

TESL NS Newsletter

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TESL NS Workshop Calendar

TESL Nova Scotia invites you to the following workshops:

April 9, 2001 "Grammar for Dummies"

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Private Dining Room, Loyola Building
St. Mary's University

Presenters: Bill Kerr and Sandra Powell
(TESL Center / St. Mary's University)

May 22, 2001 Teaching Overseas

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Private Dining Room / Loyola Building

Social

June ?, 2001.

Announcements

Job Posting

GEOS Language Corporation is now accepting applications for the following positions.

Part Time ESL Instructor - Halifax Branch 12-20 hours/week. Salary dependant on qualifications. Minimum level 2 under the new TESL Canada qualification system

Program Co-ordinator - Ottawa Branch Full time salaried position. Minimum level 3 under the new TESL Canada qualification system. Must have experience in human resources, marketing, and academic administration. Must have 2 years overseas work experience. Must be willing to travel.

Interested applicants should forward a resume to Howard Brown at fax (902) 423-9896.

The Editor Speaks...(begs)

I started editing during my university days. For several years I was editor of the students' yearbook. But, though I was the editor, my superiors at the time (Catholic nuns) always had the final say. Problem -- if there was a problem -- no freedom of speech.

Among several editing jobs that followed, one stands out -- editing the Newsletter of the English Department of the University of Maiduguri in West Africa. Problem -- "ba kudi," no money for paper. I had to solicit donations from European companies that were in the area.

And now I am editing the Newsletter of TESL Nova Scotia. Problem? You bet! Few people find the time to contribute to the newsletter. I have to beg, to cajole, to threaten and to coerce people to have something to print.

Since the release of our winter issue, we have had several occasions to celebrate -- Valentine's, Teachers' Week, Ramadan for the Muslims, International Day for the Elimination of Racism, and -- yes, April Fool's day. In between, we have had workshops for teachers' professional development. Some of the contributions in this issue are related to these celebrations.

A big thank you to Ellen Pilon, the computer wizard responsible for the layout of the newsletter; to the people who contributed to this issue; to the workshop speakers and guests, and to Norma McSween and the other members of the TESL Executive for their enthusiasm in organizing all these activities.

I'm looking forward to your contributions for the summer issue. Please don't use the sun, so long waited for, as an excuse for not writing.:) Thank you and a Blessed and a Happy Easter to those who celebrate Easter.

Fe Leonor

Your TESL NS Executive

President: Norma MacSween (SMU)

Co-Vice Presidents:

Darlene MacInnis (MISA)

Jayne Geldart (Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre)

Recording Secretary: Sheila Nunn (East Coast)

Treasurer: Ellen Pilon (ILI)

Membership Secretary: Maureen Sargent (SMU)

Newsletter Editor: Fe Leonor Baculi (SMU)

TESL Canada Rep: Sandee Thompson (ILI)

Members at Large:

Beverly Eisner (Metro)

Daphne Tallon (Halifax School Board)

Belinda Raymond-Hart

Judy Terrio (St Catherine's)

Janet Hattie

Announcements (continued from pg. 1)

The Bedford Sackville Literacy Network is holding a workshop for their volunteer tutors entitled "Getting Started in Literacy" with Marian Lindsay on April 11.

- Marilyn Johnson/ ESL Instructor

Community News (past, present, future)

TESL Canada.

National Recognition Standards for Instructors of English as a Second or Foreign Language to Adults

Instructors
Coordinators
Program Directors
School Owners

- * What is an appropriate maximum class size?
- * What qualifications should program directors have?
- * Should programs ensure that all international students have medical insurance?

WE NEED YOUR INPUT on these and other important issues in the TESL Canada Institutional Standards. Please take a look at the Institutional Standards on the TESL Canada website: www.tesl.ca

Send your comments (e-mail preferred)
TESL Canada
teslcanada@home.com
Tel/Fax: 604-298-0312

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Halifax Immigrant Learning Center

by Gerry Mills

This past year has been a really busy one for staff and clients at the Halifax Immigrant Learning Center with a 20% increase in numbers from last year. In January we began a special-ized Further Education Preparation for Newcomers class for those learners intending to go on to university or community college in the fall. This is being taught by Katherine Macnaughton and is proving to be immensely successful and we hope, pending funding, to be able to offer it again later in the year.

We also received funding through the Community Learning Initiative Special ESL Funding from the Department of Education to develop ESL work-books for Microsoft Word 98, Microsoft Word 2000, Corel Word Perfect 8 and the Internet. These are being developed by Kathy Burnett and will be made available to all LINC sites and Nova Scotia ESL Network member agencies at the end of March. We are also making arrangements so that they can be downloaded from the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) site.

The day after Kathy's contract finishes, we will be losing her amazing skills for a few months while she uses them elsewhere to welcome and delight in her new daughter Emma Zi Lin Burnett.

Last year we lost core funding for the English in the Workplace program but were able to maintain EWP programs in a reduced number of sites in metro through alternative resources. We were delighted to recently receive additional funding to expand English in the Workplace and new training sites are currently being finalized.

Internally we have been working very hard developing our CLB aligned curriculum. CLB workshops at the TESL Canada 2000 conference and the Atlantic Settlement Conference, together with our piloting of the Guide to CLB Implementation (available soon!) supported our efforts and instructors at the Centre are finally converts.

Like most Nova Scotians we are all looking forward to a break in the snow cycle and the appearance of those first bulbs so that we can convince some of our newcomers who arrived at the end of last year that we really do have grass somewhere under all of this.

* * * * *

"Wine-ing about Grammar" Workshop - January 17, 2001

Grapes and wine and cheese, a room full of enthusiastic language teachers, a touted mentor ready to expound on the vagaries of grammar instruction: the scenario for a perfect evening. And a perfect evening it was. "Wine-ing Grammar" took place on January 17th in the Private Dining Room of Saint Mary's University. Sandra Powell was the grammar expert.

Sandra's enthusiasm and words of wisdom were welcomed by everyone as the evening raced onwards. An avowed grammar lover, Sandra inspired us, and revitalized those of us experiencing grammar fatigue in the gloomy grey January days. She talked about verb tenses, gave a little bit of etymology, shared a few ideas on current styles of teaching adult students, and demonstrated several excellent practice activities for teaching tenses.

The goals of this workshop were threefold: instruction, entertainment, and recruitment. All three goals were realized. Approximately 40 TESL NS members attended the workshop. Half a dozen new members also enjoyed the evening. After Sandra's teaching, wine and food and conversation were enjoyed by many.

"Sweetening Grammar" Workshop - February 22, 2001

About 30 TESL NS members braved the terrible cold on the evening of February 22nd to listen to Sandee Thompson give us tips on how to sweeten our grammar teaching. She set out

to "infect us with her energy," and infect us she did. We intended to listen, but in fact we participated fully as we practiced and absorbed ideas to infect our students with grammar learning.

After a brisk warmer activity -- one of those "Find someone who....." which was our first step in active participation -- we laughed with six members who enacted a human time line. Simple Present lay stretched out on the floor with Present Continuous circling around and over her. Assorted past tenses continued the line. Observers called out suggestions, and Sandee prompted us to think about the types of learners who would benefit from such a visual representation. We agreed that the shy or hesitant learner would benefit from this kind of activity: it certainly involved even the most reticent TESL NS member!

We played a Snakes & Ladders sentence correction game, Dominoes for matching simple past endings, and Compare the Picture. A conversation activity involved two rows of chairs facing each other. We sat on the chairs and spoke with the partner opposite on a given question for 1 minute. Then the question changed and the partner spoke. Among the questions were ones such as: "Talk about a grammar point you hate teaching," and "Talk about a song that you think everyone would remember from your high school years." The listener could not speak, but had to indicate interest with facial expressions. We then played Grammar Volleyball, with Sandee holding up irregular verbs flash cards for which we had to call out the past form. At this point we were so relaxed that we ourselves were not mortified when we called out the wrong answer!

All activities contributed to the teachers-as-students' comfort, their enjoyment, their success working in pairs, and their increased practice and (for students) understanding of grammar. Each activity was assessed for its strengths and for how much learning could be gained from it. Stimulated by the content of the workshop, we enjoyed additional stimuli from the delicious cakes and coffee.

Ellen Pilon, Instructor at ILI, TESL NS Treasurer

International Language Institute had an OPEN HOUSE on Thursday March 22 from 4 - 6 pm. Information was presented about its host family program, CELTA and CELTC teaching programs, English for university-bound and College-bound students, regular program and IELTS testing. Light refreshments were served.

International Language Institute, 5151 Terminal Road, 8th floor, Halifax. 429-3636
Fax; 429-2900

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The TESL Canada Conference was extremely successful. As a result, TESL Nova Scotia will receive its share of the proceeds to be used to uphold our on-going mandate to support ESL teachers and learners in Nova Scotia.

A sub-committee will be set up to make recommendations about ways to use this money to best benefit the ESL community in the province. If you are interested in becoming a member of this committee, please contact:

Catherine Vaughan (902) 477-6330
E-mail <crackers@ns.sympatico.ca>

Teachers' Corner

Greetings TESL Nova Scotia!

When Fe Lenor was at King Abdul Aziz University Jeddah, I was teaching English to students enrolled in the medical faculty. I spent over five years there and found the students much more sensible and interesting than a lot of my colleagues. However, despite the fact that I have only pleasant memories about the hundreds of students who passed through my office, I had my fair share of nutters to deal with. In retrospect, I admit that I was often to blame. I

frequently and deliberately set them up out of some sort of "White Mischief" expat syndrome. Fortunately, it was only ever a bit of fun and no-one got hurt in the game.

The best examples I can give were the annual lessons on the language used to describe the human reproductive system. Outside the class-room, in strict Saudi society, such talk would have upset someone badly enough to get you arrested. But inside the classroom, in my little protectorate, I had the freedom to be as anatomically descriptive as I thought was pedagogically necessary. Only three classes had been scheduled, but somehow I managed to stretch them to six. It was the one time I could be outrageous and get away with it - all in the name of science, of course.

My naughty self feasted on an endless supply of diagrams, board drawings, gesticulations and, of course, choruses of the most intimate parts of human anatomy. I even left the door wide open to make sure Engineering and Computer Science students got a taste of the forbidden fruit. A video of the whole natural experience, from taking a girl out to the movies right through to taking her to the labour ward, was my piece de resistance. Each year it was the ultimate test of their tolerance, and each year they passed. In fact, apart from the expected giggles of adolescent delight, no-one bothered to comment.

I was beginning to think that I had misjudged and misplaced their conservatism. But then one day, in my final year, a student suddenly stood up and in high-pitched Arabic started condemning me and my offspring to the fires of hell. I had done it. Someone had cracked. He stormed out of the room and headed straight to the director's office, presumably on a mission to extirpate the evil I had sown. Within minutes, the director returned with the angry young man and beckoned me outside. He asked me to use the mute button on the video player. But that would be a silent English class, I said. No need to go that far just because we're talking about sex, I suggested. It's not the sex that he is objecting to, the director explained patiently. It's the MUSIC on the video!!! It is forbidden in his village. Alas! In some TESL situations, you just can't win!

- **Terry Walsh**

<Terry.Walsh@CourseLeader.com>

[Australian-born Terry Walsh taught English as a foreign language for 15 years before moving into journalism and eventually the corporate world. He taught at universities in Finland, (where he was involved in the then-nascent research into suggestopedia) Italy, England and Saudi Arabia. His hobbies include travel and foreign languages, his obsessions take in fitness and his "sins embrace just about everything," quoth he. His one unpublished novel, three unpublished screenplays and one unpublished self-help book suggest that perhaps the only thing he ever did well was TEFL. He is at present living and working in London as head of corporate communications for a multinational IT training brokerage.]

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Message from the ESL/EFL Diaspora

An EFL student once, I am an EFL teacher myself now, trying to teach English as a second and/or foreign language to uncivilized unmotivated and unwilling students, whose only wish is to pass even with the lowest grade. This is proving to be a torture task as well as a near impossibility. At times I feel certain that I am up against the worst crew of students in the universe.

A real student of language should have something to motivate him to learn the language rather than go to class day after day his sights set on nothing but the pass. He'd come equipped with a minimum of willingness to learn, with a minimum of self-discipline and respect for the rights of others in a classroom setting. My students, excepting one or two, don't have any of the afore-mentioned attributes. They go to school, not to learn, but because there is nothing else for them to do. Education is free for them; in fact, they get paid for being in school provided they pass. Hence the importance of the mere pass.

I'd rather not mention here where I have the misfortune to be teaching. If you, the reader, are an ESL/EFL teacher of good will and integrity,

you may find out from the editor of the "Newsletter" who and where I am. I envy you people who teach students who go to school because they want to learn.

With little hope and much envy, I greet you all, wherever you may be.

- M.K.



THE REWARDS OF TEACHING....

The rewards of teaching ESL/EFL are plentiful, but the best reward is the students themselves. Since starting teaching last year, I have met hundreds of young men and women from all over the world. Most are from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Some are from Indonesia, Viet Nam, China, Argentina, Russia, Germany, and France.

Each student arrives with little knowledge of Canada, some with such basic English that all they know is "Hello." The student has traveled great distances to get to Nova Scotia; he begins classes in a strange school with complete strangers and lives with a host-family who doesn't understand him (in more ways than just language!). How courageous these students are! How adventurous! What commitment! One can only admire each and every one of them.

The teacher-student bond never ceases to fascinate me. With email I have kept in touch with a number of students. In a few years I'll need to retire just to manage my email correspondence! Sometimes the teacher-student bonds are so strong, that I wonder if I am big enough to hold them all. Each student is so special. A young Korean man asked to attend one of my classes because two of his friends were there (all from different countries). Then, during a week that I was teaching a special class of young

Korean teenagers, he volunteered to help me. His calmness, his self-confidence, his warmth to the teenagers and myself, helped make the week a success for all. We became close friends from the experience.

Two other students I have known since their first day at the school; they have been in many of my classes and I have seen them blossom with the friendships they have made and with their confidence in their English conversation. The student-student bond is even stronger than the one with a teacher. It is beautiful to see: so many students from different countries conversing together in English, laughing together, playing sports together with affectionate competitiveness and comradery.

Each student offers his own stories and insights, about family and home, about food and culture, about Halifax and Canadians. Often it's like traveling around the world every day. Sometimes it's just as tiring, but certainly it's always exhilarating.

Now that I'm immersed in this experience every day, I wonder how I ever lived without it. How did I live without the students' warm appreciative smiles, their laughter and easy acceptance of each other, their commitment to learning English. I love them all. Fortunately I have a supportive husband who listens to my student stories, who hears me talk about this handsome student and that charming one and another beautiful or funny one. He meets them during our many social excursions and international dining adventures, and also delights in their company.

The reward is more than just the teaching, it's the whole experience: meeting the students, getting to know them, helping them, conversing with them, socializing with them, watching their English conversation and comprehension grow, preparing and improving lessons yet again to interest them even more. It's never-ending, it's addictive, it's wonderful. Hurrah for our students!

- Ellen Pilon

Instructor ILI / TESL NS Treasurer

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ESL Quotes

".... To succeed in the academic (scientific) world one has to read, write and speak in English. With the advent of the Internet and CNN, indeed English took flight. Isn't it almost divine that we can now converse in English in practically every part of the world? I am particularly tickled to the bone when I can make a tete-a-tete with a child in Kenya or Oman or Italy or Tokyo, in English. Somehow I see that small Ruben in them, wiggling to come out. Learning is being able to communicate. To communicate is to catch a mutual language. Finally, to be truly learned, one is to learn how to love. I hope I did.

- Dr Ruben Abellon
Technische Universiteit Delft
Delft, The Netherlands

"...I find Language very confusing. The meaning of the word 'linguist' is related to 'language', while the word 'linguish' means something entirely different. Why? Like Socrates in Plato's Dialogues, I wonder if words are a matter of "convention and agreement" or are they as natural as the beating of our hearts. Much like Alice in Wonderland, I question why words have to have certain meanings as Humpty Dumpty insists they must. And like Shakespeare, I'd like to think that a Rose is still a rose and must smell just as sweet in any other name or language. A lovely flower must certainly smell and sound just as lovely in Chinese, German, Old English, Middle English, First, Second or Third language. Language experts (linguists who languish in the study of language?) like Prof. Albert Cook suggest that language is by nature arbitrary; while mathematicians like Kurt Godel tells that even the more precise language of science and mathematics are inherently incomplete. Any language eventually breaks down into contradictions and inconsistencies.

- William Chua Tan
USA Engineer

THE STUDENTS' CORNER

On Language and Culture

I. The Spirit of Japanese

The Japanese like vague expression. In Japan, this expression is called "Jo-cho" which means "atmosphere" and writing that has "Jo-cho" is very good. When we read some writings, we have to read between the lines. In Japanese, there are many expressions that aren't direct. For example, when we invite someone to have tea, the person who speaks English may say, "Would you like a cup of tea?" But most Japanese may say, "You are thirsty, aren't you?" I think this reflects the spirit of "dependence."

Where they speak English as like in USA and Canada, there aren't expressions like this. I think it is because there are no words that express "dependence" in English.

I think the word is born from the culture. The spirit of "dependence" is in the Japanese culture. In USA or Canada, the cultures probably don't have a structure of "dependence." I get the impression that USA or Canada have original culture and are independent countries. The Japanese culture includes the cultures of many countries. So I think the spirit of "dependence" was established to coexist with others in the Japanese culture.

This "dependence" has a tendency to work negatively sometimes in international communication. But there are a lot of positive aspects in Japanese and in the Japanese culture. I think Japanese literature is very beautiful and this Japanese "spirit" usually makes good communication with the people of other countries.

- *Masako Yamamoto* (Japan) / ILI, Halifax

2. Comparing Japanese-style school with Canadian-style school

I have studied English for about two weeks at ILI. When I attended my first class, I

was very surprised because the class was very casual.

In Japan, the person who always talks is the teacher. The class is very quiet. So it is one-sided. But at ILI, maybe everywhere in Canada, the class is pretty loud and every student has a chance to speak.

Sometimes the teacher asks us if we are excited or not in class. I was very surprised by this at first because most of the education I've received is a Japanese-style education. Maybe I haven't got used to ILI's style completely yet but I think that this new style is not so bad either.

- *Yuki Kamehata* (Japan) / ILI, Halifax

3. Meal vs Meat!!

Rice is the main dish in Korea. Rice is accompanied by a variety of side dishes that change according to the region and the season. In my hometown, for instance, side dishes are very hot but great. My hometown is famous for its food because there is a great variety of side dishes. It has maybe 20 kinds of side dishes such as "kimchi," sea food, meat or poultry, greens, herbs, herbs and "pulgogi." Koreans generally like hot, spicy food, and so red pepper is an indispensable seasoning.

Each person has his own rice and soup bowls, but all other dishes are placed in the center of the table for everyone to partake. We use a spoon and chopsticks for eating. They eat with fork and knife and spoon.

According to my experience, Canada does not have a main dish. Every dish is different but generally every Canadian dish includes meat.

There is a variety of snacks. I think that snack culture is very developed. I don't like to snack because much snack is very sweet.

Canadian food is quite different from Korean food but I am slowly adjusting to Canadian food.

In Canada, the household generally has an oven but in Korea the household doesn't usually have an oven.

-*Ji Ae Kim* (Japan) / ILI, Halifax

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4. The Canadian People -- Excerpt from a Valedictory Address

Enough of the weather. Let me talk about people -- the international students at the TESL Center, our Canadian hosts, and specially our dear teachers and the administration.

It is something NEW for most of us to be studying side by side with students from different parts of the world. It took some time, for some of us, to adjust to this new experience. It means different styles in learning, different ways of pronouncing English words, in dressing and eating preferences, behaviors in the classroom and more. We learn other languages too. My roommate is a beautiful Mexican girl and we are learning a lot from each other. Antonio from Brazil I think, can also speak some Chinese words, though I am afraid his teacher taught him some, if not mostly bad words, in Chinese.

From the very first day I stepped foot in Halifax, the very obvious thing I noticed, (apart from the fact that not all the Canadian population is white), is that -- cars stopped for you when you try to cross the streets. The motorists are very COURTEOUS! Now, for two months, I have gotten used to the habit of not really minding the cars when I cross the streets, because I know they will stop for me anyway :) However this is going to be a problem when I get back to my city in China. It's a big city and very populated too. Being spoiled here in Halifax, I will find it dangerous to cross the streets back home and drive in our very heavy and busy traffic.

Another very impressive observation, which I share with most of the students, is the FRIENDLINESS of the Canadian people. They say "HI" to you even when they don't know you. They are also very polite and very helpful. It's not embarrassing to ask them questions like places and how to go there.

The Canadian people are also very HELPFUL and KIND. These traits are best shown by our own teachers and the administration of the TESL Center. This is I believe, the main reason why we learned a lot from all of you dear teachers. So, in behalf of all

the students, I say THANK not just from the BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS but from our WHOLE HEARTS. We will always remember you with love.

And for our classmates and friends -- here is my simple but sincere wish. May you all succeed in your dreams and ambitions. For those who will go home soon, a safe and a pleasant journey to you all. And for those who will be coming back here, please stay SAFE and WARM from the cold weather...

and please don't break your bones while attempting to ski. You are safer eating doughnuts at Tim Horton's. ;)

Thank you, thank you all... and goodbye.
- Chen "Daisy" Xiao Yun (China)
TESL Center / SMU

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Ramadan in Halifax

The Holy Month of Ramadan was concluded last month. Every year, during the holy month called Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. One of the aims of Ramadan is to make everyone equal because hunger is the same for everyone whether rich or poor. At the end of a successful fast, a Muslim feels more able to face up to any problems that life brings. Fasting in Halifax isn't that difficult; it has been cold so you don't need much water in daytime.

As well as fasting, Muslims try to live specially "pure" lives during Ramadan. No smoking and no sexual relationship during the day. They are urged to spend extra time on religious matter like attending special prayers and reading the Koran. Some Muslims choose to go and stay in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan. This is called a retreat. They take only a few necessary possessions with them and live simply reading the Koran and praying and thinking about spiritual matters. They do this because this was how Mohammed spent the last part of Ramadan while he was still alive. The Muslims believe they are following his example. Ramadan ends with the festival of EID-UL-Fitr.

- Humaid Al Hamedi (United Arab Emirates)
TESL Center / SMU

Canadian Schools As We See Them

Schools in Canada are different in many ways from schools in other countries. Newcomers to Canada often have trouble adjusting to our system; many problems and misunderstandings arise because of different expectations and beliefs about how schools should be. Here are some comments from some newcomers we interviewed*, which will give you a glimpse into how immigrants see Canadian schools:

- ☐ *Teachers in Canada dress very casually. I was surprised to see teachers in training suits. (Korea)*
- ☐ *Canadian children have a very easy time. There is no pressure on them. They can relax. (Hong Kong)*
- ☐ *I don't understand why the children change classes and the teachers stay in one room. Why doesn't the teacher just move? It wastes time and the halls are noisy. (China)*
- ☐ *In elementary in Canada they just play...I'm not saying this is bad...in Jordan there is a lot of stress. (Jordan)*
- ☐ *In schools in Canada, they don't teach children responsibility; they don't celebrate success. They want everyone to feel good, but children need to be challenged. (Albania)*
- ☐ *The Canadian system encourages freedom and communication. In Korea, the teachers give information and facts. They are very different systems. (Korea)*
- ☐ *The discipline in Croatian schools is much stronger. There is a lot of homework. (Croatia)*
- ☐ *I think the Canadian classrooms are very noisy. It is quiet in the Chinese classrooms. The children are all working. (China)*
- ☐ *Here the children have more freedom. They can tell the teacher their opinions. In Albania, teachers don't like to be questioned. (Albania)*

- ☐ *In Canada, teachers help students to trust themselves and to have their own personality. (Jordan)*

* These comments are taken from *Adjusting Our Sails: Working with Immigrant Children in Today's Changing Communities*, by Anne Kelly and Julie Snair. For more information on the book and/or workshops, call 464-2868, or fax us at 464-2828.

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Poetry Corner

Happy Valentine

The gentle flutter of the butterfly
The utterance of a lover's sigh
The beautiful crimson of a sunset sky
All remind me of you.

The soft, soft, down of a baby fawn
The clear, blue sky of a morning dawn
A lion's cub sleepy yawn
All remind me of you.

The shining winkle of a star so bright
The beautiful moon in the black of night
The stunning view of a mountain height,
All remind me of you.

A lonely ballad sung from the heart
The gentle prick of cupid's dart
The longing I feel when we are apart
All remind me of you.

The splendor of an autumn day
The smell of spring in the month of May
The laughter of children hard at play
All remind me of you.

Things that are beautiful, wonderful and true
And cheer me up when I am feeling blue
A sense of joy that goes through and through
All remind me of you.

<JM, USA... somewhere on the Net>

Now, you may not be one of the great poets, but that's no reason why you can't try your hand at writing a poem yourself. Don't believe me?

Just find five people willing to write poetry with you, follow the instructions below and see what happens.

Unusual poems collectively achieved

by

Fe, Pamela, Sara, Bernie, Joyce, Anthony
EDU 656 / Graduate Course

Instructions:

Get pen and paper. Do each step as you hear me articulate it and, after each step, pass your piece of paper to the person next to you. Think of

1. a situation which contains a person plus something you can see
(pass the paper...)
2. a color and a feeling
(pass the paper...)
3. a quotation
(pass the paper...)
4. a reaction to the quotation
(pass the paper...)
5. moving towards a resolution
(pass the paper...)
6. a concluding line that contains NEVER or FOREVER.

A Stressful Meeting (1)

The phone had rung: it was my doctor's call.
Her voice was wavering slightly
With anxiety and depth; a hollow, grey depth.
Don't underestimate the wrath of a woman scorned.
I knew it was bad karma to seduce a
pediatrician,
but the danger gave it spice.
"It's best for everyone if we end this now.
We can't fake Johnny's illness forever."

But the plague is serious; they will never catch on
we are safe finally. Let the affair go on.
She wanted a forever affair; he had taken enough.

A Stressful Meeting (2)

He stands in his white lab coat, x-rays in hand.
The door banged behind me as I looked at the man.
Was he smiling or pretending to smile?
"I have some news for you."
I trembled. Slightly, I suppose, though it felt
like a quake. "I need you."
I've never thought we'd meet again.

A Stressful Meeting (3)

The professor had sweat on her forehead from the
lights.
The students had wrinkles and crinkles around their
eyes.
The red marks on my page were like anger.
As she bellowed, "You insects are NOTHING but
dingbats!"
"That's because we are aliens."
As the clock chimed the end of class, we resumed
our true
forms and swarmed her, stinging and buzzing.
The final thought echoed inside her head,
"I'll never get tenure this way."

A Stressful Meeting (4)

Her dying aunt leans, false teeth in hand,
Her hands on her aching joints.
Yellowed papery skin -- disappointment drips
from the IV.
"So yer tellin' me this is the end," she rasped.
"Ah shut your face, you old bag!" yelled the niece.
"I've been telling you this is the end since 1993."
"And I'm saying 'No, No, it cannot be the end.'"
But it was never to speak again, forever relieved.

ESL Humor

EFL Gone Awry

"Please leave your values at the front desk." (in a Paris hotel elevator)

"The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable." (in a Bucharest hotel lobby)

"Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up." (in a Leipzig elevator)

"To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order." (in a Belgrade hotel elevator)

"Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 A.M. daily." (in a hotel in Athens)

"Cooler and heaters at once. If you want just condition of warm in your room, control yourself. (another Japanese hotel)

"It is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing please do not read notices." (in a Tokyo hotel)

"You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday." (a Moscow hotel across from a cemetery)

"Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension." (in an Austrian hotel catering to skiers)

"Our wines leave you nothing to hope for." (On the menu of a Swiss restaurant)

"Salad a firm's own make; limp red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger;

roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion." (on the menu of a Polish hotel)

"Ladies may have a fit upstairs." (outside a Hong Kong tailor shop)

"Dresses for street walking." (outside a Paris dress shop)

"Order your summer suit. Because of the big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation." (in a Rhodes tailor shop)

"There will be a Moscow Exhibition of Arts by 15,000 Soviet Republic painters and sculptors. These were executed over the past two years." (from the "Soviet Weekly")

"It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose." (a sign posted in Germany's Black forest)

"Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the room, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose." (in a Zurich hotel)



"Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists." (in an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist)

"Ladies, leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time." (a Rome laundry)

"Take one of our horse-driven city tours - we guarantee no miscarriages." (in a Czechoslovakian tourist agency)

"Would you like to ride on your own ass?" (advertisement for donkey rides in Thailand)

"Special cocktails for the ladies with nuts." (in a Tokyo bar)

"We take your bags and send them in all directions." (in a Copenhagen airline ticket office)

"If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it." (on the door of a Moscow hotel room)

"Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar." (in a Norwegian cocktail lounge)

"Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty." (in a Budapest zoo)

"The manager has personally passed all the water served here." (in an Acapulco hotel)

"Our nylons cost more than common, but you'll find they are best in the long run." (in a Tokyo shop)

"When passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him with vigor." (from a brochure of a car rental firm in Tokyo)

* * * * *

Chevy Nova Awards

These are the nominees for the Chevy Nova Award. This is given out in honor of the GM's fiasco in trying to market this car in Central and South America. "Nova" means, of course, in Spanish, "it doesn't go".

1. The Dairy Association's huge success with the campaign "Got Milk?" prompted them to expand advertising to Mexico. It was soon brought to their attention the Spanish translation read "Are you lactating?"

2. Coors put its slogan, "Turn It Loose," into Spanish, where it was read as "Suffer From Diarrhea."

3. Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American campaign: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."

4. Clairol introduced the "Mist Stick," a curling iron, into Germany only to find out that "mist" is slang for manure. Not too many people had use for the "Manure Stick."

5. When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the US, with the smiling baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, companies routinely put pictures on the labels of what's inside, since many people can't read.

6. Colgate introduced a toothpaste in France called Cue, the name of a notorious porno magazine.

7. An American T-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish market which promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of "I saw the Pope" (el Papa), the shirts read "I Saw the Potato" (la papa).

8. Pepsi's "Come Alive With the Pepsi Generation" translated into "Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back From the Grave" in Chinese.

9. The Coca-Cola name in China was first read as "Kekoukela", meaning "Bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax", depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 characters to find a phonetic equivalent "kokou kole", translating into "happiness in the mouth."

10. Frank Perdue's chicken slogan, "It takes a strong man to make a tender chicken" was translated into Spanish as "it takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate."

11. When Parker Pen marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read, "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." The company thought that the word "embarazar" (to

impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant!"

12. When American Airlines wanted to advertise its new leather first class seats in the Mexican market, it translated its "Fly In Leather" campaign literally, which meant "Fly Naked" (vuela en cuero) in Spanish!

Marketing Blunders: <http://www.stumps.org/stumps/messages/713.html>

The other side of globalization:
<http://mai.flora.org/forum/6211>

* * * * *

Top Ten Misconceptions about Translation and Translators:

by Caitilin Walsh

[<http://www.notisnet.org/aboutt+i.htm>]

10. Anybody with two years of high school language (or a foreign-tongued grandmother) can translate.
9. A good translator doesn't need a dictionary.
8. There's no difference between translation and interpretation.
7. Translators don't mind working nights and weekends at no extra charge.
6. Translators don't need to understand what they're translating.
5. A good translator doesn't need proofing or editing.
4. Becoming a translator is an easy way to get rich quick.
3. Translation is just typing in a foreign language.
2. A translator costs \$49.95 at Radio Shack and runs on two 'C' batteries.
1. The #1 misconception about translation and translators -- that marketing copy which took a team of 20 people two months to put together can be translated overnight by one Person and still retain the same impact as the original.

More Humor.....

One could build an English lesson around most of the following pieces of unintended humor from real life.

Don't let worry kill you - let the church help

Thursday night - potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs

The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Allen Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer

Wednesday the ladies liturgy will meet. Mrs. Johnson will sing, "Put me in my little bed" accompanied by the pastor.

Thursday at 5:00 pm there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be "Little Mothers" will meet with the pastor in his study.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be - "What is hell?" Come early and listen to the choir practice.

* * * * *

Fund raiser dinner -- Turkey \$2.35; Chicken or Beef \$2.25; Children \$2.00.

Lost: small apricot poodle. Reward. Neutered. Like one of the family.

Four-poster bed, 101 years old. Perfect for antique lover.

We do not tear your clothing with machinery. We do it carefully by hand.

For Sale -- Eight puppies from a German Shepperd and an Alaskan Hussy.

Sheer stockings. Designed for fancy dress, but so serviceable that lots of women wear nothing else.

For sale: an antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.

Used Cars: Why go elsewhere to be cheated? Come here first!

Wanted. Man to take care of cow that does not smoke or drink.

We will oil your sewing machine and adjust tension in your home for \$1.00.

* * * * *

Electronic Humor

Having fun with a translation robot Translation problems of a different sort

I "asked" the Altavista robot to translate the following passage first into Spanish and then back into English. The result is below.

Some preliminary definitions:

"A test may be defined as an activity whose main purpose is to convey (usually to the tester) how well the testee knows or can do something. This is in contrast to practice, whose main purpose is sheer learning. Learning may, of course, result from a test, just as feedback or knowledge can be one of the spin-offs of a practice activity; the distinction is in the main goal." [A COURSE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING, Ur, 33, 2nd para]

1. Some preliminary definitions

"One proves can be defined as activity that proposito main is to transport (generally to the probador) como esta or el testee knows or can do something. This esta in the resistance to practice, that proposito main is steep to learn. Learning can, of course, be from a test, as soon as whereas feedback in knowledge can be one of the effects of an activity of practica; distinction esta in the main goal." [English --> Spanish --> English]

Next, I had the robot translate the same passage first into German and then back into English. Here is the result:

2. Some introductory definitions

"A test can be defined as Atktivitaet their principal purpose is to transmit (normally to the inspection fixture) as well to that testee knows or can something do. This is contrary to practice, whose principal purpose is bare learning. Learning can result from a test naturally, be able even feedback or knowledge one spin offs of the practice activity to be there; the distinction is in the principal purpose." [English --> German --> English]

Finally, I had the same passage translated three times -- first from English to German, then from German to French, and finally from French back to English. The result -- I don't think I could make head or tail of it if I didn't have independent knowledge of its content -- is amusing. I get a chuckle out of "retroaction" for "feedback." Gotta hand it to the robot: he/she/it is trying.

3. Some definitions preliminaries

"A test can be defini as activitee its goal principal is, (normally with the testing device) as well that testee too can transmit or something can make. This one is contrary has the practice of which the goal principal is a simple training. The training undoubtedly can resulter of a test, comme the retroaction or the right knowledge of spin-offs of a practice activitee; the distinction is with a principal aim." [English --> German --> French --> English]

When I saw the trouble Robot had translating reasonably literal text like the above, I decided to try him/her/it on Sandburg's "Fog."

Fog

The fog comes
on little cat feet,
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

"Empane the fog comes in pequenos feet of the cat, feels to watch concluded quiet port and city in haunches and despus moves ignition." (English -> Spanish --> English)

- Staff, SMU

On the Elimination of Racism

"Racist" flyer causes concern in metro

Sherri Keirstead was horrified when she saw a flyer from the neo-Nazi Heritage Front posted on a bulletin board in a downtown Halifax music store.

"I was completely outraged, disgusted and shocked," Ms. Keirstead said Thursday. Using the image of a tiny blond-haired white girl, the flyer suggests that the little girl's future in Halifax is bleak.

"There will be no future for her in the multicultural Halifax that our provincial enemies are planning," it reads.

Ms. Keirstead, at the store with a friend, pulled down the flyer and walked out of the store. She forwarded the flyer to this newspaper, describing its message as "awful"

Randy Jones, Crime Reporter, "The Mail-Star," March 30, 2001

March 21 was declared the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. Below are excerpts from Ms. Mary (Metcalf) Tobe's thesis "Anti-racist Education: The Challenge for Canada." This is printed with the permission of the author in the hope that it will bring home to us the fact, which many Canadians are quite happy to keep swept under the carpet, that Canada is not nearly as innocent in matters of racism as many Canadians think and that there is much room for improvement -- of attitude first, and then of behaviour, especially for teachers. [*Editor*]

Throughout her thesis, the author ponders, Why many Canadians deny our past, or the current strength of racism within Canada, continues to confound me. Rosemary Brown speaks of this issue of denial: "If I were to write a book about Canada and its people, the title would be 'Let's Pretend, Let's Deny.' The first line would read, 'Canadians are a tolerant and compassionate people... at least that's what they tell me.'" (1991, p. 168)

These are but three examples of [racism... Africville, Residential Schools, Chinese workers building the railway] events in Canada's past

which are not discussed in any depth in most Canadian textbooks designed for junior and senior high schools. It is by no means a conclusive list of what has been omitted or glossed over in these texts.

For example, while students do learn of slavery... in the United States, they are rarely informed that slavery was practiced in Canada as well. This practice began with European contact with Native peoples, who were called "panis," apparently a corruption of Pawnee. (Miller, 1989, p 45) Later, Blacks were kept as slaves in Upper and Lower Canada. As well, a virulent resistance to Black immigration to the western provinces from the southern states at the dawn of the 20th century was foreshadowed in 1899 by the following sentiment expressed by the Immigration Branch of the Federal Department of the Interior. "It is not desired that any negro immigrants should arrive in Western Canada or that such immigration should be promoted by our agents. (Shepard, 1991, p. 17)

Ironically, this was at the same point in history that Clifford Sifton, Minister of Immigration in Canada, had launched a huge campaign in Europe and the American West to attract settlers to Canada's western areas. It might be of some comfort if racism in Canada was an aberration of the past in an otherwise tolerant and just society. But racism has been an integral part of the Canadian fabric throughout the 20th century, at both an individual and an institutional level. One of the most infamous racist organizations, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), established a Montreal chapter in September 1921. "Within months, cross burnings and Klan activity were being reported in and around Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Sault St. Marie, Welland, London and even Niagara Falls." (Kinsella, 1994, p. 13)... more fertile ground for hatred was to the west and KKK was to reach their peak of influence in Saskatchewan during the 1920's. By the close of the decade, the Klan could claim almost forty thousand members in Saskatchewan -- 5% of the population (Kinsella, 1994, p. 17)

With the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, it was the federal government that launched the next chapter of racism in Canada... all Japanese (except those married to Whites) were removed from the coast of British Columbia to the interior of the province, and in some cases farther east. Twenty-two thousand people, many of them born in Canada or naturalized citizens, lost their homes, farms, businesses and fishing boats....

Racism does continue to flourish in Canada presently and cannot be dismissed as a thing of the past... Organized hate groups, such as the Heritage Front, the Western Guard, the Aryan Nations and the Ku Klux Klan are but a few of the forty or so far right groups operating in Canada. Men of these groups are affiliated with right wing organizations south of the border, and around the world.

The Canadian judicial system does not have an untarnished record in regard to racism either. Perhaps the most notorious case is the of Donald Marshall, a Nova Scotia Native person, who at the age of seventeen was convicted of a murder he did not commit. Investigation revealed that the justice system knew of the evidence that he had not committed the offence, yet kept him incarcerated for 12 years and suppressed knowledge of the evidence throughout the time. (Brown, 1991, p. 167 - 169)...

Silence is a powerful tool, and often a dangerous weapon... the Sydney Police Department, the RCMP and the Nova Scotia Attorney General's office all knew within weeks of his false conviction for murder.

A lesser-known incident is the murder of Helen Betty Osbourne, a high school student in The Pas, Manitoba. On November 13, 1971 four white boys forced the Cree Native into a car and attempted to rape her. She struggled fiercely and they were unsuccessful in their efforts, where upon they stabbed her fifty times with a screwdriver and left her to bleed to death in an isolated area. Within a week the boys were bragging about the crime to their friends and co-workers and the whole town eventually heard the confessions or rumors (Priest, 1989, p. 77) Yet it was sixteen years before anyone was charged with the murder and only one of the four boys was convicted.

One would think that such a litany or racial events in Canada's history would make clear to everyone that Canada does not have an unblemished record in regard to racism.

A study (Henry, 1987) of racial attitudes in Toronto discovered that 16% of the population were extremely racist and a further 35% somewhat racist. Of equal importance was a survey commissioned by the Canadian Secretary of

State which found that 31% of the respondents in a nationwide sample indicated that they would support organizations that worked toward preserving Canada for whites only (Barret, 1984)

... a door is opened to evil when we pretend that racism has not been, and does not continue to be, an integral part of Canadian life. I am heartened to know that others feel similarly. Adrienne Shadd, "a fifth-generation black Canadian, writes: It always amazes me when people express surprise that there might be a "race problem" in Canada, or when they attribute the "problem" to a minority of prejudiced individuals. Racism is, and always has been, one of the bedrock institutions of Canadian society, embedded in the very fabric of our thinking, our personality. (1991,p. 1)

My foray into teaching... I was not prepared for the racism that many teachers openly exhibited. Nor was I prepared for the silence of my colleagues that generally followed such behavior. I have seen children treated in a racist manner... there were very few teachers who objected. (18, 2nd last para)

Numerous educators recognize the need for an anti-racist education system... There is an under-representation of visible minority teachers across the country. Studies conducted... within the Toronto Board of Education found that, though approximately 45% of the students were not White, only 9.2% of the teachers that faced these student each school day were members of a visible minority group. (Carr,1995, p. 34) (Metcalf, 22, 2nd para)

I believe that, as educators, we must admit openly that racism has been, and is, a reality in Canada. We must be taught to see that schools play no small part in the perpetuation of discriminatory practices and the maintenance of the status quo. Racism must be understood to be contrary to the notion of democracy and social justice. (27, 2nd last para)

... when I talk to the students, I am reminded that for many of them racism is an issue that they must face on a daily basis. (28, 2nd para)