



# THE ESL PARROT

Issue 7

Fall 2006

## *Interviewing Professor Michael Larsen*

Hi Michael, here are some questions:

*Please complete this sentence: Most people would be surprised to know*

That Michael ... is an ordained Baptist minister, a competitive runner, and speaks Japanese with his wife.

*What do you find is the most challenging for you as an ESL teacher?*

First of all, I think most teachers continually challenge themselves to improve their classes every year. Teachers encourage life-long learning, and most teachers are good models of that.

*What do you find the most enjoyable about teaching ESL?*

ESL students tend to be older and more motivated. We rarely have discipline problems, and most students are a genuine pleasure to work with. It is fun and interesting to meet people from all over the world. I enjoy helping them to

achieve their American dream.

*What do you think are the most important things students should learn from your class?*



Teachers can teach their hearts out, but in the end, the students determine whether or not they learn. Also English fluency is just one part of a person. I hope to encourage and motivate my students to be good not only at English but in all parts of their life – physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

*If there were one thing you could change, what would it be and why?*

Well, I could use plastic surgery on my ... Oh,

you mean about my classes? I think I could do a better job if I could teach full-time instead of having five part-time jobs.

*Have you ever taught in another country?*

Yes, I lived and taught English for three years in Japan, which is where I met and married my wife, and my first son was born.

*Who is your favorite writer and why?*

I first read a Stephen King novel back in high school. It was called "The Stand," and I think I have read just about every Stephen King novel since then. However, my favorite genre is science fiction since it opens my mind to so many possibilities.

*Who was your hero when you were growing up and why?*

I grew up reading comic books, so my heroes were fictional characters like Spider-Man and

Life's up and downs provide windows of opportunity to determine your values and goals. Think of using all obstacles as stepping stones to build the life you want.

**Marsha Sinetar**



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Superman. I learned about how people with great powers also have greater responsibility to do good things with those powers. I think when God blesses us with good things; we have a responsibility to use those good things in a way that blesses other people as well.

by Young Victor– Former ESL student, Nursing Major

## *Student Chippings*

### *My Most Embarrassing Experience*

When I go on vacation, I visit my grandparents in Guanajuato, Mexico. Whenever I am planning to go to Mexico, I try to keep it as secret as possible because my relatives here always want me to take things to my family there. In fact, my most embarrassing experience arose from one of such occasions.

Last December, while I was getting ready to make a trip, my cell phone rang. At first, I didn't want to answer because I knew for sure that it was going to be someone who wanted me to take something to Guanajuato. When I answered, it was my aunt, my

mother's sister. She wanted me to take three packs of adult diapers for my great grandfather. Each pack had 10 or 15 diapers. I didn't want to take them because there were too many, and they would take a lot of space in my luggage. Finally, my aunt convinced me.

By the time she brought over the diapers, I had my entire luggage ready. I was trying not to take those diapers by saying that I could not fit even one of those packages in my bag. Alas, my aunt found a solution. She opened one packages and began stuffing the diapers in empty spots in my luggage! She got in two packages that way. The diapers were scattered all through my luggage. I left behind one package because we couldn't squeeze in

anymore.

It was my first time traveling alone, and I was scared and disoriented. When I got to the airport, I was told that I was allowed to take only two bags weighing fifty pounds each. I had one bag weighing eighty pounds, and I thought I was okay. Then the airline staff told me that my bag was thirty pounds overweight. I



had to buy a box for the thirty extra pounds that I had. At that time, I forgot about the diapers. I began to open my bag, and the first thing to pop out was a diaper. I got so red and started to sweat. I was so nervous that I didn't know what to do. I just began taking clothes and diapers from my bag and putting them into the box until I finally had thirty pounds out of my luggage. I didn't want to look at people's faces; I hoped they wouldn't notice. When I arrived in Mexico, I told all my friends and family about this experience.

This was the most embarrassing experience of my life. I learned from it that the next time I fly, I am going to take two fifty-pound suitcases instead of one heavy one, which is also harder to carry. Moreover, I am never going to take anything that might be embarrassing to me, especially diapers!

Eloy Hernandez  
Spring 2006 W-50

## Parrot Warblings

### Speak Like a Parrot

#### How to pronounce "the" in English?

Normally, we pronounce "the" with a short sound like "thuh". But when "the" comes before a **vowel sound**, we pronounce it as a long "thee". e.g.

*thee* apple  
*thuh* house

### ESL WEB LINKS

- <http://eslbee.com>  
Provides advanced composition material for non-native speakers of English.
- <http://www.eslpartyland.com>  
The students' side of this web site has the following features: Learning With The Internet, Music, Movies, Quiz Center (Hot Potatoes Javascript quizzes), Discussion, Chat, E-mail Exchange, Message Center, Links, Search the Site, and Meet the Hostess
- <http://www.eflclub.com>  
It is a website specifically for young learners of English as a foreign language.



### Seven Secrets to Learn English

#### Secret #5: Improve your vocabulary with 5 words a day

Vocabulary is easy! How many days in a year are there? 365, normally (on Earth).

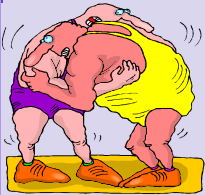
If you learn only 5 new words a day, you will learn  $5 \times 365 = 1,825$  new words in a year. ONE THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE WORDS. That is a lot of new words. And we are not counting all the other words you will learn in

other ways - reading, conversation etc.

Buy a notebook and write in 5 new words EACH day, EVERY day. Learn them! You will soon have an excellent vocabulary.



## Grappling with Grammar : A, An or The?



When do we say "**the** dog" and when do we say "**a** dog"? **The** and **a/an** are called "articles". We divide them into "definite" and "indefinite" like this:

Articles	
Definite	Indefinite
the	a, an

We use "definite" to mean sure, certain. "Definite" is particular.

We use "indefinite" to mean not sure, not certain. "Indefinite" is general.

When we are talking about one thing in particular, we use **the**. When we are talking about one thing in general, we use **a** or **an**.

Think of the sky at night. In the sky we see 1 moon and millions of stars. So normally we would say:

- I saw **the** moon last night.
- I saw **a** star last night.

Look at this examples:

the	a, an
* <b>The</b> capital of France is Paris.	* I was born in <b>a</b> town.
* I have found <b>the</b> book that I lost.	* John had <b>an</b> omelette for lunch.
*Have you cleaned <b>the</b> car?	*James Bond ordered <b>a</b> drink.
*There are six eggs in <b>the</b> fridge.	*We want to buy <b>an</b> umbrella.

Of course, often we can use **the** or **a/an** for the same word. It depends on the situation, not the word. Look at these examples:

- We want to buy **an** umbrella. (Any umbrella, not a particular umbrella.)  
Where is **the** umbrella? (We already have an umbrella. We are looking for our umbrella, a particular umbrella.)





## Out of the Cage

### Two ALL DAY RESUME EVALUATIONS

**Tues., Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>  
& Wed., Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>**

In preparation for ARC's up-coming Career Fair (Oct. 5th), the Career Center is sponsoring two all day resume evaluations:

Tues., Sept. 19th  
Wed., Sept. 20th  
9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

Students need only bring a copy of their resume for a 30 minute one-on-one resume critiquing session.

Just drop in—no appointment necessary.

Questions? – Call the Career Center at 484-8492.



### eWaste Recycling in Lot A



Most electronic devices are no longer accepted at landfills and this "eWaste" is often expensive to recycle. On Sept. 30, ARC is taking part in an area-wide eWaste recycling effort, and students, faculty and staff are encouraged to take part in this free program, by bringing in old TV's, monitors, laptops, printers, DVD players, copy machines, fax machines, calculators, keyboards, stereo systems, speakers, phones, VCR's, etc.

The drop-off location will be the northeast corner of Lot A, off Myrtle Avenue, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm

### Tom Goff Poetry Reading: "Truenature"

*A beloved fixture on the Sacramento poetry scene, Tom Goff has graced our community of writers since the early 1990s by creating and hosting frequent poetry events around town, by writing regular book reviews for Poetry Now, a monthly publication for the active Sacramento Poetry Center, for which he has been officer, and by publishing in numerous small press publications in Northern California*

*Tuesday September 26 from 12:30 to 1:15 pm at: Raef Hall, Room*

#### Questions / Comments?

*Please let us know what we can do to improve "The ESL Parrot".*

*We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us.*

*Send us an e-mail, call, or just drop by Professor Bracco's office D387 (at Davis Hall) braccop@arc.losrios.edu (916) 484-8988*

### Intolerance Issues in Our Community

ARC is home to students of many races, ethnicities, and countries of origin. Booker Neal and a representative from the Sacramento Commission on Racial Profiling will describe recent anti-African-American and anti-immigrant incidents of intolerance, and help us explore ways of reducing intolerance and learning, in Rodney King's words, to "just get along."

Thursday September 14 from 12:25 to 1:20 pm at Raef Hall, Room 160

### Constitution Day Event

Only a third of Americans surveyed know that "we the people" are the opening words of our Constitution, while over two thirds know what "www" means. Who were "we the people" in 1787? Who are "we the people" today? The Political Science Department and the Center for Teaching and Learning invite you to join in an informative and stimulating celebration of the United States Constitution. Watch for and join in other Constitution related events this Thursday September 14 from 12:25 to 1:20 pm at Raef Hall, Room 160

#### Need help with your English skills?

### The ESL Resources Center

Is designed for students who are non-native speakers of English. Students can earn units while working on their own individual needs in areas such as:

- Basic Grammar
- Reading and Writing
- Listening Comprehension
- Accent Reduction

**The Most Beautiful Song in the World**

I'm a musician,  
But, I play with my heart.  
I sing with my heart,  
The most beautiful song in the world

I play with my heart for my man,  
Who has stood strong, persistence in my heart

I play for him a vital song  
The strongest song in the world

I play with my heart for my friend,  
Who has started her new life  
I play for her who is a bride  
The happiest song in the world

I play with my heart for a patient  
Who was burning in high fever  
I play for him who didn't want to die  
And wanted my love  
The loveliest song in the world

I play with my heart for a woman  
An old mother who fell in front of the hospital  
For her whose heart was broken by the death of her son  
The most touching song in the world

I play with my heart for a soldier  
Who was killed innocently  
I play for him who was hopeful to the future  
The most encouraging song in the world

I play with my heart for the world  
That is full of war, famine, cruelty and pain  
I play for the people  
The most peaceful song in the world

I play with my heart for the crickets  
Who are on the top of trees  
Singing in the night for the stars and the moon  
And the stars twinkling and dancing by our song  
The loudest song in the world

I play with my heart  
And I fly with my song to the top of the world  
I play and I sing with my heart  
The most beautiful song in the world

Parisa Samadi  
Former ESL student and now language and literature major

Dear Granny Noetal,

My students always have cell phones going off in class, or they sit there reading their text messages instead of focusing on the lesson. What can I do about this?

Annoyed,

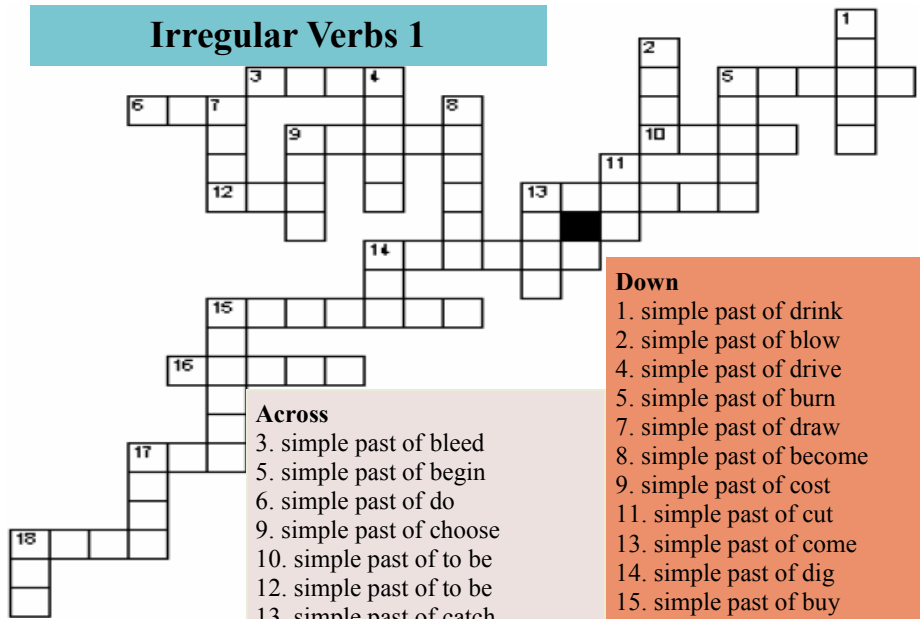
“Sell Phone” Advocate and  
ESL professor



Dear “Sell Phone”,

I've got lots of ideas but let's take it the students.  
OK, students, not all of you enjoy cell phones in the classroom. What recommendations do you have for solving the problem of cell phone abuse in the classroom?

**Irregular Verbs 1**



**Across**

- 3. simple past of bleed
- 5. simple past of begin
- 6. simple past of do
- 9. simple past of choose
- 10. simple past of to be
- 12. simple past of to be
- 13. simple past of catch
- 14. simple past of dream
- 15. simple past of bring
- 16. simple past of build
- 17. simple past of bet

**Down**

- 1. simple past of drink
- 2. simple past of blow
- 4. simple past of drive
- 5. simple past of burn
- 7. simple past of draw
- 8. simple past of become
- 9. simple past of cost
- 11. simple past of cut
- 13. simple past of come
- 14. simple past of dig
- 15. simple past of buy
- 17. simple past of bend
- 18. simple past of bite



*Don't let the grass grow under your feet.  
(Not let the grass grow under someone's feet)*

**Meaning:** Act now without any delay.

If you say "Don't let the grass grow under your feet" to someone, you tell him/her not to waste time and to do something immediately.

If someone **doesn't let the grass grow under his/her feet**, he/she does something right now without waiting

**Example:**

\*Now that you know what to do, act right away. **Don't let the grass grow under your feet.**



## Tail Feathers

### Brief History of Labor Day

Labor Day is a national legal holiday that is over 100 years old. Over the years, it has evolved from a purely labor union celebration into a general "last fling of summer" festival.

It grew out of a celebration and parade in honor of the working class by the

Knights of Labor in 1882 in New York. In 1884, the Knights held a large parade in New York City celebrating the working class. The parade was held on the first Monday in

September. The Knights passed a resolution to hold all future parades on the same day, designated by them as Labor Day.



The Socialist Party held a similar celebration of the working class on May 1. This date eventually became known as May Day, and was celebrated by Socialists and Communists in commemoration of the working man. In the U.S., the first Monday in September was

selected to reject any identification with Communism. In the late 1880's, labor organizations began to lobby various state legislatures for recognition of Labor Day as an official state holiday.

The first states to declare it a state holiday in 1887 were Oregon, Colorado, New York, Massachusetts,

and New Jersey. Then in 1894, Congress passed a law recognizing Labor Day as an official national holiday.

Today, Labor Day is observed not only in the U.S. but also in Canada, and in other industrialized nations. While it is a general holiday in the United States, its roots in the working class remain clearer in European countries.

It has come to be recognized in the U.S. not only as a celebration of the working class, but even more so as the unofficial end of the summer season. In the northern half of the U.S., at least, the summer vacation season begins with Memorial Day and ends with



### Silly Vasily's Chuckle Chamber.

A customer ordered some coffee in a café. The waiter arrived with the coffee, and placed it on the table. After a few moments, the customer called for the waiter.

'Waiter,' he said. 'There's *dirt* in my coffee!' 'That's not surprising, Sir,' replied the waiter. 'It was *ground* only half-an-hour ago.'

Labor Day.

Many colleges and some secondary and elementary schools begin classes immediately after Labor Day. State parks, swimming pools, and campgrounds are all quite busy on Labor Day, as vacationers take one last advantage of the waning hot season. September is the month that marks the beginning of autumn. And, because of that, the average daytime maximum temperatures take a plunge during the month in most of the US.

<http://wilstar.com/holidays/laborday.htm>

### Chernobyl : The True Story

"It seemed as if the world was coming to an end... I could not believe my eyes; I

saw the reactor ruined by the explosion. I was the first man in the world to see this. As a nuclear engineer I realized all the consequences of what had happened. It was a nuclear hell. I was gripped by fear."

On April 25th -26th, 1986 the World's worst nuclear power



accident occurred at Chernobyl in the former USSR (now Ukraine). The Chernobyl nuclear power plant located 80 miles north of Kiev had 4 reactors and whilst testing reactor number 4 numerous safety procedures were disregarded. At 1:23am the chain reaction in the reactor became out of control creating explosions and a fireball which blew off the reactor's heavy steel and concrete lid. The Chernobyl accident killed more than 30 people immediately, and as a result of the high radiation levels in the surrounding 20-mile radius, 135,000 people had to be evacuated.

**Editor's Note:** Many of our ARC ESL students lived in Ukraine at that time. Students, what were your memories of that time? Write us a short paragraph of your memory of that tragic day. Where were you?

What did you hear, think, or say? Submit your writing to your writing

teacher or directly to Professor Bracco in his mailbox or electronically."



<http://www.chernobyl.co.uk/>