves respect, and it motivated me to focus on ESL education.

How would you describe your teaching style or supporting students?



Ryan: If you include tutoring, I've been teaching for nearly 10 years. My style is rooted in respect, patience, and understanding. Every student has a unique perspective, and I encourage them to share what they see without fear of being right or wrong. For me, teaching is about building confidence and meeting students where they are.

What do you find most rewarding about teaching ESL?

Ryan: The most rewarding part is seeing students succeed and hearing from them as they progress in life. I've attended graduations and seen former students build careers as nurses, dentists, and more. Knowing I played even a small role in their journey is incredibly fulfilling.

Can you share a story about a student who overcame significant challenges?

Ryan: Yes, there was one student who lived in a shack in a refugee camp. She and her mother slept inside, while her father and brothers stayed outside to protect them. Despite her timidness, she worked incredibly hard. Some professors were critical of her English skills, but we worked together for nearly two years. She graduated from ARC, then UC Davis, and recently partnered with another and opened her dental practice. She credits me for helping her, but I believe she did most of the work. I was just happy to be part of her journey.

That's such an inspiring story. I've had moments of discouragement with my English. I often feel that my writing is stronger than my speaking, even though I

delivered training workshops in English back home. Thank you for reminding me that having an accent is not a weakness but part of who I am.

Ryan: Exactly! ESL students often focus on negative interactions, like someone misunderstanding their accent, and that discourages them from practicing. But mistakes are part of learning. Your accent reflects your identity, and that's something to embrace.

What's your experience with handling cultural or language barriers?

Ryan: Respect is key. Understanding what students have been through, whether it's cultural differences or personal struggles, is important. Everyone's journey is unique, and I try to honor that. For instance, accents and language twists make communication interesting, not flawed. I intend to celebrate these differences; they're what make our world and our classrooms rich and diverse. For example, my fiancé is Filipino and she has a different accent and she's always nervous about, like, "Did I say that right?" or "Did I say that wrong?" and I was like, "I wouldn't change a thing because it's part of your personality, and it's what I love about you." What would be different if everybody spoke English exactly the same? It would be a boring language, right? So those little differences – how she sees something and how her mind translates it into English – are fascinating to me. I wouldn't want her to change anything to sound more American or whatever. Everybody that lives here is American. I love all of our different perceptions and all the different ways that everybody sees things. It makes the country great because you have people from your country, from the Philippines, from Iran, from Iraq, from Russia, from Canada, and from everywhere, and everybody sees things differently, and this combination of how everybody sees what we call this country – even back in its formation. Granted, there wasn't a lot of diversity in terms of ethnicity, but there were still people from all different parts of the world coming here and they kind of put it all together. That's why we can have many religions and many great different foods that I never would have gotten to try if I wasn't an ESL teacher. My seeing how different people from different places in different languages process the information that they see to me is amazing, and I wouldn't want to change but respect that perception because that's what they see. One of my biggest teaching philosophies is, "Tell me what you see. Don't worry about right or wrong. Tell me

what you see!"

What are your hobbies, and what do you do in your free time for fun?

Ryan: First and foremost, one of my favorite things to do is restore old vintage vehicles, vintage cars from the 1960s and 70s. I really enjoy working on them. I own two myself. Another thing is bowling. In my 20s, I was a professional bowler, not on TV or anything like that, but I did it for a couple of years. Lastly, I'm a passionate tabletop gamer. Not video games, but games where you physically go somewhere with a group of people to play together.

Asila: What kind of physical games?

Ryan: Games like *Dungeons & Dragons* or Magic. There's a game called Magic, but not the kind where you pull a rabbit out of a hat; it's a strategy card game. So yeah, those are the three things I enjoy.

Is there anything you'd like to share that I didn't cover in my questions?

Ryan: Just that in my 10 years, I've heard so many success stories, and there's no reason why anybody can't be one of those stories. The only thing that can stop ESL students is themselves.

Wow, thank you for that! I appreciate your time and insights. Thank you so much.

Ryan: Thank you!

This interview offers just an indication of the passion and dedication Ryan brings to supporting ESL students. His inspiring journey, practical advice, and encouragement remind all of us that success is attainable with effort and belief in oneself. On behalf of all ESL students, I extend heartfelt gratitude to Ryan for his time, wisdom, and unwavering support.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

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,

Last semester was difficult for me, and I failed one of my classes. What should I do now?

I'd appreciate some advice. Thank you.

Frustrated Student



Dear Frustrated Student,

Failing a class can feel discouraging, but it can also be a great opportunity to learn and grow. Here's some advice to help you bounce back. First, take time to reflect on what went wrong. Was it time management, study habits, or understanding the material? Identifying the problem is the first step to solving it. Second, reach out for support. Talk to your teacher or professor to understand where you struggled and how to improve. Don't forget to ask if there are extra resources, such as tutoring or study guides,

available. Third, make a plan to succeed in the future. Set a schedule, prioritize studying, and focus on improving your weaknesses. Don't hesitate to ask classmates for help or form study groups. Finally, stay positive and don't give up. Remember, failure is not the end—it's part of the journey. Learn from it, and you'll come back stronger.

Good luck!

Dear Readers,

I hope you found my advice to the student's question helpful. I am thankful for the information and experience he shared with us. If you need some advice, please share your question with me at:

Granny Noetal
TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu

Thanks,

Granny Noetal

Top Ten Universities for Communication Majors in California, USA

If you are passionate about the field of communication, California offers some of the best universities to pursue this major. From theory to practical skills, these schools provide comprehensive programs that prepare students for success in diverse communication careers. Each university provides unique opportunities to explore the dynamic field of communication, helping students gain the skills needed to thrive in various industries. Here are the top ten universities for communication majors in California:

- 1. University of Southern California (USC)** – Renowned for its Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.
- 2. Stanford University** – Offers interdisciplinary approaches to communication studies.
- 3. University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley)** – Known for its research-driven communication programs.
- 4. University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)** – A

leader in media and communication studies.

- 5. University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB)** – Strong in communication theory and practice.
- 6. University of California, Davis (UC Davis)** – Offers diverse communication coursework and research opportunities.
- 7. San Diego State University (SDSU)** – Highly regarded for its practical communication curriculum.
- 8. California State University, Fullerton (CSUF)** – A great option for public relations and media studies.
- 9. University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine)** – Focuses on the intersections of communication and technology.
- 10. California State University, Long Beach (CSULB)** – Known for its affordable and robust communication programs.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

Susan Pezone Scholarship Recipient



My name is Hanna Konstantynova, and I am from Ukraine, but I've been in the United States for about 2.5 years. I know Ukrainian, Russian, and Bulgarian. It's my third semester at ARC, my major is Business Administration, and I want to transfer to a 4-year college. To earn money, I babysit and sometimes work part-time at a cleaning company, so I am very happy to receive this scholarship. It will help me a lot.

Unfortunately, I didn't know Professor Pezone. However, when I found out about the scholarship, I wanted to know about the person in whose honor this scholarship was established, so I read what I could find on the Internet. I read a lot of positive feedback from students and also an article in *The Parrot* from Fall 2020. This really impressed me. Not many people manage to do so much in life, be kind to others and leave behind only good memories.

I like to read books and watch movies when I have free time. I enjoy writing. When I was about 12 or 13 years old, I wrote fairy tales and adventure stories for my younger siblings. We enjoyed reading these tales on long winter evenings. One of my favorite writers is Jane Austen. I like all her books. I love her ability to put into words people's inner

experiences and beliefs.

I have so many people to whom I am grateful and without whom my educational journey would have been much more difficult. The very first person is my cousin Marina. She was the one who convinced me to go to college and helped me fill out all the necessary documents. She continues to support me to this day. I am also grateful to all the people who drove me to college while I didn't have a car, especially my wonderful classmates Tatyana Mentus and Svetlana Pechena. They took me to and from college for the entire last semester absolutely free!

I am very very grateful to all the professors who turned English from something scary and incomprehensible into something I want to learn. Thanks to their professionalism and hard work, my adaptation to life in a new country is becoming easier. Special thanks to my Reading and Writing professors, Professor Joye and Professor Hoggan, who showed me that I am able to write an essay in English without using a translator! I really didn't believe that this was possible! I also want to thank Professor Limmaneeprasert for letting us know about the opportunity to apply for this scholarship.

An Audience to Life: Steps Reverent and Profane by ESL Professor David N. Evans

Good Hours

By [Robert Frost](#) 1874 – 1963

I had for my winter evening walk—
No one at all with whom to talk,
But I had the cottages in a row
Up to their shining eyes in snow.

And I thought I had the folk within:
I had the sound of a violin;
I had a glimpse through curtain laces
Of youthful forms and youthful faces.

I had such company outward bound.
I went till there were no cottages found.
I turned and repented, but coming back
I saw no window but that was black.

Over the snow my creaking feet
Disturbed the slumbering village street
Like profanation, by your leave,
At ten o'clock of a winter eve.

When, shortly before this last Christmas, I first encountered Robert Frost's short poem "Good Hours" (1914), I quickly found myself drawn into its world, and read it over and over, until I had it committed to memory. With its curious syntax, quasi-religious diction, and lilting rhythm, I found the poem rather moving despite the simplicity of its plot, which

features a person walking along a snow-covered village street on a winter evening.

From a syntactic standpoint, it is noteworthy that the speaker, who is likely an older man, uses the verb *had* six times in the first nine lines, in the same complementation pattern, each time to describe what belonged to the speaker's conscious experience

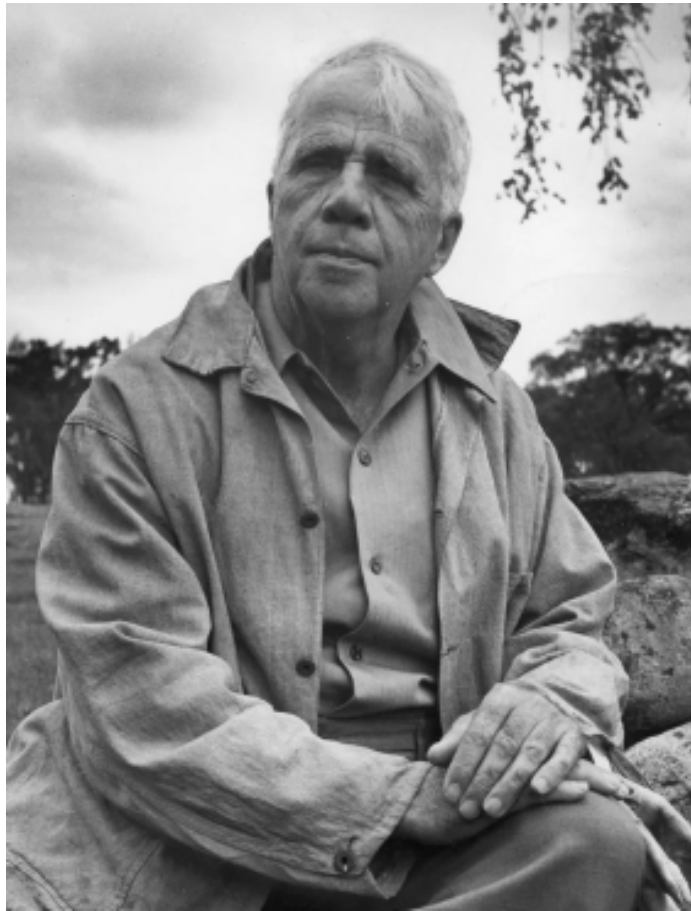
during his walk. Although he had no one to talk with, he did “have” cottages (described as if they were living beings, with “shining eyes”), the sound of a violin, and glimpses of youthful people.

Essentially, the effects of lively human life near the speaker made him feel as if he had human company; he “*thought* he had the folk within” (line 4, emphasis mine). However, on his way back, he “saw no window but that was black” (line 12). This *but that*-clause, an archaic construction that functions like a relative clause, means he saw no window which was *not* black. All the windows were dark; the inhabitants of the cottages had gone to bed.

Regarding diction, a few of Frost’s word choices in the second half are commonly found in religious contexts. The speaker didn’t simply turn around when he no longer found any cottages; he “turned and repented.” The Bible has similar language: “Repent therefore, and turn back” (Acts 3:19, English Standard Version). It’s as if the speaker came to regret pursuing his walk away from the lively folk within the cottages, whom he had perceived himself to “have.”

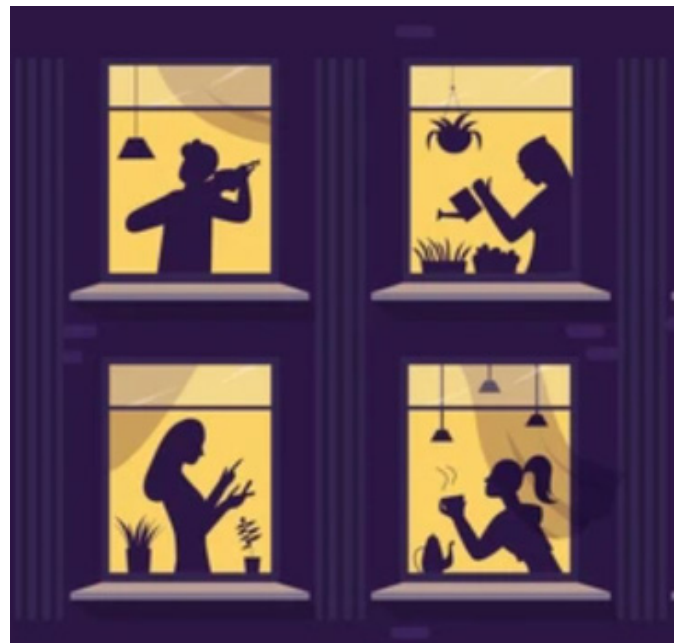
After turning and starting to come back, the speaker realized that he had never “had” those people after all, who had all gone to bed regardless of the speaker and his walk. The speaker had, as it were, been graced with their liveliness, without which it felt “like profanation” (line 15) to him to tread, with creaking feet, amid the silence of their sleeping presence. Profanation is to treat something sacred with disrespect.

From a rhythmic standpoint, too, the line



about profanation stands out. Although the poem is in iambic tetrameter (ta-TUM / ta-TUM / ta-TUM / ta-TUM), every line except this one has one or more three-syllable units, which give the poem a light, lilting quality. Line 1 has two such units: “ta-TUM / tump-ty-TUM / ta-TUM / tump-ty-TUM” (“I HAD / for my WIN / ter E / ven ing WALK”). But line 15 is stiffly regular: “like PRO / fa NA / tion, ON / your LEAVE.”

Who, incidentally, is the “your” in “on your leave”? This I find delightfully mysterious!





English Conversation Group

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

Want to practice speaking English? Join our friendly group!

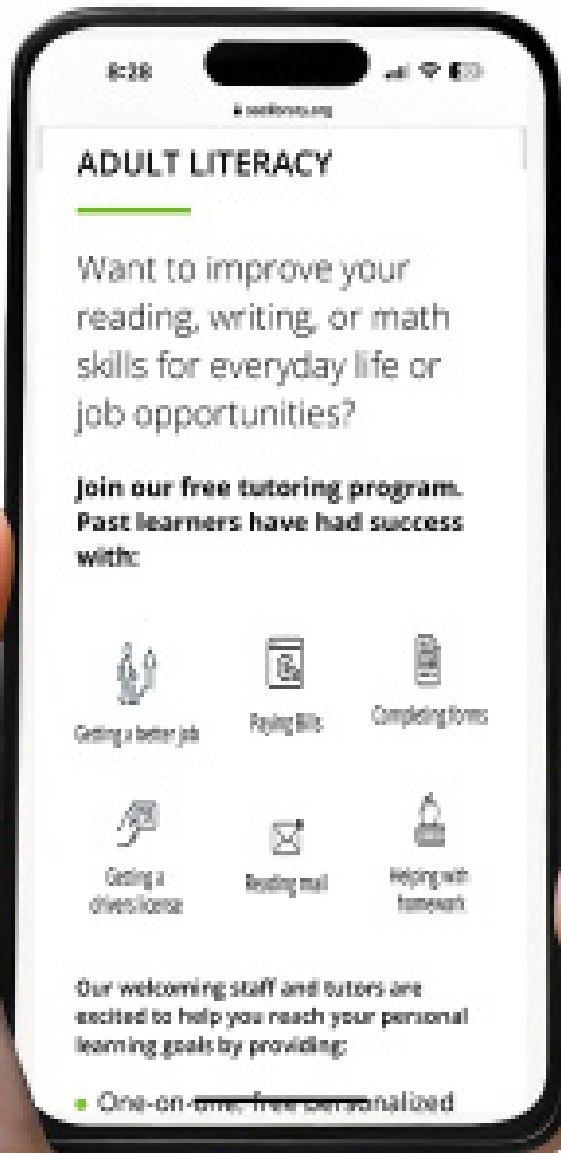
All languages and levels welcome. No registration. Meet new people and share experiences. This is not a class; it's more a social group for practicing.

Check "Events" for more locations and times at www.saclibrary.org.

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

The Honors Ball was a truly special occasion, inviting guests with formal invitations to celebrate the accomplishments of students. “Las Estrellas,” meaning “The Stars” in Spanish, set the elegant theme of the evening, with a formal dress code – suits, beautiful dresses, and gowns, which created a memorable atmosphere.

The Honors Ball included many activities, and the entire ASB and the Center for Leadership and Development worked hard along with Esperanza to organize and host the event at the highest level. This will now be a tradition, with the Honors Ball held each semester to honor graduates. “When Esperanza came to me three months ago with this idea, I was thrilled, and we decided to make it happen,” said Brett Sawyer, ARC Student Life Supervisor, in one of the opening speeches.



The evening featured a variety of memorable speeches, beginning with a heartfelt and delightful address by Lisa Cardoza, President of ARC. The organizer and host, Esperanza, followed with her own thoughtful speech, alongside Freshta Mehrpore, President of PTK. After these inspiring messages, the evening continued with the highly anticipated awards ceremony, where medals and certificates were presented to honor outstanding accomplishments. The awards were given in categories such as Graduates, Club and Events Board, Club Officers, Scholarship and Award Recipients, ARC Student Senate, 3.2+ GPA, honor societies, and more. I was amazed at how many active and talented students we have at ARC. It was inspiring to hear their stories, and I realized how important and wonderful this event was for recognizing excellence.

After the official ceremony, the evening continued with a delicious dinner, filled with conversations between all the award recipients. A fun part of the evening was the photo booth, where everyone could take pictures. The night ended with hours of dancing and relaxing before finals week. It was a perfect way to recharge and celebrate the hard work we’ve all put in throughout the semester.

Esperanza’s vision and dedication, along with the support of ASB and the Center for Leadership and Development, were key to creating this event. Their hard work made the evening possible, serving as a powerful reminder that leadership, determination, and a little bit of passion can turn an idea into something extraordinary. I’m already looking forward to the next Honors Ball, where even more stars will shine, thanks to the inspiration Esperanza has given us.

Parrot Staff Writer: Sofia Kovalko



Restaurant Review

Rica Burger: Colombian Style Burgers

ricaburger2023
J Balvin · Amarillo

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Uber Eats GRUBHUB

burgers, and more. I tried the Colombian hot dog, which is a regular hot dog but with many extra ingredients. It comes with bacon, lettuce, pineapple sauce, mozzarella cheese, mustard, and ketchup. What makes it special is that it also comes with a sunny-side-up egg and a salad. I was surprised by



how well all the ingredients worked together.

I also tried the *salchipapa*, which is a mix of sausage chopped into pieces with French fries, sauces, and mozzarella cheese. It was very tasty and delicious. I loved the combination of the sausage and French fries, and the sauces added a lot of flavor.

The food at *Rica Burger* is very good, and I would recommend it to anyone who likes Colombian food or wants to try something new. The prices are reasonable, and the portions are big. I am looking forward to trying more of their menu items in the future.

If you are in Downtown Sacramento and want to try some delicious Colombian food, I suggest you check out *Rica Burger*.

I am excited to share with you my experience at *Rica Burger*, a new Colombian fast food place in Downtown Sacramento. Currently, they offer pickup and delivery options only, but I heard they will have a dining area soon.

Rica Burger has a variety of delicious Colombian food, such as hot dogs, *salchipapas*,

Parrot Staff Writer: Manny

One-Minute Interview

If money wasn't the issue, what would be your ideal vacation?



Ramon Jarquin: "I would travel to every main destination in South America, including Machu Picchu."

Oxana: "I would go to Disneyland and then to Disneyworld right after."



Marisol: "I would go to Paris and stay in a hotel with a nice view of the Eiffel Tower."

Think in English – Write Better

Do you remember your first attempts at writing in English as a non-native speaker? I clearly remember my early drafts during my first ESL class. The challenge of learning the language was overwhelming, but it was also inspiring. As I worked paragraph by paragraph on my essays, I realized how much I had to simplify my writing. My drafts were basic – simple sentence structures, limited vocabulary – and I constantly fought the urge to write more intricately. I had to restrain myself. To reach my goal of thinking in English while writing, I had to start with simple steps: short sentences and basic words. That’s how I began to lay the foundation for more advanced writing later on.

Trying to write in more advanced English when I wasn’t quite ready was my biggest mistake, and it negatively influenced my writing overall. When I wrote, I was thinking in my native Ukrainian, creating sophisticated sentences in my head and using poetic vocabulary. However, when those thoughts came down on paper in English, they looked unnatural. I was tiring myself out with “translating”, but the translator wasn’t able to translate the difficult words from Ukrainian into English the way I wanted them to sound.

During my first semester in college, I came to a realization and made a big step back: I started writing very short sentences on simple topics to train my brain to absorb all the English I knew, gradually pushing myself to think in English. It was a bold decision, but it helped me feel more comfortable during the writing process. Instead of focusing on how to translate words, I concentrated on the quality of what I was writing. Subconsciously, I invited the foreign language into my mind and allowed it to dominate.



Sometimes, it feels like you have to let go of your native language to allow English to take over all aspects of your life. This starts with consuming content in English – whether reading, watching YouTube videos, or thinking in English even in everyday situations. Thinking in English, as though it were your native language, is a combination of many actions that will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the language, helping you feel it and make your writing more natural and authentic. Here’s my advice for how to do this.

1. Intensively read books by American authors. I personally read a lot – my bookshelves are packed with dozens of books in English. This is a useful habit that not only develops your imagination but also creates a space where only English exists.
2. Try consuming a lot of content in English: reading news, watching YouTube videos, or looking for interesting topics you want to learn about and reading materials in English.
3. If you love taking notes on your phone or in a notebook, I suggest writing them down in English, too. Over time, you will even forget you are trying to write in English – this process will become natural.
4. And lastly, don’t be afraid and don’t believe the old myth that non-native speakers will never be able to think in English as native speakers do. Just let the English language fully integrate into your life and become a constant presence, following you even during the tiniest moments of your everyday life.

Parrot Staff Writer: Sofia Kovalko

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.

I Won the Awesome Arts Grant!

I am so happy to share with you that I won the Awesome Arts Grant from the arts department! This grant is a great opportunity for art students to turn their ideas into reality. The Art Department of American River College looks for students who have a creative project and want to make it happen. If

you win, you get \$250 cash to help you make your project come true. I submitted my project about starting a photography YouTube channel. I love taking pictures and want to share my adventures with others. I also want to teach people how to take great photos of the stars and night sky. I was so excited to hear that I won the grant!

The Awesome Arts Grant is only open to art students, so you need to be majoring in art to apply. But if you are an art student, I highly recommend that you participate. The Art Department announces the deadlines for the grant through the Art Homebase, so make sure to check it out. I am very happy to have won the grant and I am excited to start working on my project. I hope that my YouTube channel will inspire others to take up photography and explore the beauty of the night sky.

If you are an art student, don't be afraid to submit your project. You never know, you might

win the grant and make your dreams come true. The Art Department is always looking for new and creative ideas, so don't hesitate to share yours. I want to encourage all art students to go out for the Awesome Arts Grant. It's a great opportunity to showcase your talents and make your project a reality. Who knows, you might be the next winner!



Remember, the deadlines for the grant are announced on the Art Homebase webpage, so make sure to check it out. Don't miss your chance to win and make your creative dreams come true.

I am so grateful to have won the grant, and I am excited to see what the future holds for my photography YouTube channel. I hope that my story will inspire you to go out for the Awesome Arts Grant and make your own creative dreams come true.

By Manny

Movie Review

Everything, Everywhere, All at Once



One of my favorite movies that I watch over and over again is *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*, and I must say that it is a truly unique and thought-provoking experience. As a non-native English speaker, I sometimes struggle to understand complex plotlines and nuances of language, but this movie is both challenging and rewarding to watch.

The story follows the life of Evelyn Wang (played by Michelle Yeoh), a Chinese-American woman who is being audited by the IRS. As she navigates the complexities of her tax return, she is suddenly thrust into a multiverse, where she must confront different versions of herself and make choices that will determine the fate of the universe.

The movie explores themes of identity, culture, and belonging. Evelyn is a woman who is caught between different

worlds. She is Chinese, but she is also American; she is a wife and mother, but she is also an individual with her own desires and aspirations. As she navigates the multiverse, she must confront different versions of herself and make choices that will determine which path she will take. This theme resonates with me, as I have often felt like I am caught between different cultures and identities. As a non-native English speaker, I sometimes struggle to express myself in a way that feels authentic and true to who I am.

The cinematography and special effects in the movie are also worth noting. The film uses a lot of bright colors and fast-paced editing to create a sense of energy and chaos, and as a photographer who understands color and light, I truly appreciate this. The special effects are often surreal and dreamlike, which adds to the sense of wonder and confusion that Evelyn experiences as she navigates the multiverse. For example, the scene in which Evelyn first enters the multiverse is incredibly vivid and disorienting, with colors and images flashing by in a way that is both overwhelming and exhilarating. The best part of all these special effects is that they are practical, meaning they didn't need to spend a lot of money on special editing and

post-developing, but rather they made them based on different lighting techniques and camera angles.

In terms of character development, I was impressed by the complexity and depth of the characters in the movie. Evelyn is



a rich and nuanced character, with a lot of flaws and contradictions. She is a woman who is both strong and weak, confident and uncertain, and this complexity makes her feel more real and easy to relate to. The supporting characters, such as Evelyn's husband Waymond and her daughter Joy, are also well-developed and add depth and nuance to the story.

One of the things that I found most interesting about the movie was its use of symbolism and metaphor. The multiverse is a powerful symbol for the complexity and multiplicity of human experience, and the movie uses it to explore themes of identity, culture, and belonging. The character of Evelyn is also a symbol for the immigrant experience, and the movie uses her story to explore the challenges and complexities of navigating different cultures and identities.

Another thing that stuck with me is how a simple phrase like, "nothing matters" can have different connotations depending on how you say

As an ESL student, I appreciated the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and phrases, and to practice my listening and comprehension skills. I would give the movie 5 stars out of 5, and I would definitely watch it again in the future.

Parrot Staff Writer: Manny



it. Throughout the movie, that phrase was used as a sign of deep depression and hopelessness; however, by the end it completely switches its meaning and becomes something capable of expressing hope and relief.

Overall, I would highly recommend *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* to anyone who is looking for a thought-provoking and visually stunning movie. The film is both challenging and rewarding, with a complex plotline and nuanced characters.

Time Cut (2024)

A Thought-Provoking Time Travel Thriller

I really enjoyed *Time Cut*, and the idea behind the movie was fascinating. The story was copacetic, making the audience feel connected to the possibility of time travel. It really made me think: What if I got the chance to accidentally travel 20 years back like Lucy did? What would I change? What would be at the top of my to-do list?

In the movie, Lucy, a teenage girl, suddenly finds herself traveling from 2024 to 2003. At first she is confused, but then she discovers something shocking: she had a sister she never knew about, who was murdered

by a masked killer 20 years earlier. Now, Lucy's mission is clear: she has to save her sister's life. The way the story unfolds keeps you engaged, and it makes you wonder about your own past and what you would do differently if you could go back in time.

This movie made me reflect on my own life. If I could travel 20 years back, there are so many things I would do differently. One of the biggest things is choosing the right education path earlier. I graduated from school in 2006, and if I had the chance to go back, I would have gone straight to college and studied computer science (software engineering) instead of doing it much later now in 2025. I would also focus more on learning English fluently because now I understand how important it is and how much stronger English skills could have helped me be even more



successful.

Another thought that came to my mind was all the innocent lives lost in Afghanistan due to explosions and violence. If I had the power to travel back in time, I would do everything I could to save as many people as possible. And of course, on a more practical note, I would invest in properties to secure my financial future and make sure I am wealthy and stable 20 years later.

These are just a few things that crossed my mind while watching the movie. *Time Cut* is more than just a sci-fi slasher, it's a movie that makes you think deeply about your past, your choices, and

the what-ifs of life. There are so many things I would have done differently, and this movie reminded me of that.

If you love movies that make you think about second chances and the power of time, I definitely recommend watching *Time Cut*!

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Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi

The Swallow's Silverquill

Have you ever thought about talking to yourself? At first, it may seem odd and awkward, but let's imagine this in light of something deeper – gaining self-awareness of what you do and how you grow. Two months ago, I started practicing journaling – writing down thoughts daily and reflecting on one's experiences on paper, in a notebook, on a Word document, or in notes on a phone. I had known about this practice for a while, but only just recently gained the courage to try it myself. And I can honestly say that I loved it!

Journaling always seemed like a bold practice to me, not to mention an activity that would require a lot of dedication and time commitment. How is it possible to have a desire to write more if you already have a lot of writing assignments due? I started to look at it as a way of emotional relief and a tool to improve my own writing – to write more creatively and freely, with no boundaries. In my first journaling entries, I reflected in the evenings on everything I had experienced throughout the day – what I did that improved me or what I did that changed something. What did I read, what did I learn, and how did that knowledge shape me? The most fascinating thing about journaling is that I don't worry about the quality, the order, or the grammar, as no one is going to read it. It is my place to express everything I feel and explore how I can write without a particular topic and how creative my writing can be.

Indeed, it may seem like a chore, and I was afraid of it initially. But the feelings I experience are amazing. I don't feel like doing a "workout for

my brain" again after a busy day of studying, but I look at it as an opportunity to observe myself. I can write just a few sentences, or I can write more than a page – extensive descriptions of a day that was rich in events, or when I did so much during the day. Initially, it was quite difficult to get into this process, to force myself, late in the evening, to write, but once I started, I found that additional writing on your own initiative feels like joy.



For example, I wrote down my understanding and reflection on a book I've read, the theme of which reminded me of a movie I've watched: *Hope*. Another topic that I encountered yesterday while watching *The Theory of Everything*. It's an example of how one scene can be more meaningful than most of the modern movies. Or I could write about my commitments

that I plan to do: *Today, I woke up with the torturous thought of how many assignments I should complete*. And in the end, I reflect on how much I accomplished – or maybe not: *I am very proud of myself because I've finished everything I scheduled for today. It's time to relax*.

In my column *The Swallow's Silverquill*, I will be sharing my experience with journaling, reflecting on how it improves my writing, and offering advice on how to start and manage your own journaling – if my story inspires you to give it a try.

Chirrup 'til next time!



Written by the quill of *Sofia Kovalko*

Music Review

Wasia Project



I have recently discovered an extraordinary music group, Wasia Project, and I am utterly amazed by their sound. This British sibling duo, formed by Olivia Hardy and William Gao, masterfully blends a captivating mix of jazz, bedroom pop, and classical music to create a truly distinctive and unique sonic experience. Olivia's enchanting vocals take center stage, while William's keyboard expertise adds a rich layer of depth and complexity to their compositions.

The themes that Wasia Project explores in their music are both deeply personal and universal. They tackle topics like love, loss, and self-discovery with a level of nuance and sensitivity that is rare in contemporary music. From the catchy and upbeat "[ur so pretty](#)" to the more introspective and emotional "[Remember When](#)", their songs are meticulously crafted to evoke a strong emotional response. And let's not forget their music videos, which are

stylish, visually stunning, and infused with a sense of humor that is distinctly British.

One of the things that set Wasia Project apart from other music groups is their ability to connect with their audience on a deep and meaningful level. They have a gift for creating a sense of community and intimacy at their live shows, where everyone in attendance feels like they're part of something special. And their music is incredibly versatile, effortlessly shifting from soft and slow to upbeat and energetic, keeping listeners engaged and eager for more.

My favorite song by Wasia Project is one called, "[Takes Me Back Home](#)". As someone who has left their hometown, the lyrics truly resonate with me, as the song talks about those special little things that instantly transport you back home. It could be a smell, a person, or even a word – that one little thing that just takes you back to a moment in time when you felt happy and safe.

All in all, I'm thoroughly impressed by Wasia Project, and I think you will be too. This talented duo is pushing the boundaries of what's possible in music, and their unique sound and energetic live performances are not to be missed. If you haven't already, do yourself a favor and check out their music – I promise you won't be disappointed!

Parrot Staff Writer: Manny



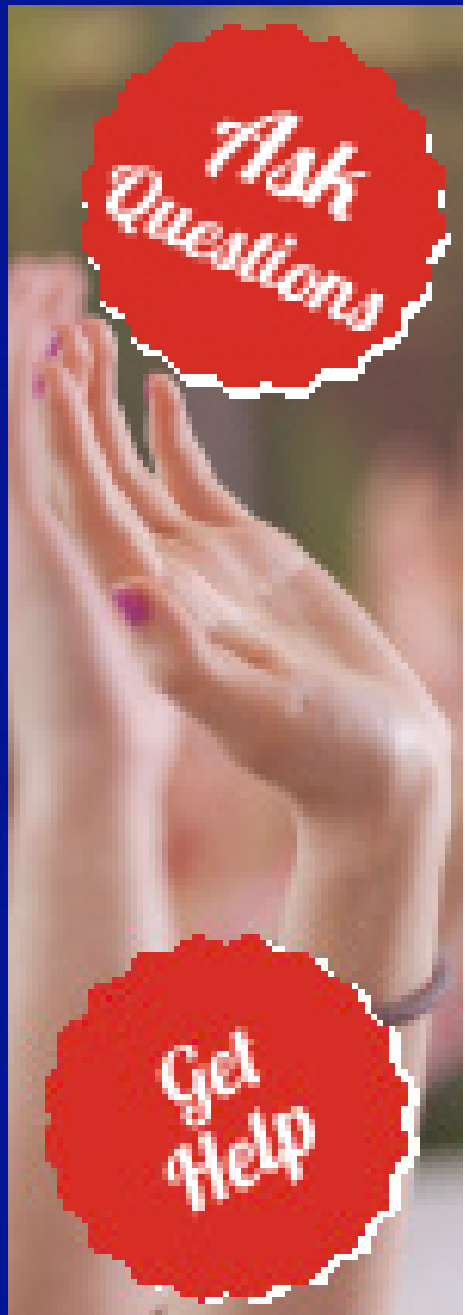
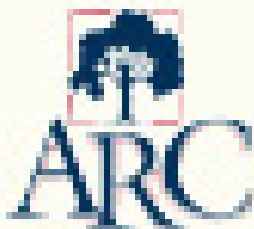
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Explore California

Auroras in Oroville



Last October, I embarked on a thrilling adventure to Oroville, California, with the sole purpose of capturing the breathtaking beauty of the Northern Lights. Also known as the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon that occurs when charged particles from the sun interact with Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere. This spectacular display of colored lights can be seen in the northernmost parts of the world, and I felt incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to witness and photograph it in Cali-

fornia.

As I arrived in Oroville, I couldn't wait to set up my camera and wait for the night sky to come alive with the dancing lights of the aurora. And what a night it was! The Northern Lights were so bright and beautiful, filling the sky with vibrant hues of green, blue, and purple. I was overjoyed to be able to capture their beauty through my lens, and I spent almost the entire night sitting in my little chair next to my camera, snapping away at the stunning display above.



The rolling hills of Oroville provided a perfect backdrop for the Northern Lights, and I was able to capture some truly breathtaking shots of the auroras dancing across the sky. The lights were so vivid and intense that they seemed to pulse with an otherworldly energy, and I felt as though I was witnessing a celestial spectacle that few people ever get to see.

Photographing the Northern Lights in Oroville was a dream come true, and I feel so



fortunate to have been able to capture their beauty and essence through my camera. The experience was a reminder of the incredible wonders that our universe has to offer, and I left Oroville feeling inspired and renewed, with a newfound appreciation for the natural world and its many secrets.

If you want to see more of my work, check out my new website:

Emrradophotography.com

By Manny

Celebrating Resilience: Afghan Success Shines Bright in Sacramento

Newly Arrived Afghan Success Celebration Event

On December 20, 2024, I had the privilege of attending a remarkable event honoring the resilience and achievements of newly arrived Afghans organized by the **Muslim American Social Services Foundation (MAS-SSF)**. This celebration recognized the strength and progress of Afghan community members as they rebuild their lives in the United States.

About MAS-SSF

MAS-SSF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing mental health services to diverse communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim. This orga-

nization offers services in five languages: Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Arabic, and English. The organization supports seniors, families, and youth through nine tailored programs to provide Peer Support Counseling services. Their mission is family togetherness to foster mental health and wellness, addressing the needs of the community as a whole.

Event Highlights

- **Recognition Ceremony:** Twenty Afghan individuals were honored in a nomination-based award program for their accomplishments, celebrating milestones that inspire the broader community.



• **Workshop Presentation:** Dr. Farid Younis, a respected scholar and author, led a workshop titled "How to Be Successful in the United States While Maintaining Wellness and Mental Health." His insightful presentation emphasized the importance of mental health as a foundation for success.

• **Artistic Performances:** Afghan artists brought vibrant cultural energy to the event with traditional song performances.

• **Raffle and Prizes:** Excitement filled the room as participants won 35 prizes in a fortune-wheel raffle.

• **Community Gathering:** Approximately 350 adults and 135 children attended, with activities supervised by the professional daycare/babysitting of "Amazing Athletes" team in Sacramento.

• **Food Delights:** A delicious meal concluded the evening, fostering a sense of unity and celebration among attendees.

Impact and Reflection

The event was a resounding success, providing a platform to honor Afghan resilience and encourage positive change. Events like these are vital for combating depression and anxiety and promoting a healthier and more connected society.

I thoroughly enjoyed the event, which ran from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM. It was both in-

spiring and uplifting, exploring the strength of the community and the value of celebrating achievements. I hope similar events continue to inspire hope and foster mental and emotional well-being across all communities.

MAS-SSF Afghan Success Nominations

MAS-SSF invites nominations for Afghan community members who have made significant strides since arriving in the U.S. in July 2021. Winners are recognized at the annual Afghan Success Recognition event to celebrate resilience and inspire others. The winners included people of different ages, from 9 years old to 63 years old, in different fields.

This event reminded me of the power of community support and the importance of cultural diversity. By participating, I witnessed the positive impact of recognizing achievements and fostering connections. Let us all strive to support and celebrate one another, building a stronger and more inclusive society.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi



Out of the Cage

Parent to Parent Program at ARC

Being a student and parent brings unique challenges that only another parent truly understands.

At American River College, a special resource called [Parent to Parent \(P2P\)](#), in partnership with the Mentor Collective, enhances the students' experience by connecting CalWORKs students with a mentor from within the program. Students are paired with someone invested in their success--a person ready to listen, inspire, help navigate challenges, and recognize opportunities.

Additionally, P2P mentors serve as a critical part of a student's success team by serving as a proxy for your dedicated counselors and the [CalWORKs program](#). Mentor Collective's online platform provides training and resources for students' mentors and makes it easy for mentors and mentees to connect.

To enroll in P2P, scan the QR code or call: (916) 484-8059



Mentee Registration

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

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