Fall 2026
American River College

4700 College Oak Drive
Sacramento, CA 95841
(916) 484-8011

The Parrot

ISSUE #212
FALL 2026

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



The War Started:

One Day That Changed My Life

BY VIKTORIA SOBENKO, ESL 47

One day, my life was divided into before and after. In every person's life, there are events and situations that affect us in some way. They can touch our emotions, change how we see the world, and even change the direction of our life.

Continue on page 16

Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!
See page 2 for details.

DRIVING LESSONS WITH MY HUSBAND

BY OLENA IVANIUK, ESL 325



Learning to drive with her husband turned out to be much more than just a simple lesson. It became a daily adventure full of confusion, mistakes, and unexpected emotions. Between mixing up left and right and trying to survive his instructions, she often wondered if their marriage would survive after this experience.

Continue on page 20

Inside This Issue

Comic Page 6

People Who Inspire Me Page 12

Explore California Page 18

Taraghi Park Page 9

English Outside of Class Page 3

Be Bilingual Page 22

Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!

The Parrot **wants to hear from YOU—students, staff, faculty, and administrators!**

Tell us about a funny or memorable moment you've had while learning or teaching English.

Send your story to TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu.



As a BIG thank-you, receive a gift from *The Parrot*.

USING ENGLISH OUTSIDE OF CLASS

NARRATIVE ESSAY

BY LATIFEH DOGHDIZADEH, ARC STUDENT

When I moved to the United States three years ago, I did not understand English at all. I could not communicate with people, ask simple questions, or even introduce myself. Everything around me felt new, and sometimes I felt lonely because I could not express my thoughts.

One day, I met my neighbor, Anna. She became the first person I felt comfortable speaking English with. She always encouraged me to use every English word I knew and reminded me not to be afraid of making mistakes. She believed that mistakes were part of learning, and her kindness gave me confidence.

At first, our conversations were very simple. We said things like "Hello," "How are you?" and "Have a nice day." As time passed, our conversations became longer. Watching television, reading books, and talking with Anna every week helped me improve my English.

My four-year-old son has also been one of my greatest teachers. He learns English very quickly by watching educational programs and talking with other children. Sometimes he teaches me the names of animals, fruits, colors, and foods. It makes me smile because we are learning together.

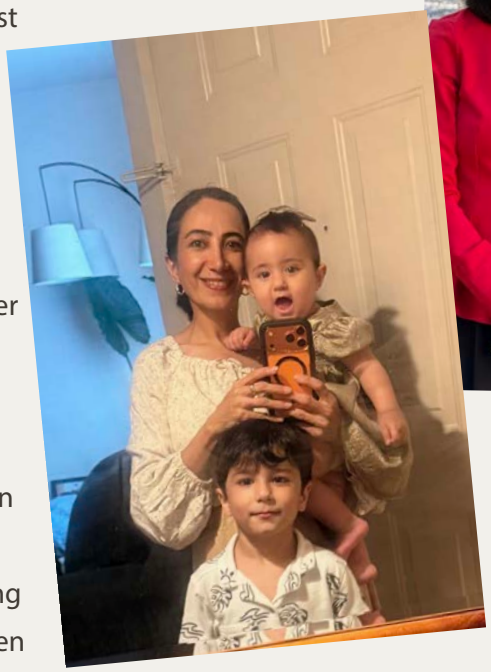
Life as a mother and a student is not always easy. After my children go to bed each night, I study English and finish my homework. Some nights I am very tired, but I remind myself why I started this journey. I also wake up early in the morning before my children wake up so I can practice reading and writing.

Two years ago, I felt nervous whenever my phone rang because I did not know what to say in English. Now, when my phone rings, I answer with confidence. I can make appointments, ask questions, and communicate without being afraid of making mistakes. Looking back, I can clearly see how much I have grown.

Today, Anna is one of my closest friends. We spend hours talking, sharing recipes, and learning about each other's cultures. I still cannot express everything perfectly, but I always do my best, and every conversation helps me learn new words and become more confident in English.

Learning English has given me more than a new language. It has given me confidence, friendships, and the courage to keep moving forward. My journey is not finished, but every new word I learn brings me one step closer to my dreams.





OPINION ESSAY

THANKSGIVING EDITION

THE GRATEFUL GULL

BY KATERYNA KOVTONIUK, ESL 47

Thanksgiving with My Family

What makes a holiday unforgettable: the people, the traditions, or the food? For me, it's my family and the food. When I came to the United States four years ago, my first holiday with my family was Thanksgiving. It's a special American holiday when families come together to share food and create happy memories. There are three types of food that make Thanksgiving special in my family.

Hot dishes are an important part of Thanksgiving with my family. The first and most special dish is juicy turkey, which my husband prepares using his own recipe. He spends almost the whole day cooking it to make it delicious, tender and aromatic. He uses different herbs, such as basil, spices, and mayonnaise, to give the turkey a wonderful flavor. I have never tasted a turkey as delicious and tender as my husband's turkey. Another important dish on our Thanksgiving table is hot mashed potatoes, which go perfectly with the turkey. We also prepare cabbage rolls, one of our family's favorite traditional dishes. These three hot dishes make our Thanksgiving dinner special and delicious. The best part is that everyone in our family helps prepare the food. My daughter helps in the kitchen, and even our little son loves to help by adding spices, mixing ingredients, and tasting everything we cook. Cooking together makes our family closer and creates happy memories. In conclusion, preparing these delicious dishes together makes Thanksgiving special for my family.



Salads and appetizers are another important part of Thanksgiving with my family. Two of our favorite salads are Olivier salad and Herring under a Fur Coat. These salads are special to us because they remind us of our childhood. My husband and I grew up eating these traditional salads, and we still love them today. Olivier salad is made with boiled potatoes, carrots, eggs, pears, pickles, sousage, and mayonnaise. Herring under a Fur Coat is a colorful salad made with layers of herring, boiled potatoes, carrots, beets, and onions, with mayonnaise spread between the layers. Besides salads, we also prepare different appetizers for our Thanksgiving table. We serve pickles, different kinds of cheese, crackers, sliced sausages, olives, and cherry peppers stuffed with cheese. Sometimes we also add fresh vegetables. The best part is that everyone in our family helps prepare and arrange the food on the plates. My children especially enjoy arranging the appetizers, and we have fun doing it together. Overall, these traditional salads and delicious appetizers bring back childhood memories and make our family celebration even more special.

In my family, no Thanksgiving is complete without our favorite desserts. My favorite dessert to make is chocolate cake with chocolate sponge and whipped cream. I usually cover the top with melted chocolate to make it extra delicious. Another dessert we love is sweet fruit salad made with fresh fruits. We mix the fruits with whipped cream or yogurt to make it creamy and sweet. My children especially love this fruit salad because it is fresh, colorful, and sweet. We also enjoy fruit jelly, which is a favorite dessert for us. After eating all the delicious Thanksgiving food, everyone likes to relax and enjoy something sweet. That's why we also buy different flavors of ice cream for our family celebration. Everyone can choose their favorite flavor and enjoy it together. Finally, our favorite desserts make Thanksgiving even sweeter and help us enjoy our family time.

In summary, juicy turkey, hot dishes, traditional salads and appetizers, and favorite desserts are the foods my family looks forward to most at Thanksgiving. Indeed, Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to enjoy delicious food together, share laughter, and create beautiful family memories that we will treasure for years to come.

OPINION ESSAY

THANKSGIVING EDITION

THE GRATEFUL GULL

BY LILIIA YERMOLAIEVA, ESL 47

BLESSINGS IN MY LIFE

Do you have any blessings in your life? I have a lot of blessings in my life. There are different opportunities, many places, and many people. I have three blessings that I am very thankful for: my opportunity to live in America, my church, and my sister.

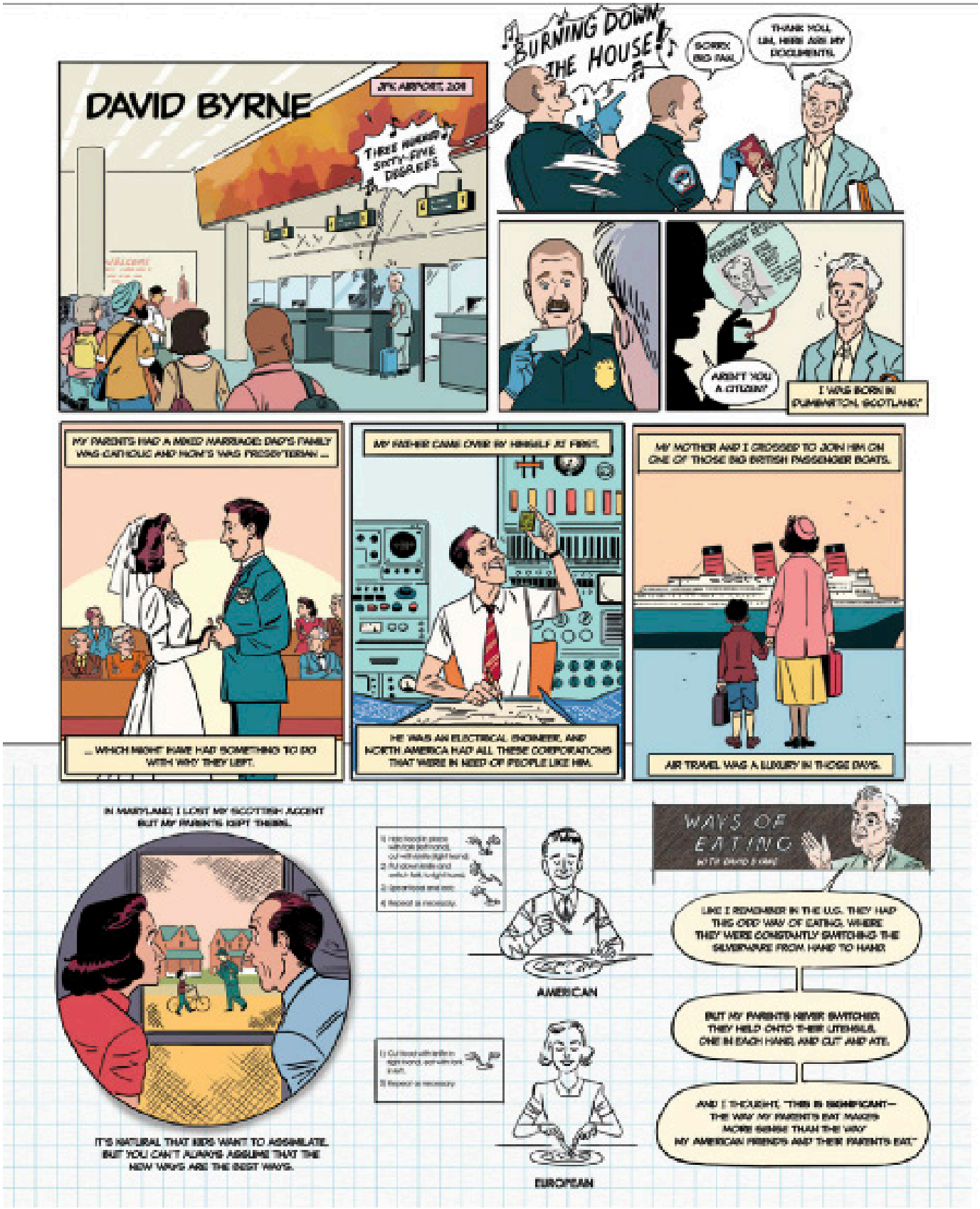
First of all, I am thankful for the opportunity to live in America. It is important for me because I can spend time with my relatives, especially my sister and parents. I meet new, beautiful, and kind people from different countries. I can see wonderful nature in California. I travel with my family a lot. I have the opportunity to learn English in America. I study in American River College and meet new friends. My future will be better in America. My children will have a better life and good education. The opportunity to live in America is a blessing for me.

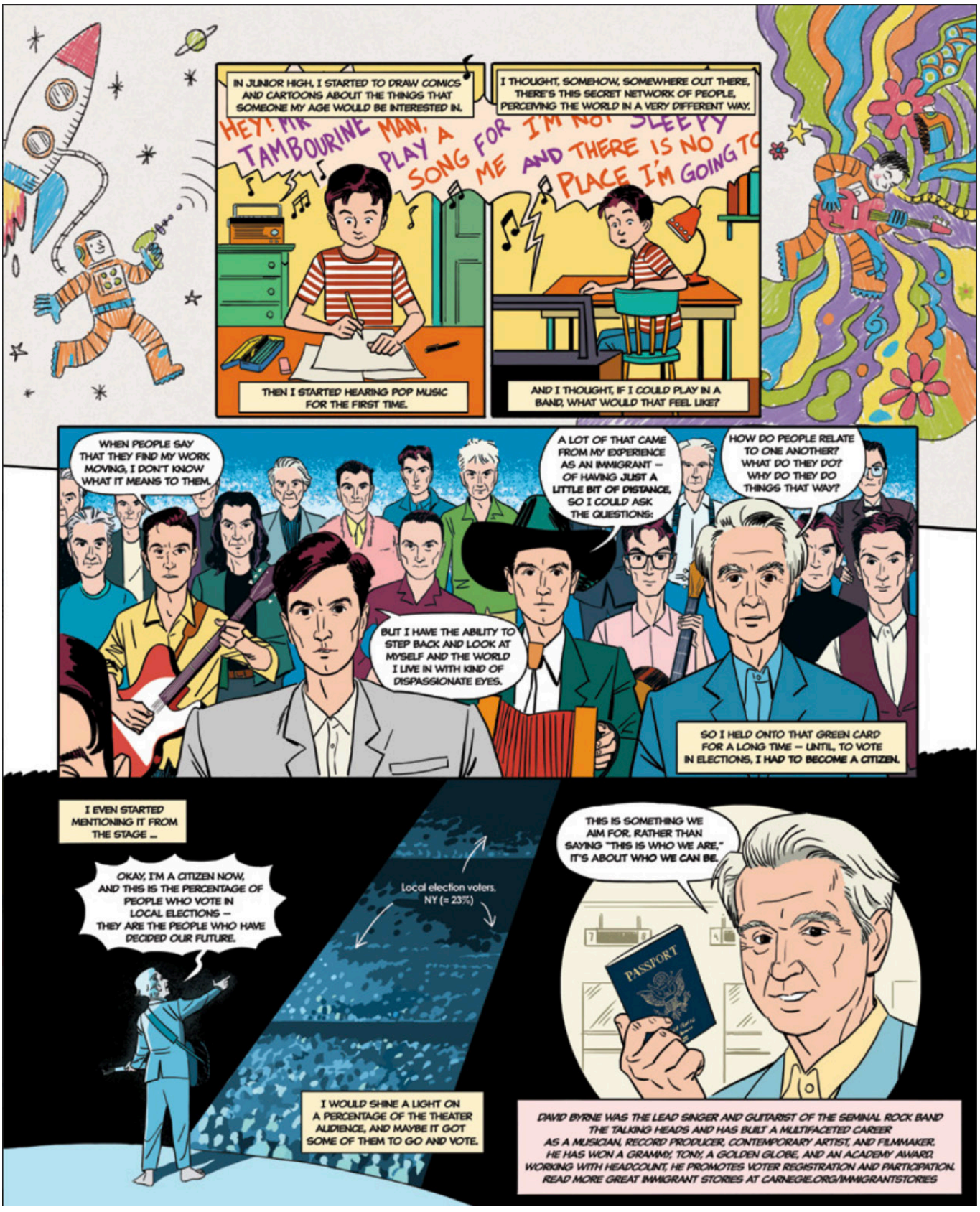


The second blessing in my life is my church. The church is not just a building. It is a place where everybody comes to worship God and pray. We can study the Bible a lot together, explore and explain different words or things. We spend time together with a cup of coffee or tea. In my church, people are helping each other and sharing with people in need. Many people are tired of problems and need good advice and pray. We can support each other to build a better life and world. I am thankful to God that I have this place in my life.

Last of all, I am thankful to have my younger sister Natalia. She helps me a lot in my life. For example, when we arrived to the USA, she shared her house with my family. I didn't see my sister for 5 years, and I really missed her. She gives me good advice about life in America. Natalia shares with me food and clothes. One time she shared the dishes. We love to spend time together with our families. We go shopping with our children together. Sometimes we cook food and have dinner together. In conclusion, my sister Natalia is the blessing in my life, and I am thankful to have her.

The best blessings in my life are the opportunity to live in America, my church, and my sister. I am thankful to God that I have such great blessings.

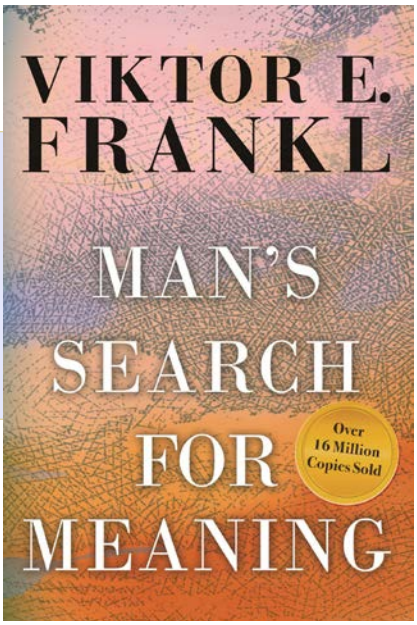

DAVID BYRNE
JFK AIRPORT, 2011
THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE DOLLARS
BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE
SORRY, BIG MAN.
THANK YOU, LIN, HERE ARE MY DOCUMENTS.
AREN'T YOU A CITIZEN?
I WAS BORN IN DUMBARTON, SCOTLAND."
MY PARENTS HAD A MIXED MARRIAGE: DAD'S FAMILY WAS CATHOLIC AND MOM'S WAS PRESBYTERIAN! ...
... WHICH MIGHT HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHO THEY LEFT.
MY FATHER CAME OVER BY HIMSELF AT FIRST.
HE WAS AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER, AND NORTH AMERICA HAD ALL THESE CORPORATIONS THAT WERE IN NEED OF PEOPLE LIKE HIM.
MY MOTHER AND I CROSSED TO JOIN HIM ON ONE OF THOSE BIG BRITISH PASSENGER BOATS.
AIR TRAVEL WAS A LUXURY IN THOSE DAYS.
IN MARYLAND, I LOST MY SCOTTISH ACCENT BUT MY PARENTS KEPT THEIRS.
IT'S NATURAL THAT KIDS WANT TO ASSIMILATE. BUT YOU CAN'T ALWAYS ASSUME THAT THE NEW WAYS ARE THE BEST WAYS.
WAYS OF EATING
AMERICAN
EUROPEAN
LIKE I REMEMBER IN THE U.S. THEY HAD THIS ODD WAY OF EATING, WHERE THEY WERE CONSTANTLY SWITCHING THE SILVERWARE FROM HAND TO HAND.
BUT MY PARENTS NEVER SWITCHED. THEY HELD ONTO THEIR UTENSILS, ONE IN EACH HAND, AND CUT AND ATE.
AND I THOUGHT, "THIS IS SIGNIFICANT— THE WAY MY PARENTS EAT MAKES MORE SENSE THAN THE WAY MY AMERICAN FRIENDS AND THEIR PARENTS EAT."


IN JUNIOR HIGH, I STARTED TO DRAW COMICS AND CARTOONS ABOUT THE THINGS THAT SOMEONE MY AGE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN.
HEY! MR TAMBOURINE MAN, PLAY A SONG FOR ME
I'M NOT SLEEPY AND THERE IS NO PLACE I'M GOING TO
I THOUGHT, SOMEHOW, SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, THERE'S THIS SECRET NETWORK OF PEOPLE, PERCEIVING THE WORLD IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY.
THEN I STARTED HEARING POP MUSIC FOR THE FIRST TIME.
AND I THOUGHT, IF I COULD PLAY IN A BAND, WHAT WOULD THAT FEEL LIKE?
WHEN PEOPLE SAY THAT THEY FIND MY WORK MOVING, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO THEM.
A LOT OF THAT CAME FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS AN IMMIGRANT — OF HAVING JUST A LITTLE BIT OF DISTANCE, SO I COULD ASK THE QUESTIONS:
HOW DO PEOPLE RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER? WHAT DO THEY DO? WHY DO THEY DO THINGS THAT WAY?
BUT I HAVE THE ABILITY TO STEP BACK AND LOOK AT MYSELF AND THE WORLD I LIVE IN WITH KIND OF DISPASSIONATE EYES.
SO I HELD ONTO THAT GREEN CARD FOR A LONG TIME — UNTIL, TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS, I HAD TO BECOME A CITIZEN.
I EVEN STARTED MENTIONING IT FROM THE STAGE ...
OKAY, I'M A CITIZEN NOW, AND THIS IS THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO VOTE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS — THEY ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DECIDED OUR FUTURE.
Local election voters, NY (= 23%)
I WOULD SHINE A LIGHT ON A PERCENTAGE OF THE THEATER AUDIENCE, AND MAYBE IT GOT SOME OF THEM TO GO AND VOTE.
THIS IS SOMETHING WE AIM FOR, RATHER THAN SAYING "THIS IS WHO WE ARE." IT'S ABOUT WHO WE CAN BE.
PASSPORT
DAVID BYRNE WAS THE LEAD SINGER AND GUITARIST OF THE SEMINAL ROCK BAND THE TALKING HEADS AND HAS BUILT A MULTIFACETED CAREER AS A MUSICIAN, RECORD PRODUCER, CONTEMPORARY ARTIST, AND FILMMAKER. HE HAS WON A GRAMMY, TONY, A GOLDEN GLOBE, AND AN ACADEMY AWARD. WORKING WITH HEADCOUNT, HE PROMOTES VOTER REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

BOOK REVIEW

BY FEROOZA AHADI, ESLL 310

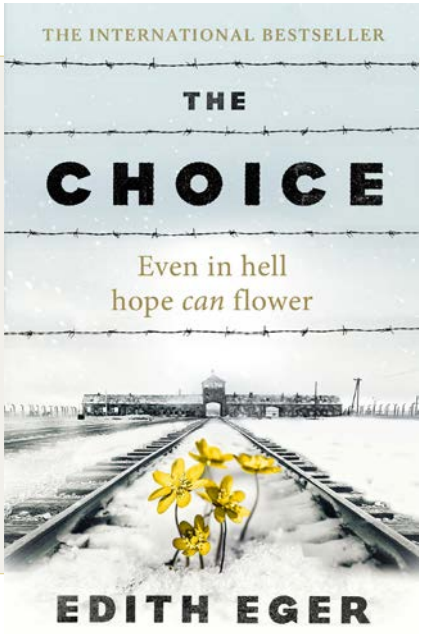


There is a book called *Man's Search for Meaning* written by Viktor Frankl. I really like that book because it's a biographical and psychological book, and it helped me to understand people even if they have the wrong behavior with me. Also, this book changed my perspective on the world. I read it a few years ago but want to read it again in English. I give it more than 5 out of 5 stars because it was a life-changer for me.

THE CHOICE

BOOK REVIEW

BY YULIIA ZAZHYTSKA, ESLL 310

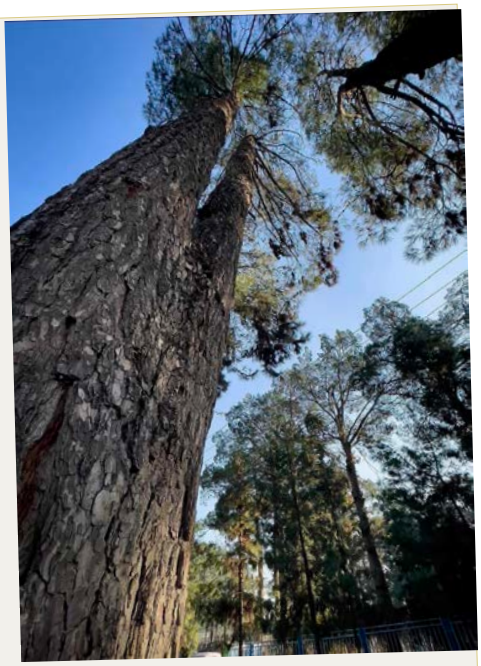


I like to listen to a book. And the recent book I have listened to is called *The Choice* by Edith Eger. It's a true story of her survival in a Nazi concentration camp. She lost her parents on the very first day; just she and her sister were left to fight for their life. Every single day in camp she was making a choice, a choice to stay alive, to not give up, a choice to accept the reality and adjust to it, a choice to find a little spark of hope in that hell. As a result of her choices, she survived; she started her long healing journey, injured, weak but not broken. She even found a strength in her heart to forgive her offenders. All these experiences helped her to become a therapist and help others. I love the idea of this story, because every one of us is making a choice daily, and exactly these choices can change our life.

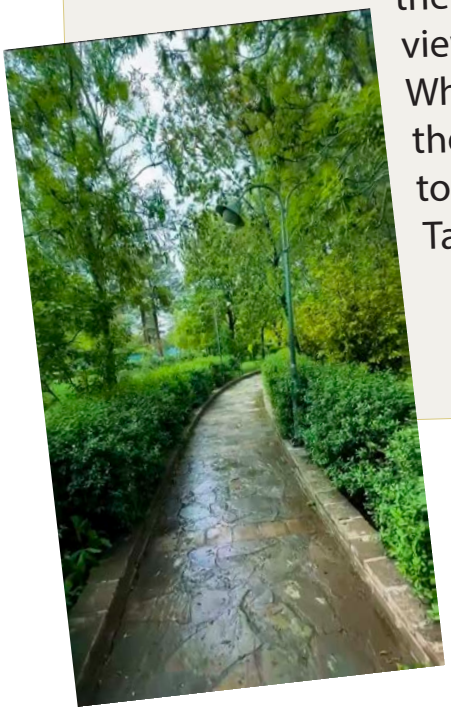
FUN DESTINATIONS: TARAGHI PARK

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

BY SIMA TABIBI, ESL 47



When I was a child, I loved to spend time with my exceptionally smart family and very friendly aunt's family in a park. Taraghi was really a big park, it was far from our houses, so we often had to go by car. The extra calm park was large and very beautiful, and it had many flowers and trees. The flowers smelled like heaven, such green paradise under the blue sky. I enjoyed their scent. When we went to the park, we walked on the soft green grass; it felt so relaxing. My aunt's daughter was named Bahareh, and she was friends with me. We usually talked about interesting things like telling jokes and laughing together. We played volleyball or badminton together. I liked walking in the park with my sister under the extremely tall trees, but I didn't want to do anything. My especially clever father, who was an engineer inventor, and my brothers used to make delicious kebabs. Sometimes, we were quiet, and we were listening to the sounds of the birds. When I felt tired, I lay down and looked at the sunlight between the trees. I loved and still love that amazing view. It's just like a shower of golden light shining on my face. When the juicy, smoky, and savory kebabs were baked, I tasted them, and they were wonderful. We were content and happy together. Indeed, my favorite peaceful and happy place was Taraghi Park, where I had beautiful memories during childhood.



FUN DESTINATIONS: AL-QANETER

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

BY AMIR ABDELRAHMAN, ESL 47

When I was a child, I loved to spend time in a big green park called Al-Qanater. This park was in Egypt, and it was next to the Nile River. I always felt very excited every time we planned to go there. My family did not go there by car or by bus, so we went by a large boat with two floors. I could hear the loud engine of the boat, and we sailed in the middle of the Nile River. The wind felt cool and fresh on my face. I went to this place with my father, my mother, my brother, and my sister. I always felt really happy and safe when I was with my family. When we arrived, we walked around, and we enjoyed the truly beautiful nature. The air smelled clean, like green grass and river water. There were a lot of tall trees and grass in the park. The grass felt soft and cool under my feet. I like to play in the park, but my favorite thing in the park was a small circus, and I watched it with my family. The circus music was loud, and the animals made funny sounds. We ate ripe mango and popcorn near the circus. The mango tasted very sweet and juicy. We stayed in the park until the afternoon, and we went back home. We returned by the same boat, but this time I felt extremely tired. My legs felt heavy and I wanted to sleep on the boat. The circus was like a colorful dream. Indeed, Al-Qanater Park was the best place for fun and happiness when I was young.



THE CHALLENGES OF IMMIGRATION

OPINION ESSAY

BY YEVHENIIA MINKOVA, ESL 47



Many immigrants face difficulties when they move to a new country. Leaving home and starting a new life can be exciting, but it can also be stressful. Immigrants often experience problems with language, culture, and finding work.

First, language barriers can make daily life difficult. Many immigrants do not speak the second language well when they arrive. Because of this, they may have trouble communicating with people. They can also find it difficult to understand important documents. For example, speaking with doctors or teachers may be stressful. Some immigrants are afraid to make mistakes when they speak. As a result, they may avoid conversations with other people. In addition, learning a new language usually takes a long time. People may feel lonely because they cannot express their thoughts clearly. Indeed, language problems can make adaptation very different for immigrants.

Second, cultural differences can create many challenges for immigrants. Every country has different traditions and social rules. Sometimes immigrants do not understand local customs at first. Because of this, they may feel uncomfortable in some situations. In addition, food, holidays and other things can be different. Some immigrants also miss their family and friends very much. This situation can make them feel sad and stressed. Furthermore, children and adults may adapt at different speeds. Indeed, adjusting to a new culture is not always easy for immigrants.

Last, finding a good job is often difficult for immigrants. Many employers want workers with local experience. Some jobs also require strong language skills. Because of this, immigrants may not find good work quickly. In addition, some people need to conform to their education or diplomas. This process can take a long time. As a result, immigrants sometimes accept low paying jobs at first. They may also work long hours to support their families. Furthermore, financial stress can make life even more difficult. In sum, employment challenges are a common problem for many immigrants.

In conclusion, immigrants can face many problems while adopting to a new country. Language barriers, cultural differences, and employment challenges are common difficulties. However, with time, support, and hard work, many immigrants successfully build a better life in their new home.

INSPIRING PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

OPINION ESSAY

BY ALINA VYNDIUK, ESL 47

In life, we meet many people who inspire us. These people can be famous or just people in our family or community. Sometimes life is hard, and we need someone who gives us motivation to continue. Inspiring people show us that we can achieve our dreams if we work hard. In my life, I am inspired by Barrington Irving, Nazar Melnychuk, and my mother. Barrington Irving is a person who followed his dream and inspires me a lot. He was born in a poor family and had many problems. When he was young, he met a pilot who inspired him. After that, he wanted to become a pilot, too. Flying lessons were expensive, so he worked hard to make money. He did not give up and followed his dream. For example, he built his own airplane because his dream was to fly all around the world. Then he became the youngest person to do it. He also helps poor young people believe in themselves and follow their goals. His story shows me that I achieve my dreams if I work hard. In sum, Barrington Irving inspires me to follow my dream.



Barrington Irving waves as he arrives home from a solo flight around the world on June 27, 2007. Photo: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Nazar Melnychuk is a person who inspires me to not give up and to keep moving forward. He lives in Sacramento and became a pastor at a young age. Through his blog, he motivates many people to stay strong and positive. He also supports Ukrainians in the United States and tries to help them in different ways. He moved to the U.S only about eight years ago, but he achieved a lot. He built a family, created a church, and became a leader in his community. His life shows me that it is possible to succeed in a new country with determination. Because of his example, I feel more confident about my future. He inspires me to stay strong, not give up, and keep working toward my goals. Indeed, Nazar Melnychuk is a powerful example of leadership in my life.

My mother is one of the most incredible women who have inspired me in my life. She worked as an accountant for many years and showed me the value of hard work. She managed to balance her job, take care of two daughters, and do the household at the same time. For instance, she sometimes brought work home because she had so many responsibilities. When I was a child, I watched her carefully as she worked on reports, used a calculator, and worked on the computer. Those moments made me interested in accounting and business. I saw how responsible and dedicated she was every day. However, her job was not easy. She never complained and always kept going. Because of her, I chose to study accounting at American River College. Overall, my mother inspires me to build a successful future.

In conclusion, Barrington Irving, Nazr Melnychuk, and my mother are inspiring people in my life. Their examples motivate me to never give up, even if life is difficult. I believe that if we follow the examples of inspiring people and stay focused on our goals, we can create a successful future.

MY FAVORITE HOBBIES

BY GALYNA BOROVETS, ESL 47

HOBBY CORNER



Every person is special. Everyone has their own character, feelings, and desires, so everyone has different hobbies. My favorite hobbies are taking care of plants, cleaning the house, and working.

First, I really like taking care of plants; therefore, there are many flowers in my yard. I very often buy flowers because flowers are beautiful. They make my yard cozy and pleasant. I make sure the flowers have enough moisture, fertilize them, and remove weeds if they appear. Besides that, I made myself a small garden in my backyard. This summer I grew cucumbers and tomatoes. It was so nice to take care of the plants, and wait for the flowers to appear, and then there were little fruits. And finally, when the fruits ripen, you can't imagine how pleasant it is to taste it as the result of your labor. When I moved into this house where I live now, several rose bushes were planted in the front yard. They were already dying. I started taking care of them, watering, pruning, and feeding them, and as a result, they gave me incredibly beautiful flowers as a token of gratitude. One day, my roses attracted a passerby. He asked me to give him some flowers for his wife. And I made a bouquet and gave it to him. Indeed, I want to say that taking care of plants is a great activity because you both move and enjoy the fruits of your own labor.

Next, one of my favorite hobbies is cleaning my house. I really like living in a clean house. I really like coming home to a clean house every time, so I keep my house tidy every day. For example, when I cook something in the kitchen, I immediately clean everything afterwords, wash the table surfaces, stove, oven, dishes, sink, and floor. I do not put it off. In particular, I make sure that all things are in their places. In addition, I do a general cleaning of my house every week, which means I clean and wipe everything. And it doesn't take much time if you keep the house clean during other days. All members of my family know that in our home we only eat in the kitchen. We can't take food in a bedroom or living room. My family knows that when you come into the house from the yard, you need to take off your shoes at the front door because the floor in the house is clean and there is no point in spreading dirt all over the house. Every night, before I go to bed, I check the kitchen and other rooms to make sure everything is in place. After that, I fall asleep with satisfaction because I know that in the morning, I will have a clean kitchen and the rest of my house. In summary, cleaning house is a significant hobby for me because as a result I get a wonderful vacation in my own home.

Third, walking is truly my favorite hobby, I really like nature, so I really like walking to look at nature. For me, it is not necessary to go far for a walk. I just go outside my yard, go to the park, or walk along the streets near my house. At this time, I like to look at trees, bushes, flowers, grass, and birds. I notice colors of flowers, and shapes of the leaves of trees, and bushes. For some reason my heart is filled with such joy! I don't know why nature has such a pleasant effect on me. Furthermore, I have walked in the same places many times, but I never get tired looking at the same views. Evey time it is just as wonderful for me. One day, I was walking and as always, admiring nature. Suddenly, I heard strange sounds that I had never heard before. I stopped and looked around. And then, I saw a beautiful squirrel with a fluffy tail sitting on an electric wire and making these sounds. I thought, "Maybe that squirrel was talking to me?" I spoke to her, but she probably doesn't understand the Ukrainian language. In short, walks are a special hobby for me because walking in nature and listening to it is amazing.

In conclusion, my walks, cleaning my cozy home, and taking care of my beautiful plants are the activities that motivate me to active life. I am very happy to have such wonderful hobbies!



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!

Fall

Connect with the Language and Communication HomeBase

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



Explore careers in the field of language and communication.

We area one-stop hub where studentspursuingrelated majors/programs in the LanguageandCommunication field have access to a Success TeamofCoaches,Peer Mentors, Counselors and Faculty.

Services Offered through the HomeBase

YourHomeBase supports you withthe following services:

- Resource and Referrals to Support Programs and Services at ARC
- Workshops and programming for First Year Students
- Fun events to connect with students in your HomeBase
- Tutoring Connections
- Scheduling Counseling Appointments
- Questions about Classes
- Assistance with Enrolling in Classes
- Connection to Peer Mentors (student leaders in the HomeBase with similar majors)
- Study Space and Lounge Area

Get Started with Your HomeBase

(New Students)

We are so excited to welcome you to the Language and Communication HomeBase! To get started, please follow the steps below:

1. Complete the ARC Application
2. Attend a New Student Orientation with the HomeBase
3. Schedule a Counseling Appointment after you attend Orientation (we'll show you how!)
4. Connect with us for important updates, reminders and events- see contact information below!

New Student Orientation

Meet with the HomeBase

Location: Learning Resource (LRC) Building
Contact: askhb-lac@arc.losrios.edu | (916) 484-8974 | IG: @archb_lcomm

LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT | ARC AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

ONE DAY THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

ARTICLE

BY VIKTORIA SOBENKO, ESL 47

Continued from page 1

Sometimes, one event can change everything in a single moment. That is what happened to me on the sad day of February 24, 2022, when the war started.

This event was a big surprise but not quite unforeseen. Everyone guessed it could happen, but no one really believed it. Everyone thought it would not happen. People reacted differently to this situation. My husband and I always try to think ahead and be prepared. And this time, we also decided to prepare. We thought that it would be something similar to Donbas in 2014, that military actions would take place in border cities. My family is from Kharkiv, and the Kharkiv region borders with Russia. We planned that if the war starts, my family and I will go to live in Western Ukraine, away from border and fighting. We decided to pack bags just in case. I collected documents, clothes for the first time and dry food, and my husband filled our car with gas every evening. In short, we were getting ready, but we pushed away these terrible thoughts to the last and did not believe in them.



Unfortunately, our worst fears came true, and that terrible day came. It was an early winter morning. There was some snow on the ground. It was cold, but the sun was rising. I was sleeping. It was around 6:00 a.m. when my alarmed husband woke me up with the words: "Get up quickly. It has started!" I understood right away what he meant. I jumped up, sat on the bed, and for about two minutes I could not move. My thoughts were running in my head. I could not believe it. Everything around us was quiet and normal. We did not hear explosions because our home was in a part of the city far from the Russian border, so the bombs didn't reach us. But it did not make it any easier. Our friends, relatives, and co-workers started calling us. They were scared. All the TV channels were talking about the war. There was news that enemy troops had entered the city and were moving deeper inside. There was panic, and it was scary.

Time was passing, and we had to eat. We pulled ourselves together and decided that we had to leave the house by 8:00 a.m. because with every minute it became more and more difficult. Many people tried to leave the city, and huge traffic jams formed. My mother came to us. She lived in the next building, and she helped me pack the children and the remaining things. I asked her to go with us, but

she refused completely. My husband went to get our car because it was in the garage, five minutes from our home. And we were ready to leave. New information was coming from everywhere. It turned out that the situation was not as we expected. The enemy was bombing not only the cities near the border but also cities all over Ukraine. We were confused about where to go because even Western Ukraine was not safe. Only one thing was clear: we needed to leave the city faster and go far away. We said goodbye to our home and my mother. It was extremely hard. Everyone was crying. Then we got into the car and drove away. So, we left our home and still have not returned there.



In conclusion, February 24, 2022, changed my life very deeply, and so much that I could not even imagine. That day, I could not even think that I was leaving for such a long time, and that I could be so far from my home. The situation in my country got worse and worse, and I kept moving farther from home. First, it was Central Ukraine, then Western Ukraine, then Slovakia; after that was Italy, and finally, the most unexpected place: America. As it turned out, that was the day my immigration story began.

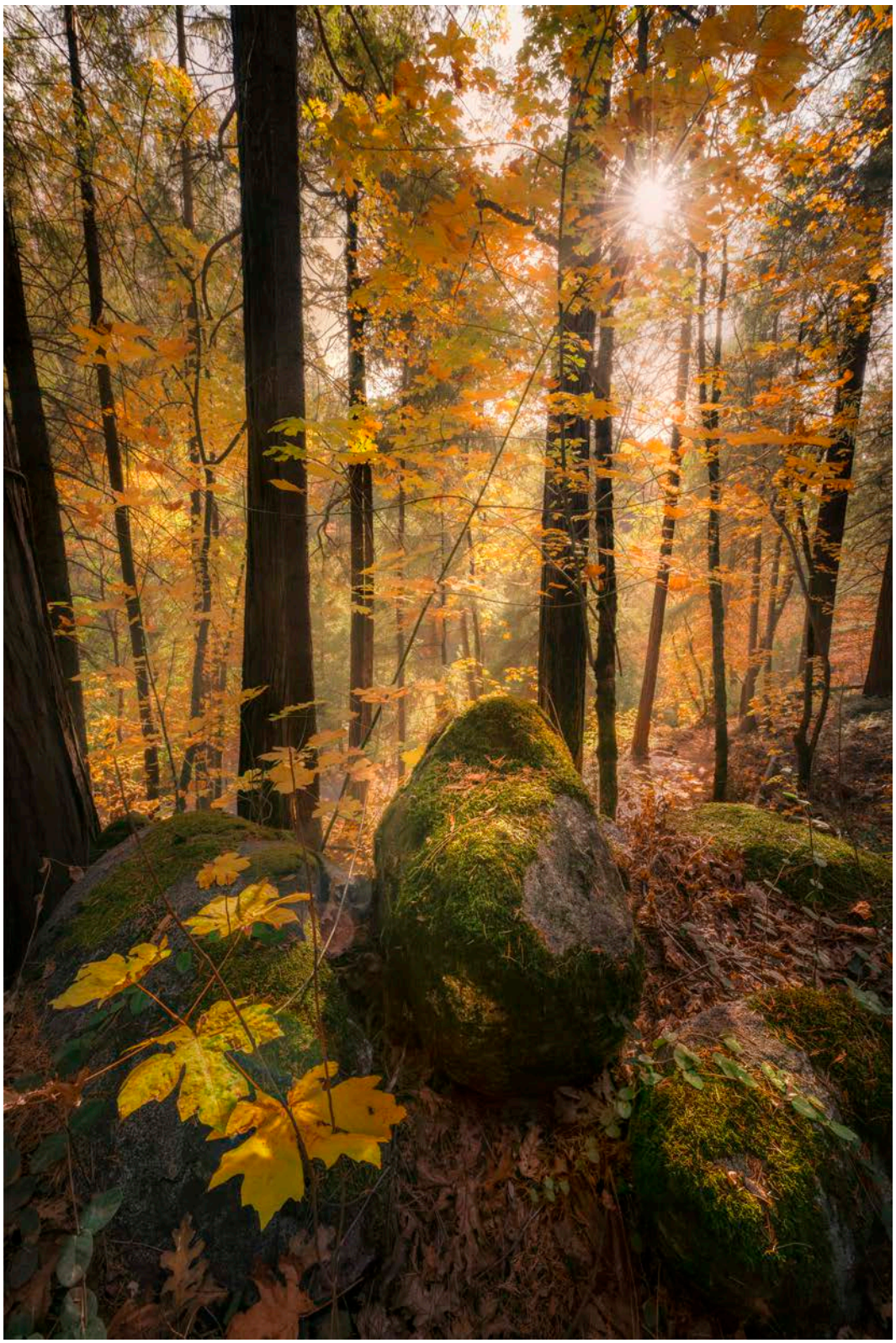


EXPLORE CALIFORNIA:

DEER CREEK TRIBUTE TRAIL

EXPLORE

BY PARROT STAFF EMMANUEL MADRID (MANNY)



On my most recent quest to find fall foliage, I ended up at the Deer Creek Tribute Trail in Nevada City, a place recommended by a very good friend. The roughly 30-minute hike took me along beautiful winding paths lined with trees in shades of yellow and red.

I found this particular spot near the beginning of the trail. The rocks, blanketed in green moss, immediately caught my attention. I used my Nikon Z8 and 14–24mm lens to capture the scene, choosing an aperture of f/18 to keep as much of it in focus as possible while also creating that sunstar effect.

The view was breathtaking. Even though not every tree was dressed in yellow or red, the scene still captured the beauty of this wonderful fall season.

If you like my work and would like to see more, check me out on **Instagram.com/emrrado**

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

DRIVING LESSONS WITH MY HUSBAND

LEAD ARTICLE

BY OLENA IVANIUK, ESL 325

Continued from page 1

"This year will be our twentieth anniversary," I said to myself. I have weird feelings because it has been twenty years that I have lived with my husband. However, three years ago, I was almost ready to divorce him. Through my calm and step-by-step life in Ukraine, I did not have to drive a car. As a left-handed person, for me it was a little complicated. Honestly, it was a huge problem. My husband used to call me "my small disaster," and he was afraid that I could destroy each fence or house on our street because no one could escape from me. I often confused left and right, and when people asked me for directions, people could easily get lost because instead of "turn right," I might say "turn left." People often became confused around me. However, when I came to the United States, I had to learn how to drive a car. My husband decided to teach me because he was a brave person. At that moment, I thought learning to drive would only give me freedom, but I did not know it could also test my patience, my confidence, and even my marriage.



My first driving lesson was stressful because I was nervous, and my husband was very strict. I clearly remember my first day. It was in June 2023 with sunny weather, birds' songs, and my anxious feelings. My hands were shaking, and my face was flashing and red. My nervous condition did not stop my husband. He seemed cold and like a stranger to me. I was sitting and watched curiously how he prepared for my first lesson. I noticed that my lovely husband no longer sat near me, but became strict and impatient. "Engine! Be careful! Turn left, not right! I said left!" he shouted at me repeatedly. Driving was not comfortable. I remember that time as the hard, unfair, and harmful time for me. It was like an emotional battle. Throughout my life, I watched many times in movies how other husbands taught their wives how to drive a car. None of those movies were like my experience. My "life movie" was like a horror film. My driving lessons were before my adult school classes, and very often after my driving lessons, I had tears on my face. I felt angry and hurt because I could not accept my husband's behavior.

During the next month, the driving lessons become an emotional struggle for both of us. We practiced in a big welcoming parking lot surrounded by big green palm trees. The sunlight touched my shaking hands on my steering wheel. I remember all his words from that period. "You must feel your car.

You need to be with the car like one mechanism," my husband reminded me every day. He did not know that the car for me felt like a huge airplane, and I was a small, scared, unskilled pilot. My husband gave me instructions, and I could not follow them; instead, I rejected them.

I am not a perfectionist, but I always try to do my best. My husband did not share this vision with me. After one month, nothing changed. He was loudly speaking with me while I was practicing; at home, he was the opposite of that guy who taught me. Crying was my way to escape from accepting that something was wrong with me, that I am not an idealist, or that I could make many mistakes, and I am not a fast-learning student.

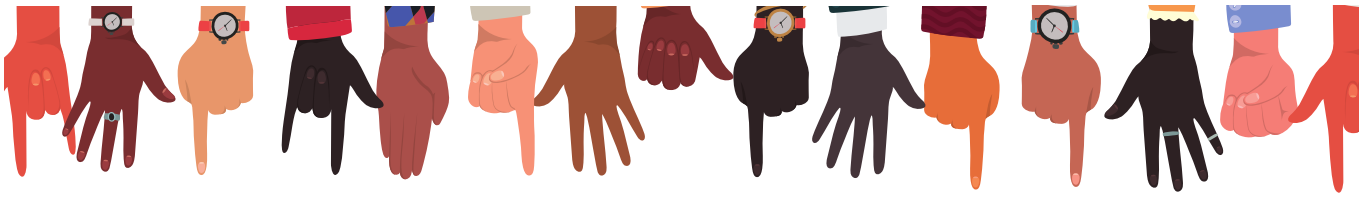


It was Wednesday, when I lost the final drop of my patience. That day, I was really like a disaster or maybe a huge tornado. Suddenly, all that I kept inside of me came out. "Enough! I quit! I am not a toy! You must respect me because I am your wife! I want to leave you and this car. I need time." For the first time, my husband looked scared. He knew if my disaster personality wakes up, it could bring a huge emotional crisis in our life. He whispered, "Sorry, maybe I was too strict with you." From my childhood, I learned that if I had stress, I could not learn. That day was meaningful for me because even the war in Ukraine and many other movements did not lead my marriage to divorce.

Since that day, we have been listening to each other more, and our communication, understanding, and patience have helped me. At the end of my driving lessons, I felt calm and more confident driving a car. I successfully passed my driving test. My husband encouraged me that day. Later, when my oldest son was practicing before the driving test, I taught him. Then I understood how hard it is to be patient and polite with your loved ones. Teaching someone to drive a car is too responsible: you must be aware of many situations, be willing to be helpful, and always stay calm. Now, I understand that my husband was fully in the process, and maybe he was scared because beside him was his small disaster.

Learning to drive a car can bring regret, sadness, or even destroy a marriage. However, if you do everything with patience, communication, and dedication, you can improve your unity with your family. Those two months were stressful, but they changed my life and my attitude in a positive way. Now, I can live a happy life with my driver's license that was so hard for me.


GUIDED PATHWAYS
MILESTONE CERTIFICATES
Health Sciences
ECE
BE
BILINGUAL
CIS
USE YOUR LANGUAGES!
coming soon: Admin of Justice
Culinary Arts
Requirements:
• Take additional language classes in advanced ESL
• Pass the intro classes in your field
• Complete the certificate application
• Finish the remaining courses for your AA or Certificate.
Bus Tec
Scan this QR code for more info:



Language & Communication HomeBase

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE ESL PROGRAM OR CURIOUS ABOUT NEXT STEPS? SCAN THE QR CODE TO MEET WITH A HOMEBASE TEAM MEMBER.

Come and meet with a HomeBase team member and learn more about next steps.

Services Offered

1. Connection to Counselors
2. Enrollment Help
3. Success Coaches
4. Peer Mentor Support
5. Assistance Navigating eServices & Canvas
6. Workshops and Social Events
7. Safe Community Space
8. Free Printing
9. Snacks

Find Us Here

LOCATION:
LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER
PHONE: (916) 484-8974
EMAIL: ASKHB-LAC@ARC.LOSRIOS.EDU

Hours

MONDAY: 8AM - 5PM
TUESDAY: 8AM - 5PM
WEDNESDAY: 8AM - 5PM
THURSDAY: 8AM - 5PM
FRIDAY: 8AM - 4:30PM





Attention ARC Students and Employees

Unlock your **FREE 3-year LinkedIn Learning membership** using the QR code below - courtesy of Professor Heidi Bennett.

What's in it for you?

- Earn badges & certifications in tools like **Microsoft Office** and **Adobe - display them proudly on your LinkedIn profile**
- Learn at your own pace and boost your skills in **programming, generative AI, marketing, design, and more** - in over 35 languages!
- **No limits** - take as many courses as you'd like.

- Scan the QR code above to unlock your free membership to LinkedIn Learning

- Scan the QR code above to register for free courses and discover tips and tricks on making your profile stand out!

Questions?

Stop by El Centro in the Unite Center for more info

Have a tooth problem?

Need help?

No dental insurance?

Here are some resources:

WellSpace Health: 916-737-5555

One Community Health: 916-443-3299

Refugee Health Clinic: 916-874-9227

Elica Health Centers: 855-354-2242

California Northstate University: 916-686-8914 (Dentistry School)

Sacramento District Dental Society: 916-446-1211

Emergency Dental Sacramento: 916-318-0911 (open on week-ends and accepts walk-ins).

Some of these places may require a fee. Call for information about cost.

You can also look on https://cityhub.findhelp.com/ with your zip code.



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.

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 o call: **(916) 484-8059**

Mentee Registration



Staff Writers: Emmanuel Madrid and Asila Sadiqi

Faculty Advisors: Patrick Hoggan and David Evans

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