

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



# The Parrot

ISSUE #189  
SPRING 2025



Inside This Issue

## CalWORKS Works for You at ARC!

### Meet Liliana Plamadeala

**Sayed:** Thank you very much for taking the time to have an interview with *The Parrot*. To start our interview, can you introduce yourself and tell us about your educational journey?

**Liliana:** Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Liliana Plamadeala, and I work as a Student Support Assistant (SSA) in the CalWORKs program at American River College (ARC). My educational journey began at ARC, where I graduated in 2020 with a degree in General Science. From there, I continued my education at Sacramento State University,



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## My Immigration Story

Jana Perciun - ESL 325

Would you like to contribute to *The Parrot*?

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### *The beginning of a new chapter of my life*



Have you ever heard about the expression "American Dream" and wondered what it is? Yes, the "American Dream" is a concept about aspirations, usually for immigrant groups, and the belief in achievement and success that is based on an individual's efforts and hard work, despite class structures, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity.

How did I find myself among those who aspire to this "dream"? In 2014, during my second year as a resident in Anesthesiology and Intensive Care, I was doing my daily tasks at the hospital when I received

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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.

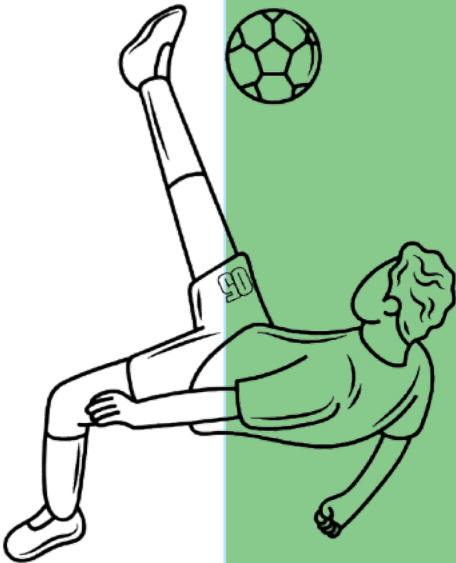


Need help?  
[esl-assessment@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:esl-assessment@arc.losrios.edu)

## **Soccer**

**By Rohullah Osmani, ESL 350**

Nothing feels like you  
When I am with you  
I forget about all the world  
You fulfill my incomplete life  
When I hear your name  
All my body comes to life  
Wherever you are  
You connect all the world  
You bring peace, joy, excitement and madness to the boring life  
I don't want anything else,  
But to have you forever  
Your name is written in my heart  
You will stay with me forever and forever  
People forget about their problems  
When they watch your green field  
People forget to breathe  
People forget to blink  
When they watch your army in action  
Your warriors are ready to die  
To keep your name alive  
Your name is like music  
You brighten our life  
You bring hope to life  
Some people call you soccer  
Some people call you football  
Your name is so cool  
My football, my football.



## ***Soccer***

***By Yuli Pineda, ESL 350***

It's the curves,  
they are  
beautiful,  
the lines going all around  
like following  
a path, the truncated  
icosahedron

Connecting with the lines  
as it is supposed to  
happen, it's called  
destiny, just as when  
flies away from the  
leg hit bat.

it's amazing,  
Sometimes, it can fly  
in a curve sometimes  
straight but at the end  
it's just as destiny wants it,  
pass or not the big  
rectangle is all in destiny's  
Hands, the black balloon  
inside giving  
the necessary help for the fly,  
ninety minutes and  
she is only one  
that runs all around  
the place, she is not an athlete  
but she is faster than everyone.  
She is perfect.





## The Day My Life Changed

It is hard to leave your home country, but sometimes you have to. People may leave their home country because of war, or because their family is separated. My family and I left Afghanistan in 2021 to go somewhere safe, to be together and feel free.

It was the afternoon of August 22, 2021. In 3 or 4 hours we collected our valuables. I was so frustrated and in shock; my phone was in my hand waiting for more text and the time to leave home. We gathered our documents, and I took just 3 pairs of clothes. I could only take a small and light bag. It was finally time to leave. Women were forced to wear long dresses and scarves to cover up outside. The Taliban could bother or kill females without hijabs.

Every moment was filled with danger. On one side of the airport was the Taliban. The Taliban stopped people, asked them questions and did not allow them to go inside. On the other side were American soldiers who helped their employees and volunteers to enter inside. My father, mother, brother and I were stuck in the crowd with arguing, gun shots and screaming.

We made it inside the airport. After two nights in the airport, sleeping on boxes, on hard concrete and in cold weather, we ended up in Abu Dhabi. We thought it would be

good that we were safe and would go soon to the U.S. But unfortunately, we were like in a jail even though we did nothing wrong. In the beginning, we were not allowed to go outside of the building, because of possible COVID symptoms. Then they allowed us to go to the yard, but I was feeling completely disappointed because they still did not allow us to go outside of the camp.

After all the difficulties, we finally made it to the United States. First, we landed in Virginia and stayed for a month for

immigration process. We chose California because of its nice weather and Afghan population, including some friends and relatives. We came here to start a new life. My mind was like a blank sheet of paper ready to be filled. Everything seemed new to me, but now I'm happy

that I'm here together with my family.

We are free. I can study at college, go to work and go outside alone. Like a bird, I can fly anywhere I want! I'm thankful that we made a decision that changed our life when we left Afghanistan and moved to the United States.

**Soman Nooristani - ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**



## I Like to Shop

Most people like to shop. They go shopping for various reasons. Some people go to stores to buy food, others to buy clothes. Some people prefer to shop at the minimarket near their house, others to go to the market. What stores do you shop at? I prefer to shop in the big mall, and there are several great reasons such as safety, a large selection of things, and the opportunity to have a good time.

The first reason is that the mall is safe. There are video cameras around and inside the mall. Furthermore, there are security guards on duty. Parking is always free for visitors. From the parking lot you can enter the shopping center. Inside the mall, at the information desk, you can find a map of the stores. For example, using a map, you can always find the store you need. The mall staff will also help family members find each other if they get lost. In short, I always feel safe here. Therefore, I like to go shopping at the mall.

The second is that there are many amazing small shops here. Stores sell many different goods. Moreover, in the stores you can buy everything, from jewelry to stocks. Beyond that, stores sometimes have sales. On this day, you can really buy an expensive item at a good price. I like walking between the aisles of clothes. I can touch the material, choose the color, and choose the size. Also,



I can try on clothes for myself. When I find clothes that I really like, I get happy like a child. In fact, at the mall I can find any store with different clothes.

The third reason is that I can spend a wonderful day with my family at the mall. The mall has a lot of remarkable restaurants to suit the taste. For instance, we can eat a sandwich or order American steak. Furthermore, there are many exciting activities for children. They can take part in various competitions. While the kids are having fun, I can go and do some shopping. It is especially beautiful in the mall before Christmas. The shopping center is decorated with New Year's toys. Children feel as if they are in a fairy tale. In brief, in the mall I can not only shop, but also have a good time with my family.

In conclusion, I like shopping at the mall because it is exceptionally safe, there is a great selection of remarkable products, and I get to spend quality time with my family. In my opinion, even if you didn't buy anything, you will still be satisfied with your visit to the mall. Of all types of stores, I prefer to shop at the mall, and I am special happy that I can visit the shopping center every day.

**Andrey Selvasyuk - ESL 47**  
**Opinion Essay**

## My Dangerous Tan

Sometimes, we do dangerous things to try to be beautiful. At the beginning of the summer season we want to get a tan as soon as possible. Especially, when we are teenagers and don't have much experience and knowledge.

Such an unsuccessful tan happened to my cousin and me in June 1996, in the south of Ukraine.

Many years ago, when I was 12 years old, my cousin and I went to a children's camp

on the Black Sea coast in the city of Odessa, Ukraine. She was 12 years too. We really wanted to have tanned bodies and we wanted to do it quickly. On the first day of our vacation, we went to the beach in the morning. We were sunbathing and didn't use sunscreen. We didn't go to the shade in the middle of the sunny day. All day we stayed on the beach. The sun, at that moment, eclipsed our minds, and it seemed that our red bodies were looking very attractive. We were like jellyfish melting on hot rocks because of the intense heat. A feeling of joy filled our hearts that we would be the most tanned on the first day of rest.



The burnt skin peeled off, creating fresh wounds. We didn't go to the beach for the next 10 days. We felt disgusting when others were enjoying a good vacation. We had both physical and emotional pain. It was a shame to lose in our own battle.

Finally, we remember this story with a smile. Now, I use sunscreen every time I sunbath, and I try to spend less time under a scorching sun. Now, we have learned from our mistakes. We don't need tan bodies; we need healthy bodies. I know how to have a beautiful tan without putting myself in danger.

***Tetiana Bannikova - ESL 47***  
***Opinion Essay***

Back on the campus at night, we had chills and fevers. Our bodies were burning. A few days later, we had blisters all over bodies.

## The Power of a Name

Have you ever thought about why people leave their home country, what difficulties they face adjusting to a new culture, and how they respond to all these problems? I recently read two stories from two different immigrants, one from Asia and another from Mexico, that move to the U.S. and what they face in their life journey with the new culture. Even though both of the stories ("Hello, My Name Is" by Jason Kim, and "My Name" by Sandra Cisneros) talk about identity and adjusting in the US culture and society, the stories have many differences in theme, conflict, and main characters.

First, both stories focus on identity as their theme. In "Hello, My Name Is," Jason talks about his childhood when he came to the U.S. and went to school, and they treated him differently just for being an Asian and having a different and difficult name to pronounce. In "My Name," Esperanza (the main character) talks about her name, culture, and how it affects her grandmother's life since she is from Mexico. Also, she talks about the different meanings of her name in English and Spanish. It shows how important identity is in each culture. If people change their names, something other than their actual names, it feels like it's somebody else, not their true self. Jason feels that he isn't

his true self because he can't use his Korean name, while Esperanza doesn't feel it is her true self because she doesn't want to have the same fate as her grandma.

Second, both stories have different conflicts about their names. Jason has an external conflict about his name. Americans can't pronounce his name well because it's hard for them, so Jason needs to change his name to please them. Meanwhile, Esperanza has an internal conflict with her name because it was her grandmother's name, but she doesn't want to be like her grandmother; she wants to change her life and have power, freedom, and everything that her grandmother couldn't. She is also afraid that she will become like her grandmother, and that's why she wants to change her name. The differences between the stories' conflicts are so important, and that shows how two different immigrants have different conflicts that most immigrants may have in their life journey.

Third, the two stories have different points of view in their main characters. In "Hello, My Name Is," Jason is the main character and is from Korea. He is a male character who has a really different culture because he is from another continent, Asia. Esperanza is from Mexico, and she is a female character who has a different culture and story of her culture and being a woman. She is more worried about her future, about not falling into a trap of marriage to a man. Meanwhile, Jason is more worried about his race and if people accept him as

Asian. This is important because we hear these two stories from two different genders, two different points of view as immigrants.

In conclusion, in the two stories "Hello, My Name Is" and "My Name," they talk about identity and adjusting to the U.S. culture and society, and the stories have many differences



in theme, conflict, and main characters. Jason from "Hello, My Name Is" got treated differently for being an Asian even though he was just a child. He changed his name (Identity) because of other people, and that shows an external conflict as a male character from another continent, Asia, with a completely different culture. In "My Name," Esperanza is from Mexico and wants to change her name because it was her

grandmother's name and she does not want to be like her grandmother. She does not want to be treated like her grandmother as a woman, and it shows an internal conflict as a female character from Mexico. In both stories, we can see how they suffered from their own cultures even though they were different, one external and another internal, but at the end, it's their real life stories that show how people suffered for being an Asian or a woman by their own cultures or other cultures. We need to keep in mind that after all, we are all humans and unique in our own way, like our fingerprints, no matter where we are from.

**Nilab Noori - ESL 315**

**Compare and Contrast Essay**



## *The Attitude of Gratitude*

### Grateful For

What is a thing that you are grateful for? People around the world are thankful for many different things. For me, I feel gratitude for my necklace, my family's farm, and my ability to make a friendship.

First of all, I am grateful for my special necklace. This is the necklace that was a wedding gift from my dad, so it has a special place in my heart. That necklace was made especially for me, and it had the first letter of my name and my father's name. My dad ordered that necklace before my wedding to give to me as a present. That necklace is not just an object I can use or wear, but it is

more than that. Sometimes, when I wear the necklace, I feel like I am over the moon, and I remember the first time when my father helped me to wear it in front of the guests at my wedding party. I can feel his soul, his spirit, his hands patting my cheeks and kissing my forehead. Indeed, my necklace is my treasure, and I am thankful for the necklace, and I keep my necklace in the safe

place to give to my daughter when she gets married.

Second, I feel deep gratitude for my family's farm, because that farm was a heaven for my children. My children grew up between the beautiful trees, and they learned laughing, playing, and caring about the others there. My family's farm was not just a beautiful place where we spent a good time. No, my family's farm was like lungs we took our breath through. For example, every weekend during summer we went there, and we made our lunch from the vegetables, fruits, and herbs that we planted and grew there. I remember my kids running and



picking up the tomato, mint, green pepper, pomegranate, and strawberry. No one can take those feelings away from my heart because they are a part of me. I know my family's farm was reduced to rubble and ruined by the bombs, but it will remain in my memory forever as a wonderful land, as I left it before the war. I can almost smell the breeze coming from the cherry blossoms

in bloom and taste the sweet apricots in my mouth. In short, I am really thankful for my family's ranch, and I love the time we spent there. It was the best ever life like in paradise. I truly believe those days will come back one day.

Last of all, I feel truly blessed to have an ability to form meaningful friendships and help others become the best version of themselves. Being surrounded by close friends is something I cherish, and I put in the effort to cultivate these connections into something special. However, building strong friendships is not always easy. There are times when I meet people who may not like me or don't connect with my style. For instance, at one event, I met a group of women, but we didn't get along due to language differences. On another occasion, I encountered a different group who treated me poorly because of racism. Despite these challenges, I have been fortunate to meet some incredible people with whom I share a natural chemistry. We connected easily and developed strong bonds. I approach my friendships with honesty, integrity,



and a deep respect for their feelings, as I believe these are the foundations for lasting relationships. While no one is perfect, when I find the right person, I consider them part of my family and take that relationship

seriously. I have been fortunate to have friends since childhood, and I am incredibly proud of those connections. I am as involved in their lives as if they were my own sisters, and they are equally engaged in mine. Finally, I am truly proud of my ability to make meaningful friendships, and it brings me great happiness and gratitude. I feel

lucky to have these connections and be surrounded by such wonderful people.

In conclusion, I am deeply grateful for my necklace and the memories with it, my family's farm and what it means to me, and my ability to create lasting friendships and what it brings to my life. Those things fill my life with love, and they really mean the world to me.

**Rawda Shahada - ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**



## Hobby Corner: My Hobby Is a Part of Me

Do you have any hobbies? Everyone has at least one passion that brings joy and satisfaction. My hobby allows me not only to express my creativity but also to feel a connection with my native culture. I love



embroidering Ukrainian symbols, doing manicures for my friends, and organizing concerts with children. These activities give me a sense of happiness and fill my life with meaning.

First of all, I enjoy embroidering Ukrainian symbols. For me, embroidery is not just a hobby; it's a way of preserving

and passing on our traditions. For example, I embroider patterns on T-shirts and sweaters, and it gives me a sense of pride for my culture. Each stitch is a small piece of my soul that I put into every project.

Embroidery helps me feel connected to my homeland, even when I'm far from home. Moreover, I love seeing people wear the items I've embroidered. This hobby not only enriches my life but also allows me to express myself. I believe that embroidery is a meaningful way to preserve my culture and showcase my creativity.

Secondly, I love doing manicures, and it brings me great pleasure. I often do manicures for myself and my friends. This

hobby lets me express my creativity and choose interesting designs. For example, I can select colors, draw patterns, or add decorations that make each manicure unique. It's also a way to brighten my friends' day. Additionally, I enjoy spending time with my friends, chatting while I make their hands beautiful. This hobby helps me do



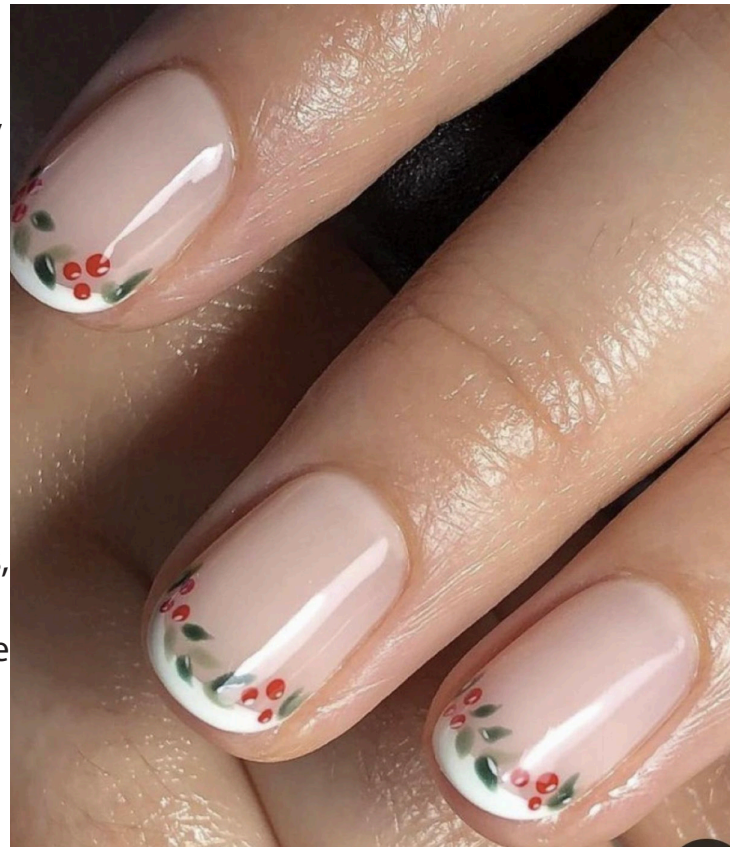
I believe that these events help children better understand their history and culture. Moreover, organizing such concerts is a great way to combine learning and creativity.

In conclusion, my hobbies are not just passions but part of me. Embroidery, manicures, and organizing concerts allow me to express my creativity and pass on important traditions. Each of these hobbies brings me joy and allows me to feel a connection with my homeland. I know my passion is a true whirlwind of emotions I will continue developing and sharing with others.

***Oksana Krytsuk - ESL 47***  
***Opinion Essay***

two things at once, giving me a sense of confidence. Moreover, it's a great way to save money since I do my manicures and don't spend money at salons. I am always learning something new by experimenting with different techniques. Manicures bring me joy and allow me to bring beauty to others. This hobby always has a positive effect on my surroundings.

Finally, I enjoy organizing concerts with children where we celebrate Ukrainian traditions. This hobby lets me combine my love for culture with creativity. For example, together with the children, I prepare a concert where they perform Ukrainian songs, dances, and recite poems. I believe it is very important for children to feel the significance of their roots and remember our traditions. Organizing such events requires a lot of effort, but the result is always worth it. I feel proud when I see children performing songs and dances with pride for their country.





## English Expressions: From Simple to Super

English is a fascinating language, and my interest in it grew the more I immersed myself in learning. However, as time passed, I often felt that despite my studies, I still didn't know how to speak English fluently. What I had learned from textbooks and academic methods didn't always translate into real-world conversations, especially when speaking with native or advanced English speakers. Even now, I sometimes lack the confidence to express myself naturally when speaking English with a native speaker. In contrast, I can articulate my thoughts much more effectively in my native language, Dari. This is because, while I have learned English, I still encounter countless idioms and expressions that native speakers use—many of which I am unfamiliar with.

One particular memory highlights this struggle perfectly. It was four years ago, during my first year at ARC. I had a classmate named David in my computer class. He was a native English speaker, while I was still learning English as a second language. Alongside my major courses, I was also taking ESL classes, and at the time, I believed I was speaking English quite well.

One day, after class, David and I planned to do a group study session. I told him that I had some urgent work to take care of at home right after class, but I would check with my roommate to see if he could handle it for me. If he could, then I would be able to join David at the cafeteria for our study session. I asked David if he would give me a



few minutes to figure it out, and he agreed, saying he needed to pick up a book from the bookstore in the meantime. A few minutes later, he returned and asked, "Have you made up your mind?" I was completely confused. I had no idea what he meant, and for a moment, I thought he was saying something negative about my mind. Concerned, I replied, "Excuse me? I didn't get that. What do you mean?"

David, realizing my confusion, smiled and clarified, "I mean, have you decided whether you want to do the group study or not?"

That moment was eye-opening for me. It made me realize that while I could speak English, I still had a long way to go before I could

truly understand and use the language like a native speaker. There was—and still is—so much more to learn beyond grammar and vocabulary, especially when it comes to the way native speakers naturally communicate.

Therefore, I decided to research and improve my English as an ESL learner while simultaneously comparing how advanced speakers use the language. My goal was to learn both approaches to sound more fluent and natural when speaking.

Here is a list of 20 different words and short sentences that are used differently by basic English speakers versus advanced English speakers:

## Basic English versus Advanced English

	Basic English	Advanced English
	Below are some words or short sentences used by basic English speakers	Below are the alternatives of saying the same ideas from the basic English column by advanced or native English speakers.
1	Stop it!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knock it off!</li> <li>2. Cut it out!</li> <li>3. Give me a break!</li> <li>4. Give it a rest!</li> <li>5. Enough!</li> <li>6. Quit it!</li> </ol>
2	Wait!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold on!</li> <li>2. Hang on!</li> <li>3. Give me a sec!</li> <li>4. Just a moment!</li> </ol>
3	To help out or To contribute	To pitch in
4	Think about it.	Mull it over.
5	I agree.	I am on board with that.
6	Have you decided?	Have you made up your mind?
7	I think...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In my opinion...</li> <li>2. To my mind...</li> <li>3. I believe...</li> <li>4. I am convinced that ...</li> <li>5. It seems to me that ...</li> <li>6. From my perspective...</li> <li>7. I feel...</li> <li>8. I suppose...</li> <li>9. I reckon...</li> <li>10. I consider...</li> <li>11. As far as I am concerned...</li> <li>12. If you ask me ...</li> <li>13. I would say ...</li> </ol>

8	I don't remember.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It slipped my mind.</li> <li>2. My mind has gone blank.</li> <li>3. It doesn't ring a bell.</li> <li>4. My memory fails me.</li> <li>5. I have no memory of ....</li> <li>6. I have no recollection of ....</li> <li>7. It is on the tip of my tongue.</li> </ol>
9	Lots of work	A heavy workload
10	Need help	Require assistance
11	I agree with you.	I am with you on that.
12	Are you Ok?	You good?
13	What do you want?	What are you in the mood for?
14	Close your mouth!	Zip it!
15	Very expensive	A rip-off
16	A beginner	A rookie
17	So boring	So lame!
18	It's super good!	It slaps!
19	That's really bad!	That sucks!
20	Congratulations!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Way to go!</li> <li>2. Kudos!</li> <li>3. My hats off to you.</li> <li>4. Props to you!</li> <li>5. Nice going!</li> <li>6. You nailed it!</li> <li>7. Good job!</li> <li>8. Well done!</li> </ol>



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!





## Beginner Reading Comprehension

**Read this story. Can you find the mistakes? Hint: There are five errors!**

Last weekend, my family and I go to the zoo. It was a very exciting day because we love animals. First, we sees the lions. They were very big and looked so strong! After that, we walked to the monkey area. The monkeys was very funny, and they jumped from tree to tree. One of them even tried to take my brother's hat!

Later, we eaten lunch at a small café inside the zoo. I had a sandwich, and my parents ate pasta. While we were eating, a peacock walked past our table. It was so beautiful! After lunch, we visited the reptile house, where we saw a huge snake. My sister is scared of snakes, so she don't want to go inside.

Finally, we watched a dolphin show before going home. The dolphins swam very fast and jumped high into the air. It was a perfect way to end the day!

**Answer some questions about the story!**

### Comprehension questions:

- 1) Did the family see the snakes or lions first?
- 2) Which animals were funny?
- 3) Who ate pasta for lunch?
- 4) Who is scared of snakes?
- 5) Which animals swam fast?



### Answers to the questions:

- 1) Lions
- 2) Monkeys
- 3) The parents
- 4) The sister
- 5) Dolphins

### Did you find the errors? Check here!

1. Go ← went
2. Sees ← saw
3. Was ← were
4. Eaten ← ate
5. Don't ← didn't

## Surreal Mustaches



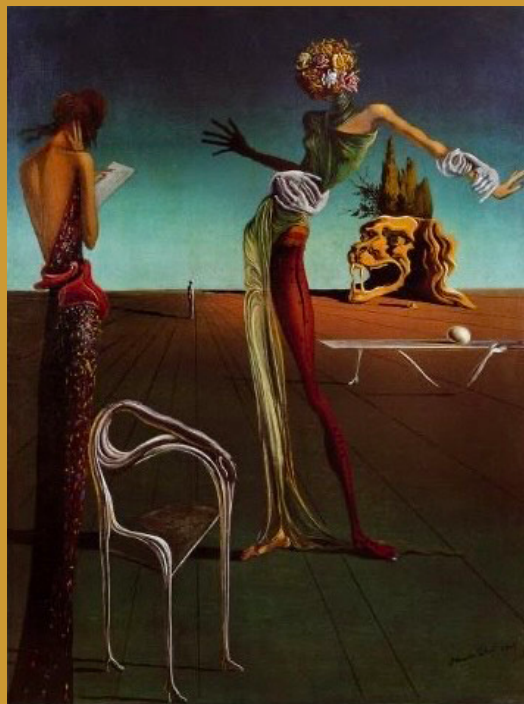
I love looking behind paintings. Why did the painter paint like that, and where did he discover this idea?

A while ago, when I was about 12 years old, I was listening to a song by my favorite Ukrainian rock band, *Okean Elzy (Elzas' Ocean)*, called *Taka Yak Ty (Like You)*. There was a line: "Eternally distant, like your beloved Dalí." It caught my attention (I had heard that name before and knew who he was), but I immediately checked for more information. That was the turning point when I discovered the most ambiguous, provocative, and unpredictable painter from Spain – Salvador Dalí.

Sometimes, I feel a pull toward extraordinary art, the kind that is unlike any other. I discovered surrealism – a style of art, featuring weird and whimsical forms. The art that pulls you away from reality and leads you into a world of unusual structures, nontraditional figures, and mystical silhouettes. These qualities I see not only in Dalí's artwork but also in his eccentric behavior – the rebellious museum figure who broke the rules of normality by creating a phone

with a lobster on top! In addition, in New York, he shoved a porcelain bathtub so hard that it broke a window. He was in a rage because his window display had been changed without his permission. While his personality is strange (one more reason why he interests me), I see him as someone who created works that always make me consider, "Was he dreaming when he painted them, and did he want to make us dream too?"

His revolutionary paintings are like confusing dreams – that's how I would describe them. I can stare at them for long minutes, trying to understand and actually find what he painted, as numerous chaotic elements are scattered across the canvas, much like Dalí's own chaotic nature. This force shatters me again and again each time, even if I feel like I've seen this painting hundreds of times before. Here are my favorite paintings of his, so I recommend you prepare to start dreaming too!



1. *Woman with Head of Roses* (1935)



2. *The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory* (1954)



4. *The Persistence of Memory* (1931)



5. *The Lugubrious Game* (1929)



3. *The First Days of Spring* (1929)



**Continued from page 1**

earning a bachelor's degree in public health. My academic journey wasn't always easy, but the support I received from programs like CalWORKs, which stands for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, motivated me to persist and achieve my goals.

**We would like to know more about [CalWORKs](#) and its services and how you ended up working there. Please tell us about your professional background and what led you to start working for CalWORKs at American River College.**

**Liliana:** My professional journey began as a student assistant in the Career Center at ARC. Over time, I gained valuable experience and was promoted to different roles, eventually becoming a Student Personnel Assistant (SPA). These roles allowed me to engage directly with students and support them in their academic and career goals.

In Spring 2023, I joined the CalWORKs department full-time. This position is especially meaningful to me because I was once a [CalWORKs](#) student myself. The program provided critical support that allowed me to pursue higher education and secure a fulfilling job. I wanted to give back by helping other students overcome barriers and achieve their goals, just as I was helped during my journey.

**We heard there is a special program through CalWORKs department called Parent to Parent that is designed to help students who are parents to succeed in their educational journey. Now, could you explain the mission and goals of the Parent to Parent (P2P) program and how it supports student-parents?**

**Liliana:** Of course, the [Parent to Parent \(P2P\)](#) program is a mentorship initiative aimed at supporting CalWORKs student-parents in navigating their college journey while balancing the demands of parenting. The P2P program's mission is to provide

consistent and compassionate support to CalWORKs student-parents by fostering community connections, offering resources, and guiding them toward academic and personal success. Our goals in helping student-parents are to help student-parents overcome barriers, such as managing time between school, work, and parenting responsibilities; provide information and referrals to programs and services, such as counseling, academic advising, and HomeBases; offer mentorship to create a sense of belonging and encourage student retention. And we also want to help students develop skills for scheduling and accessing resources effectively, enabling them to thrive in college.

**What are the benefits student-parents get from the Parent to Parent program, and what are the eligibility criteria for students to apply?**

**Liliana:** Sure, the Parent to Parent (P2P) program is a peer mentorship initiative designed specifically for CalWORKs student-parents. It pairs experienced student-parents or graduates

with current students to offer guidance, encouragement, and resource referrals.

To be eligible for the P2P program, students must be active participants in the CalWORKs program, and they must be enrolled in classes at American River College during the current semester.

**What steps should students take to enroll in the P2P program?**

**Liliana:** Enrolling in the P2P program is simple and accessible for all student-parents:

1. Contact CalWORKs: You can send an email to [acrcalworks@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:acrcalworks@arc.losrios.edu), or you can scan the QR code. Students can find a QR code on our marketing materials, which will direct them to the sign-up form for mentees.
2. Connect with Mentors: Students can reach out directly to one of our P2P mentors to learn more about the program and express their interest.



3. Visit the Office: Students are welcome to visit the [CalWORKs](#) office at ARC for in-person assistance with enrollment.

We ensure that the enrollment process is seamless so that students can begin benefiting from the program as soon as possible.

**Can you also share what are some unique challenges that student-parents face, and how does the P2P program help address these?**

**Liliana:** It is hard to be a student at the same time as being a parent. Student-parents encounter several unique challenges, including:

*Balancing Responsibilities:* Managing the demands of school, parenting, and work can be overwhelming.

*Navigating College Resources:* Understanding and accessing available programs and services can be confusing.

*Isolation:* Many student-parents feel disconnected from the college community.

The P2P program addresses these challenges by:

- Offering mentorship from peers who understand their struggles and can share personal insights.
- Providing weekly check-ins to ensure students feel supported and connected.
- Referring students to resources that can help with childcare, financial aid, academic counseling, and more.
- Creating a welcoming and inclusive community that fosters a sense of belonging.

**How effective do you think the Parent to Parent program has been so far, and what changes would you like to see?**

**Liliana:** The program has been incredibly effective in supporting student-parents, as evidenced by the positive feedback we've received. Many students have shared that the mentorship and resource referrals have made a significant difference in their ability to stay enrolled and succeed academically.

However, I believe there's always room for growth. Some changes I'd like to see include:

- Expanding outreach to reach more eligible students.
- Increasing the availability of mentors to provide even more personalized support.
- Enhancing collaboration with other campus departments to streamline resource access.

**What advice would you give to someone interested in working in student services or to mentors in the P2P mentorship program?**

**Liliana:** For those interested in working in student services, my advice is to approach the role with empathy and a genuine commitment to making a difference in students' lives. It's essential to build strong relationships and understand the unique challenges each student faces.

For P2P mentors, my advice is to lead with patience, actively listen to your mentees, and always strive to provide encouragement and practical solutions. Your role as a mentor can have a profound impact on someone's academic journey.

**What do you like to do in your free time? Can you share some of your hobbies?**

**Liliana:** In my free time, I enjoy exploring new recipes and baking with my daughters. It's a fun way for us to bond and create memories. I also love singing, which is a passion I've had since childhood, as well as reading, traveling, and drawing. These hobbies help me recharge and stay creative.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share with stu-**



**Questions that we didn't cover in today's interview?**

**Liliana:** I'd like to highlight that former CalWORKs students with children who are now in college can still benefit from some of our services, such as counseling appointments. Additionally, dual-enrollment students with [CalWORKs](#) parents may qualify for priority registration. Our program is here to support not just the students but also their families, ensuring they have the tools and resources to succeed. If you're a current or

former CalWORKs student, don't hesitate to reach out to us. We're here to help!

**Thank you very much for the outstanding interview and the helpful information you shared with us about yourself and the P2P program.**

**Liliana:** Thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

**Interviewer: Sayed Edres 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,**

*I wasn't able to enroll in two of the ESL classes I needed this semester because, by the time my enrollment date arrived, both classes were already full. Three of my classmates from last semester were able to get in because they had priority enrollment. How can I qualify for a priority enrollment date so I can register for my classes earlier and avoid this problem in the future?*

**Signed,**

**Miss Ing Theboat,**

This is a great question! I completely understand how frustrating it is when you plan your schedule, wait for your enrollment time, and then find out that the classes you need are already full. Sometimes, even the waitlist is closed, leaving you with no options.

To help answer your question, I reached out to my friend Sayed Edres from the ARC-CalWORKs department, and here's what I learned:

Priority enrollment is a great advantage that allows students to register for their classes early. However, it's only available to students who meet certain eligibility requirements. If you receive county assistance such as cash aid or food stamps, you may qualify for priority enrollment through the CalWORKs department. By enrolling in [CalWORKs](#), you'll not only get priority registration but also gain access to other support services they offer.

If you don't receive county aid but still want priority enrollment, you can apply through [EOP&S](#).

EOP&S also has its own eligibility criteria, which you can find on their website. If you qualify, you can enroll and receive priority registration. Here is the link for the [EOP&S Eligibility Criteria](#).

These are two ways you can secure an earlier enrollment date and improve your chances of getting into the classes you need before they fill up.

**Dear Readers,**

I hope this advice helps anyone struggling with the same issue. Thank you to the student who shared this question with us! If you ever have a question but aren't sure who to ask, feel free to send it my way. I'll do my best to find the answers for you in future *Parrot* issues.

Granny Noetal

[TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu)

Thanks,





## Dari Poem: This Is Love

Most of us somehow love reading poems and have some poets as of our favorite poets. I love reading poems, and sometimes I write poems in my native language, which is Dari. My favorite poet is Movlana, most commonly called Rumi in English. Also known as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumi or Mevlânâ or Mawlānā, he was a 13th-century Dari poet, faqih, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic, originally from Greater Khorasan, today's Afghanistan. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's languages. Movlana has been described as the "most widely read poet in the United States," [by Emily Donaldson of Maclean's \(see Exploring the life of Rumi, America's most-read poet\)](#). The poem is called "This Is Love." I selected this poem because it resonates with me and expresses the profound meaning of love in a way that makes me think, that's what love is. So, the way I choose to share the poem with you here is by writing a stanza of the poem in Dari then following it with its English translation. I hope you like it.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi**

### This Is Love By Movlana

عشق است بر آسمان پریدن  
صد پرده به هر نفس دریدن

**This is love: to fly to heaven,  
Every moment to rend a hundred veils;**

اول نفس از نفس گسستن  
اول قدم از قدم بریدن

**At first instance, to break away from breath-  
First step, to renounce feet**

نادیده گرفتن این جهان را  
مر دیده خویش را بدیدن

**To disregard this world  
To see only that, which you, yourself have seen**

گفتم که دلا مبارکت باد  
در حلقه عاشقان رسیدن

**I said, "Heart, congratulation  
On entering the circle of lovers.**

ز آن سوی نظر نظاره کردن  
در کوچه سینه‌ها دویدن

**"On gazing beyond the range of the eye,  
On running into the alley of the breasts."**

ای دل ز کجا رسید این دم  
ای دل ز کجاست این طپیدن

**Whence came this breath, O heart?  
Whence came this throbbing, O heart?**

ای مرغ بگو زبان مرغان  
من دانم رمز تو شنیدن

**Bird, speak the tongue of birds:  
I can heed you cipher!**

دل گفت به کار خانه بودم  
تا خانه آب و گل پریدن

**The heart said, "I was in the factory  
Whilst the home of water and clay was abaking.**

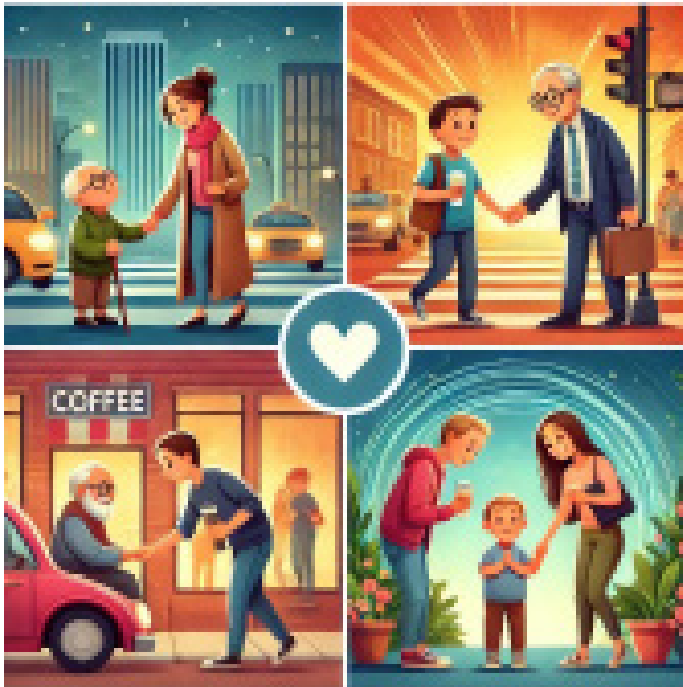
از خانه صنع می پریدم  
تا خانه صنع آفریدن

**I was flying from the workshop  
Whilst the workshop was being created.**

چون پای نمائد می کشیدند  
چون گویم صورت کشیدم

**"When I could no more resist, they dragged me;  
How shall I tell the manner of that dragging?"**

## The Power of Giving: How Small Acts Create Big Change



Have you ever experienced the joy of helping someone in need? I have, and I can say with certainty that even the smallest act of kindness can make a significant difference. My contributions may not be grand, but the simple act of offering a smile to someone who needs it has shown me that kindness has the power to transform lives.

In our community, there are many opportunities to give back. Donations, volunteer work, and acts of kindness are all ways we can contribute to positive change. The beauty of giving is that it does not have to be large or extravagant; sometimes, what seems insignificant to us can mean the world to someone else. A warm meal, a kind word, a small amount of money, or even a moment of listening can uplift a person facing hardship. However, I have contributed to people who are in need. 2024 was a great year for me, and I was able to be part of very

small positive assistance for a few loved ones around me. I plan to consider more and continue to increase my assistance with others this year.

*The ARC Parrot Newsletter* is a platform where voices come together to inspire and encourage. As a reader, you have the chance to be part of something greater. Whether it's donating a little, offering your time, or simply spreading awareness, every action matters.

I encourage you to take a step forward and be the reason someone smiles today. Let's come together to build a community where generosity and compassion succeed. A small act of kindness from you could be a life-changing moment for someone else.

Are you ready to make a difference? Start today, because no act of kindness is ever too small.

Human beings are members of a whole,

In creation of one essence and soul.

If one member is afflicted with pain,

Other members uneasy will remain.

If you've no sympathy for human pain,

The name of human you cannot retain!

Saadi Shirazi

بني آدم اعضای یکدیگرند

که در آفرینش ز یکا گوهرند

چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار

دیگر عضوها را نماند قرار

تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی

نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

سعدی ره

**Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi**

## My Dance with Words

Have you ever been betrayed by words?

When I write, I have constant arguments with words that are similar but, at the same time, completely different. I think many of you can agree that the English vocabulary is a tricky thing, confusing non-native speakers with its variety (a very tricky variety) of usage – one word but numerous different situations and meanings depending on the context. Did you know that the very simple word *take*, which is one of the top 100 most frequently words in English, has more than 24 different definitions, and moreover, over 30 additional meanings as a phrasal verb? I was stunned by this discovery when I turned to my *Longman Dictionary*, and a few pages were dedicated to a word consisting of only four letters.

Last semester, while writing many essays, I started to stumble on words I knew, but their spelling and pronunciation began betraying me. I ended up using the wrong words in my writing. *Hostile* and *hospitable* – they are similar, but with completely different meanings. In one of my essays, I confidently wanted to use the word *hospitable*, meaning welcoming, but subconsciously, I wrote *hostile*, which means unfriendly. I almost destroyed a very important sentence by using the word that conveyed the complete opposite of what I wanted to say!

Another example of words that are chasing



me are *terrible* and *terrific*. The reason I always tangle with them is that *terrific* always sounds to me like something disastrous, frightful, or something that causes terror, just like *terrible*. I always wonder: why *terrify* and being *terrified* mean to frighten and to be frightened, while we can use *terrific* to describe things that are beautiful and excellent? Each word has a root – the element that explains the origin of

the word – which to me means that they should be connected, right? But the examples of *terrible* and *terrific* show that the history of each word can move in completely different directions, causing some misunderstanding in my mind. At the same time, it also evokes more desire in me to dig deeper into each word and understand “why is that?”

Therefore, double-checking is always a good solution to avoid these mistakes, and not being too self-confident that you definitely know a word. If you are facing the same problems

I am, I really recommend using the print edition of the *Longman Dictionary of American English*, because believe me, it is way better than any online resource, which sometimes can be incorrect. Each word in this dictionary is explored deeply, not only with the actual meaning but also with examples of when and how you should use it.

To sum up, make your relationship with English words more hospitable, not hostile, and make your writing terrific by avoiding mistakes.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Sofia Kovalko**





## English Conversation Group

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

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

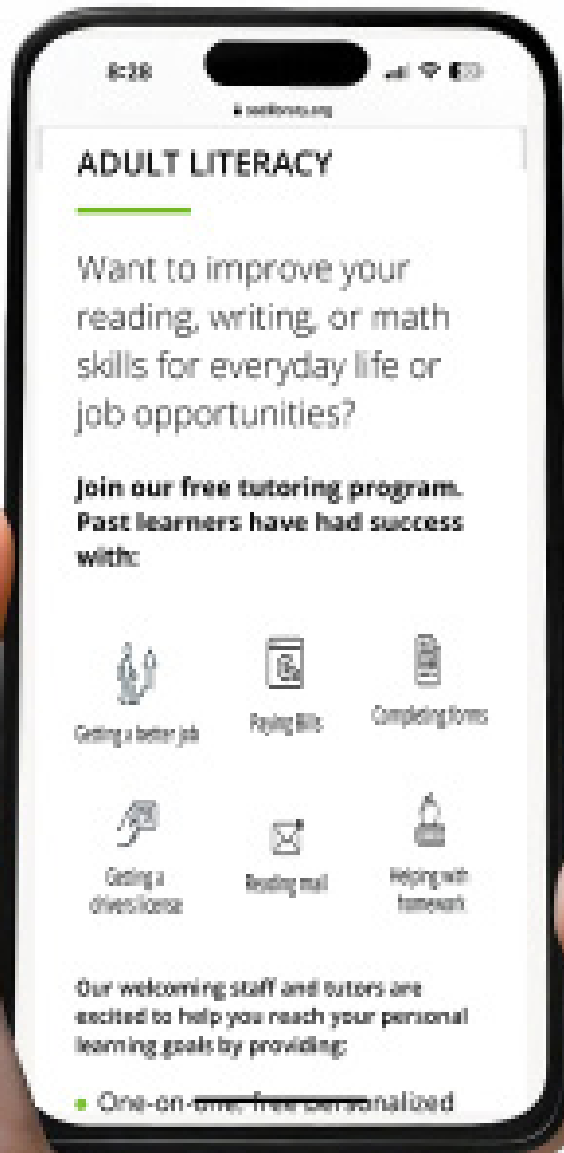
All languages and levels welcome. No registration. Meet new people and share experiences. This is not a class; it's more a social group for practicing.

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**



unexpected news: I had won a Green Card lottery. That event allowed me to obtain an immigrant visa in the United States. Since I could not financially sustain myself in Moldova, that was my golden ticket for positive change in my life and a chance to explore a new world.

Just one year later, I left my small eastern European country and came to Sacramento with big hopes: to find a home, a successful job, a stable life, and happiness just like I saw in American movies.

This is my immigrant story that shares my own immigrant journey, provides some of the cultural challenges I faced, and reveals my difficult and sometimes funny language experiences. It can be useful for those who choose to build a new life in Sacramento or simply for those who want to explore the process of immigration.

### **Welcome to California**

Ten years have passed since I stepped on American land, but that memory is still fresh in my mind. I was nervous and excited at the same time heading through the airport. At twenty-seven years, this was the first time I had experienced a flight.

My first language barrier as a newcomer happened when I was standing in front of the customs post.

“Passport and green card, please. Where are you traveling from?”

“From Moldova”, I replied.

“Where is your next destination, or is this your final destination?”

I hesitated to answer. My mind perceived that question as a mix of quickly spoken sounds, and I simply froze up. I was rooted to the spot. At that moment I realized that the English that I just heard had nothing to do with the English that I had learned during my school years.

“Where is your next destination? Is this your final destination?”, the customs officer repeated slowly and clearly.

“Sacramento”, I replied, while shame blushed my face...Why couldn't I hold such a typical conversation?

“Welcome to California!”





### ***First Impressions about Sacramento's Life and People***

Over the next few weeks, Sacramento was embraced by the Christmas season. And some of my impressions about life in the United States, shaped by American movies and TV shows, matched up with the reality I was experiencing at that time. I felt like I was in the movie "Home Alone", a movie I used to watch with my family every year back home during the holiday season. Colorful lights from decorated houses, stores, and streets were sparkling in the joyful eyes of people who were buzzing around for Christmas presents for loved ones.



During those weeks, I also had the chance to meet the Moldovan community from Sacramento and some locals. I was pleasantly surprised to find that natives left me the same impression that I had gained from the movies: they were kind, friendly, and always willing to help. But what left me speechless was their relaxed attitude toward my "broken English". I did not face any negative reactions about my mispronunciations or my strong accent.

### ***Reality Without Filters***

However, after the festive season ended, I quickly realized that real life is not what the movies and shows depict, which often is an idealized version of reality. The reality of rapidly achieving career

success with minimal struggles, easily finding a job, securing the house of your dreams, and living a glamorous life every day was far from what I was experiencing.

At times, my reality was sometimes harsh and sometimes scary. I had left everything I knew behind in my country and I had to start a new life in a foreign country while overcoming linguistic barriers, adapting to cultural differences, and integrating myself into a new world with its own rules and regulations.

One rule I did not know until I arrived in Sac-

ramento was that I had to be a permanent resident for at least for one year before I could go to college. Once again, my expectation to continue my education here did not align with reality. So, I learned to be prepared for the possibility that expectations may not be met immediately after immigrating.

**Please look in the next issue of *The Parrot* to read the rest of Jana's story!**

## Old Ironsides: The Ship, the Poem, and the Bar

by ESL Professor David Evans

### Old Ironsides

*By Oliver Wendel Holmes Sr.*

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!

Long has it waved on high,

And many an eye has danced to see

That banner in the sky;

Beneath it rung the battle shout,

And burst the cannon's roar;—

The meteor of the ocean air

Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood

Where knelt the vanquished foe,

When winds were hurrying o'er the flood

And waves were white below,

No more shall feel the victor's tread,

Or know the conquered knee;—

The harpies of the shore shall pluck

The eagle of the sea!

O, better that her shattered hulk

Should sink beneath the wave;

Her thunders shook the mighty deep,

And there should be her grave;

Nail to the mast her holy flag,

Set every thread-bare sail,

And give her to the god of storms,—

The lightning and the gale!

“Old Ironsides” is the nickname of the USS *Constitution*, one of the original six Navy warships in the United States. Still afloat today, in the Charleston Navy Yard, in Boston, Massachusetts, the ship was launched in 1797 and figured

prominently in many early wars of U.S. history, serving most memorably in the War of 1812, when it acquired its nickname. Ironically, the

sides of Old Ironsides have always consisted of heavy oak wood, not of iron.

The sides of the ship seemed so impenetrable to its admirers that, to them, it was as if the sides were made of iron.

“[Old Ironsides](#)” is also the name of an activist poem written in 1830 by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. (1809–1894) to oppose the dismantlement of that very ship, which had recently been decommissioned. One of Holmes’s first published poems, it was widely circulated and loved and quickly brought him national acclaim as a poet. What’s more, the public sentiment garnered by the poem for the USS *Constitution* helped to save the ship from being dismantled. Today, the name “Old Ironsides” at once calls to mind the ship and the poem, for those acquainted with both.



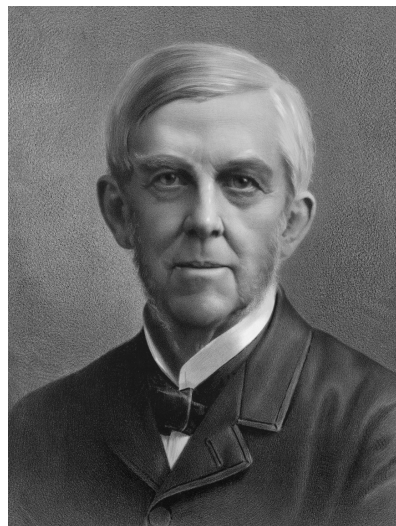
For residents of Sacramento, the name may also make one think of the oldest bar in midtown. Old Ironsides the bar opened in 1934, right after the Prohibition era ended, and is still going strong today, 91 years later. Although I

have never been inside, I have long admired its exterior, with its attractive ship mural, when my wife and I drive past it. Located at 10th and S, the bar is right between our church and my favorite Sacramento bookstore, Beers Books (no pun intended, honestly). Should you be inspired to visit the bar after reading this article,

be sure to let *The Parrot* know about your experience!

But enough about parrots—let’s return to “the eagle of the sea” and other interesting phrases and lines from Holmes’s poem about the ship. As befits its subject, the poem has a strikingly masculine quality, proceeding, in my opinion, like a three-part drum cadence. Each of its three stanzas consists of eight lines of ballad meter, with alternating pairs of lines in iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. The rhymes fall at the end of each pair of line pairs: the last words of lines 2 and 4 rhyme (*high, sky*), as do the last words of lines 6 and 8 (*roar, more*), and so on.

Within the lines, alliteration (repetition of consonants, as in “tear her **tattered**”; “**w**aves





were white," etc.) and assonance (vowel repetition, as in "better that her shattered") are recurring elements, and there is at least one amusing instance of homonymy (words identical in sound but not in spelling or meaning), namely in "... **No** more shall feel the victor's tread, / Or **know** the conquered knee" (lines 13 and 14).



Syntactically, the poem contains delightful inversions, even in a relative clause; we find "where knelt the vanquished knee" (line 10), not "where the vanquished knee knelt."

ESL learners and native speakers alike may need to consult a dictionary in places in this poem. I, for example, had to remind myself of what "harpies" were (a mythological bird-human hybrid monster), and I even looked up "hulk," to remove a grossly anachronistic Marvel Comics association.



Quite by accident, I appear to have made one academic discovery about the poem. The use of "meteor" in metaphoric reference to the high-waving tattered "ensign," or flag, finds a striking parallel

in Book I of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), which Holmes had doubtless studied:

"... forthwith from the glittering Staff unfurld  
Th' Imperial Ensign, which full high advanc't  
Shon like a Meteor streaming to the Wind ..."



# One-Minute Interview

**What strategies do you find most helpful for improving your English skills?**



**Alex:**

"I think immersing yourself in English through music and podcasts is the best way. Listening daily helps you pick up pronunciation and new words naturally."

**Maria:**

"Practicing with native speakers has been the most helpful for me. Joining language exchange programs or speaking clubs builds confidence and fluency."



**Ahmed:**

"I believe reading books and news articles in English is effective. It improves your vocabulary and helps you understand different sentence structures."



**Interviewer: Mohammed El mrani**

## *The Waitlist Blues: The Struggle of Late Registration at ARC*



For the past five semesters, I have been a student at American River College (ARC), struggling to complete my education and follow my academic plan. However, one recurring issue has caused me enormous stress and anxiety: late registration. Each semester, when it is time to enroll in classes, I find that most of the courses I need are already full. This forces me onto waiting lists, leaving me uncertain about my schedule and delaying my progress.

The root of the problem lies in the increasing number of students at ARC, while the number of available classes and instructors has remained the same. As a result, many students, including myself, face significant difficulties in securing spots in required courses. This not only disrupts our educational plans but also adds unnecessary stress to our academic journey.

Education is meant to be a structured path that allows students to progress efficiently toward their goals. However, the limited class availability at ARC hinders this process. When students are unable to enroll in required courses, they are forced to take unnecessary classes to maintain their enrollment status or wait another semester, further delaying their graduation. The absence of priority registration for long-term students exacerbates this issue, making it even more challenging to move forward.

The frustration of being on a waitlist is overwhelming. During breaks, instead of feeling

relieved, I am filled with anxiety about whether I will be able to secure a spot in my needed courses. The uncertainty affects my academic performance and motivation. If ARC and other institutions facing similar challenges do not address this issue by expanding class offerings or adjusting registration priority policies, students will continue to struggle with delayed educational progress.

The problem of class shortages and late registration is a significant obstacle in higher education. It is a headache that adds to the many difficulties students already face, such as tuition costs, workload stress, and balancing education with personal responsibilities. A fair solution would be to increase class sections and hire more instructors to accommodate the growing student population. Additionally, providing priority registration to long-term students who have demonstrated commitment to their education would help ensure that they can stay on track.

The “waiting blues” of class registration should not be a recurring burden on students. Colleges must recognize this issue and take proactive steps to improve the enrollment process. Education should be accessible, structured, and supportive, not a stressful waiting game that discourages students from achieving their academic goals.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi**



## 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.

## Book Review

# Henry Smith and the Nightmare

The world often associates Afghanistan with war, struggle, and the suppression of women's rights, especially in education and employment. Yet, amidst these challenges, young Afghan voices continue to rise, bringing stories of imagination, resilience, and hope. One such inspiring voice is Sana, a young Afghan writer who, despite the instability of displacement, completed her first fantasy novel, *Henry Smith and the Nightmare Monster*. This book represents a groundbreaking moment for Afghan literature, as it ventures into the fantasy genre, one that has remained largely unexplored by Afghan writers.

*Henry Smith and the Nightmare Monster* is a compelling fantasy novel that introduces readers to the character of Henry Smith, a young boy who finds himself entangled in a world of mysterious horrors and mythical creatures. Drawing from both real-life emotions and the limitless boundaries of imagination, the book presents an intriguing blend of adventure, suspense, and thought-provoking themes. Through its captivating storytelling, the novel not only engages readers but also reflects the author's deeper philosophy: that humans belong to the earth without geographical borders separating them.

Sana Rahim Mohtasabzada is a remarkable young Afghan writer who composed this novel during one of the most difficult transitions of her life. Forced to leave Afghanistan, she found temporary refuge in Pakistan while awaiting approval to enter the United States. Instead of succumbing to despair, she chose to immerse herself in storytelling, proving that creativity and resilience can flourish even in the most challenging circumstances. Upon arriving in the U.S., she officially launched her book in Washington, D.C., in 2024 a testament to her determination and passion for literature.

Currently, *Henry Smith and the Nightmare Monster* is available in Dari/Farsi, with plans for an English translation soon. The book's upcoming translation will allow a wider audience to experience her unique perspective and storytelling brilliance.

Here is the link: <https://www.instagram.com/henrysmithbook/>

**Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi**



## Movie Review

### Watching “In America”



Rating: 4.5/5

I just finished watching a movie called *In America* (2002), and I feel so inspired that I want to share my thoughts with you. This movie touched my heart in many ways, and I think it’s a wonderful film, especially for anyone who has moved to a new country or is learning English. It tells the story of an Irish family—Johnny, Sarah, and their two daughters, Christy and Ariel—who move to New York City to start a new life. They are grieving the loss of their son and brother, Frankie, while trying to adjust to a new culture, language, and way of living. The movie beautifully shows the struggles immigrants face, from financial hardships to loneliness, but it also highlights how love, hope, and community can help people overcome even the hardest times.

One of the things I loved most about the movie was how relatable it felt. As someone who moved to a new country, I could see myself in the

family’s experiences. Learning a new culture and language is both scary and exciting, and watching the family navigate these challenges made me feel like I’m not alone. The two daughters, Christy and Ariel, stole my heart with their innocence and strength. Christy, the older sister, narrates parts of the story, and her magical way of seeing the world reminded me to find hope, even when life feels difficult. Their relationship with Mateo, their kind but mysterious neighbor, was another highlight. Even though Mateo is sick and struggling in his own way, he shows the family so much kindness and becomes a symbol of friendship and healing. His story moved me to tears and made me think about how important it is to support each other during tough times.

This movie is also a fantastic choice for ESL students. The characters speak clearly, and their emotions help you understand the story, even if you don’t catch every word. Watching *In America* helped me learn new words like “grief,” “resilience,” and “diaspora.” It also gave me a better understanding of American culture, especially life in a big city like New York. I recommend watching it with English subtitles, as it makes it easier to follow the dialogue and pick up new vocabulary. After the movie, I found myself reflecting on my own journey—my challenges and the moments of hope that helped me move forward.

I think everyone should watch [In America](#). It’s not just a story about sadness; it’s about love, courage, and finding beauty in hard times. Whether you’re learning English, living in a new country, or just looking for a film that will touch your heart, this movie is a perfect choice. After watching, I encourage you to think about your own life. What challenges have you faced? How did you find hope, like the Sullivan family? I’m sure this movie will leave you feeling inspired and connected, just as it did for me.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani**



## A MISTAKE COUPLE

*These commonly confused word pairs can trip us up. There are moments when we all stumble in using them. Let's discover what they are!*



Note: Ex = Example

### 1. Sometime vs. Sometimes

**Sometime:** refers to a point in time that is not specified.

Ex: I would like to visit Italy sometime next year.

**Sometimes:** occasionally.

Ex: Sometimes when it's raining, I sit by the window and drink a cup of coffee.

### 2. Beside vs. Besides

**Beside:** close to or next to something.

Ex: My parents live in a room right beside mine.

**Besides:** Used to introduce new information or

ideas to a sentence.

Ex: Besides Tom and Mary, a few selected students will be going on the trip.

### 3. Experience vs. Experiment

**Experience:** you learn from something that happened to you.

Ex: I experience a migraine when I try to remember something.

**Experiment:** a procedure you perform to learn something.

Ex: They experimented with a new way of making sauce.

## Childhood Steamed Bun (Bánh Bao Mini Tuổi Thơ)

When I was a kid, one of my favorite snacks was the Steamed Bun. It's a simpler version of the BBQ bun we have here, but it always brings back fond memories whenever I think about it. Made from wheat flour, milk, yeast, and sugar, it wasn't overly sweet, yet it was irresistibly delicious from the first bite. We called it the mini bun because it was as small as a \$1 coin. I haven't been able to find it in America, but I might try making it myself. In Vietnam, many stores are trying to revive this snack and sell it widely, but the taste just isn't the same as the one from my childhood memories.



**Parrot Staff Writer: Tuyet Le**

## Podcast Review

### Learning English with *ESLPod* and *All Ears English*



Listening to podcasts is a great way to improve English, and I recently tried two different podcasts for learning. One is for beginners, and the other is for advanced students. Both are very helpful, but they focus on different skills.

The first podcast I listened to is *ESLPod – English as a Second Language Podcast*. This is a great choice for beginners because the host speaks slowly and clearly. The episodes explain vocabulary and grammar in an easy way. I like that they focus on everyday conversations, so I can learn useful phrases for real-life situations. For example, one episode was about ordering food in a restaurant, where they explained phrases like “I’ll have the steak, please” and “Could I get the check?” Another episode talked about making an appointment, and I learned how to say, “I’d like to schedule a meeting for next week.” After listening, I understand these expressions better because the host explains everything in detail. This podcast is perfect for students who are still building their listening skills.

The second podcast, *All Ears English*, is for more advanced learners. The hosts speak at a natural speed, so it is more challenging, but this is good practice for understanding real spoken English. They

talk about different topics, like culture, expressions, and pronunciation tips. For example, one episode was about how to sound more confident in English, where they explained how to use phrases like “That’s a great question!” or “I see what you mean.” Another episode



discussed the differences between American and British English, which helped me understand why some words are different, like “elevator” (US) vs. “lift” (UK). I like this podcast because it teaches how to sound more natural when speaking. Sometimes, it is difficult to understand everything, but I listen multiple times and learn a lot of new words and phrases.

Both podcasts are excellent for improving English. If you are a beginner, *ESLPod* is a good place to start because it explains everything clearly. If you want a challenge and want to improve your fluency, *All Ears English* is a great choice. I recommend trying both and seeing which one works best for you!

**Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani**

## Immigrant Students' Concerns in 2025



For many immigrant students, the path to higher education has never been easy. Leaving behind family and friends, adapting to a new culture, and dealing with financial hardships are struggles they have long faced. However, in 2025, shifting immigration policies and heightened fear of deportation have made their journey even more stressful, adding another layer of uncertainty to their dreams of earning a degree.

Although many students have legal immigration documentation, rapid and unpredictable changes in immigration policies leave them feeling vulnerable. One of their biggest concerns is the fear of being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) while simply trying to attend classes. Increased immigration enforcement and ever-changing policies create constant anxiety, making them worry that a routine school day could turn into a life-altering encounter with authorities. This fear doesn't just affect their ability to focus on their studies—it also weighs heavily on their mental and emotional well-being.

Stricter immigration policies have also made it harder for students to access essential resources. Some have lost protections that once shielded them from deportation, while others find themselves with fewer financial aid opportunities and scholarship options due to their immigration status. The uncertainty about their future only adds to the emotional and psychological toll they experience daily.

Beyond the legal and financial struggles, immigrant students continue to navigate cultural and social challenges. Many feel isolated, missing the comfort and support of their families while trying to fit into an unfamiliar academic and social environment. The added worry of being targeted because of their immigration status makes it even harder for them to fully engage in campus life.

Despite these overwhelming challenges, immigrant students remain determined to complete their education, fueled by the hope of creating a better future for themselves and their loved ones. Colleges and universities must acknowledge these intensified struggles and take steps to provide the necessary support. Expanding mental health resources, ensuring access to legal assistance, and advocating for inclusive policies can help ease some of the burdens these students face.

Education should be a gateway to opportunity, not a source of fear. As immigration policies continue to shift, it is essential to recognize and address the extra weight placed on immigrant students. Rather than forcing them to merely survive, institutions and policymakers must work toward solutions that allow them to thrive in their academic journeys.



**Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi**

Resources:

1. <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2024/06/26/looking-back-to-look-ahead-the-case-of-us-immigration/>
2. <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/topics-glance/immigration>
3. <https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/democracy/gutierrez-immigrants-validate-values>



## The Swallow's Silverquill

Time goes by fast, doesn't it? It feels like just yesterday I published my first column about journaling. I'm still on this journey, and I can confidently say it keeps improving my writing. I'm happy that I can write in English so freely. Today, I want to share how journaling develops my creativity and makes descriptive writing even more enjoyable.

At my first attempts, I was just reflecting on my days and the activities I went through. But as I wrote more and more, I started trying to write more deeply – not just summarizing what I experienced but viewing it as an opportunity to write more imaginatively. I started catching the tiniest details that were interesting for me to describe, and I enjoyed writing about and imagining them. For instance, about two weeks ago, I was driving early – like before 6 a.m. Even though the cold weather and darkness might seem like a reason to say, "I want to go back home and keep sleeping," I experienced it in a positive way, so I wrote:

My eyes wandered, looking for the first signs of dawn, but the freezing frost on the car windows covered the orange shades somewhere behind the horizon. So, my eyes adjusted to the beaming lights from dozens of cars, each driving to its destination, just like I was.

Journaling for me is not only about reflecting on and tracking my experiences but is also very important for developing me as a writer, which I sincerely want to become in the future. I

try to get the most out of it and have started writing more thoughtfully and making English feel as natural as my native language.

To be honest, sometimes it's really difficult to dedicate time to journaling because of a busy schedule (I have a bunch to write about). One day, I was too exhausted, and the weather was unpleasant – heavy rain with strong wind (I'm so sensitive to bad weather). I wasn't feeling it was the right day to write in my regular format. Some-

thing sparked in me, and I did something I had never done before in my life: I wrote a poem! Nobody set a rule that journaling should only be in sentences, right? I wasn't expecting it from myself – I was shocked because I thought I never had a skill for writing poems. But it went so quickly, and in less than five minutes, I wrote an eight-line poem. Of course, it may have an illogical structure and no rhyme, and it's quite sad because of the gloomy weather. But here are two lines I'm ready to

share:

*Wind blew; its force never knew boundaries,*

*Like sadness never drew its own.*

The most important thing is that after I wrote it, it immediately took away my exhaustion. Journaling became a kind of unexpected thing for me, and I'm very curious about what it will bring in the future. I'm excited to share it with all of you!

Chirrup 'till next time!



*Written by the quill of Sofia Kovalko*

# Music Review

## Learning English Through Music: A Fun and Easy Way to Improve



Learning English with songs is one of my favorite ways to practice. It makes learning fun, and I don't feel like I'm studying. When I listen to music, I improve my listening skills, pronunciation, and vocabulary without even realizing it.

The first thing I do is choose the right songs. It's important to pick songs that are not too fast and have clear pronunciation. If the song is too difficult, it can be frustrating. Slow songs, like Adele's "Someone Like You," are great for beginners. Faster songs, like "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran, are good for listening to how native speakers connect words.

When I listen to a new song, I try to understand the meaning without reading the lyrics. I focus on catching words and phrases I already know. After that, I read the lyrics and listen again. This helps me see the words I missed and understand how they sound in real speech.

Another great way to learn is by singing along. It helps me practice pronunciation and intonation. When I sing, I try to copy the way the singer pronounces words. This makes my

English sound more natural. Also, many songs use everyday expressions that people actually say in real life. For example, in "Shape of You," the phrase "Come on now, follow my lead" is very natural, but when spoken fast, it sounds like "Comeonah, follow mah lead." Listening to songs like this helps me get used to connected speech.

To learn even more, I write down new words and phrases from songs. Then, I try to use them when I speak or write. Sometimes, I also summarize the song in my own words to check if I really understand it.

The best way to learn English with music is to repeat, repeat, repeat! I listen to the same song many times until I remember the words. This helps me learn new vocabulary and get better at listening to English.

Some suggestions for songs

1. ["Someone Like You" – Adele](#) (Slow and clear, good for practicing past tense)
2. ["Shape of You" – Ed Sheeran](#) (Fast speech, natural conversation phrases)
3. ["Rolling in the Deep" – Adele](#) (Strong pronunciation, emotional expression)

Listening to music makes learning English much more enjoyable. It's something I can do every day, and it helps me feel more confident when I speak. If you want to improve your English, I really recommend trying this method!

**Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani**



Scan QR Code

## Zoom Hours

*Thursday*

11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

*Friday*

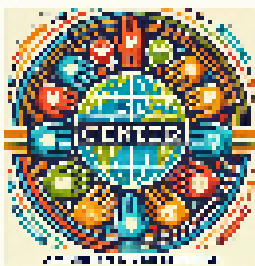
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

# ESL Center Spring 2025

## On Campus in the LRC

Monday	9:00 to 4:45
Tuesday	9:00 to 4:45
Wednesday	9:00 to 4:45
Thursday	9:00 to 4:45
Friday	Closed

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



Ask  
Questions

Get  
Help



# LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION HOMEBASE

## HOURS

- ✓ Monday-Thursday  
8-5pm
- ✓ Friday 8-4:30pm

## SERVICES

- ✓ Workshops & Orientation
- ✓ Support Resources & Referrals
- ✓ Counseling Appointments
- ✓ Snacks, Study Space, Lounge Area, Fun Events

### Included Majors

- ASL-English Interpreting
- Communication
- Deaf Culture and American Sign Language Studies
- English
- English as a Second Language
- Journalism
- World Languages

Located in the Portable Village Room 613B

Contact Us



(916)484-8974



Askhb-lac@arc.losrios.edu

# Explore California

## Point Reyes, CA



Last month, I had the incredible opportunity to hike and photograph the stunning trails at Point Reyes. The trails are truly awesome, offering long routes with breathtaking views that left me in awe. The wildlife I encountered was incredible, including coyotes, elk, and other beautiful animals that posed graciously for my camera.

Watching the sunset from one of the hills was nothing short of mesmerizing.

The soft, golden light cast a magical glow over the landscape, making every photo opportunity a treasure. I felt like a kid in a candy store, eager to capture every moment, every view, and every creature that crossed my path.

I started my hike at the Tómales Point Trailhead, which has convenient restrooms and a large parking lot – a thoughtful touch for photographers like me who often carry bulky gear. From Sac-

ramento, the drive takes around 2.5 hours with traffic and slightly less without.



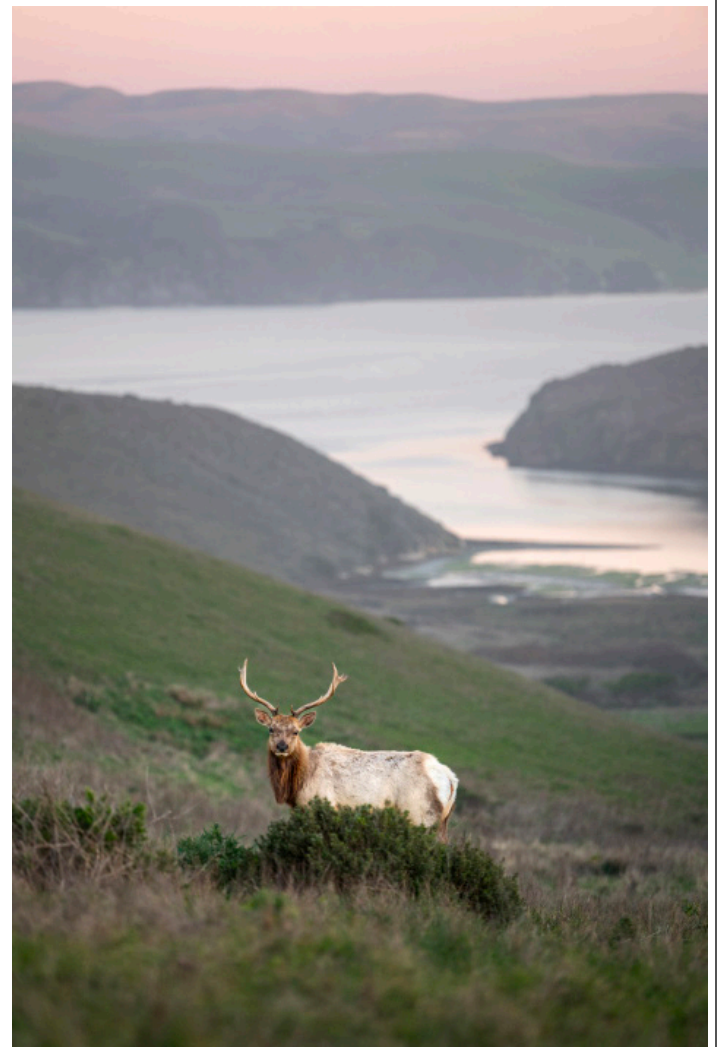
Throughout the day, I reveled in the joy of photography, experimenting with different angles, compositions, and lighting setups. The Nikon Z8 camera and Nikkor Z 400mm f/4.5 S lens proved to be a fantastic combination, allowing me to capture stunning close-up shots of the wildlife without disturbing them. The lens's reach and image quality were breathtaking, making every shot a thrill.

Even in the cool weather, I got thirsty from all the hiking, so remember to bring enough water to stay hydrated!

Despite the physical demands, I left Point Reyes feeling exhilarated and inspired, and was already planning my next visit.

*Check out more of my work at:*  
[Emrradophotography.com](https://www.emrradophotography.com)

**By Manny**





## The Rise of Hidden Kitchens in Sacramento



As a food enthusiast, I am always on the lookout for unique dining experiences. Recently, I stumbled upon a fascinating trend in Sacramento's culinary scene: hidden kitchens. Also known as "ghost kitchens" or "virtual restaurants," these secretive eateries are revolutionizing the way we enjoy food. In this article, I will share with you what I found on my research about what hidden kitchens are, how they work, and why they are getting so popular.

### ***What Are Hidden Kitchens?***

Hidden kitchens are restaurants that operate without a physical dining space. They exist solely as online entities, taking orders through food delivery apps, websites, or social

media platforms. These kitchens prepare and cook meals in a commercial space, often shared with other restaurants or food establishments. Once the food is ready, it is picked up by delivery drivers or customers themselves.

### ***How Do They Work?***

The concept of hidden kitchens is built around convenience, efficiency, and innovation. Here's a little breakdown of their operational model:

**Online Presence:** Hidden kitchens establish an online presence through websites, social media, or food delivery apps. They showcase their menus, prices, and operating hours.



**Ordering and Payment:** Customers place orders and make payments online. Some hidden kitchens also offer phone ordering or in-person pickup.

**Food Preparation:** Chefs and cooks prepare meals in a commercial kitchen space. This space might be shared with other restaurants or food establishments.

**Delivery or Pickup:** Once the food is ready, it is picked up by delivery drivers or customers themselves.

### **Why Are Hidden Kitchens Gaining Popularity?**

Hidden kitchens are gaining traction in Sacramento and beyond due to several reasons:

**Convenience:** Hidden kitchens offer customers

the convenience of ordering food online and having it delivered to their doorstep.

**Affordability:** Without the overhead costs of maintaining a physical dining space, hidden kitchens can offer competitive pricing.

**Innovation:** Hidden kitchens encourage chefs and entrepreneurs to experiment with new cuisines, menus, and cooking techniques.

**Sustainability:** By reducing food waste and optimizing kitchen space, hidden kitchens promote sustainability in the food industry.



Hidden kitchens are revolutionizing the culinary landscape in Sacramento. By offering convenience, affordability, innovation, and sustainability, these secretive eateries are attracting foodies and busy professionals alike. As the popularity of hidden kitchens continues to grow, it will be exciting to see how this trend evolves and shapes the future of the food industry.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Manny**



## 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?

Student Editors: **Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed El mrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Asila Sadiqi, and Sofia Kovalko.**

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).

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